

**2017 World Service Conference Summary**

*World Service  
Conference 2017*

*57th Annual WSC*

OUR  
**MEMBERS:**

OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Nuestros miembros: nuestra esperanza para el futuro  
Nos membres : notre espoir pour l'avenir

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2017 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE



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The 2017 Conference Summary is available in color online at [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) in the Members' section. Remember, you can enlarge the text by using the zoom button.

## Concept Two

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

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

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

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# 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.

# OUR MEMBERS:

## OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Nuestros miembros: nuestra esperanza para el futuro

Nos membres : notre espoir pour l'avenir

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

Debbie G. • Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

The day before the 2017 Conference convened, the Chairperson of the Board reviewed the roles and responsibilities of members of Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, and Task Forces with all Conference members. The intent of the session was to clarify the role of Conference members as it pertains to participation in these groups.

The 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.

**A Committee is formed by the Board of Trustees and responds to an ongoing need of AI-Anon Family Groups.** While it does not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service department it is related to (such as Public Outreach, Literature, etc.), it may make recommendations about any work it is doing or considering. It is often thought to be a permanent part of an organization. It can be an originating body; therefore, a Thought Force or Task Force may evolve from a Committee.

**A Work Group is a unit of people established to meet an ongoing need of the originating body.** It can be considered a permanent part of the organization that formed it. It can be an originating body; therefore, a Thought Force or Task Force may evolve from a Work Group. The objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body to move forward.

**A Thought Force is a temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity.** It uses the resources available, such as the perspective of members of the Thought Force and World Service Office (WSO) staff knowing that some members may have additional information. The Thought Force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solution. If there are facts that are unknown, they can be flagged in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making question, "Things we don't know but wish we did." A Thought Force presents its information to the originating body so it can move forward. "They are thinkers, not doers."

**A Task Force is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity.** It uses available resources, such as the perspective of its members and WSO staff knowledge. It implements a strategy developed by a Thought Force. Task Forces are the "doers."

These units make recommendations; they are not decision-making bodies. Each body's objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body.

## **The Chairperson of the Board then described the roles:**

All participating members of the Committee (Delegates, WSO Staff and Trustees) have equal voice and bring different perspectives with various experiences or understandings of the issue.

Everyone's role is the same except for the Chairperson and Recorder, who have additional responsibilities.

## **Chairperson:**

- Builds the agenda—a plan of action.
- Reviews the agenda with the group and asks for input and agreement to follow it.
- Sets ground rules for discussion.
- Sets up meeting times, dates, methods of communication, and the tentative purpose of each meeting.
- Helps the group maintain a sense of unity.
- Gives everyone an equal voice, and allows a few minutes for venting if needed.
- Has the group agree on the outcome.
- Ensures that the job is done to accurately meet the charge, including submission of paperwork to the Executive Committee.

## **Recorder (member selected from within the group):**

- Keeps notes and key ideas and other information.
- Asks for clarity, when needed.
- Assists the Chairperson as requested.

## **Responsibilities of the members:**

Be sure that the charge is understood.

- 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 at any time something is not understood.**

- 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.
- Brainstorm and share your work with each other.
- Stay on course and be careful not to impose 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 the charge from the moment it is assigned.
- Be willing to volunteer for specific activities related to the fulfillment of the charge.
- Respond to the Chairperson in a timely manner and if unable to complete a task or to be available on a given date, let the Chairperson know.
- Be open to accept constructive feedback when the project is reviewed.

# 2017 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 55	Panel 56	Panel 57
<b>Conference Committee on Trustees</b>	Elizabeth K., CA(S), Chair Brenda L., IN Wendy R., FL(N)	Richard McC., MA, Chair Elect Don B., WIUPMI Laura D., OK Valentina H., NC/ BDA Ann Marie Z., NJ	Janice V., ON(N) Sarah S., MO Sue C., SD
<b>Literature Committee</b>	Betty R., KS Dana Rae H., HI Phyllis H., RI Pat K., FL(S)	Gaston A., QC(E) Julie P., WA Renelle M., GA	Gail L., CT Gail F., AR Janet P., NV
<b>Public Outreach</b>	Barbara G., PA Chris C., TX(W) Connie C., MD/DC Sandy W., IL(N)	Duane F., VA Janis A., BC/YT Norma F., AB/NWT	Beth K., IA Madeline S., WY Sonya M., ME
<b>Task Force: Celebrating Our Differences and Our Common Purpose</b>	Debbie H., MB/NWO Lori H., KY Yvonne de G., CA(N)	Rachelle C., MN(N), Chair Kenneth R., VT Marilyn M., WV Marty W., ALNWFL	Mabel M., PR Stephanie S., NM/EP

# ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE CONFERENCE

Debbie G. • Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

At the beginning of the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC), the Board of Trustees announced the hiring of Mary G. to serve as interim Executive Director. She was charged with the task of spearheading dynamic changes within the World Service Office (WSO). At that time, the Board shared with the WSC that Mary would serve as the interim Executive Director for a period of time that would ensure that changes within the office were implemented and functioning well. One only need review the 2016 Annual Report to conclude that the past year has been a success. It is with great enthusiasm and hope for our future that the Board of Trustees announces that it is ready to begin the search for our next Executive Director.

We will begin the process by posting the announcement of the Executive Director position opening on AFG Connects, AFG Announcements, *Group e-news*, an in house posting at the WSO, and on national internet job search sites. This announcement will be posted by April 27, 2017.

The Board is sharing the following time line to inform potential candidates of specific dates within the search and hiring process for which they should be ready:

## May 1 – June 15, 2017

Application and Résumé submission period

## June 26 – 30, 2017

Video conferencing Interviews

## Week of July 17, 2017

Final candidate interviews with the Board of Trustees  
Virginia Beach, Virginia

## September 5, 2017

Desirable start date for New Executive Director at the WSO in Virginia Beach

We anticipate announcing the new Executive Director to the fellowship by mid-August.

Mary G. has committed to stay on for a period of time to ensure that our new Executive Director, our WSO staff and our fellowship as a whole experience a smooth transition. The Board believes this transition period is supported by the spiritual principles of our program by offering the sharing of our experience, strength and hope. We then let go and allow the new Executive Director the freedom to oversee the World Service Office in his or her own way as outlined in Concept Eleven.

We ask that you, our Conference Members, share this exciting news with our fellow members. We also ask that you keep the Board of Trustees and WSO staff in your thoughts and prayers as we move forward to the next chapter in our fellowship.

## SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to the opening of the 2017 World Service Conference (WSC), a session was held by the Delegates to share Area successes and challenges. All other Conference members were invited to attend as guests with no voice.

The Delegates had submitted their written reports of Area successes and concerns in advance of the Conference and were compiled by the Recorder and available for all attendees.

The Sharing Area Highlights Chairperson, Wendy R., Panel 55, Florida North, and Recorder, Tarcila F., Panel 55, Tennessee, opened the session explaining to the participants that this was a continuation of an expanded format that began with the 2016 Sharing Area Highlights session and is a work in progress.

As an “icebreaker,” the Chairperson asked each Delegate to share one thing few people knew about them. During the session, Delegates shared in small groups on strategies they use to encourage participation in their Areas.

### Strategies for filling open positions included:

- Asking—extending a personal invitation.
- Hand out a good job description.
- Don't have to do it alone—Service Sponsor to help them.
- Ask Assembly service volunteers to stand up as Sponsors.
- Lead by example.
- Handout résumés to identify skills.

### Strategies to encourage groups in an inactive District:

- Visit and share report and service experience with groups.
- Invest in active members.
- Invite groups from inactive Districts to Assembly.
- Workshops at conventions.
- Offer to serve as a Sponsor.

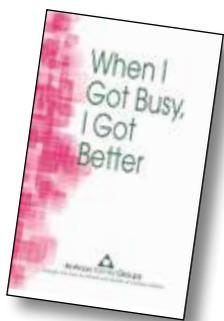
### Members in remote areas

- Electronic communication—online meetings and phone conferencing.
- Take a workshop to a remote area.
- Skype, cell phones.
- Offer help for District member to come to Assembly.

### Strategies Areas can use to help strengthen sponsorship included:

- Encourage temporary Sponsors for newcomers.
- Educate, be visible in service.
- Workshops on sponsorship.
- Chair a meeting on sponsorship.
- Ask sponsees what they are looking for and give them sponsorship bookmark.
- Sponsor a home group member or adopt someone and invite to events.

- District meeting on sponsorship using questions in *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78).
- Share your own experience.
- Group inventory and open meetings on sponsorship.



interactive, ask members to give out handouts; have a game on using the *Conference Summary*; be the “Delegate Queen.”

### **Sponsorship is a factor in retaining newcomers:**

- Use Conference Approved Literature on the topic of sponsorship.
- Have a Sponsor/be a Sponsor; share experience, strength and hope; use beginner meeting guideline; offer to work the Steps with someone instead of waiting to be asked; encourage members to be Sponsors.
- Make sponsorship available.

### **Recognize cult-like behavior**

- Rigid and restrictive rules.
- Exclusive behavior.
- Discourage attendance at different meetings.

### **Delegate Reports:**

- Make it relevant and fun. Present “hot topics” related to the Area; Thought Force and Task Force skits and workshops; pictures in PowerPoint keeping members interested.
- Prioritize information—what affects the Area. Run apps and share how big Al-Anon is outside the Area. Make it

### **Delegates also discussed what is working for Alateen:**

- Promotion vs. attracting Alateens: parents want kids to have the Alateen experience. A.A. is more supportive.
- How do we help Alateen to be more self-supporting?
- Educate through the Al-Anon Member in Alateen Service (AMIAS) process
- Have jobs at Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings and Alateen conference chairs.
- Special events and conventions. Have meetings at same time; encourage Alateen Group Sponsors to bring Alateens to the event.
- Help them to be self-supporting.
- Alateen skits, role-playing training modules.
- Peer-to-peer sponsorship—Alateens can’t give away what they don’t have.
- Public Outreach in schools, encourage Al-Anon to bring message; ask teens to bring to others and participate in growing groups; educate about anonymity.

Before the session ended, Duane F., Panel 56, Virginia was elected to serve as Chairperson for the 2018 Sharing Area Highlights session, and Elaine D., Panel 56, Montana was elected to serve as Recorder.

## **OPENING DINNER**

Rosie M. • Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson

Prior to the official opening of the Conference, the Conference members, International Representatives, and staff necessary to support the Conference attended the Opening Dinner. The Co-Chairperson of the 2017 World Service Conference welcomed all dinner attendees and opened with the theme, “Our Members: Our Hope for the Future.”

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

Following dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 57 Delegates and new Conference members. Each first-time Conference attendee received a 2017 WSC pin.

Mary G., Executive Director, was the opening dinner speaker.

*(See page 57 for her talk.)*

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

# CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Tina B. • Trustee, Conference Chairperson | Rosie M. • Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson | Suzanne M. • Associate Director—Conference

The 2017 Conference theme, “Our Members: Our Hope for the Future,” laid the foundation for the spiritual tone of this year’s World Service Conference (WSC). It encouraged members to use the Legacies of the Al-Anon program to empower members to success in service. The idea led to thoughtful discussions, creative thinking, and focused decision-making throughout the 57th WSC held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 24-28, 2017. This year’s Conference was opened by the Conference Chairperson with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. The Conference Chairperson continued her greeting:

“Welcome, World Service Conference (WSC) members. This WSC member body makes up the largest group conscience for Al-Anon Family Groups. By our participation, in all of our various roles, we will work together to ensure the future of our groups; our World Service Office; and the hope for recovery for all families and friends suffering from the effects of alcoholism.

“The Conference theme was conceived from suggestions offered by last year’s Conference members. Members were invited to offer theme ideas and inspiration for the next Conference. The suggestions ranged from humorous to truly inspirational. I believe we have been given an inspirational theme that translates well not only to our work this week at this Conference, but will help us to inspire members in our Areas and our home groups.

“‘Our Members: Our Hope for the Future.’ Who are our members? Is it someone who has a home group? Is it those who are doing service in their group, District or Area? Is it someone who has been to six meetings or 600 meetings? Is it the quiet person sitting in the meeting or the one who speaks up first each week? Is it the individual who greets the new person walking in the door of the meeting room? Is it the person who holds the key or puts out our literature? Our members are all of these and more.

“I remember distinctly when I made the choice to become a member of Al-Anon. It was during one of those challenging times living with active alcoholism. There was a big event coming and deep inside I just knew he was going to drink. I went to the Tuesday morning Al-Anon meeting that I had visited a number of times. I shared with absolute certainty to the members there, ‘He is going to drink tonight.’ A member looked at me kindly and said, ‘Yes, that is probably what he will do—but, what will you do?’ That question helped me to answer why I needed to keep coming back to Al-Anon and highlighted what the members were sharing with me—the *hope* for recovery for me. They didn’t offer any false promises or guarantees that my loved one would find sobriety, but shared that I would be okay. I was told that I could find contentment and even happiness. It is that consistent, generous giving to anyone who reaches out that guarantees our future of continued hope and recovery for those who are still suffering from the effects of the disease of alcoholism.

“We each have our own story about becoming a member of this fellowship of hope. In my mind, the best parts of the stories include ‘who’ reached out to us and helped us to find that desire to keep coming back. It was in the warm invitation and welcome offered by Lois and Anne to the wives waiting outside for their alcoholic spouses. The future of Al-Anon was embraced by Lois in 1951 with the personal outreach to the original 87 AA family groups. The resounding ‘yes’ from those early members has led us here. That enduring member spirit lives in each of us today at this 57th World Service Conference. We are continuing the work of the Conference members who have gone before us in an

effort to guarantee that this program of hope and recovery will be available to all who seek it. This week we are doing the footwork, along with our Higher Power, to ensure that our groups, Districts and Areas will continue to be filled with active, vibrant and passionate members ready to go forward in service and welcome those who walk through the doors of Al-Anon in search of hope.”

With a tap of the gavel, the Chairperson announced the opening of the 2017 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 representatives from other structures, individuals who could provide critical information to the Conference and staff members who attended as part of their ongoing training.

**The following persons were seated:**

**With voice, but no vote:**

**Niketa Bailey**

Director of Finance • Non-Al-Anon Member

**Arnold H.**

International Representative—New Zealand • Al-Anon Member

**Maria Oliva M.**

International Representative—Mexico • Al-Anon Member

**Kim A.**

International Representative—UK & Eire • Al-Anon Member

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

**Jeffrey K.**

Chairperson, ECRPM • Al-Anon Member

**With voice limited to Finance Presentation Breakouts, but no vote:**

Friday, April 28, 2017

**Ken Pearl**

Controller • Non-Al-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office staff members be seated as part of their ongoing training at the 2017 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

All days

**Scot Powers**

Digital Strategy Manager • Non-Al-Anon Member

Wednesday, April 26, 2017

**Norman A.**

Language Services Coordinator (Spanish) • Al-Anon Member

**Michele Ogonowski**

Group Records Clerk I • Non-Al-Anon Member

Thursday, April 27, 2017

**Sarah C.**

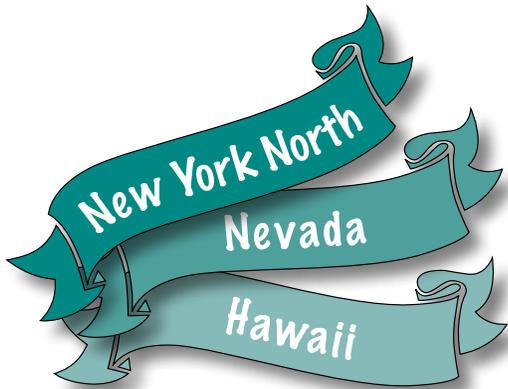
Member Services Secretary (French) • Al-Anon Member

*The motion carried by consensus. (See WSC Motion #1, page 64)*

# ROLL CALL

Tina B. • Trustee, Conference Chairperson

As a way to visualize the different groups of members that comprise the World Service Conference (WSC), the Chairperson read the role of each group as the members came up to the front of the Conference. All members of each group were invited to introduce themselves, their Area or position, and their home group. The Chairperson explained the role of each group as they came to the front of room.



## Delegates

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

## Trustees

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

## WSO Voting Staff

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

## Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) Chairperson

- Ensures that the spirit and letter of the resolution to create the ECRPM to handle the management of the property is upheld. This is why the ECRPM Chairperson is given voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote at Conference.

## International Visitors

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

## Non-Voting Staff

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

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

## Similarity in Roles

### Two roles that are similar for all Conference members:

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

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

## Differences in Roles

Conference members bring different:

### Perspectives:

- Delegates bring Area viewpoints.
- Trustees bring legal, financial, public outreach, worldwide viewpoints.
- Executive Committee members bring legal, financial, public outreach, worldwide viewpoints and understanding of the day-to-day operations of the WSO.
- Staff members bring experiences working with the fellowship.

### Responsibilities:

- Delegates to their Areas and the Conference.
- Trustees to the AI-Anon Organization, Conference, and the fellowship.
- Executive Committee members to the Board of Trustees and the fellowship.
- Staff to the Board of Trustees and the fellowship.

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

# WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Debbie G. • Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

“On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the 57th World Service Conference. This year’s Conference theme, ‘Our Members: Our Hope for the Future,’ reminds me of cofounder Lois W.’s following statement to the 1976 World Service Conference on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the World Service Office: ‘It’s always forward that we have to look, and let our gratitude be for those to come...’ As we move through this week, may our discussions be focused on looking to our future and reaching out to new members, while keeping the foundation of our Legacies in the forefront of our minds.

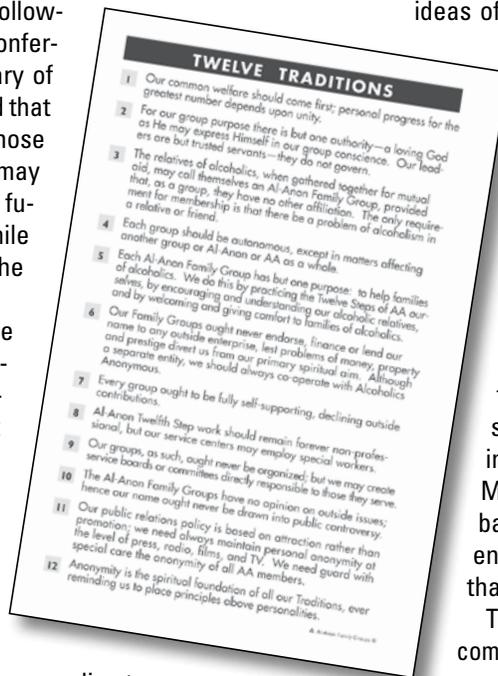
“Al-Anon’s hope began for me in my home group. It was there that I watched and listened to you, our members, and came to believe that things could be different. For that one hour, I felt safe. You showed me that even in the midst of chaos, there was an opportunity for the future to be different. From our earliest beginnings, Al-Anon’s hope for the future has always been in the hands of our members. Our hope began with our cofounders, Lois and Anne B., in a little office in the upstairs at Stepping Stones while responding to

87 initial inquiries. Those initial inquiries have grown to thousands of groups throughout the world with members from all walks of life. Our future lies within enthusiastic new members with progressive ideas of how to grow and strengthen our fellowship.

Our future is grounded in maintaining our living heritage, our singleness of purpose, along with our Legacies and our willingness to be obedient to the unenforceable.

“This week, may we find hope for the future within the faces and the voices of our fellow Conference members. The collective voice of our Conference is hope itself. It is a voice of trust, confidence and reason. We have been given an opportunity to participate in discussions, address our problems and look for solutions and hope for the future. May we strive to seek the wisdom of our Higher Power in our collective voice and in all that we do. May the message of this Conference be carried back to our members with laughter, love and an enthusiasm for all that has been given and all that can be.”

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



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

Debbie G. • Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

Mary H. • Panel 55, Minnesota South

The purpose of this presentation is to provide information about Al-Anon’s history and how Al-Anon Family Groups and the World Service Office came to be. We will explain the relationship and differences between Al-Anon Family Groups, the Fellowship and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Organization. When we finish, we hope you will have gained a better understanding of how you as a member of an Al-Anon Family Group are connected to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and its world services.

The Family Group idea is nearly as old as Alcoholics Anonymous. 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, numbers of Family Groups had applied to the A.A. General Service Office for listing in the A.A. Directory, and scores of relatives of alcoholics asked them for help. But, as we know A.A. was designed to aid alcoholics only.

By 1951, two wives, Lois W. and Anne B., formed a Clearing House Committee to get in touch with these 87 inquirers and to coordinate, unify and serve them. Fifty-six 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.

Tax returns are filed annually in both countries and those returns are available for your information on the Members website.

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

Following the presentation, a skit was introduced by the Chairperson of the Board and the Minnesota South Delegate illustrating the differences in the roles and responsibilities between Al-Anon Family Groups, the Fellowship and traditional arm, and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the Organization and legal arm which Lois incorporated in 1954.

### Al-Anon Family Groups, the Fellowship

In 1970, the World Service Conference approved the Twelve Concepts of Service, which outlines the spiritual principles that

bind together Al-Anon, the fellowship. Concept One places the ultimate responsibility for world services in the hands of the Al-Anon groups. This is why it is important for a group to have a Group Representative (GR). GRs are linked by group conscience to the World Service Conference.

- Is the traditional arm—provides meetings and a service structure.
- Provides support for individual members and their recovery on a daily basis.
- Has a governance document, the World Service Conference Charter (see *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 171) which is amended by the World Service Conference.
- Does not exist in the eyes of the law.
- Does not have tax-exempt status; contributions are not tax-deductible.
- Recognizes the Board of Trustees as the chief service arm of the Conference.

#### **Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc., the Organization**

- Exists in the eyes of the law.
- Has tax-exempt status in the U.S. and Canada and can accept contributions that may be tax-deductible.
- Is the legal arm and protects the Al-Anon trademarks (logo and copyrights) and the Al-Anon name.
- Conducts the business of Al-Anon.
- Has a governance document, the By-Laws for the Corporation which are amended by the Board of Trustees unless objected to by the Conference. (See Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter, *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 174, 10d).
- Recognizes the World Service Conference as the ultimate traditional authority (Concept Two). Even though legal requirements put responsibility for the organization of Al-Anon in the hands of the Board of Trustees, Lois and the pioneers always sought to share leadership with the fellowship of Al-Anon, and to seek as broad a group conscience as possible

# APPROVALS

Jennie McC. • Trustee, Treasurer | Niketa Bailey • Director of Finance (Non-member)

## 2016 Auditor's Report

Each year, the Director of Finance 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 AFG Connects for all Conference members to review. During the Conference, the Director explained the audit. A copy of the audit can be found on the Members website.

### Conference members had the following questions and comments:

- Is our WSO staff being fairly compensated and is it comparable to other companies?

*The Board of Trustees looks at overall compensation to make sure it is fair and equitable to other non-profit organizations in the area.*

- Is there any type of internal audit done?

*No, what we do have is a lot of separation of duties, and checks and balances of certain things people can't do, different parameters. We review everything monthly during the Finance Committee meetings. We then present all financial information to the Committee. Oversight takes place throughout the year.*

- What made up the approximately \$2.1 million dollars of contributions?

*Group, online, birthday, individual, memorial, bequest, appeal and "other" Contributions.*

- What is the "Other" category?

*When a contribution is not specifically identified as to what to attribute it to by category, i.e., online etc. we put it in the "Other" category. Also, if there is no group number.*

*For example, our AWSC sent \$20,000. You know it came from us, but it doesn't fit in a category, so it goes in "Other."*

*Contributions gathered at the World Service Conference also go into "Other."*

- Do International structures come into this at all?

*Yes.*

- What did our contributions support?

*A redesigned website coming in 2017, increased social media presence, a fully staffed World Service Office, a Digital Strategy department, efforts to protect our trademarks/copyrights, and new Literature.*

- Please explain limits on the Reserve Fund by federal law like one year's operating expenses.

*That is an Al-Anon requirement. We are working to uphold Warranty One.*

- We have a problem with members going to Mexico to buy Spanish literature and not supporting our own structure. When the warehouse runs out of pieces, the WSO buys from Mexico. That literature has "Printed in Mexico." Can there be some kind of sticker to say the WSO bought it from Mexico?

*We will have to check into that.*

- Does the WSO get a cheaper price or revenue when someone buys a book online, i.e., e-books?

*Yes, it is reflected in literature sales. We track it, but it is not shown separately.*

- Are salaries comparable to the industry average? Corporations are increasing salaries and eliminating benefits. Are we looking at that?

*We are looking at all things to evaluate how we deliver services. Our philosophy for employment is that we want to pay salaries equitable to those in the area. We did a benefits survey with the staff and the Board is looking at it carefully. You received a handout showing salary averages and comparables.*

- I was struck by something you said at the beginning of your presentation regarding when you were thinking about coming here [to the WSO]. You said, "I knew that there was a difference between working for the bottom line and working for a vision." I must admit I've never heard a financial person say that. And I find it very attractive. I'd really like to hear more about how you see that?

*When I talk with you all—you are Delegates, you're in service—so the question becomes, what can I do in my role to provide the same level of service. I think about this as I'm trying to find ways to leverage costs and think of new ways to put back into Programs and different areas to assist you [Delegates] as you carry the message. So, for me, I look at what I'm doing and what I can do to help that along. That's what gives me that feeling.*

- Does the WSO make contributions to current 401Ks?

- Yes.

- Members can go to our website and click on the "donate" button to make an online contribution. A small amount makes a big difference.

- We had a great year and we want to continue so we can do the things we want to move Al-Anon forward in technology and get resources to the members.

*A motion to approve the 2016 Audited Financial Report was made and carried.  
(See WSC Motion #3, page 64).*

# 2016 AUDITOR'S REPORT

## SCHEDULE 1

### AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC. 2017 Budget

	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>
	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Audited Actual</b>
<b><u>Operating Expenses</u></b>		
Salaries	3,179,000	2,837,914
Payroll Taxes	219,000	220,531
Employee Benefits	<u>466,000</u>	<u>438,351</u>
Total Labor Costs	3,864,000	3,496,796
Building Occupancy	284,000	285,550
Packing & Shipping (Net)	(80,000)	(83,615)
Postage	183,000	201,558
Telephone	58,000	57,009
Stationery & Office Supplies	76,000	71,289
Office Services & Expenses	191,000	192,780
Repairs & Maintenance	8,000	8,042
Travel & Meetings	183,000	159,561
Direct Conference Costs (Net)	63,000	52,042
Legal & Audit	62,500	78,504
Printing	106,000	101,077
Canadian Office	2,000	1,291
General services meeting	-	50,323
In-Office Volunteers	2,000	1,690
Membership Survey	12,000	-
PSA Campaign	43,000	84,848
Miscellaneous	46,000	66,942
Postretirement Health Benefits	<u>58,000</u>	<u>57,342</u>
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>5,161,500</b>	<b>4,883,029</b>
Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)	<u>68,000</u>	<u>62,088</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>5,229,500</b>	<b>4,945,117</b>
<b><u>Estimated Revenue</u></b>		
Literature Sales less cost of printing	2,700,000	2,714,877
Contributions	2,100,000	2,098,098
Forum Subscriptions	250,000	251,900
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	<u>190,000</u>	<u>(31,605)</u>
<b>Total Estimated Revenue</b>	<b>5,240,000</b>	<b>5,033,270</b>
Net increase (decrease)	<b>10,500</b>	<b>88,153</b>

# 2017 FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Jennie McC. • Trustee, Treasurer | Niketa Bailey • Director of Finance (Non-member)

The 2017 Budget was presented to the Conference members by the Treasurer of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2017 Budget shows expenses are expected to be \$10,500 less than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,229,500 and revenues to be \$5,240,000.

## Projected Expenses

Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$275,051 from last year's actual expenses. Labor costs are expected to increase \$341,086 due to the addition of new staff, cost of living and merit increases.

## Estimated Income

Income from literature sales is estimated to be about \$14,877 less than last year. *Forum* subscription income is expected to be comparable to the prior year. We are budgeting contributions to be \$2,100,000, which is equal to last year's actual. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer up to 4% of the fair value of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund. Since 2016 was successful, we returned the transfer to the Reserve Fund. For 2017, a transfer of 4% has been budgeted again.

Following the presentation of the Budget, the Treasurer said, "This budget tells a more optimistic story than the budgets of recent years. The Delegates at the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC) did such a great job relaying the message of need for support at the World Service Office (WSO) that contributions totaled almost \$2,100,000. This level of contribution did not include any large bequests. This amount was achieved by many of us doing a little and having it add up to a lot. We are hopeful that we can do it again this year.

"Those services include hiring some new staff in the field of technology. We are finding that so much of what we do relies on good, reliable and innovative technology to communicate with our members and potential members. In addition to the Digital Strategy Manager,

which we were fortunate to be able to hire in 2016, we also hired a Webmaster. The Research Analyst position, although not new, has been filled. This staffing will position us to be able to move forward and keep up with future demands and needs. As the WSO migrates to more digital publications, we are able to save money in postage.

"Every other year, we send one staff member and one Board member to the various Zonal meetings to share the experience, strength and hope of our World Service Conference Structure with service members in Central America, South America and Europe. This is reflected in the increase in the Travel line.

"With the publication of the companion workbook for *Paths to Recovery* (P-93), we are hoping for a modest increase in literature sales. We would love to budget for a huge increase in literature sales as our newer and longer-time members rediscover or discover for the first time our extraordinary inventory of great books. If sales increase significantly this year, we will be able to budget for more in 2018.

"2016 was so successful that we did not need to make the transfer of funds from the Reserve. This was unexpected and financially a very positive move. For 2017, we are budgeting a Reserve Fund transfer to the General Fund, but are hopeful, with increased contributions, that we will not have to even make the transfer.

"The Finance Committee is very pleased to present this Proposed Budget. We are also very grateful for the shared concern and responsibility as shown by all our members. Budgets like this one, that we are presenting this year, bring us closer to the Vision of the Board of Trustees that 'All people affected by someone else's drinking will find help and recovery in every community,' and the Board's Mission to 'Anticipate the future and Al-Anon's place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.'"

*Motion to approve the 2017 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See Motion #4, page 64).*

# 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Debbie G. • Trustee, Chairperson of the Board | Bev A. • Executive Committee Chairperson | Mary G. • Executive Director

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

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

## Conference members had the following questions:

- Regarding this paragraph entitled *Insurance*, "Al-Anon and Alateen groups are increasingly being asked by the facility where they meet to provide liability insurance. Another Area began providing liability insurance to its groups for a nominal fee in 2016." How is the Area able to provide insurance for groups if it is incorporated?

*There is a lively conversation going on AFG Connects regarding this topic. That would be a tool to find out how other Areas are doing it. The WSO doesn't become involved in group/Area insurance matters.*

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

### 2018 Calendar Quotations

For the last five years, the World Service Office (WSO) has provided Conference Approved Literature (CAL) quotations that could be used by service arms in fundraising calendars without seeking written permission. The WSO posted 20 quotations for use in 2018

calendars in March on the Announcements community of AFG Connects. If service arms submit reprint permission requests for use in calendars, they will be asked to select from the 20 quotations.

### **PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS OF YOUNG PROBLEM DRINKERS (working title)**

In January, the WSO selected a freelance writer/editor who is an Al-Anon member for the parents and grandparents pamphlet. The writer/editor, having read the 240 sharings submitted, has completed the first draft of the pamphlet, which the Literature Committee is in the process of reviewing. We hope for the pamphlet to be introduced at the 2018 World Service Conference in English, French, and Spanish.

### **INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title)**

The WSO also selected a freelance writer/editor who is an Al-Anon member for the intimacy book in January, who has read the 1,272 sharings submitted, and selected those to be included. Introductory text for the six sections of the book is currently being drafted. We expect a first draft of the entire book to be ready for review by the Literature Committee in May. If completed on schedule, the book will be available in English at the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention in Baltimore.

### **NEW DAILY READER (working title)**

We've received over 10,682 sharings so far for the daily reader. The January issue of *The Forum* included an "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" article describing the differences between a daily reader sharing and a sharing for *The Forum*, in hopes of clarifying this for the fellowship and attracting more sharings. Provided that members continue to submit additional sharings, we hope to begin looking for a writer/editor for this project by the end of this year. No deadline has been set at this point for submitting sharings, and no publication date has been proposed.

### **New Addition to *The Forum***

In January, *The Forum* began adding several questions about the Step of the month to the "Instant Meeting" department of the magazine to encourage discussion when used as a meeting topic.

### **Requests for More Sharings for *The Forum***

*The Forum* continues to be in shortage of sharings about each of the Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service for use in the back pages of the magazine. Because of the need for Canadian sharings, in April the WSO staff contacted Canadian *Forum* Coordinators and Delegates to encourage them to hold *Forum* Workshops in their Areas.

### **THE FORUM BOOK (working title)**

So far, members have sent in over 441 titles and publication dates of *Forum* articles that they consider the best of recent years. Please keep encouraging members to let the WSO know which *Forum* stories they want to see included in this book. And don't forget to send in your own selections!

### **Lois W. and the Pioneers Audio Interview**

Members can now listen to a *free* downloadable Lois W. and the Pioneers audio interview. Part I is 56 minutes long, in which a 91-year old Lois talks about her early life and the eventful years that led to Al-Anon's beginnings. Part II is 54 minutes long, in which Lois, Henrietta and Margaret describe the early days of the WSO Clearing House. It is available on the Members website.

## **The Director of Programs updated the Conference on the following topic:**

### **Area Highlights Newsletter**

The World Service Office (WSO) is in the process of re-evaluating publications. In the past, this publication was produced quarterly. After a presentation at the 2015 World Service Conference (WSC), Conference members were asked for feedback because after the *Area Highlights* newsletter was produced in an electronic format in 2011, the WSO noted that throughout 2014 and early 2015 visits to view this publication on the Members website averaged about 159 members each quarter. (See *2015 WSC Summary*, pages 36-38).

Following the 2015 presentation and discussion, the WSO gleaned adequate information to produce the remaining quarters in 2015 and one in 2016. However, it remained difficult to find service-related Area articles. The publication consists of (60% Area articles and 40% WSO articles). Many articles found in the Area newsletters were reprints from past issues of *Area Highlights'* WSO articles.

The WSO did not produce a summer, fall or winter issue in 2016. Since the 2016 Spring issue was produced, the WSO has had four inquires this past October about the newsletter. *Area Highlights* has not been shelved, but the WSO is re-evaluating it. When we keep doing what we have been doing and it doesn't work, we need to see if we need to look at it in a different platform. A survey will be done through AFG Connects.

## **The Associate Director—Conference updated the Conference on the following topic:**

### **2023 International Convention**

Thirteen Areas submitted a bid to host the 2023 International Convention. All 13 bids were approved for consideration: Albuquerque, New Mexico; Calgary, Alberta; Chicago, Illinois; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Denver, Colorado; Houston, Texas; Indianapolis, Indiana; Little Rock, Arkansas; Nashville, Tennessee; Orlando, Florida; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Seattle, Washington.

On Saturday, April 29th and Sunday, April 30th, members of the Convention Site Committee will hear presentations by Delegates and Convention & Visitors Bureau representatives who wish to host the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention in their respective cities. Each city will have 10 minutes to present the bid followed by a 10-minute question and answer period. After each presentation, the Committee as a whole—six Delegates chosen by lot, two Trustees chosen by lot, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Director of Programs, the Director of Finance, the International Convention Coordinator and Co-Coordinator—will discuss the merits of that city for 10 minutes. After all of the bids have been presented, the Site Committee members will have the task of narrowing it down to the three cities that they believe will be best suited for Al-Anon's convention needs. Selecting three sites gives the WSO the opportunity to negotiate the best possible terms a city can offer.

This summer, a WSO Convention Site Selection Committee—comprised of one Trustee chosen by lot, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Director, the Director of Programs, the Director of Finance, and the International Convention Coordinator—will then visit the three cities to walk through the meeting facilities, meet with hotel personnel, and envision, in general, how the Convention would function in each location. Based on its findings, the Committee will make a

recommendation to the Board of Trustees. The Board will select one of the three cities sometime in the fall of 2017 or early 2018 and will notify all Conference members.

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

### Social Media

As of the end of March, World Service Office (WSO) Social Media channels reached a combined audience of 3.3 million and produced 65,000 engagements. This means people liked, shared, or posted comments 65,000 times for the WSO Social Media posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram during the first quarter of 2017.

### Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Preliminary reports on television public service announcements through the end of February show an estimated audience of 52 million people saw the new Al-Anon PSAs during the first two months of 2017. This year the WSO has a new procedure for Public Outreach volunteers to place public service announcements with local TV and radio stations.

The process begins in the usual way, when the volunteer calls a local station and asks for the name of the best person at the station to talk with about public service announcements. Then, during a personal visit to the station, the volunteer uses their smart phone, tablet or laptop to show the station contact person the current PSAs by going to [al-anon.org](http://al-anon.org) and clicking on "Media." The PSAs appear in the center of the page and will play in audio and video, including captions. By playing the PSAs, explaining a little about Al-Anon and maybe giving the station contact person a copy of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine, or sharing a little of the volunteer's personal story, the volunteer can ask the station contact person if they are interested in playing the Al-Anon PSAs.

The volunteer can also explain how local Al-Anon and Alateen meetings can benefit over 30 percent of the station's audience. According to a recent Gallup poll, over 30 percent of U.S. households admit their families have been affected by a loved one's drinking. In Canada, according to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, alcohol consumption is more than 50 percent higher than the global average.

To deliver the PSAs to a TV or radio station, all the WSO needs is the name of the station, along with the name and phone number of the contact person at the station who said they were interested in playing the Al-Anon PSAs. The WSO vendor will arrange for an electronic delivery of the PSAs in whatever format the station requires at no charge to anyone. The delivery process can occur in just a few minutes.

Public Outreach volunteers are welcome to send their TV or radio station information or questions to [wso@al-anon.org](mailto:wso@al-anon.org), attention Public Outreach. Complimentary copies of this year's radio PSAs are available in the hospitality room while supplies last. You are welcome to take one or two home with you for the Public Outreach volunteers in your Area. The CD's are in English, Spanish or French, so be sure to take the language that will work for you. Please extend our gratitude to all of the members in your Area who are helping to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery.

### Phone Contacts

The Group Records Department continues to work with the Area Group Records Coordinators and Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) on educating members about the Phone Contact for the

group, as the fellowship doesn't always realize that this number is given out to the general public on the WSO toll-free meeting information line. An insert underlining the importance of the duties of the Phone Contact for the public and updated group information will be added to the September 2017 Group Annual Update Sheet Mailing. As with all Public Outreach efforts whether social media posts, TV, or magazine it is important to list the toll-free number, and website. Help is only as good as the information available to those who take those calls. It is important to notify the WSO of any changes.

### Group Records Update

The WSO registered 215 new groups to date for 2017.

### Groups Not Meeting Status

The WSO Group Records Department has placed forty-six groups in "Reported not Meeting" status since the beginning of the year. This new status allows the WSO to stop directing people to groups that are not meeting. The flagged meetings are temporarily removed from the WSO toll-free information meeting line and the Public Outreach website meeting search results, until the status of the meeting can be verified. The staff makes every effort within two days through phone calls to find out if the meeting is being held at the time and place of the posting.

To date, the WSO has determined that forty-three percent (20 meetings) of the reported meetings were actually meeting. It was revealed that either the meetings did not have signage throughout the building to direct people to the meeting room, or have location instructions on their group record, or had moved to another location. Twenty-six percent (12 meetings) were no longer meeting; the groups disbanded and did not notify the Area or the World Service Office (WSO). The remaining meetings are still being verified by the Area Group Records Coordinators and District Representatives (DRs). There are a lot more meetings that are not reported.

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

### Digital Postcards

In January, a recap of 2016 website digital postcard inquiries from professionals was created. It reaffirms the three primary sources of professional inquiries: 38 percent mental health counselors, therapists and social workers; 19 percent of inquiries from addiction facilities counselors and 18 percent middle and high school educators. It is a challenge to maintain the foundation of professional referrals (mental health and addictions counselors, therapists, and social workers) and at the same time, increase awareness of our program among smaller audiences such as medical, clergy and Employee Assistance/Human Resources professionals.

Al-Anon group contacts at correctional facilities are distributing a new *Writer's Guide for Incarcerated Al-Anon Members to inmate members*. This Guide is an invitation to share and gives incarcerated members a voice. To date, three *Forum* sharings have been received. Beside *The Forum*, our hope is to explore the development of a Public Outreach service tool for current or new Al-Anon groups at correctional facilities or incarcerated members transitioning from prison into society using quotes from the sharings.



### **Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)**

There is more good news about the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* magazine outreach project.

- The 184,625 copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2017* ordered by members in February set a record for the second printing orders. This number represents a 19 percent increase from the *AFA 2016* second printing orders. It also exceeds the previous record quantity of second printing magazines purchased by members in 2012 by 125 copies. However, the true meaning of each *AFA* magazine printing is that it represents members' involvement in this Public Outreach project. Al-Anon's message of help and hope found in the contents of each *AFA* magazine is literally and figuratively reaching more offices of professionals and public places where families of alcoholics can learn about our program.
- The *AFA 2018* magazine is ready for production. The new feature for the issue is the cover.
- A new masthead focuses on Al-Anon's purpose.
- The title and year of the magazine are positioned in a less prominent place.
- "Free/take home copy" appears to let individuals know that they can take the magazine with them.
- The WSO is now accepting *AFA 2018* magazine online orders for the first printing online. A downloadable order form is also available on the WSO's website store. The deadline to order the magazines is July 5, 2017, 5 p.m. ET.
- A recap of *AFA 2016* and *2017* first and second printing copies ordered in each Area is being created as a tool for Area Public Outreach Coordinators. For the first time, Area Public Outreach Coordinators will be able to know about their respective Area's participation in the *AFA* outreach project.

### **2018 Membership Survey**

Mark your calendars for the 2018 Al-Anon Membership Survey for US, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda English-, Spanish- and French-speaking members. The evidence-based data about our physical, mental/emotional, and spiritual health before and since attending Al-Anon quantifies Al-Anon's effectiveness to professionals, researchers and students. Watch *The Forum*, *Group e-News*, AFG Connects communities and AFG Announcements for information in November and December 2017 and January, and February 2018.

Finally, please keep in mind that professional awareness and referrals to Al-Anon are very important. Forty-six percent of Al-Anon members reported in the 2015 Membership Survey that they began attending our program because of a professional referral. As Bill W., A.A.'s cofounder said, "Let's be friendly with our professional friends."

## **The Associate Director—International updated the Conference on the following topics:**

### **Reprint Permission**

In January, the Board of Trustees granted reprint permission for the first time to the Al-Anon structure in Slovakia. This structure has an AIS office located in the city of Poprad. They are currently working on a translation of *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Traditions* (B-8).

### **Translation**

Since the first of the year, more than two dozen publications have been translated into French and Spanish, including pamphlets, newsletters, order forms, Board communications, and magazines. In addition to our recurring projects, staff are preparing to undertake translation of the updated website and the revised *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

### **Communication**

Since January 2017, the International Section has had verbal or written correspondence with 41 different countries.



## The Associate Director—Groups updated the Conference on the following topics:

### Alateen

As many of you are already aware, 2017 is the 60th Anniversary of Alateen. We have made such significant strides over the years to support and promote Alateen. When the Board officially recognized Alateen in 1957, I don't think they ever imagined that Alateen would have grown to the size it has—900+ meetings in the WSC Structure and 680+ meetings in the International structures. We recognize the importance of teens having a place of their own to talk to each other and reason things out and want to celebrate their "Diamond" anniversary. Don't forget to visit the display of Alateen's journey. Please encourage your members and AI-Anon/Alateen groups to send us postal and electronic "Happy Anniversary" cards for a special display to commemorate Alateen this year! Alateen's most effective public outreach tool is *you*, the AI-Anon member.

Please remember that there are still few active Alateen groups in comparison to AI-Anon groups. We want to remind everyone that, according to our policy on "Membership Eligibility" on page 81 in the "Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies" section in our *2014-2017 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), "Where there is no Alateen meeting available, young people are encouraged to attend AI-Anon meetings."

We need your assistance in sharing with your local information services and Group Records Coordinators that they need to compare your local meeting list information with what is listed on the online meeting search platform on the AI-Anon website. We receive phone calls daily from people stating that no one was at the meeting location that they found online. How disheartening for the newcomer who is raw and finally admit to needing help to garner the courage to get to a meeting and find no one there. Please ask your local links of service to verify that the information on our public website is on your local meeting lists and update them if they are not accurate. In the spirit of Traditions Three and Five, we ask for your support in reconciling the database with accurate information.

The revised and updated *2018-2021 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and "Groups at Work" (P-24) are in the process of final review. They will be made available as a free download with interactive links on our new website in January 2018. They will also be available for sale in hard copy through our online store for the same prices as they currently are: \$1.00 for "Groups at Work" and \$5 for the *Service Manual*.

I want to sincerely and humbly thank you for allowing me to serve you.

*A motion to approve the 2016 Annual Report was made, seconded, and carried.  
(See WSC Motion #2, on page 64).*

*The complete report can be found on pages 65-83.*

# BY-LAWS

Debbie G. • Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

Prior to the World Service Conference, the members were provided with two amendments to the U.S. By-Laws passed at the January 2017 Board Meeting. These amendments change the position title of Director of Business Services to Director of Finance.

In accordance with Article 10 d of the “Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter”:

“The By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., 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.”

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

*(The U.S. By-Laws as amended can be found on pages 85-89 in Appendix I.)*

## INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON GENERAL SERVICES MEETING

Marilyn M. • Trustee, International Coordination Committee (ICC) Chairperson | Karen W-P. • Trustee, ICC Co-Chairperson  
Kerri K. • Associate Director—International

The 18th International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) took place in Rome, Italy, October 5-8, 2016. Summaries from 1980 to the present are on the Members website. The theme for the meeting was “Sharing Worldwide Diversity—Strengthening Our Growth.” 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.

This service meeting is an opportunity for service structures to come together and share experience to strengthen their structures. IAGSM Delegates participate by leading the General Sessions. They are often Delegates whose structure have 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.

These international meetings are essential to Al-Anon’s growth around the globe. Without them, the World Service Office (WSO) and the international structures would not have the same personal connection.

Those few days during the 2016 IAGSM were dedicated to sharing with each other, supporting existing General Service structures, and ensuring that everyone felt welcome and supported—all in the “language of love.” One Delegate exclaimed: “Service makes me nervous!” We all laughed! Which of us has not experienced that feeling? Another thanked the WSO for the freedom to sort out what works for each of them. The three Legacies, it is evident, guide us in Al-Anon—all over the world.

In welcoming the Delegates of the 18th IAGSM, the ICC Chairperson remarked, “This experience felt like a family reunion for me. Even though I had not met most of the members of our family yet, our common bond of being affected by someone else’s drinking, grew more powerful as the days went by. We understood each other, as we shared the heartfelt love and concern we have for Al-Anon Family Groups. The ICC communicated on behalf of the World Service Conference (WSC) to the IAGSM Delegates the love and strong commitment to our common purpose.”

The ICC Chairperson shared that as she began her journey in

service, she had been stirred by the IAGSM Delegate with the description of Al-Anon members dotting the world, participating in meetings just like her home group. She did not have even a dream of meeting any of them. That very year, the second IAGSM was being held as a trial in New York City. Lois was there and she quoted the *1982 IAGSM Summary* (page 2): After expressing tremendous joy at seeing the gathering, Lois said, “I see Al-Anon well on its way to joining people from all over the world in fellowship. At the beginning this was one of our ultimate goals. Bill never had a small idea for AA and I must have caught that attitude from him for Al-Anon.” The *Summary* goes on to say that in a world that may seem pessimistic, her feelings were of hope. “God has worked through Al-Anon, Alateen and AA. If we stay open to Him we will continue to have reason to be optimistic.”

Lois’s optimism was plainly evident throughout the IAGSM meeting. Representatives from 21 of the 36 structures from seven regions of the world came together for the 2016 IAGSM. From the African continent—South Africa; from Western Asia—India; from Central America—Guatemala and Mexico; from Europe—Belgium (French-speaking), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK & Eire; from North America—the U.S. and Canada; from Oceania—Australia and New Zealand; and from South America—Brazil and Paraguay.

Three structures, Guatemala, India and Paraguay were able to send Delegates for the first time. Working through a Higher Power and the “language of love,” they were united in carrying out the dreams of our cofounders. One of the goals of the IAGSM Delegates and the WSO is to have even more participation in 2018 when the IAGSM will be held in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Over the three days of the meeting, there were nine general session presentations, two keynote speakers, six workshop sessions, and one “Big Question” session. During the presentations, Delegates usually read from a report that had been previously drafted and submitted. These were made available to the Delegates in advance to provide time for each person to read and prepare a response. When the presentation was complete, other Delegates shared from their own experience the challenges, successes and questions they had about the same topic. The Del-



legates provide each other with a lot of mutual support through this exchange of information.

#### **ICC Delegates made presentations on the following topics:**

- Inspiring Members to Participate in Public Outreach
- Carrying the Message to the Public in an Effective but Spiritual Way
- Strategic Planning, Using Our Principles—A Good Business Practice
- Pricing of Literature in Self-Support

The Chairperson shared, “I could clearly see ‘lights going on’ as impressions were being made on the listeners.” (See 2016 *IAGSM Summary* for a more detailed account of the topics.)

The Associate Director—International shared that she thought attending the IAGSM would be like attending the World Service Conference. She described it as more like attending an Area Assembly composed of 21 Districts from all over the world, each with a slightly different service structure, and each speaking English with a slightly different accent.

She loved hearing about the activities in other Districts and the news the Coordinators shared from the WSO in the District Representative (DR) and Coordinator reports. She had questions afterwards about things that didn’t make sense to her because other Districts didn’t do things the way they did them in her District. It was that way with the IAGSM.

Each structure provides a different perspective on a topic or has experienced a different way of solving a problem, conducting outreach, translating literature, managing finances, staffing an office, etc. She noted that the sharings of the Delegates at the IAGSM brought the abstract idea of “international Al-Anon” into sharp, focused, reality for her, the same way it happened when she heard those DR reports at the Assembly. She continued, “I no longer had an *idea* about Al-Anon in Australia; now I *knew* someone who worked in the office and who wanted to know about TEAM Events. I no longer had an *idea* about Al-Anon in Iceland; now I had someone asking questions about public outreach flyers.”

She described the IAGSM as a fantastic gathering place for sharing. It is not a business meeting. There are no policy discussions. There are no finance discussions. Issues of policy and finance may come up, but they come up in the context of what each structure is doing. The IAGSM itself doesn’t create policy or have any of its own financial interests.

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

The WSO Delegate for the United States shared that one role of the Board of Trustees is to provide leadership to structures around the world. In serving as an IAGSM Delegate, her role was to participate in General Sessions and breakout discussions through sharing the experience of the Board of Trustees. “I was mindful to carefully balance my participation of listening and sharing. While the International structures look to the WSO and our Board for leadership, we must always do so with humility and gratitude. Carefully balancing the sharing of our experience, strength and hope without domination.”

Participation in a second IAGSM offered the opportunity to reconnect with the second-year Delegates who attended their first IAGSM in 2014. “I was touched by the growth and understanding of our Legacies, the comfort in presenting and the openness in sharing of their experiences displayed by each second-year Delegate.” All were unaware of the visible transformation and displayed only

humility when we shared our thanks and gratitude for their service.

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

The Canada East Regional Trustee, representing the WSC Structure as the Canadian Delegate, appreciated the introduction to each presentation. “Each Delegate began with a picture of his or her structure with its successes and difficulties. I was so touched by their courage to put all the possible tools into action to overcome their difficulties. One Delegate shared the structure’s experience of having to overcome some financial difficulties. They addressed the situation facing the reality one step at a time by putting into action the spiritual principles of respect, collaboration and faith in a Higher Power.”

A highlight for the ICC Co-Chairperson was the “Big Question” session where groups talked about “How can we strengthen our growth by sharing worldwide diversity?” Each person shared his or her hopes for the future of Al-Anon. They were united in how important the program is to all of the participants and how much they want it for all people worldwide. The session also discussed fear about service work but acknowledged that it is a vital part of the Al-Anon program. There was discussion about the importance of understanding our responsibilities when we take service positions. ICC representatives listened to people share about the need for more meetings and safe ways to get to a meeting.

#### **The ICC participants shared their insights.**

“When we all shared our stories, we felt so connected. We were all the same! A personal highlight was being privileged to present the spiritual sharing on the last day.”

“If asked what has been my most spiritual moment serving as a Trustee, it would have to be the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting.”

“Before traveling to Italy, I was finishing the book *Lois Remembers* (B-7). I realized that Lois and Bill not only traveled all over North America, but they also went all over the world to plant the seed of this wonderful program. How privileged we are to continue their work.”

“One thing that touched me also was the generosity of the Delegates in their presentations and in their way of offering other Delegates all the help they would need.”

“I was reminded of the importance of sharing the joy and enthusiasm gained through service. I will forever cherish the images of our IAGSM members sitting during coffee breaks and our meals together. The smiles, the loud and invigorating conversations, the result of our willingness to share and learn from each other. I believe it was the expression of our Higher Power at work.”

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

# INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATE

Mary G. • Chairperson | Marsha W. • Coordinator | Suzanne M. • Co-Coordinator

## 2018 Al-Anon International Convention

“Celebrating One Day at a Time” is the theme for Al-Anon’s 2018 International Convention in Baltimore, Maryland.

Al-Anon and Alateen members from around the world will come together at the beautiful waterfront of Baltimore, Maryland, Friday, July 6 – Sunday, July 8, 2018, for fun and fellowship. Members are encouraged to make plans now to attend the Convention.

Al-Anon and Alateen workshops on a variety of recovery topics will be held during the day on Friday and Saturday.

A.A. will participate by holding daytime meetings on Friday and Saturday.

The Friday and Saturday evening and Sunday morning “big meetings” for all attendees will feature U.S., Canadian, and International speakers. There will be a dance too!

Members can celebrate their recovery by marching in the opening night “Language of Love” parade and can choose their costumes for fun.

Beginning in September 2017, the WSO will provide information to the fellowship through articles in *The Forum* magazine, *Group*

*eNews*, AFG Announcements for members, the WSO Members website, print and electronic group mailings.

The Convention has its own website, [al-anoninternationalconvention.org](http://al-anoninternationalconvention.org). Al-Anon and Alateen members and their A.A. guests will be able to register for the convention online. Members will also find information and sign up for housing and learn about activities connected with the Convention happening before and after the event. Members are encouraged to register early to save money. Once you have registered to attend the convention, you can:

- Reserve a hotel room. Al-Anon has reserved a number of rooms at a guaranteed rate with several hotels in the area. If you book an “Al-Anon” room, you will receive the lowest possible rate and be supporting the Convention.
- Register to march in the “Language of Love Parade.”
- Purchase tickets for the Pioneer Luncheon (limited seating/ first come, first served).
- Come a day earlier for a separate service-oriented day of workshops on July 5th.

### Registration Fees (in U.S. Funds)

\$130.00 until Dec. 31, 2017

\$165.00 from January 1 - May 31, 2018

\$195.00 from June 1 - July 7, 2018



## ROAD TRIP! YOU AND YOUR BOARD CONNECT

Joan S. • Trustee, Work Group Chairperson

Member feedback from past “Meet the Board” events indicated the name of the event could be more descriptive. Members of the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC) were asked for their ideas and suggestions. The final choice was a combination of several suggestions: “Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect.”

The purpose of this event is to take the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee members to a local Area, hold its meeting there and then the day after the Board meeting ends, meet with local members.

This event is an opportunity for Trustees and Executive Committee members to share their personal recovery and their current service roles in an intimate setting with members. It is also an opportunity for members to learn more about how the World Service Office (WSO) serves the fellowship.

In October 2016, the event was held in Fayetteville, Arkansas. There were more than 100 members registered. Most attendees were from Arkansas, but members also traveled from Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas East, Texas West, Missouri and Bermuda. One group spent two days on the road, and said every mile was worth it.

The agenda included time for personal sharings woven in with presentations about Area and International visits, and talks about various Board Committees and the work. A visual tour of the WSO Public and Member websites was included.

### Roundtable discussions included topics of interest to the Area including:

- Ways Al-Anon can attract new members and retain current members.
- Ways we, as individuals, groups and Areas, encourage personal and service sponsorship and participation in service.
- Ways to reach out to rural and unattached groups.
- How members learn to apply our Three Legacies in their personal recovery and their service.
- Ways to grow in leadership.

### As the October 2016 session ended, members were asked to write their one “take away” from the event on a card. These were insightful and interesting. Comments included:

- We don’t have to do things the way we have been doing them—in our Assemblies, in our District, in our groups and in ourselves.
- That the responsibilities held by the Board and Executive Committee and the work done by them are based on spiritual principles and spoken in the language of Al-Anon—citing the Concepts and Traditions.

- I take home the laughter in service and the personal part that each member of the Board shared.

**Another member wrote:**

- Stick with the winners! People who immerse themselves in service are immersed in recovery.

The October 2017 “Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect” will be held in Aurora, Colorado at the Radisson Hotel—Denver Southeast.

Conference members received the 2018 invitation and Request Form that included a list of tentative meeting space needs to assist the Area in more easily selecting a hotel site. It will allow the Planning Committee to more accurately provide the hotel staff with what accommodations the event requires. Having this list will save the Planning Committee time and prevent possible problems regard-

ing the initial selection of a hotel with adequate space and ability to accommodate our needs.

Conference members were asked to take the invitation back to their Areas and discuss the possibility of the Board and Executive Committee members coming to their Area.



## OPEN BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Debbie G. • Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

Conference members were invited to observe the Board of Trustees discussion on the use of technology to attract younger members while maintaining the core principles of our Legacies.

In keeping with the Board’s Vision and Mission, while we no longer communicate as our cofounder Lois did, with her typewriter, envelopes, and postage stamps, Lois did anticipate the future and said our fellowship would need to “make changes as circumstances and...growth would require.”

Much of the direction for Al-Anon’s public outreach has been based on Lois’s statement at the Sixth World Service Conference (1966) “...There is no standing still without retrogression. Al-Anon must continue to grow if it is going to fulfill its primary purpose of reaching millions who need Al-Anon’s help but who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship....”

Although communication methods have advanced, especially with the advent of social media, for more than 65 years, Al-Anon’s Legacies and principles and mission have remained the same. We use available communication methods just as Lois did in order to fulfill our primary purpose.

Today, however, our fellowship faces a new challenge: Learning to view our Traditions and Concepts through the eyes of a much younger generation, those whose lives are dependent on multiple communication avenues that were, and even are, unfamiliar to many of us.

**Therefore, the Board considered two questions:**

1. The principle of anonymity with technology. How can we communicate our message of hope and recovery to attract prospective younger and more diverse generations, yet live within our own Traditions?

Board members commented that it is easy to be anonymous on the Internet. Anonymity is a definite advantage so focus on increasing ways within the Traditions. How does it fit in a new way within the Traditions? When fear is moved out of the way, we can see more if

we try it. Rather than try new technology, we are often comfortable with what we have. It was suggested that going back to our beginnings could free Board members up to exposing themselves to young ideas—rather than preconceived ideas. The Board will rely on the World Service Office staff to share feedback from the membership regarding what apps are available. Discussing Tradition Eleven and the principle of anonymity brought up questions. They looked at other Traditions of concern, such as promotion versus attraction. They suggested consulting members who attend electronic meetings regarding issues they have encountered. It was suggested that we need to find ways to support electronic meetings. We need to respond to our members’ spiritual needs. “Participation also responds to our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong.” (Concept Four, last paragraph, *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 190).

2. How do we remain true to the core principles of our Legacies in this time of explosive technology and social media advancements?

Board members commented, “When we don’t understand technology, get a kid. We have Alateens who know technology and are learning our principles They are resources.” It was pointed out that as adults, we are caught up in rules of what we can or cannot do. The Board’s role is big thinking and remaining true to our Legacies. The Board works with the WSO staff to change the way we give the message, not change Al-Anon’s principles and fundamentals. Technology does not rule our Legacies. We don’t have to have all the answers before we try something. That may be projecting fear that is not there. We are just not experienced. A member wondered whether we could we have a “closed” community and stream our meetings.

A suggestion was made to continue the discussion during the October 2017 Board meeting in Colorado using technology in order for the WSO staff to connect remotely so the Board could learn more.

# OPEN POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Judy K. • Trustee, Policy Committee Chairperson

Donna E. • Trustee, Policy Committee Co-Chairperson

An Open Policy Committee meeting was held during the Conference so Delegate members could observe the Committee in action.

Throughout the years, the World Service Office (WSO) has often been asked by members or Areas to take some sort of corrective or disciplinary actions against a group or groups for not abiding by the Traditions, particularly Tradition Four, “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.” Those requests often come from a place of wanting to protect Al-Anon, but more often than not the requests do not offer any ideas to help the meetings “fix” themselves.

During the Policy Committee meeting, the Committee discussed group autonomy in the context of page 101 of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,” Tradition Four, page 15 and Warranty Four, pages 221-225 of the *2014/2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. It considered the following:

- What spiritual principles do we need to look to when we want to “straighten out” a meeting?
- How do we communicate the idea that with freedom comes responsibility and that the groups themselves must assume responsibility for keeping our Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties?

- What does Warranty Four suggest can be done to encourage “obedience to the unenforceable”?

Committee members found some answers in discussion of Warranty Four in reference to unreasonable people on page 222, bullet one, and page 223 of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The Policy Committee will continue to consider the topic.

The Committee also had a discussion regarding electronic meetings. The Committee considered the increase of members attending electronic meetings and how these meetings can be included and supported in the spirit of Tradition One. Thousands of Al-Anon and Alateen members practice the Al-Anon program using new and electronic media. Committee members suggested that we first have to get to know those members and their needs by collecting data through the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process rather than trying to make something fit our reality. Based on the spiritual principles of unity and participation, it was pointed out that with the WSO commitment to digital strategy, the discussion is timely.

There was consensus to do a KBDM on this topic in the future.

## SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Joan S. • Trustee, Work Group Chairperson

Bruce F. • Trustee, Work Group Co-Chairperson

### 2017 RCT Out-of-Region Delegate Selection

Concept Nine reads: “Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.”

The Work Group Co-Chairperson shared that, “being part of the selection process for future Al-Anon leaders is a humbling experience. I’ve found it necessary to place principles above personalities while I ask my Higher Power for guidance in selecting those whom I believe will serve Al-Anon well.”

The Work Group Chairperson 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.

### The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
<b>Canada East</b>	Danielle E., ID, Panel 57	Carol T., ND, Panel 56
<b>Canada Central</b>	Loraine D., QC(W), Panel 55	Gaston A., QC(E), Panel 56
<b>Canada West</b>	Laura D., OK, Panel 56	Cindy E., OR, Panel 56
<b>US Northwest</b>	Connie C., MD/DC, Panel 55 Debbie P., ON(S), Panel 55 Tony S., MP, Panel 56	Eloy M., CO, Panel 56 Barbara G., PA, Panel 55
<b>US South Central</b>	Cindy E., OR, Panel 56 Madeline S., WY, Panel 57 Kenneth R., VT, Panel 56	Kathy E., MS, Panel 56 Mary H., MN(S), 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 among 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
Canada East	Angela D., NF/LB, Panel 57	Gaston A., QC(E), Panel 56
Canada Central	Debbie P., ON(S), Panel 55	Debbie H., MB/NWO, Panel 55
Canada West	Janet A., BC/YT, Panel 56	Jean H., SK, Panel 57
US Northwest	John I., NE, Panel 57	Madeline S., WY, Panel 57
US South Central	Sarah S., MO, Panel 57	Joyce Y., TX(E), Panel 55

## Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Elizabeth K. • Chairperson, Panel 55, California South

The CCT Chairperson opened her report by thanking the Committee members for their participation in the nominating process. She thanked the members of the CCT for their diligence in satisfying deadlines and fulfilling their responsibilities during the past year.

"The CCT is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson each year. Résumés for Trustee at Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) are submitted to the World Service Office (WSO) in August of each year. The CCT members review the résumés, 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, 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 the knowledge it has about the current Board needs, the Nominating Committee scores each résumé. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates they have selected. CCT members then have the opportunity to file an objection to a potential candidate by December. The final selection of the candidates is decided by the Board at the January Board meeting."

The Chairperson concluded her report saying, "These three years were a wonderful experience for me, watching the Concepts in action; seeing so many well-qualified candidates and their thoughtful answers; knowing we were part of the Nominating process. Thank you to all the Conference members for your willingness to contribute toward electing next year's new Trustees at Large and the new ECRPM member. They and our members are our hope for the future."

## Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

John McL. • Trustee, Chairperson

Before beginning the affirmation process, the Chairperson provided some background and explained the purpose of the session.

"Before 1960, Lois and the Directors wanted to link the groups to world services through a Conference. The first trial Conference was held in 1961.

"With the finalization of the Conference, 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. As the Concepts of Service were developing, the process for the Conference to affirm nominees to fill vacancies on the Board of Trustees was established.

"In 1986, the Conference Committee on Trustees was created as a subcommittee of the Nominating Committee to provide input from Delegates for at Large Trustee candidates.

"Since 2010, following a Conference approved revision to the Regional Trustee Plan, the Regional Committees on Trustees have provided input to the Nominating Committee for nominating Regional Trustees.

"Although the Board of Trustees is a self-electing Board according to the By-Laws of the Corporation, traditional approval by the entire Conference gives the Board the direction and voice of the fellowship. Today, we continue our tradition of affirmation of Trustee candidates as well as Board officers and members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM).

"Although the Conference gives traditional approval, the Board must legally elect nominees at its Annual Meeting on the Saturday following the Conference. These Trustees will serve AFG, Inc. as well as the fellowship as a whole."

After the Chairperson 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 hard work throughout the last year, he continued, "In reviewing and scoring the résumés and responses to the additional question, they worked conscientiously to rate the candidates and return the information to the WSO in time for the October Board meeting. As a result, we have fielded another fine slate of candidates to serve AI-Anon Family Groups. The Nominating Committee has also proposed an excellent slate of Board Officers and a member of the ECRPM."

### Below are the steps that were followed to bring those candidates forward:

#### Trustees at Large

1. 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 is a list of vacancies, deadlines for submission, and copies of all the résumé forms including Trustee, ECRPM, and Executive Committee positions.
2. Trustee and ECRPM résumés are submitted to the WSO by August 15th of the year prior to possible election. Those résumés and responses to an additional written question are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking.
3. The CCT Chairperson tallies the scores and rankings from the CCT members and sends a report to the WSO.

4. At its October meeting, the Nominating Committee uses the CCT input and its own rankings to select a slate of up to six candidates to be invited to a January Board lunch for introduction to the Board. At that time, each candidate gives a ten-minute talk about their AI-Anon recovery and service experience, followed by interview questions.
5. Using this information, the Board nominates up to three candidates at its Quarterly Meeting.
6. Today, Conference members are asked to give traditional approval to the three proposed nominees for a three-year term. This year, there was also one opening for the remaining year of a three-year term. All of the nominees receiving traditional approval may be elected at the Board's Annual Meeting.

### Regional Trustees

1. Candidates for Regional Trustee (RT) are selected by their Areas who forward their résumés to the WSO via the Delegate.
2. This year, the US Northwest, US Southwest, and US South Central Regional Committees on Trustees, consisting of the Regions' Delegates and three out-of-Region Delegates who were chosen by lot, independently reviewed résumés and the responses to an additional written question that has been added as part of the process.
3. The comments and feedback from Delegates serving on these Regional Committees were submitted to their RCT Chairs and then to the Nominating Committee.
4. The Nominating Committee combined its own independent review of the résumés and considering the input from the Regional Committees on Trustees, select up to two nominees per Region for presentation to the Board.
5. 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.
6. The Board then nominated one candidate for the US Southwest Region leaving openings to be filled next year in the US Northwest and the US South Central Regions. If the nominee receives traditional approval, then s(he) may be elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting.

### The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM)

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, consisting of the AFG Treasurer, the Director of Finance and three at-large members, is designed to keep management of our headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of AI-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 and the candidate does not meet with the Trustees in January.

Résumés for ECRPM are due by August 15th and sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking.

Following the report, Conference members were asked to give traditional approval or affirmation for the nominees for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, the Board officers, and the at-large member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). A candidate must receive a two-thirds majority 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. 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 candidate selection process begins with prayer. Members of the various committees pray to their Higher Power for guidance before they begin reviewing the candidate résumés. By the time a nominee is brought to the Conference floor, at least 30 people—a combination of Trustees and Delegates—have reviewed the résumé. In addition to the reviews, the candidates have been interviewed by the Board of Trustees. The Delegate of the Area that the candidate is part of has had an opportunity to voice any concerns he/she has about the candidate.

The Chairperson concluded saying, "A lot of time, prayer and consideration have brought these candidates to you. We ask that you respect that work and, remembering the spiritual principle of trust, consider whether or not the candidates are acceptable to serve on the Board of Trustees."

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

### The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2017 WSC:

#### Trustees at Large:

Terry F., second three-year term  
 John McL., second three-year term  
 Therese (Teri) M., first three-year term  
 Norman (Norm) W., third year of a first three-year term

#### Regional Trustees:

Joyce B., US Southwest, second three-year term

#### Board Officers:

Debbie G., Chairperson  
 Marilyn M., Vice Chairperson  
 Elizabeth (Jennie) McC., Treasurer

### Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

Sue C., three-year term

### The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2017-2018

Paula B., second one-year term, Chairperson  
 Connie H., second one-year term  
 J.P. M., second one-year term  
 Marsha W., WSO Director of Programs

The Board announced the appointment of Jeffrey K. as the ECRPM Chairperson for 2017-2018.

# 2018 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE

Suzanne M. • Associate Director—Conference

At its January 2017 Board Meeting, the Board of Trustees approved holding the 2018 World Service Conference in the greater New York City area. The Conference will be held Monday, April 16 through Friday, April 20, 2018 at the Renaissance Westchester Hotel in West Harrison, New York. All Conference Members will visit Stepping Stones the morning of Wednesday, April 18, 2018.

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



# BOARD OF TRUSTEES' BIG QUESTION

Judy K. • Trustee, Task Force Chairperson | Karen W-P. • Trustee | Terry F. • Trustee | Joyce B. • Trustee | Marilyn M. • Trustee

Two of the Board's priorities are empowering the Al-Anon fellowship and achieving a viable future for Al-Anon Family Groups. The Board of Trustees' Big Question is about taking intentional actions and initiatives that support members in maximizing their potential. It focuses on strengthening the knowledge, abilities and skills of every individual who attends Al-Anon.

In support of the 2017 World Service Conference theme, "Our Members: Our Hope for the Future," the Board of Trustees Task Force asked Conference members:

How can we empower our members in the use of our Legacies and policies when seeking solutions to issues within the Area, District and group?

The Chairperson introduced the topic, "As we consider the question, hopefully we recognize the importance of empowering our members because they are our hope for Al-Anon's future.

"Today, many Areas are empowering members to use Al-Anon's resources when seeking solutions and are doing a wonderful job. Members are being encouraged to explore Al-Anon's principles and policies, available to anyone who attends meetings."

## A review of available resources included:

- Al-Anon's Three Legacies with their guiding spiritual principles.
- The "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" (P-24) booklet, with its "Suggested Meeting Format Outline," history of Al-Anon and Alateen and information about group service positions.
- The "World Service Handbook," defining terms commonly used in Al-Anon and explaining our service structure.
- Information on our Members website, such as our Guidelines and the *Alateen Service e-Manual*.
- The "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" addressing such issues as anonymity, finances and Al-Anon as it relates to others.

The Task Force Chairperson noted that "All too often, members may consider statements in the Policy Digest as a set of 'rules' to be followed, rather than broad, general statements to guide discussions and decisions. If the 'rule' isn't in the Digest, people want to add another rule, even though the 'Preface' of the *Service Manual* reminds readers that, 'Members seeking answers to specific questions of special situations may well find guidance within these pages.' The Preface stresses guidance, but not specific answers.

"Likewise, the 'Introduction' to the Policy Digest (page 79 of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*) reminds readers that the policy statements contained in that section simply, 'grew out of questions and experiences from the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide. They are interpretations of our basic guides, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service.'

"The 'Introduction' concludes, 'As our fellowship grows and many more ideas and questions are raised, let us strive to live with and by what we have here, secure in the knowledge that changes and additions will be made as circumstances and our growth require.'"

Another resource is the World Service Office (WSO). The WSO is a service arm of the World Service Conference. It is not a decision-making body. Its purpose is to provide services to help in-

dividuals and groups worldwide. Some services are very familiar:

- Acts as the clearinghouse worldwide for inquiries about Al-Anon and Alateen.
- Publishes and distributes our Conference Approved Literature.
- Maintains data of worldwide Al-Anon/Alateen groups.

## Other special services aren't as well-known:

- Registers Lone Members and electronic meetings.
- Guides countries outside the United States and Canada in developing their structures.
- Maintains translation review of Al-Anon/Alateen literature into *languages other than English, French and Spanish*, and supervises the legal aspects of its distribution. Special services such as these are provided for groups worldwide that are busy in their respective areas helping other relatives and friends of alcoholics and carrying the message of hope to prospective members who have not yet found Al-Anon and Alateen.

The WSO was designed to be the source for special services to groups, but not the authority. According to Concept One, "The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups."

## Given the resources available, the Task Force asked:

Why do members seek solutions outside themselves?

- They may just be learning the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts.
- They want to find a solution quickly.
- They hope to resolve a conflict.
- They can't find the topic in the *Service Manual* Index.
- They encounter a baffling situation.

## From that, several things were concluded:

- Many answers to questions about these common topics are readily available in our resources.
- Other questions don't have clear answers, but workable solutions can be found with more in-depth research of our resources.
- Some questions are about new situations, presenting an opportunity for members to *strengthen their skills and expand their knowledge by reasoning* things out using the Legacies and policies.

## Talk to each other and reason things out...

The Chairperson continued, "How do we, as experienced leaders in service, support our members and help them believe they are capable of finding their own answers if they use our Al-Anon and Alateen resources to seek solutions?"

"Newcomers at meetings are often told that if they just keep coming back, they will find their own answers. These answers come from listening, learning, participating and applying the principles of the program. The same is true for groups, Districts and Areas

seeking solutions to important issues. These conversations and discussions among members lead to an informed group conscience.

“Since members are ‘our hope for the future,’ how can we encourage them to trust themselves, to use Al-Anon’s Legacies and policies, and to ‘talk to each other and reason things out’? After all, members really are the ones most familiar with a particular issue for which they are seeking a solution, and they have the available tools to address most situations that arise in their group, District or Area.

“Through loving interchange, members, groups, Districts and Areas can be empowered to find their solutions.

“Time spent researching, discussing and learning is not time wasted, as this quotation from page 139 in *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) reminds us: ‘If two Al-Anon groups exchange a dollar, they still have but one dollar each, but when they exchange an idea, each group has two ideas.’

“The ‘Introduction’ to the Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies concludes, ‘As our fellowship grows, and many more ideas and questions are raised, let us strive to live with and by what we have here, secure in the knowledge that changes and additions will be made as circumstances and our growth require.’

“This ‘... informed group conscience encourages us to talk to each other and reason things out. It embodies the spiritual principles found throughout our program, including our three Legacies, which are the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service’ (From the booklet, *Talk to Each Other—Resolving Conflict within Al-Anon* [S-73]).”

The Board considered whether opening a conversation and discussion might help members come to an informed group conscience since by and large, members have many Al-Anon resources to explore when seeking solutions to issues, including experience within their own District and Area Assembly.

Conference members had the opportunity in small group discussions to continue the conversation by brainstorming strategies to empower members to use their wisdom, engage in loving interchanges and explore Al-Anon’s abundant resources; and whenever possible, to find solutions to resolve their issues.

In a later reflection session, Conference members were invited to share their reflections or strategies on two questions.

#### **What did you find beneficial about the breakout session?**

- Use copies of this Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) document to explain to members how to solve problems.
- The way we explain how it works is important; sometimes how we say it is a turnoff.
- Continue to have loving interchange.
- Hold meetings using the Conflict Resolution cards.
- We are skipping some of these steps.
- Encourage inventories.
- Sponsor with Concept One, Tradition One and Step One.

Lead by example at all levels.

- Don’t be the keeper of all the information, redirect it. Was I asked?
- Empower members to look up the answer instead of giving it to them.
- I have a dream to publish a workshop on conflict resolution.
- This is a great tool.
- The solution is in our minds and hearts. We have to believe.

#### **What strategies can you suggest to empower members to use Al-Anon’s Legacies and Policies to seek their own answers?**

- Show, by example, how to find answers in the *Service Manual*. Refer to the Legacies when talking to others.
- Ask, “Have you looked for spiritual principles in CAL?”
- Talk about group issues at District meetings as a place to come and share.
- When asked for the answer, respond, “I don’t know, let’s look it up,” instead of fixing it for them.
- At Assembly, we used the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts* kit (K-70) and different scenarios. We talked to others, then went to the literature and moved on from there. We had a KBDM workshop to take back to groups.
- KBDM, group conscience, Area inventories.
- Ask, “Whose issue is it? Do I need to make a decision?”
- Workshops on Traditions and Concepts so members realize this is part of their recovery.
- At the Area: Utilize the experience of Past Delegates or Trustees who could guide the member to see what Legacy to use.
- The last paragraph of our “Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Closing” is actually a strategy.
- When there is an issue of concern, I need to ask the person to identify if this is his/her problem or the group’s problem. Ask, “Have you prayed on it and talked about it?”
- Utilize technology to show where the answer can be located in the *Service Manual*. Use examples of WSO questions/answers.
- Younger people use collaboration. Slowly encourage them to use the literature to find answers.

The Moderator concluded, “Based on what we have just heard, our Conference has had a very productive and inspiring conversation about empowering members to use Al-Anon’s abundant resources to seek their own solutions. In doing so, we help each other grow. Our members are the foundation of the Al-Anon Family Groups structure—Our Hope for the Future!

# CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

This year, for the first time, Conference members submitted Chosen Agenda Items (CAI) using an online survey, which was a success. Conference members submitted more CAIs than in the recent past.

Conference members submitted 60 CAI topics. Five topics were forwarded to the Policy Committee or answered by World Service Office (WSO) staff.

The remaining 55 topics became 19 after a Task Force comprised of two Delegates and the Conference Chairperson combined similar topics.

At its January 2017 Conference Leadership Team (CLT) meeting, **the CLT agreed to continue its policy of not editing or fact-checking the content of the CAIs and to present the topics as submitted.**

Conference members voted for their top three Chosen Agenda Items. The theme of attracting new members received the most votes and was discussed on the floor of the Conference (see discussion below). Later in the week, Conference members participated in two of the three topics that received the second, third, and fourth highest number of votes.

Following a brief framing, the Chosen Agenda Item topic receiving the most votes was introduced to all Conference members; **it is presented unedited and without being fact-checked.**

## Topic: Attracting New Members

- What are the barriers in attracting younger members or keeping them after they attend a meeting? The importance is one we've been talking about to a certain extent for several years. The population of Al-Anon is not changing; it is a 62-year-old white female. We're wondering if there are things in our program that are keeping younger members from staying connected, such as God, or religious quotes in our literature. We don't hear too much about needing a Higher Power as we do in regard to needing God in our lives. It's written in every Step, and Tradition.

What other barriers can we see or think of that are keeping newcomers from coming?

Where the meetings are held? What our welcoming opening consists of?

We think that most of us hit our bottom later in life instead of earlier. We're still thinking there is some way I can change the situation I'm in when we're younger. Then, if we go to a meeting and we're not ready to "do whatever it takes", we don't come back until we're more the age and demographic of the program. What can we do to stay with the principles of our program, yet open with a different message for those who are younger?

The demographic of the typical Al-Anon member has increased in age each year that I have been in the program for the last 10 years. I remember it being mid-fifties and now it's sixty-two. If we don't change the populace of our program, we'll get to the point where when we're in our seventies, or later, some of us won't be able to attend evening meetings or go to fewer meetings due to age related issues. Where will our program take us then with newer members having to take leadership roles without the experience of long-time members? We already see this happening in our Districts and Areas. People stand for positions who haven't even been in the program for two years. We vote for them to fill the position, but we have more

problems with following our principles because they don't know the history and concept.

- How do we get newcomers to come back and become long-term members? Our group has a fair number of newcomers but our retention rate is very low. We have tried several things but nothing seems to work. I think this topic coincides very much with the theme "Our Members: Our Hope for the Future." We have no hope for our future if we cannot attract and retain new members.
- To address the problem of our failure to attract younger members, please discuss the following ideas: Question younger people about what turns them off about Al-Anon. Would a less rule-oriented and less repetitive format appeal to younger people? We are not in the 1950's anymore and adding more rules to it as we go along. In this age, when we can Google everything, we could be open to people sharing their experience in information beyond Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. It is still sharing personal experience. It is wrong to prohibit people's right to share their experience or opinion in an Al-Anon meeting. We are not a cult. We are not brainwashing members to only listen to one point of view—the Al-Anon point of view. Other opinions can be shared as long as it is clear that this is outside information—not Al-Anon principles.
- How do members *care* for the well-being of Al-Anon? As we attend more Al-Anon meetings, we learn to start taking care of ourselves. But do we do that to the point that we begin to neglect the program that gave us this great way of life? We continue to talk about how we can attract more people. So perhaps taking care of what we have is the best way to attract members. Are we there for the newcomer, giving them our number or are we just visiting with people we know? Do we invite them to "get in the car" to attend other meetings, District meetings, Area Assemblies, workshops, etc. or casually tell them the location and hope they find their way?
- How are we addressing multi-generational diversity issues? With our members aging, how much adaptability do we have as an organization serving multi-generations of people who communicate, socialize, and participate differently than the format used in our traditional meetings? Are more virtual meetings being planned? Are service opportunities for these changing times available? Are our Delegates and Conference members being trained on these issues/changes?

Following the reading of the Chosen Agenda Item topic, Attracting New Members, the Conference Chairperson opened the floor for discussion. Conference members responded:

- The meeting room size can be self-limiting and a deterrent, especially if small children are present. If we want younger people to stay, we can find out if their children are safe at home and if they want any support in a way that is appropriate.
- Members embraced me and my children. They were available to me outside the meetings too. I had a safe place for me and my children—we were invited to potluck dinners,

for coffee and into homes. I see children being turned away even at gratitude meetings. My children used to have jobs serving, etc. It is not just an hour a week. We need to look at how we embrace families.

- My thought is we need to solicit younger members and support them early in Al-Anon. Young people have skill sets that older people don't. We need to be able to connect and attract. To those in service, how do we get out of the way and leave positions open so others will serve? It is a daunting task.
- Young members said we get here when we need to. We stay because of the newcomer meetings. Those meetings are smaller so they do not feel overwhelmed. They have an opportunity to share what is going on with them. We embraced them and told them we loved them. When we open our hearts and minds to them, they give a lot back. We need to step back, accept their love, and take them where they are.
- Young people have a language of their own—accept them in the spirit of the Concepts and Traditions.
- The word, “God,” upset me. I was told to substitute “Good Orderly Direction” for God. I had to find a Higher Power. It could be a chair, but I had to believe and fake it until I made it.
- Al-Anon is one Al-Anon member talking to another. Look at how it started and sustained itself, through full cooperation with A.A. Through the Al-Anon principles of participation and cooperation, we can work with the other programs to help others understand who we are and what we do.
- Our fellowship is considerably larger than what we recognize; there are more groups than on record. We need to look at our electronic meetings. We have thousands in those groups. If young people communicate and are gathering around the Al-Anon message of recovery, we need to extend more welcome to that aspect and take the Al-Anon message of recovery to them. We had focus groups on the communication project for products at the WSO. The results: Al-Anon has excellent communication products and messages, but our delivery system was bad. It is the same now, look at our methods of delivering the message. We need to take Al-Anon more formally into the young people's world.
- We need to get data from the source, our younger members. Ask direct open-ended questions. They can answer the questions anonymously. We need to ask younger members what works and what doesn't. We are heading in the right direction having more digital communications. Social media is a language and a culture.
- Why not retain the young members we already have? How many Alateens are we losing each year who aren't making the transition to Al-Anon? Do we have an appropriate platform for them? A lot of Alateen members come in and out of the doors. They are not treated any different than other Al-Anon members. Their focus is more on Alateen conferences today. Are we investing appropriately in younger members? Put the focus on our core spiritual principles. Alateen members are our hope for future—give them a reason to transition.
- We are living in a crisis of addiction that equals devastation.

Our rooms could be bursting with young members if we extended a welcome to potential members suffering from drug addiction. We have to be looking forward. It would be valuable to survey members who came in five, ten and 15 years ago. Then it was because of a parent or spouse; now they are dealing with addiction in their family.

- The new Newcomer packet is awesome. Alateens want their literature updated. They don't relate to it as well today. Our attitudes are not as loving to Alateens coming to Al-Anon meetings. Older members express thoughts and ideas that turn off new members. Beginner Meetings help a lot. We need to make the effort to retain Alateen members.
- In my group, two members volunteer each week for the Beginner Meeting. We encourage newcomers to get involved right away by helping to set up, etc. The consensus of the group was that if members bring their children, what the children hear at a meeting is nothing to what they experienced at home. It is not working when we change the meeting topic because we think the newcomer won't understand. The consensus was newcomers don't remember what they heard anyhow. We don't have to be formally asked to sponsor to be helpful to them.
- From a public outreach standpoint, we can never do enough. It is up to us to carry the message. We can ask members to take copies of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines to distribute.
- I put myself back to my first meeting—how would I have felt if a book was passed to me and I was asked to write my name and phone number in it? I need to put myself in the newcomer's shoes before I speak.
- I talked with a college student about the possibility of starting a new meeting on campus. I always say, “I'll help you.” She found a location and time. I got others to help. She put it together to bring it to younger people. Those I enlisted to help, it was their first time to be of service.
- Offer babysitting. Arrange to pay a babysitter from the group's funds. Why not look at what groups need? If we build it, people will come.
- Alternates for positions can help younger members get involved in service.
- We can connect and communicate with younger members through technology. I ask younger members how they want to connect with me—via phone, text or email. Give them the empowerment and the opportunity to grow. We can learn about technology and connect with them.
- I urge everyone to read Chapter 18 in *Lois Remembers* (B-7). It is “Alateen—Learning Not to Hate.” It talks about the difficulty of transitioning; the difficulties with the non-alcoholic parent. Sponsoring younger people helps me. I see a need for the structure that they crave. The Steps and slogans offer that. I use Emojis and texting to check in. It is a different language and issues, but the tools of spirituality, listening and not giving advice are reaffirming.
- We had a round table discussion at Assembly on the question, “What keeps your meeting going?” Some of the answers were: the word, “God,” is detrimental. One principle is tolerance, can you learn Good Orderly Direction until

you can tolerate the word? Anyone can start a young adult meeting. Those meetings are thriving.

- We can use any resource outside of meetings, but focus on Al-Anon inside the meetings. Do we need to start new meetings and vary formats for face-to-face meetings?
- We have an Alateen Alternate DR and Alateen members on our convention committee. It helps us learn about who we are as persons. Get them into service on committees. They are willing to learn. Love, trust, give them an opportunity.
- We have issues when a person mentions drugs. There are potential members everywhere.
- We support Alateens with dessert meetings to earn money for their conference. We include Alateen in some way in Al-Anon meetings during October Alateen Awareness month.

#### **A Delegate summarized the discussion:**

#### **Are we supporting families and others?**

- Offer babysitting.
- Multi-addiction issues—how are they applying the program?
- Sponsorship and newcomers—how can we be more welcoming without changing our primary purpose and scaring people away
- Follow-up calls.

#### **Technology**

- Apps, text messages, email, electronic meetings (numbers are up), phone meetings.

#### **Alateen**

- What's the focus? Recovery or social outlet?
- Transition to young Al-Anon member meetings.
- Involve Alateen on service Committees.
- Update Alateen literature.

#### **Meeting types**

- Newcomer, beginner meeting, meetings on campuses, invite new members to come early and stay late.

## **Chosen Agenda Item Breakout Sessions**

In addition to discussing a Chosen Agenda Item (CAI) in the General Session, Conference members met in small breakout groups to discuss three additional CAIs. All Conference members attended two of the three breakout sessions.

**The following CAIs are presented as submitted—unedited and without being fact-checked.** A Task Force comprised of two Delegates and the Conference Chairperson combined similar topics.

### **First Chosen Agenda Item Breakout Discussion**

**Topic:** How can we more effectively cooperate with A.A., enhancing a relationship with those members and their friends and family who are already aware of the positive impact of 12-step recovery?

The latest survey results show nearly 50% of Al-Anon members whose loved one's drinking got them to Al-Anon is a member of A.A.

([www.al-anon.alateen.org/membership-survey](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/membership-survey)).

What is "Cooperation"? Cooperation is working with others outside of our program, providing information about who we are, what we do, and how to reach us. The pamphlet, *Attracting and Cooperating* (S-40), defines cooperation as:

- Providing literature, meeting schedules, and telephone contact numbers to professionals.
- Setting up display booths or "take one" tables at outside conventions, conferences, and health fairs.
- Giving Al-Anon and Alateen presentations to family members and staff at facilities.
- Responding to requests from the media and professionals for Al-Anon and Alateen information.
- Offering Al-Anon and Alateen members' services to share how the program works for them.

Al-Anon's efforts at cooperation are focused primarily on professionals while overlooking opportunities within the A.A. community, which recognizes Al-Anon as a separate but similar fellowship. Specifically, the A.A. international conventions serve as an extraordinarily high visibility platform for educating families and friends of alcoholics curious about how their own recovery might look. When A.A. members travel from around the world with their families in tow to attend an international convention and see an Al-Anon information booth we are in fact engaging in public outreach. Not all family members are members of Al-Anon and this may be their first exposure to the Al-Anon program. At the 2015 A.A. International Convention, the Al-Anon information booth had many requests for Al-Anon literature. The Al-Anon Host Committee had asked and was denied the opportunity to provide any type of Al-Anon literature. When an A.A. international convention invites Al-Anon to participate, certain foundational aspects of the Al-Anon program must come as part of this "package" deal.

The Al-Anon guideline, Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention (G-07), states: "Literature and Display Committee

- Consider providing an ample supply of inexpensive Conference Approved Literature to give away at a literature table.
- Display a copy of each Al-Anon/Alateen book, other Al-Anon/Alateen material, catalogs, and order forms if space permits."

While it is reasonable to limit "competing" items for sale, free Al-Anon pamphlets need to be available at the Al-Anon information booth at future international conventions along with display copies of Conference Approved Literature (CAL). Posting a sign with CAL that reads "Available for purchase online or at a local meeting" would be helpful. We must stand up for the opportunity to share these resources at international conventions. What better way can Al-Anon participation help attendees seeking help for themselves, families or friends than to make them aware these resources exist? Furthermore, A.A. international conventions have the potential to provide a positive impact on Alateen. At the 2015 A.A. International Convention there was a meeting about supporting Alateen. An outreach opportunity was missed when Alateen literature was not permitted.

Our international conventions could be one of our single-most prime opportunities to attract more members. Are we doing the best we can to take advantage of those opportunities? Modeling cooperation at that level can serve as a positive and effective example for events at Area and District levels in which Al-Anon cooperates with A.A.

Today more and more individuals search for information on the Internet. When one searches "alcoholism" or "alcoholic" a lot of information is provided for identifying and treating alcoholism. Researching

many of these websites revealed that none of them mentioned help for friends and family members. Al-Anon is not as well recognized for families seeking help as A.A. is recognized to help the alcoholic.

Cooperation with A.A. could include a link on the Al-Anon website to the A.A. website and asking A.A. to consider doing the same. From the A.A. guidelines: Relationship Between A.A. and Al-Anon (MG-008): Question: How may I get in touch with Al-Anon? Answer: Check your phone book for local intergroup office, or write: Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group, Inc., 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway, Virginia Beach, VA 23454-5617. Tel: (888) 425-2666; al-anon.org.

Cooperating with A.A. can be mutually beneficial to both fellowships. Alcoholism is a family disease. Both Bill and Lois recognized the importance of recovery for the entire family. It is reflected in our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

#### **Conference members in the breakout shared the following:**

- It is important for us to be visible, to build a bridge with A.A. By doing that, members of both fellowships have an opportunity to be aware of and know about each other. How our two fellowships cooperate with one another impacts our Areas, Districts, groups, members and our hope for the future. We lead by example.
- We had a closer relationship with A.A. at one time.
- The relationship varies widely between Areas.
- Be a liaison or build a relationship by encouraging Al-Anon speakers at A.A. events, and A.A. speakers at Al-Anon events.
- Meet with our A.A. counterpart on the District level.
- When building a relationship, "Let It Begin with Me."
- One person can make a difference. Liaisons strengthen relationships, they take time, communication and work. We need to mix and mingle.
- Participate in the fellowship on a wider level.
- Have a conversation at Al-Anon's International Convention in Baltimore.
- Go to open A.A. meetings and identify ourselves as Al-Anon.
- Speak at A.A. functions.
- Every one-on-one meeting is important.
- Attend as many A.A. functions as possible and make an effort to find out about their functions.
- Hold joint conventions.
- Remember you are not A.A.
- Create a Resolution of Gratitude.
- There is some Al-Anon resistance to participating in A.A. events.
- Reach out to fellow Delegates in A.A.

## **Second Chosen Agenda Item Breakout Discussion**

**Topic:** Encouraging the need for more Service Sponsors so that newcomers understand the need for filling service positions. People often will stand for a position saying, "Oh, alright I'll be a GR but only for a year, or I tried it and there was too much commitment, etc." If Service Sponsorship was encouraged and talked about, new people would know the commitment necessary before they accept a position.

**Topic:** Our Members: Our Hope for the Future. How can Al-Anon interest non-participating, registered groups to become active and supportive groups? Importance: Our future depends on participation by all members. With slowing membership, every group is important to the survival of Al-Anon.

**Topic:** Projects/Ideas/Topics to keep Group Representatives actively involved at the District and Area level. Suggestion is important as we have so many GRs who stand for GR but do not fully engage in their service position.

**Topic:** Ways to encourage our members to continue their spiritual journey from relief to recovery. To me it speaks of members understanding the difference between a quick fix and a life long journey of continuous growth.

**Topic:** New ideas for Assemblies or conventions (to generate and motivate growth).

**Topic:** How do we get people to step up to service? In the past it has been a big problem but this year I was able to fill all of our Area positions except for Fall Workshop. But our new Delegate is concerned for the future.

What does one do if someone is over stepping their job descriptions and trying to control the Delegate's position? I see this as becoming a problem with two dominant people serving as Area officers and the Delegate is newer to being an Area officer.

**Topic:** Service work at all levels of Al-Anon is important. How can we better attract members to take the next step of recovery into service? Explanation: It seems harder to attract members into service positions than it used to. Groups and Districts are struggling to find members to fill positions. Is there anything new or different we can do to better communicate that in order for Al-Anon to survive we need our service positions filled? Is there anything new or different that we can communicate that helps explain that by performing service we are helping ourselves grow and recover and live the Twelfth Step?

**Topic:** Encourage members in service functions.

**Topic:** How can we encourage Al-Anon members (newcomers & longtimers) to fully understand and embrace the spiritual principles of our Seventh Tradition when so many of our meetings refer to "passing the basket" as the Seventh Tradition? Are we enabling our members to not fully embrace the Tradition's fullest spiritual principles?

Explain the importance of this CAI and how it could shape Al-Anon as a whole: Many members are surprised when they finally hear that the Seventh Tradition includes so much more than just contributing financially. Many of our Groups, Districts, and Areas identify with the struggle to get members to participate in service. Our suggested meeting format in our "Groups at Work" does refer to "passing the basket" and to our Seventh Tradition.

We have aspired to and accomplished some amazing financial ambitions. Can we be just as innovative and creative to encourage our members to contribute *service* to strengthen, unify, and help Al-Anon stay healthy and flourish?

#### **Conference members in the breakout shared the following:**

- Get involved, get in the car.
- Share the benefits of doing service: it is one of the three legs of the Al-Anon triangle. Our program is unbalanced if service is not part of our recovery program.
- There is a tug between long time members who have always done it this way versus new and inexperienced members who need guidance.
- Young people are busy so they are taking or sharing alternate positions. Newcomers don't think they need

recovery through service.

- Offer to talk with beginner groups.
- There is someone to step into everything. There is a need to have worked the Steps and have a Sponsor before taking on the role of Delegate.
- It is not a quick fix, but a lifelong journey.
- I was thrilled to be asked to wash coffee cups because it meant I was included.
- Tell them, “You do a fabulous job.”
- Talk about the importance of service, start the discussion early with new sponsees.
- Talk about service from day one and how it is helpful to your recovery.
- Responsibility, accountability, reliability.
- We have willingness, but need to provide clear descriptions of jobs and what is required.
- Talk to a member who is not fulfilling the responsibilities of the position.
- Assign a Service Sponsor.
- Foster the potential we see in others.
- Variety and interactive elements are helpful.
- Fun activities and skits.
- Having a theme, writing workshops and workshops on the Legacies.
- Holding a “Media café” helps members get media exposure.
- Bring a gift-wrapped package and ask, “Can I get a GR? This package is for you.”
- Financial contributions are only one way to do Tradition Seven.
- Assembly has a “kitchen party” or a “Chinese auction” as a fundraiser.
- Encourage members one-on-one: “I know you can do it.”
- Do yourself a favor, never say “no” to Al-Anon.
- Attitudes are contagious, is mine worth catching?

### Third Chosen Agenda Item Breakout Discussion

**Topic:** Welcoming and supporting newcomers to Al-Anon dealing with drug addiction while staying true to our Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service.

In our Area, we continue to see a rapid increase in the number of newcomers to Al-Anon that come because they are dealing with drug related problems in a family member or friend. It is very difficult to tease apart the problem of alcoholism and the problem of drug addiction. I do not have a statistic at my disposal, but my gut tells me that a very high percentage of alcoholics are also abusing drugs.

I would like to see a robust discussion around what else we can do to welcome, encourage and offer help and hope to these family members and friends. Many of our current Al-Anon members came into Al-Anon due to a drug related issue, and like most of us, soon found that drugs were not the problem and began to use the tools of Al-Anon to recovery for themselves.

We have made good progress in our public outreach in telling people that drug addiction may be related to alcoholism, but once a newcomer enters the meetings, our CAL and *Service Manual* reinforce the idea that if your loved one is not dealing with alcohol you do not qualify for Al-Anon. “The only requirement for membership is a problem of alcoholism in a family member or friend.”

**Topic:** To be or not to be relevant in today’s society by including the word addiction in its various forms in Al-Anon’s outreach material as a reason for coming to Al-Anon.

Should Al-Anon try to attract families of addicts? Over 40% of members already come because of someone else’s addiction. The percentage is growing rapidly! Does Al-Anon hold steadfast to the literal interpretation of its Traditions or does it embrace the spirit of its Declaration and thrive? Holding to current wording Al-Anon faces possibly becoming far less relevant in today’s society. Organizations that exist to serve other addictions are not always readily available to those in need. It is even possible that Al-Anon could become just a shadow of its former self.

**Topic:** How do we attract, welcome, and support those who are affected by someone who is multiply addicted?

Perhaps because of Al-Anon’s acceptance, tolerance, and self-selecting membership, I have seldom seen this be an issue. However, drug addiction is rapidly increasing, so we have those with multiple addictions (alcohol plus narcotic/club drug). We can expect more people affected by another’s drinking & drugging to find their way to Al-Anon. I think it would help our membership to receive a clear, unified message. (Because sometimes people react out of fear, as if this is a threat to the “purity” of Al-Anon.) Those multiply addicted are clinically dealt with differently. Do we say that our program only helps that part of you that is affected by their drinking and you must go somewhere else for the rest? I don’t know the answer, but it would be good to decide and voice what we all agree on.

#### Conference members in the breakout shared the following:

- There is concern that we know our program works for people and we know people are suffering—we have a program that works and a desire to help them.
- We do not want to change our primary purpose, but is there a way to be more welcoming?
- How can we keep our primary purpose and not dilute our program?
- Do we need to look at our Suggested Welcome and educate our groups?
- Can we soften some of the language?
- Education of groups so those potential members are not turned away.
- This is a great area to do more work through Knowledge-Based Decision-Making and a Thought Force to focus on how to be more welcoming to those still suffering.
- We are seeing those people. We need to be patient and understanding, but let the person decide for themselves. Most decide to stay after looking at their family tree.
- Stay focused on our literature and principles.
- It is okay to let other members know about other programs and support groups that are available to them, but they can also decide to stay in Al-Anon.
- Al-Anon is spoken here. Listen to similarities, not differences.
- Only a person can decide his/her membership.

# FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Jennie McC. • Trustee, Treasurer

## 2017 Finance Presentation

The Treasurer introduced the presentation stating, “At last year’s World Service Conference (WSC), the Finance Presentation consisted of a concerted effort to increase the understanding of all of our financial resources. With that increased understanding, it was hoped that the Delegates would increase their comfort level with explaining the financial situation of AFG, Inc. It was further hoped that with this understanding, the membership would respond enthusiastically with gratitude and feelings of abundance—and *did the fellowship ever respond!*”

“The response from the members was unprecedented. Our co-founder Lois believed that if the World Service Office (WSO) needed more money, we should just go to the fellowship and ask. But we didn’t just ask. *You* asked. *You* travelled back to your Areas, armed with information and confidence and explained exactly what WSO does with the funds generously contributed by its members and service arms. *You* explained the concern about literature sales. *You* explained how if we each do just a little, we can accomplish a lot. *You* explained the new ‘Contribute Now’ button. In response, many members went right online to make a contribution in that simple way. *You* explained that self-supporting means that we all have a responsibility to make sure the message of hope is carried to families and friends of alcoholics. *You* explained that we all need to fund the service arms, including the WSO. *You* described the spiritual principles of humility, generosity, abundance, unity, responsibility,

and how all those principles are present in our contributions.”

Following the introduction, Conference members met in breakout rooms. The purpose of the small group discussions was to give Delegates the opportunity to become more familiar and comfortable with the finances of AFG, Inc. by solidifying their understanding of the Audit and Budget reports and to ask questions. Six Delegates were invited to help lead the discussions and volunteered to give short reports to the Conference as though they were giving their financial report to their Area or District to demonstrate how they would present it. The intent was to hear the message in a variety of voices that could provide Delegates with ideas to deliver the message in their Areas with their own distinctive voices. While details varied, a common theme in each report was that in order for Al-Anon to grow, we need member contributions to continue:

- We can’t let our foot off the gas.
- Look at the mission, not the bottom line.
- Keep our focus on world services.
- Contribute with all the love and gratitude you possibly can.
- We need to dream big.

After giving reportbacks to the Conference, the Treasurer thanked the Delegates who gave their reports for being willing and participating with such enthusiasm noting, “This was not supposed to be entertaining, but I was thoroughly entertained.”

## POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Judy K. • Trustee, Policy Committee Chairperson | Donna E. • Trustee, Policy Committee Co-Chairperson  
Claire R. • Secretary, Associate Director—Professionals

### Announcing Events at Meetings

The Policy Committee was asked to clarify what could be announced at meetings. This is because of wording often cited by members who organize an event and call it Al-Anon, even though the event does not abide by Al-Anon’s Traditions.

The wording in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” under the heading “Mini Conventions, Share-a-Thons, Workshops or Other Get-Togethers,” page 85 reads, in part:

*“Members may choose to plan get-togethers for public information, service, or other sharing purposes. Chairpersons of these events are not necessarily chosen by, or members of, their Area World Service Committee (AWSC);....”*

In some Areas, these members plan an event using the Al-Anon name, distribute flyers, and request that groups announce this workshop at meetings. They are doing this even though the agenda does not reflect Al-Anon as we know it, and the event does not abide by Al-Anon’s Traditions and principles. Because of Tradition Six, that we are asked not to lend our name to any outside enterprise or allow anyone else to use it, the Policy Committee has drafted language to address this loophole and to provide clarity.

Last year at the World Service Conference (WSC), the Policy Committee presented a proposed revision of the text on “Announcing Events” to the Conference. However, after much discussion, the Conference asked the Policy Committee to reconsider portions of this text. In response to the 2016 WSC request, the Policy Committee Task Force presented amended text of the “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions” section found in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)* on pages 85-86 and 123-124. Included in this amended text are Al-Anon principles and criteria for members to consider when choosing to announce these events at meetings or to personally attend them.

In the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,” the paragraph titled “Outside the Fellowship,” page 123 has been moved into the section on pages 85-86 in order to have all policy statements about announcing events in one section. This paragraph makes clear that the Al-Anon name cannot be used to identify or publicize retreats or activities sponsored by others.

Last year, the Conference asked the Committee to “tighten up” the language to address specific situations. Conference members were reminded that Policy is an interpretation of our basic guides—the Traditions—expressed in a broad sense, with the hope that members apply the principles of our Legacies in order to

resolve situations they might encounter. While Policy statements provide a few examples, the Policy Committee does not and cannot address every possible circumstance. Policy is merely a framework for members to reason things out. It is not intended to be a set of rules. The Policy statements contained in our “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” are based on commonly shared experiences of the worldwide Al-Anon fellowship.

Conference members reviewed the amended text page-by-page and following questions and comments agreed by consensus vote page-by-page.

#### **During the review, Conference members had the following questions:**

- A.A. Events with Al-Anon/Alateen Participation: Why are we not stating A.A. service arms? Was there a specific intent?

*We have no opinion on A.A. and when asked to cooperate in an event we don't question what service arm asked for Al-Anon participation.*

- How would we know whether an individual is putting on the event versus someone who has the right to use the name?

*The Area would make the determination based on the Area's criteria.*

- We have several A.A. get-togethers that have Al-Anon members on the Board with 50/50 participation, but there are no liaisons to them. Does it have to be Area participation? I am not sure we're linked to service arms.

*Our focus is on Al-Anon. We can't make that call, it would be policing. Having a liaison is a good idea to keep the links open for communication.*

- At the local level, we have a controversy over an event supposedly sponsored by both programs. We make a point of that. When it says participation, does that have to mean A.A. and Al-Anon are separate, or can it be together? At this particular conference each side does the Steps and presents their side of it.

*It is a matter of Area autonomy and communication. To be clear, the Al-Anon focus was on our Traditions. The Area would decide.*

- Al-Anon/Alateen Events with A.A. participation: Distribution of proceeds: Can you clarify Maintaining Anonymity in Events regarding video?

*This text is addressing the use of video on cell phones, etc. for a little memento with a personal device. It does not refer to tapers hired by a convention.*

#### **The Task Force tried to identify some spiritual principles relating to events. They believe the following are key:**

- Tradition Seven: Cooperation, Participation.
- Concept One: Responsibility, which includes proceeds.
- Tradition Five: Singleness of Purpose.
- Tradition One: Unity; our common welfare.

#### **We can ask why is it important? What does that mean?**

- What to announce at meetings: Regarding the word “generally.” Not all events honor Al-Anon Legacies and are not connected to service arms. They may have a connection to an A.A. event.

*We can't dictate that every event in an Area be connected to a service arm. It is up to an Area to communicate with those who put on events.*

- The Area determines if the Area is not following the Traditions. The Area can ask groups not to publicize.

*We always have to keep in mind what other Areas have decided so we need to have a conversation about why we shouldn't announce a certain event so it doesn't sound like dictating.*

- Outside the Fellowship: How does the WSO determine if an event is within or an Area approved event to be announced? If we wanted to make a contribution to the WSO, how does the WSO determine if it is an outside entity?

*The Area would make the contribution.*

- Our Area policy is, it can't be announced unless they go through the Area.

*If someone goes rogue, we have no control. Areas need to be clear about what Al-Anon accepts for contributions.*

- A retreat put on by individual members saying, “Okay, we'll call ourselves workshops,” Is a workshop counted?

*We weren't into defining words. Workshop could be a luncheon. These are outside events. We can't play a game. We can say a workshop is an event and stop at that.*

- Does that mean if someone has a program of some kind that they want to let others in Al-Anon know about, they could stand in a parking lot and distribute?

*We don't have Al-Anon police—we want to avoid that.*

- Please clarify “meeting” and “meeting location.”

*A meeting location is the room in which a meeting meets.*

- Many meet in local churches that have lots of advertising. A.A. and Al-Anon meet in churches and so do other groups.

*It is up to us to decide what works for us. Up to us as individuals to decide what we want to participate in. We could discuss semantics all day about what to include. Those who live outside our spiritual principles are going to do what they are going to do. It is not possible to put every word in the book. Policy is a broad umbrella.*

- I am stuck on the words “meeting location.” If it is intended for rooms, should we just say rooms?

*Remember, a meeting location is not just face-to-face, but phone and other venues. We're talking about announcing events. Those connected to the Area are the events we want to announce and support. This section is taking about outside events where someone may have borrowed our name.*

After discussion about “meeting location,” there was consensus to leave that text as it is.

A motion to amend the text on pages 85-86 and 123-124 in the “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions” section in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the 2014-2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) was made, seconded and carried. (See Motion #7, page 64).

## Financial Matters

In 2014, the Policy Committee began its work on amending the text of the “Financial Matters” section, pages 95 – 99, in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). The purpose of the revision is to update the text in order to include core spiritual principles, whenever appropriate, that are foundational to our Al-Anon philosophy of giving and receiving. The initial idea for re-examining the Policy language was sparked by a Thought Force conversation in which the Committee began reflecting on abundance and gratitude as part of giving, rather than just the responsibility of self-support.

Including Al-Anon’s core principles into this revised text helps clarify how and why we do what we do in relation to Tradition Seven in order to be fully self-supporting. In addition to incorporating key principles into the text, several passages contain updated language. For example, we now have the ability to make online contributions and to access technological services available to all other not-for-profit organizations.

Since the Policy Committee began working on this section, the “Individual Members/Direct Contributions/Memorial Contributions” text on page 95 (and continued on page 127) was approved by the 2016 World Service Conference. (See *2016 Conference Summary*, pages 61-62) The discussion of that topic, addressed separately but contained in the section titled “Financial Matters,” took five years of revision and discussion before the amended policy was approved by the Conference.

The entire proposed document was sent to Conference members in advance for their review. The Chairperson of the Task Force expressed appreciation for the questions and comments Conference members sent in for consideration. The positive comments provided clarity as the Task Force reviewed and amended the text. She noted that the proposed document has a new introduction that includes spiritual principles the Task Force identified.

The Chairperson concluded, “Today, the Policy Committee is very pleased to bring the completed text of the entire section titled ‘Financial Matters’ to the 2017 Conference for consideration.”

### Conference members were asked to keep in mind as they reviewed the document page-by-page:

- Is it accurate?
- Is it clear?
- Can you live with it?

Highlights of the discussion included a question about proportions when giving locally. It was explained that it was the intent that an Area, in its autonomy, can consider what service arm needs support at the time. It was not intended to dictate what is given to any one entity, although some Areas have established rigid percentages. A decision should be prudent and reasoned out.

A concern was expressed about portraying ourselves as child care providers. This could create a liability issue. It was explained that it is a matter for group autonomy to provide and pay for child care during meetings.

There was a suggestion that the section on “Fees for Speaking” is directive and a question as to whether there were possibilities other than Conference Approved Literature for donations. It was explained that this section was intended for the area of public outreach where we do accept money from outside agencies but only for literature.

There was a concern about Spanish groups bringing in speakers from Mexico and paying big fees. It was explained that that was an

Area issue and not a Policy Committee matter.

The Task Force Chairperson thanked Conference members for their participation noting that their participation is the key to harmony.

A motion to amend the text on pages 95-99 in the “Financial Matters” section in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) was made, seconded and carried. (See Motion 6, page 64).

## “Open” and Closed” Terminology

The Policy Committee asked the World Service Conference (WSC) to consider the history of the terms “open” and “closed,” and the feedback Delegates submitted through AFG Connects after review of the text. The goal was to reach consensus upon a course of present or future action or inaction the Policy Committee should take.

The Chairperson explained that the Policy Committee first discussed the “open” and “closed” meeting designations at the 2016 World Service Conference Open Policy Meeting. The purpose of the discussion was to explore the degree to which the “open” and “closed” terminology complicates or has a negative impact on public outreach efforts, potential and current members, professionals and interested individuals. The discussion about “open” and “closed” meetings focused primarily on the principle of being welcoming (Tradition Five), and maintaining anonymity of members (Tradition Twelve).

As a result of that initial discussion, the Policy Chairperson appointed a Thought Force to further explore this topic. After discussing the responses to the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions prepared by a Policy Committee Thought Force, the Policy Committee felt that also obtaining Delegate feedback would be helpful. In August 2016, background information about the origin and initial intent of the terms was posted on AFG Connects for Conference members. Delegates were asked to review and consider the following background information:

• **Historical Information:** From the beginning, Al-Anon followed the A.A. model and adapted A.A.’s terminology to designate a classification of an Al-Anon meeting that was not open to visitors, e.g., public, professionals or interested individuals. Our *Manual of Al-Anon Family Groups* from 1960 until 1966 said this: ‘Many groups hold an open meeting once a month at which alcoholics and other guests are invited to attend so they may learn just what work is being done in Al-Anon.’ However, in 1968, the World Service Conference (WSC) discussed and approved a Policy Committee statement defining “open” and “closed” meetings. The hope was to clarify the age-old question: Who is welcome to attend Al-Anon meetings? Today, Area websites, local Al-Anon Information Services (AISs)/Intergroups, and printed meeting schedules commonly designate Al-Anon meetings as either “open” or “closed.” Although these terms are defined in Al-Anon materials, e.g., the *Service Manual* and WSO Guidelines, the designations are confusing to some members as well as prospective newcomers, professionals and public agencies reaching out to Al-Anon.

• **Relevance:** Why are we choosing to discuss this? Potential newcomers, or interested individuals might misinterpret our terminology when they are reading a meeting schedule. They might think they are not welcome to attend closed meetings. It would be easy to assume that a closed meeting does not welcome newcomers, is closed to anyone who

doesn't have a personal invitation to attend or that the meeting is "full" and cannot accept any more new members. Generally, a "closed" meeting does not sound welcoming. Newcomers may be misled or become discouraged, thus not receiving the help they need when trying to attend a meeting.

•**AI-Anon's Principles:** Step Twelve emphasizes the importance of carrying the message and reaching out to friends and families of alcoholics who are in need of help. Is it self-defeating to reach out to the general public using language that is understood only by AI-Anon insiders or to engage in public outreach using terms that are unclear? Do we look like a closed society that is difficult to penetrate? Does the word "closed" contradict the spirit of Tradition Five, that we are "welcoming"? How can we achieve an appropriate balance, assuring members that their anonymity is safe at an AI-Anon meeting, while using language on our websites and in our meeting schedules that is clear and not misunderstood?

Using AFG Connects, Delegates were asked to provide feedback on the three questions listed below. Over half of the Delegates responded with feedback either from their Areas or from their own experience.

1. How well do members in your Area understand the difference between an open and closed meeting? Do group members know if their meeting is listed as open vs. closed?
2. How do students and professionals find out about AI-Anon in your Area? Are the closed meetings in your Area providing a monthly open meeting?
3. Is the original purpose of open meetings obsolete? Has the Internet, social media, numerous self-help books and active public outreach, etc., eliminated the need to designate AI-Anon meetings as "open" or "closed"?

#### **A summary of the feedback is below:**

- Responses were fairly similar and repetitive.
- Confusion abounds around the term "closed." Only AI-Anon members in service are clear about the designated term.
- The "closed" designation is not a welcoming word. It is also confusing to members and certainly prospective members.
- The purpose of "open" meetings is not obsolete; however, with the advent of the internet and more knowledge about the family disease of alcoholism, it is rare that a professional ever attends an "open" meeting.
- "Open" meetings are not held in most Areas with any frequency, although some are always "open." Occasionally groups declare a meeting "open" for a special event. The one group of potential professionals who do attend a meeting, whether "open" or "closed," are students who are assigned to do so. Most groups understand about holding a quick group conscience if the meeting is "closed," and students are never turned away.

#### **The purpose of the 2017 Conference session was to discuss and consider the following options regarding the use of the "open" and "closed" meeting designations:**

1. Do nothing. These terms are part of our long-standing tradition, part of our roots and should remain.

2. Leave it up to the Areas to deal with the terminology on their meeting lists and websites. Many already have stopped using the term "closed" on their websites and stress the AI-Anon principles of confidentiality and anonymity of the AI-Anon program when newcomers and visitors attend meetings.
3. Let the World Service Office (WSO) address the confusion and define the terms more fully by updating that section in "Groups at Work" (P-24), pages 36-37, and the "Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies," page 83.
4. Ask the Policy Committee to consider the terminology and consider alternate wording appropriate for modern times, with the caveat that preserving anonymity, confidentiality and safety is important to all members.
5. Completely omit the designations for meetings and discontinue use of the terms as an aid for families of alcoholics seeking help.

Although labeling a meeting "closed" may not be the best way to stress confidentiality and anonymity, members still are concerned that their anonymity is preserved. The Chairperson reminded Conference members that the goal of the discussion was to reach a consensus. Conference members shared pros and cons of each option.

**Option One** was eliminated from the list.

**Option Two:** Several Areas have taken action to avoid confusion. Their decisions were based on the fact that the members had no clear understanding of the terms, the confusion of newcomers and that the terms do not protect anonymity.

**Option Three:** "Groups at Work" can be updated without Conference encouragement. With a clearer definition, Areas can be uniform and united. If we clarify whether a meeting is "open" or "closed," yet still make it more welcoming, newcomers would not feel like they are unwelcome.

We are trying to attract newcomers. We want them to come. There was a suggestion to combine Options two and three and to eliminate the term "closed."

**Option Four:** Several Conference members advocated for keeping the "closed" designation, but agreed that it needed more clarity. The Policy Committee is the largest group conscience outside the World Service Conference. The designations are detracting from public outreach, but work well within the meetings. It was unclear how the Policy Committee could distinguish that aspect. It was seen more as an autonomy issue than a Policy issue.

**Option Five:** Many Areas leave the designations off the meeting lists whether printed or not and have removed the designations from websites. Perhaps the Suggested AI-Anon/Alateen Welcome could announce any special format. At Assembly meetings, a majority of people with many years of service were confused. We decided to have our Area Web Coordinator remove the designations. It is not designated on meeting lists. As a student, I knew about anonymity and confidentiality. Everyone knows a family member or friend with the problem.

- Would Option Five make all AI-Anon and Alateen meetings open?

*We can't say at this time. We would have to discuss what it does or doesn't mean.*

- If Option Three is considered, and the WSO comes up with better defined terms in "Groups at Work," what about pages where it is addressed in the rest of the *Service Manual*?

The Policy Committee would look at its section for consistency. "Groups at Work" has the best definition. Pages 89 and 99 mention it. All would be crosschecked.

- There are definitions of "open" and "closed" on pages eight and 11 in the "Groups at Work" section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, but not listed in the Index.
- All Alateen meetings are "closed," so if we got rid of the designation, we need to specifically state it does not apply to Alateen.

The Policy Committee would have to look at anonymity,

privacy, safety, etc.

On page 89 under "Alateen Policy" in the *Policy Digest*, it is very clear who attends Alateen meetings. So, I am not sure what we change would affect it.

- Could we send this back to the Policy Committee?  
Yes.

There was consensus to send the issue back to the Policy Committee where the Policy Committee can entertain the topic and determine the next steps.

## PRAYER FOR TODAY

Tom C. • Associate Director—Literature

In April 2016, the Literature Committee initiated an hour-long discussion at the World Service Conference regarding the "Prayer for Today," which is included on the *Just for Today* Bookmark (M-12) and Card (M-10), as well as on page 101 of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22). As background information, the Committee presented its members' responses to the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions, which were gathered during its year-long discussion of the topic. For those Conference members who were not present at the 2016 Conference, a detailed description of the discussion can be found on pages 57-60 of the *2016 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46).



As a result of last year's initial discussion, the Conference agreed to continue the conversation at this year's Conference, and that in the meantime the Delegates would conduct informed, Tradition-based discussions within their Areas to gather further input.

Time was set aside at the 2017 Conference to continue the conversation on this topic. Rather than reach any conclusions, its purpose was to continue gathering information and give all

Conference members the opportunity to listen to one another and consider all aspects of this topic with an open mind.

### To initiate the 2017 WSC's relatively brief discussion, Conference members received two questions prior to Conference:

1. What format(s) did your Area use to discuss this issue?
2. What did you learn from your Area's discussions that would help expand the Conference's discussion of this topic?

### Conference members commented:

- I asked groups to consider the information, have a group conscience on the topic and provide the information to be used as part of a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) document. It was sent by mail to every group not in attendance. 25% of groups responded. The information was compiled, presented and discussed at Assembly. By eliminating passages from CAL to make people comfortable are we contradicting, "Take what you like...?"

- We sent the KBDM questions by email notifying the groups of the discussion. We held an "Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs" workshop at Assembly and then asked for comments on the Prayer for Today. Among the comments was, "I see no need to eliminate it."

- We presented the Task Force skit, "Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs," at Assembly. We attached the framing from the *2016 WSC Summary*, pages 65-68. We forwarded the skit and presentation to the Group Representatives (GR) to use in their groups. We also discussed it at a recent Assembly. We learned 75% want the Prayer for Today left as is. They saw it as part of the spirit of the program and "Take what you like..."

- We presented at Assembly—235 GRs there. We distributed the KBDM from the 2016 WSC and broke into groups. About 60% were willing to remove or change it, 40% said no. We had a conversation about attracting newcomers that was eye-opening. They understood we are not trying to take away anything from program, but make it more attractive.

- I offered an email option to respond. I received 52 responses from 42 from active groups. Responses were overwhelmingly to leave the Prayer as is. Comments included, "When will we stop changing literature that has been around for so long?" There was a lot of fear, but it was good to have the conversation on a difficult topic.

- It was presented at Assembly and information was posted on the website. I asked for email comments and received 32 responses. The majority wanted to keep it. Comments were that although the prayer is based on Christianity, "take what you like." It gives a mixed message to newcomers when including it in the newcomer packet.

- Diversity skit presented a framework for questions. We had a one-hour discussion at Assembly. The Area is divided into thirds. The "no changes" group was the most vehement.

- We asked the GRs for their thoughts at Assembly. They were evenly divided with passionate opinions on both sides.

- The idea was introduced in the Delegate report. I posted a summary of the *Conference Summary* report on our website.

DRs were told it would be a topic at Assembly. There were extreme, passionate points of view. Comments were: leave well enough alone, and it is dangerous to start picking what to take out.

- We had a discussion. They were passionate and appreciative for the opportunity. Comments were: The Prayer for Today expresses our declaration. Many members use it when working Steps Six and Seven and use it as a guide to ask God.
- We discussed at Assembly. I was surprised by how many didn't know it was on the bookmark saying they never noticed the Prayer for Today on the back!
- It was a topic at Assembly. It was clear at the end that it was about 50-50, but the Area said, "Let's not talk about taking things out, but how to add things."
- Comments made in my Area included: The last 12 words are a specific tenet. It is not copyrighted. We should retain the part that is spiritual and universal; it contradicts the "do's and don'ts"; it looks like it is about family disease, but talks about religion; don't take it away.
- We had an exciting discussion. All GRs and DRs brought notes with members' opinions. It is the most excitement we've seen from groups. We are a conservative Area. There was a minority opinion to remove it, but sharing of history helped them think about options—remove it from newcomers packets.
- The process was positive. The AWSC did the skit and diversity workshop. It was discussed at District meetings. At Assembly, over time it worked itself out because of opportunities to talk and reason it out, and the value of the minority opinion began to sink in. There were minority opinions at the mic that never happened in past. We are grateful for the process.
- We got questions like: How can we take out something helpful to my recovery? Mostly it was, "take what you like..." Leave as is and continue to print and use it. It is our best opportunity to move forward with a "just for tonight" prayer.
- I hated and ignored the Prayer for Today when I came in. Today, I have no problem. Comments: It is an attempt to remove God from the program. Others are opposed. It got members reading the *Summary* and we included a link. One percent want it removed. Change is taking God out.
- We used this as an opportunity to reassure members that we talk about topics before making any decisions. We had loving, respectful interchange. Groups had a group conscience about it. Spanish-speaking groups: first time hearing about it and needed more time to have it translated to fully participate. There were strong opinions. In my District, members changed their minds after looking at the materials.
- I gave questions to DRs to give to GRs. I received 115 emails. Sixty-six want to keep it. There was fear in the Area.
- A poignant opinion was shared in my Area: A newcomer confessed to having a hard time. "I cannot align myself with an organization that says one thing and does another." She has never come back.
- This was a hot topic. We asked GRs to send one e-mail

after discussing in the group. We asked them to read the Concepts and Traditions. We used it as an educational tool. I received 100 emails with a clear consensus to keep it; some to revise it. There was a clear objection about it giving it to newcomers.

- When will the World Service Conference define religion versus spirituality?

Following these thoughts, there was consensus to defer any decision regarding how to move forward until later in the Conference.

Later in the week, the Conference Chairperson reopened the discussion offering two options:

**Option 1: Continue to have the discussion in some fashion.**

**Option 2: Stop the discussion for now until some new information comes forward.**

**The floor was opened for comments:**

- If we select Option 2, my understanding of the original question was do we remove it from the back of the card and from our literature. Does that mean we will not move forward with removing it at this time?

*Correct*

- Could we consider a third option and start thinking about a "Just for Tonight" bookmark?

*The Literature Committee received several suggestions after the August printing of a Forum article entitled, "Just for Tonight," that the article be published as a piece of CAL. The Committee is conducting a KBDM and considering development of that. It doesn't mean the Committee will bring it to the WSC next year, but if it goes anywhere, it will be to this body.*

- Could another option be stop the discussion and pull it out of the Newcomer packet?
- Is it a WSO decision or a WSC decision to remove it from the Newcomer packet?

*The Executive Committee is responsible for deciding the content of the Newcomer packet. Last time the Committee looked at it was two or three years ago. A Task Force did recommend removal for that reason, but the Executive Committee decided to keep it.*

- I'd like to consider a third option of removing the specific religious tenet.
- Let's go back to the Areas and see if we can get a consensus.
- I would like to send it back to the Literature Committee, and if it comes back again, we can discuss it then.

Following the comments, the Conference was ready to take a consensus. There was a consensus to stop the discussion for now, but to remain open to new information.

There was one follow-up question.

- Does anything change now?

*Nothing changes for now.*

# TASK AND THOUGHT FORCE PRESENTATIONS

## Task Force: Sharing Spiritual Principles Gained Through Serving as a Trustee

Thérèse S. • Trustee, Chairperson

The Task Force entered the General Session room singing a unique song to the tune “We are Family.”

During the July 2016 Board of Trustees meeting, Board members discussed ways to continue educating the fellowship as to the work of the Board, along with how to attract and mentor potential Board members. From that discussion came the decision to develop a presentation for the 2017 World Service Conference (WSC): *Sharing Spiritual Principles Gained Through Serving as Trustee*. A Task Force was formed and we are going to share our reflections.

To help Conference members identify their own potential for considering to serve as a Trustee when eligible and identify other qualified members’ potential and invite them to submit their résumé for serving as a Trustee; the Task Force invited three Trustees to share their growth, spiritual principles, abilities and skills developed through serving as a Trustee. Three Delegates were also invited to share about their growth, spiritual principles, abilities and skills while serving as Delegate.

The Task Force showed a PowerPoint presentation and distributed a handout with questions to help Delegates in their personal evaluation to identify their own spiritual principles, growth, abilities and skills gained while serving as Delegates. The goal was to identify their own or other service member’s potential for consideration as a Trustee.

### Things to consider....

- Speak with your Service Sponsor or a current/past Trustee; and encourage members to do the same
- A Trustee is first and foremost a member of Al-Anon
- As you serve as Trustee, the spiritual journey continues
- Trustees are needed annually

## Spiritual principles gained

**As a Trustee**, serving in this position has given me integrity and dependability: The ability to speak with integrity and to be dependable. I can say what I mean and mean what I say; but I don’t say it mean.

Responsibility and a willingness to learn: Be aware of my actions, know that nothing others do or say is because of me. Be willing to learn everything I can to be the best I can be each day, keeping in mind always what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. No matter where I am, my actions need to be in keeping with Al-Anon’s spiritual principles.

Courage: To ask questions—express what I really want and need. Communicating with clarity to avoid misunderstandings has given me the ability to be fully informed and make decisions in all areas of my life with confidence and grace.

Trust: I have a trust in God, and I trust God that my presence in this position is not a mistake. I have experienced more than I could ever imagine—unconditional love, joy, laughter, comfort and good orderly direction from those I have met on my journey as a Trustee.

**As a Delegate**, the first words I learned in English were, “Thank God and the cook.” My father used to say these words after a good

meal; my mother was the cook.

With Al-Anon, I discovered spirituality. I thought that spirituality was in church and religion. I learned that spirituality is in my heart. Al-Anon helps us find and grow spirituality. Don’t you think so?

Last year, the members in my Area gave me the opportunity to be their Delegate to the World Service Conference for three years. I was out of my comfort zone. I did like the challenge to have an opportunity to say few words in English though.

Once I became Delegate, I was not comfortable in my chair—I was afraid. Fears happened, but my Higher Power was present.

Last year, I found God through all the Delegates, WSO staff, and past Delegates and members around me in my Area and through our Regional Trustee. I discovered at the 2016 Conference the spiritual principles of welcoming, communication and respect!

Through that, I could communicate to the Group Representatives (GR) and members my Conference experience (in French) that I had to translate.

In our literature, the book, *Hope for Today* (B-27), page 101 says “Miracles happen... participation is ‘the key to harmony’...” At the end, it says: “God doesn’t call the qualified. God qualifies those who are called. Am I listening?” I think I did.

Al-Anon keeps me so happy every day!

## Spiritual growth gained

**As a Trustee**, I knew I wanted to continue to give back to this worldwide fellowship. Much like when I began my term as Delegate, I was unsure of myself and my role as a new Trustee. I was afraid of making a huge mistake and overwhelmed by the magnitude of responsibility to Al-Anon as a whole. Could I personally do something that would break Al-Anon? But I was still willing to serve.

Throughout my term as a Trustee, I see the spiritual principles in action. Being able to participate in the work of the Board, I gain trust in the process and see my Higher Power in the work that is done through the discussions that occur and the decisions made. I trust that I know what I know and that it is okay not to know everything.

Through working with others on Thought Forces, Task Forces, Work Groups and Committees, I’ve seen projects and presentations furthered through a loving Higher Power over time; not forced, rushed solutions.

With a focus on the Legacies, as a Trustee, I am now able to use my voice and also listen open-mindedly to the other voices of the Board. I see unity in action as I and the other Board members presume goodwill and look to the good of Al-Anon today and into the future.

**As a Delegate**, I reflect on my service journey through the years. I can now see how it was all preparing me for the role of Delegate—the highpoint of the many service roles I’ve participated in; I’ve been transformed for sure.

I have a greater spiritual sense of my place in the world from witnessing the symbiotic harmony of how we conduct our business at the World Service Conference and how the results work for the betterment of Al-Anon.

I have learned to be quiet and let others express their ideas and opinions—to listen to understand, not to prepare an argument.

I have learned not to stay attached to my present views, with awareness that deeper realizations may come. This was never

more clear than at the 2016 World Service Conference when the Conference approved a negative operating budget, causing me great concern. However, the outcome of that vote created a financial abundance that I could never have predicted.

Perhaps the greatest spiritual principle I've been given is connection. An introvert by nature, making connections, especially with a large group of people, can be intimidating for me. During my term as Delegate, I was bonded to my Delegate peers, the WSO staff and all the Trustees by the unconditional love and acceptance offered to me, in a completely effortless manner. All the unique qualities and the goodness of each person at this Conference will forever be part of me through our connectedness.

## Abilities and skills gained in serving

**As a Trustee**, for each responsibility that I have accepted as a trusted servant in our fellowship, the advantages received were always more than the effort that I had to put into doing the work. The abilities and skills I have gained serving as a Trustee are so different than those I had expected. I am like our first explorers as they discovered new countries. The only difference is that with our program, we have a Higher Power as our guide. The first discovery I made was spiritual principles. In my Area, when we talk spirituality, we talk about our Higher Power, not spiritual principles. I was offered the chance to put them into action and to integrate them. Our common welfare; changing the "I" to "we," a profound sense of responsibility; compassion; harmony among Board members; tolerance; unity; warm welcome for others; non-judgment; flexibility. For me, these are all priceless gifts. Can you imagine that I have the unique chance to integrate these spiritual principles that are more and more a part of who I am?

My first language is French. I had the chance to start to learn English when I was ten years old. Later, I had the chance to work in an English environment for seven years. But for 50 years, I have lived in a city where the population is 80 percent French. For all those years, I didn't have many occasions to speak English daily. I had thought that the knowledge of English that I had gained in the past would come back very rapidly, but that was not the case. As Al-Anon has taught me, for every problem there is a solution. I took some advanced conversation classes at the University and suddenly my English brain started rolling. Today, I can joke in English!

Computer skills were not my cup of tea. I have always loved what they bring, but I had a hard time being proactive in learning. I am starting to explore. Quite a fulfillment! What I have learned also is about my Higher Power. My confidence in Him has grown immensely. I now dare to do things that will bring me out of my comfort zone.

**A Delegate shared:** When I came to Al-Anon I was broken. I wept for the first six months I came to meetings. My old tools weren't working. I surrendered to the program and sought new tools. God is more than my ally—He is giving me knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry it out. My confidence thrives in my new-found trust in a loving God. Sarcastic comments rarely escape my mouth today. Inclusivity and consideration for others grows. Evidence of this is found in a new capacity to genuinely and humbly listen to others without interruption.

As Delegate, my communication skills are improving. I have found my voice. I am learning how to be a part of and not the center of. My computer skills have improved, although there is room to do better. I am rapidly approaching mediocrity! As Delegate, my writing and speaking skills are greatly improved. I do a better job of delivering a message with brevity, not out of authority, but as one who openly seeks the best good for the greatest number. As Delegate, I am becoming a better trusted servant, accountable to God, myself and another human being. My boundaries are better established.

As Delegate, I have a better grasp of the principles embedded in our Steps, Traditions and Concepts and how to properly apply them to the business at hand. I am more comfortable when people, who are passionately energized, share a viewpoint different than mine. As Delegate, I do a better job inviting God into my conversations with myself and others. My greatest asset and resource is knowing God has my back, and no matter what, God is enough. My recovery has progressed because I serve as Delegate, but I still need a program.

### A Task Force member summed up the spiritual principles gained by the Trustees and Delegates:

- Integrity
- Courage
- Trust in the process; seeing a Higher Power at work
- Focus on the Legacies
- Open-mindedness
- Unity in actions
- Presume goodwill
- Higher Power is our guide
- Common welfare
- Compassion
- Tolerance

The presentation concluded with all participants singing, "We are Family."

## Spirituality in Money Discussions Task Forces

For many years, the World Service Conference (WSC) has been discussing topics through a spiritually-based approach to more effectively communicate information to the membership. At the 2015 WSC, there was a Thought Force presentation, "Create Strategies to Show the Importance of Abundance and Spirituality in Money Discussions" (2015 WSC Summary, pages 73-75). As a result of that presentation, Conference members requested a workshop or skit

that could be presented to their Areas on the spiritual principles in financial matters and discussions, and there was consensus to create a Task Force for that purpose.

The Chairperson of the Board created three Task Forces regarding spiritual principles in financial discussions—Spirituality in Group Money Discussions, Spirituality in District Money Discussions, and Spirituality in Area Money Discussions.

# Task Force: Spirituality in Group Money Discussions

Mary H. • Chairperson, Panel 55, Minnesota South

The Task Force was charged to create a workshop or skit for a group that incorporates spiritual principles (e.g., gratitude, abundance, etc.) in financial matters and discussions. After reviewing the barriers and strategies described in the 2015 WSC report, the Task Force developed a skit that incorporated realistic financial situations (fears of financial insecurity) and identified spiritual principles that would aid members in relating to the financial discussion.

After presenting the skit, Conference members broke out into small group discussions. Each group was given a topic from a handout, “Making Meetings about Money Easier,” and a quotation from a piece of Conference Approved Literature. Using those materials, the groups discussed the following:

## Fear of Financial Insecurity

What were my fears about finances before AI-Anon?

- No tools to do anything else.
- Having to make decisions about how to spend scarce resources.
- Fear of spouse’s spending; taking extra jobs to compensate.
- Denial and avoidance.

Since coming to AI-Anon, how have my fears changed?

- If I do my part, God will do His part.
- Learned to be self-supporting so others don’t have to take care of us.

How have spiritual principles played a part in those changes?

- Balance in spending/saving.
- Higher Power in control.
- God included in checkbook.

## Living Spiritual Principles

What spiritual principles am I practicing when my group discusses money contributions and expenses?

- Generosity and gratitude.
- Honesty; explain self-support and what it means.
- Trust in how money is handled; needs will be met.
- Patience: activities when fundraising.

How do following spiritual principles in money matters affect my self-esteem and the esteem of all members in my group?

- Able to evaluate our own self-worth.
- Understand what is important about the program and how to give back.
- Group has spiritual and financial responsibilities.
- Honoring a commitment to the group when we contribute.
- Spiritual organization, not a business and apply spiritual principles to financial matters.
- Be open to what money matters can cause. Treasurers report—checks and balances are important.

## Using Tradition Seven for Money Discussions

What does fully self-supporting mean?

- Raises self-esteem.
- Participating any way we can.
- Self-support is more than dollars—service, ample reserve.
- WSO is us, not them.
- Financial and emotional.
- Taking care of self.
- “First Things First” helps judge between needs and wants.

How are we personally taking care of group?

- Find out what group can afford to support through group inventories.
- Spiritually-based not self-based decisions.

Do I consider costs and what my group needs when I decide how much to contribute, or do I keep tossing in the same amount every week?

- Write a check to be an example of how much I put in basket.
- Different ways to think about money—what the group needs.

How do we support our AIS? Area? World Service Office?

- Use money within budget—group first, then District, Area and the WSO.

## Abundance and Gratitude

What benefits do we/I get from being part of the worldwide fellowship?

- Get support, understanding and a sense of belonging.
- Made contributions when pet died.
- Can repay not just financially, but in time and service.
- Ability to go to different meetings.
- Opportunities to meet people around the world we can call to get help.
- Feel safe and understood.
- Spiritual connection, even if we don’t speak the language.
- When we share, we give.

Do we/I contribute to Quarterly Appeal?

- Group reads the letter, but is not connected to it.
- Longtime members educate about the difference between a group contribution and a contribution to the WSO.
- Attitude—when I’m full of abundance, I want to give.

Following the presentation and discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members if they wanted more discussion or more work on spiritual principles in group money discussions. Suggestions were to continue ideas in discussions and a possible piece of literature for the groups. The Chairperson made note of those comments and thanked the Task Force members for their service.

# Task Force: Spirituality in District Money Discussions

Valentina H. • Chairperson, Panel 56, North Carolina/Bermuda

Due to the effects of living with alcoholism, many Al-Anon members have fears about financial matters, which carry over into service, making it difficult to have discussions about District finances. This workshop was designed to help uncover the fears and barriers to District discussions about money, as well as the spiritual principles that can help to overcome them.

The Task Force created a two-part workshop to help District members explore spiritual principles when discussing financial matters as a District. The workshop was designed to be presented as a series of workshops broken into segments over several District meetings based on the amount of time and experience of the members.

## Fears and Barriers in District Money Discussions

This part of the workshop was designed to open a conversation about what may make members uncomfortable in discussing financial matters in their District, to consider what barriers might exist and explore ways to overcome them.

In a simulated workshop, Conference members were “transported back” to their respective meetings and asked:

### What are our fears and barriers in talking about finances as it relates to our District?

Using a “roving” microphone, Conference members listed the following fears about finances relating to their District’s needs:

- District without a budget.
- Never enough money.
- Not all groups can contribute.
- Attitude is, “All they do is keep asking us for more money.”
- Having to make a budget and going back to groups to ask for money.
- If we spend money on this, we can’t do that.
- Do we have a reliable Treasurer?
- Personality when money diverts us from our primary spiritual aim.
- Members will think they need money in order to participate in service.
- If a group doesn’t like something, it might stop contributing to the District.

### Conference members then listed barriers:

- I’m bad with money. That’s the Treasurer’s job.
- Group Representatives (GR) won’t like me and won’t vote for me next time.
- Only a few groups participate—no talking about money without full participation.
- Groups competing for where money should go—WSO, District, etc.
- Groups from all socioeconomic strata. Poverty areas might feel if they can’t give equally, they are not welcome, so it hinders the conversation.
- Intergroup members will want some and be jealous.

- Nobody comes to the District meeting, so there aren’t enough members to make a decision.
- Bullies—dominant controlling members.
- Treasurer shoots down all ideas; holds the money, or takes money.
- Don’t want to know how much I’m spending, and I don’t want to ask for reimbursement.
- District Representative doesn’t give a report, just says money is in the bank—new Treasurer realizes there is not as much money as was reported.
- Roadblock is not having a plan for the year. Overspending budget without discussion.
- GRs want to spend money on a project so that would mean I would need to do something.
- Some groups are not connected within a District. The GR doesn’t go and others don’t report back. Groups hold onto information instead of sharing.

Conference members then went on to explore spiritual principles and how they could help members move forward to more confident, open conversations about District financial matters.

### How can our spiritual principles help us to address the fears and barriers we have identified?

Conference members shared:

- They turn our focus from negative to positive.
- From *my* District, it becomes *our* District.
- To realize we are only stewards of our money for now, not owners.
- Participation is the key for how to spend it, not just what we give.
- “Groups at Work,” page 21, “Passing the Basket” section mentions gratitude. Most groups don’t know where the money goes.
- Weekly Treasurer’s report.
- Trust our leaders about priorities.
- Participation and gratitude become abundance.
- Self-support helps identify what we need and abundance may follow.
- Willingness to help with District fundraiser.
- Ask service bodies to carry the message. Spiritual abundance is our responsibility so as we share, we increase the flow of abundance in recovery.
- Give what was given to me.
- Trust in the vision. What could we do with our funds?
- Trust a Higher Power with what we have got and trust that more will come in if it is given away.
- Trust and presume goodwill. Fears and barriers can be wrapped around spiritual principles.

Finally, Conference members were asked to explore further spiritual principles as they relate to financial matters in District service.

### Hope:

- All GRS able to financially attend Assemblies.
- District supports Area outreach.

- Have a District budget and be transparent with it.
- Provide consistency for groups to take back.
- Unity on how to spend the money we do have.
- Hold workshops on abundance as part of the solution.
- Encourage by being enthusiastic. Talk about giving back and be appreciative. Get involved. Stress Public Outreach.

#### Trust:

- First priority is to get GRs to come to District meetings.
- Remain fully self-supporting financially.
- Good personal leadership.
- Public Outreach is supporting new groups, having funds for essentials, i.e., rent, Assemblies, funds for special projects.
- Public Outreach within and outside the District.

#### Dream:

- Area Treasurer would be invited to come to a District workshop. All GRs would be invited and the Area Treasurer would discuss what finances are used for and where the money goes so GRs can be more comfortable in their groups.
- Have a District roundup, host the Area World Service Committee (AWSC).
- Help send a GR who can't afford to go to Assembly or District meeting.
- Setting priority: Public Outreach and distributing *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA). Luncheons for clergy and meetings at treatment centers.
- Abundance: Look at placing Alateen literature in all District schools.
- Six groups hosting a convention, finding and welcoming newcomers.

The Chairperson concluded saying, "In closing we would like to say if we use the spiritual principles to face our fears and to face our barriers we can build abundance, hope, and trust allowing opportunities for our dreams to come true."

## Task Force: Spirituality in Area Money Discussions

Mike D. • Chairperson, Panel 55, Michigan

This Task Force developed a presentation for an Area Assembly that incorporates spiritual principles in financial matters and discussions using realistic financial situations that would aid members in relating to their financial discussions.

### Money as a Tool—Not an Emotion

The Task Force members introduced the topic saying, "We have often seen a lot of emotion when discussing financial matters. For some of us, money defines us and measures our worth. For others, it brings fears of scarcity and manipulation. In fact, money is just a tool, a means to realize our dreams and to help fulfill our potential as we are guided by our Higher Power.

"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."

The Task Force members then presented a skit depicting two realistic Area World Service Committee budget meetings. One is a woefully dispirited, fear-based group, the other more hopeful, well-grounded in Al-Anon's spiritual principles.

The skit was followed by a workshop that included a handout that looked at some of the spiritual principles associated with Area finances including trust and the responsibility of the membership with a common goal of unity. It was suggested that this could be used as a helpful tool for new Group Representatives (GRs) coming to Area Assembly for the first time, as well as seasoned members for whom financial discussions cause a degree of distress.

Conference members were invited to participate in small group discussions using the questions in the handout. The presentation concluded, "Let's begin a conversation about how our Area might consider increasing our Reserve Fund so we can dream even bigger."

### Conference members were invited to give feedback on how to use this information in their Areas:

- It is not only about a message of abundance and thinking generously, but the attitude we come with and how we deliver the message paints a bigger picture.
- I realized we were already using spiritual principles, we had just not identified them as such. Trust, gratitude, participation, responsibility—say what you need and the fellowship will respond.
- I wondered who in my Area would initiate a spiritual conversation about money. I am going to talk beforehand to the Area Treasurer and work to hopefully incorporate more spiritual principles as he talks about it. I will ask the AWSC to consider bringing up spiritual principles.
- We can decide how the Area spends money by planning a budget and being the "doers." As Delegates, we can be enthusiastic and bring information back about being a worldwide fellowship.
- The members in my Area gave way more at Area as well as to the WSO when we talked about abundance, gratitude, responsibility and trust.
- We have a Treasurer and a budget, but we don't tie it to big dreams. We talked about finances and more money was contributed to the WSO and Area, but it was not quite connected yet to the link of spiritual principles.
- How can we, as an Area, embrace abundance in discussions? Bring chocolate! I thought about our budget using real expense figures. We need to recognize a budget may not always balance. We can do a "big dream" workshop. Use figures for five years, not just one year. Ask what can we do with a "big dream" workshop, and write that in your checkbook.
- In my Area, it could be named "dwindling fund analysis." We can use questions based on the Board's Vision and Mission statements with money being a tool.
- The dream and spiritual principle of abundance idea stood out. The presentation is a fabulous tool; I would love to see it in print and color. In my Area, we saw an Intergroup

# WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE AGENDA THOUGHT FORCE

Wendy R. • Chairperson, Panel 55, Florida North

give money when it never had before. Contributions also increased in groups and Districts. We are keeping “Higher Power-centered” and constantly looking at spiritual principles.

- A budget is a way to make a dream come true. How big do we dare to dream? We thought we couldn’t do this. Can we make this a way of life where we don’t have to talk about it all the time? How can we maintain this?
- We never named the spiritual principles. We can start putting them in and talking about the budget that way—being grateful in our abundance. We have no money problems. Our Area has money to do billboards. Now I can take back how we are going to get those signs done!
- This was very positive. Please translate into French.

The Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members if there was anything else they needed and where they would like to go with this presentation? Suggestions included:

- I found all three Task Force presentations helpful. Give this handout to the WSO and see if there is a way to use it as a pamphlet because it makes the spiritual principles clear; then it could be on the Conference Approved Literature form to purchase.
- There was suggestion to create service tools out of the handouts.

There was a consensus to ask the WSO staff for a pamphlet or guideline service tool.

Following the consensus, a member asked for clarification of Conference Approved Literature versus a service tool.

- In the *Service Manual*, there is a description on page 103 under “WSO Service Tools.” It describes how service tools are created. We identify a service tool by the regular logo printed and distributed by WSO.
- If we make it into a service tool, I want it to consider the role of Treasurer regarding mentioning money to groups, etc.
- I’d like to see this as a piece of CAL. When I worked on a Task Force, all references stemmed from fear of money. Trying to get people to understand the spiritual principles we can apply for all areas of our lives. Some members avoid reading service-related materials and would rather jump into material designated for recovery. I see it as an opportunity to help members open up the discussion about money matters and the way to do it is through CAL.
- I’ve long felt we are missing a piece of CAL on finances and using spiritual principles of the program in our personal finances because we don’t talk about money. Money is a big issue early in program. We’re not talking about the “elephant in the room” again. I suggest referring it to the Literature Committee.

Following the Delegates’ Sharing Area Highlights meeting prior to the start of the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC), some Delegates expressed a desire to continue the Sharing Area Highlights’ discussion of expanding the role of Delegates at the WSC within the framework of the Conference.

At the 2016 WSC, a request was brought forward by a few Delegates who asked that the Chairperson of the Board appoint a Thought Force to consider ways in which Delegates can be actively and directly involved in developing the Conference agenda.

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) plans the agenda and facilitates the Conference. All Conference members—including the Board and World Service Office (WSO) staff—must follow the same process and procedure to request time on the agenda.

Some Delegates expressed satisfaction with the agenda and felt part of the Conference. A Delegate who was involved in making the request clarified that it was not intended to be divisive, but to give Delegates an opportunity to think bigger and contribute more.

At the end of the 2016 WSC floor discussion, there was a consensus that the request be taken back to the Board to consider creating a Thought Force.

The Chairperson of the Board honored this request and a Thought Force was created for the 2017 Conference. The WSC Agenda Thought Force members include two Delegates each from Panels 54, 55 and 56; the Conference Co-Chair (a Trustee); and the Associate Director—Conference (a staff member).

During the presentation, the Thought Force members reviewed the roles of Conference members and the WSO’s current avenues of communication with the Delegates prior to looking at the current opportunities for Delegates to contribute to the Conference agenda:

## Current Opportunities for Delegates to Contribute to the WSC Agenda

- Chosen Agenda Item (CAI)—submitting, voting, and combining like topics
- Trustee calls
- World Service Conference evaluation form
- Chairperson of the Board (COB) letter—in July 2015, the Chairman of the Board asked Delegates what they wanted to see on the WSC agenda; three of those ideas were presented as WSC Agenda Item breakout sessions
- Floor motions
- Propose a topic for discussion on the Conference floor
- The Delegate sends to the Associate Director—Conference items to be considered for the Conference agenda
- Recommendation following a Thought or Task Force presentation (when the Chairperson of the Board asks the WSC, “Where you want to go from here?”)
- Via Conference Leadership Team, Board of Trustees, Literature Committee, Public Outreach Committee or Policy Committee
- Asked to make suggestions for the 2017 World Service Conference theme

- Content of the Thought Force and Task Force Presentations
- World Service Conference New Member Orientation Session

The Thought Force also noted that the Delegate responses to the question, “What specific feedback would you like to offer the Thought Force working on this?” covered a wide range of opinions. The responses ranged from one end of the spectrum where no change was desired through the idea that Delegates should be included in the Conference Leadership Team.

**The Thought Force then presented its “Potential Opportunities for Delegate Involvement”:**

- If possible, have simplified background and charges for five potential Thought Forces and Task Forces and send them out to the Delegates. Ask the Delegates to rank the three they feel to be the most important/relevant to begin at the next WSC. The more detailed background and charge for the three with the most support is then developed. Delegates indicate their preference for serving on the Committees/Task Forces/Thought Forces just like the current practice.
- Ask the Delegates for specific suggestions for WSC agenda. For instance; because Delegates have a tight schedule but still need to practice self-care, a meeting option during lunch break would be wonderful for those that cannot do the early morning or late evening meeting. Delegates could fix a plate and attend the meeting or eat before or after or perhaps, the hotel could prepare a “brown bag” for those wishing to attend the lunch meeting.
- The breakout sessions for WSC 2016 were very helpful and informative. Delegates made many positive remarks regarding them. Including the Chosen Agenda Items and maybe choosing the ones that were not first but had many additional votes would be great. Alternatively, choosing items like “open vs closed meetings” that could be affecting meeting attendance would also be helpful.
- Start a discussion on AFG Connects asking the 67 Delegates to propose topics for a one-hour full Conference session. All Delegates would brainstorm a way to select one of the topics. Delegates would title the session, write a frame, and select a Delegate to present.
- Instead of asking “Where do you want to go with this?” immediately after a Thought Force or Task Force presentation, give Conference members some time to think about what was presented and assess whether there is a need for another Thought/Task Force to look at the topic. Near the end of the WSC, after all the presentations are completed, Conference members could be asked to raise their hands to show support for which presentations need more focus.
- Have a summary of WSC evaluations available as a document on AFG Connects. This would allow WSC members to read what other WSC members thought about the Conference topics. This could be helpful when Delegates submit Chosen Agenda Items in the future.
- Give Delegates an opportunity to choose the speaker at the opening dinner.

The Thought Force also presented an historical overview of Delegate contributions to the WSC Agenda, which included periods where Delegates served on the Agenda Committee, the Handbook Committee, and the Ask-It-Basket panel and suggested workshop topics, to name a few.

The Thought Force concluded that over the decades there have been many changes and at times more/less involvement of Delegates in the agenda process. The Thought Force hoped the CLT would continue to explore opportunities for Delegate involvement in the WSC agenda.

Conference members had time for discussion directly following the presentation and during the last day of Conference regarding how to proceed.

1. Recommend no action be taken at this time.
2. Does the Conference want to pursue any of the opportunities presented, or have additional suggestions for further Delegate involvement at this time?

**Comments included:**

- Thinking along the lines of mechanics of the week last year, we had great topics for the Delegates to be sharing with each other, but not the time. We don’t have enough time to finish conversations, i.e., the Sharing Area Highlights topics.
- I’d like to add the option of having Delegates on the Conference Leadership Team.
- The logistics of putting together the Conference agenda are complex.
- Thank you for hearing our request last year. I like thinking of the potential options; the Thought Force’s work is inspiring.
- It would be a huge expense, but we need an extra day.
- The WSC is a well-oiled machine.
- I’d like more time for Delegates to share ideas.
- Technology is wonderful. I suggest we consider extending Conference using electronic meetings throughout the year.
- On page 161 of the “World Service Handbook” section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, the second to the last bullet states: “The Delegate sends to the Associate Director of Member Services—Conference items to be considered for the Conference agenda.” As a past member of the CLT, the CLT is open to Delegate suggestions.
- The Conference is so unique; we have people from various levels of experience and points of view, and the roles are not fully understood. Is reacting to everyone’s desire to have something on the agenda the best way to support what we want to do?
- I do get to participate by talking to my assigned Trustee who takes my ideas to the CLT and the Board.
- I have the opportunity to contribute to Conference before and during. The Trustees and WSO staff are willing to stop and talk anytime. What is missing for me is a timeline of when can I contribute to the agenda.
- After Conference, we could use surveys to poll the Delegates regarding what interest there is in modifying the agenda.
- We need more time for Delegates to talk to Delegates—we can utilize technology for Delegate conversations.

- I'd like to leave it up to the CLT to continue looking at ways the Delegates can participate more in the agenda.
- I'd like to see it move into a Task Force to be clear in what is established to have documentation that could be potentially open ended for Delegates to understand more.
- We have a lot of opportunity to participate, such as in breakouts, providing feedback, during reflection time, during meals/breaks. I don't personally need more time. I liked receiving information in advance; I felt included. I suggest leaving this discussion open-ended and seeing what emerges. Of all the ideas, maybe more Chosen Agenda Item discussions.
- I would like the Conference to discuss this next year.
- I just got through with being a part of a workshop on finances—Delegates participated by presenting. Having a Task Force will continue the education. I have always felt part of this WSC.
- As a member of the Thought Force, I don't think a Task Force would be productive. The Thought Force spent a lot of time gathering information already.
- As Delegate, I have been able to participate and have gotten to know the Board and staff.

Following the discussion, there was a consensus to allow the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) the opportunity to consider possible options for continued Delegate involvement in the WSC agenda.

The Conference Chairperson concluded the session by saying, "Thank you. This is wonderful information for the CLT to use in planning the agenda moving forward."

## "WORLD SERVICE HANDBOOK" TASK FORCE

Jennie McC. • Trustee, Task Force Chairperson

In the November 2014 Chairman of the Board letter, Delegates were asked: "Is there anything in the 'Handbook' that you believe needs further clarification or explanation?" Over 75 suggestions from Delegates were received and almost 20 from the World Service Office (WSO) staff. It became clear that whole sections needed revision. A Task Force was formed to review the suggestions from the Delegates and WSO staff.

Two and one-half years later, the Task Force had examined the entire text of the "Handbook" from beginning to end and proposed not only changes to text, but a complete change in the order in which the text is written. The Task Force felt that the new order would improve the ease of use by new members and for all of us experienced users too.

Conference members received the proposed text for review in advance of the Conference in order to maximize the time allotted for review during the Conference session. The Chairperson asked that Conference members review the material with an eye toward *clarity and worldwide usefulness*. The Chairperson acknowledged that "we could 'tweak' this in many ways, many more times. We also realize that it can never be perfect."

The Chairperson reminded Conference members that as a Task Force, the members should keep in mind that the Handbook would be translated and used worldwide, including in countries that have never participated in a democratic election for example. What might be obvious to us might be a new idea to others. Not all structures have Districts; some structures using this "World Service Handbook" are starting as Information Services.

The Chairperson noted that the Board of Trustees had been approving the work of the Task Force in side-by-side sections over the past couple of years. The Board's comments and suggestions had added greatly to the improvement of this "World Service Handbook."

The Chairperson commented that 2005 was the last major revision when it was discussed over several days and the text revisions took up 19 pages in the Appendix. (See *2005 Conference Summary*, pages 29 and 95-114). It was noted that the luxury of days was not available this year to get it approved. In the future, changes will be made as necessary which will make the process shorter and simpler.

The Chairperson concluded by thanking everyone for their conscientious and thoughtful review of the material saying, "Your input has been very valuable."

The process of review was explained. Conference members had received the amended document in advance in order to have time to review it and provide feedback to the Task Force before the Conference. As changes were reviewed, Conference members were asked to consider:

1. Is it accurate?
2. Is it general enough for worldwide use?
3. Does it allow for Area/Structure autonomy?

The Conference reviewed the edits and approved the new text page by page by consensus.

A motion to amend the text on pages 131-165 in the "World Service Handbook" section of the *2014-2017 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) was made, seconded and carried.

*(See Motion #5, page 63).*

# DELEGATES (PANEL 55)

## Elizabeth K., California South

Al-Anon members were *my* hope for the future, at my first meeting. They shared about tough situations and using Al-Anon tools. It gave me hope that kept me coming back.

I had waited years. In high school, my focus shifted from one person's seemingly daily raging to an over awareness of another's drinking, when my friend said, "Your relative is alcoholic; so is mine, I recognize the behavior." When I asked, my teacher said that it's not how much you drink, but how it affects you. She told me about help for families, in Al-Anon. I thought, "I'm not helpless. I can do things for myself and others. *She* has the problem."

After 15 years, exhausted from doing too much, especially for others, I finally began to wonder, "Could Al-Anon help me?" It did. Right away.

I received the news five months into Al-Anon that my loved one was blue in the ambulance. What? Not even that person knew of the cancer. I called my Sponsor, wrote an "Al-Anon letter" (to be read only to her), worked nine Steps in two days, made daily direct amends for 26 days before that person died. With Al-Anon tools, I uncovered love that was buried by hate of the behavior. What a gift. Gratitude for 40 years of members keeping Al-Anon alive *just for me*, gave me the willingness to say yes to Al-Anon service every year, even when feeling scared and not capable.

A nomination to a Service Board scared me, but I shakily accepted. I "knew" I could not do it, robbed of self-confidence by the family disease of alcoholism. I was nauseous for two weeks into each of four positions until my Higher Power led me to those who shared how to do it. My knees nearly buckled at the mic.

Suddenly, after four years, fear of new positions left me. I gained some confidence. I still didn't know how to do everything, but I became able to ask.

As Delegate, I ask questions about the reports we receive. I participate, even at the mic, in discussions and informed group conscience decisions at the World Service Conference, the key to unity among groups worldwide. In the great detail of expenses and revenue, we saw huge and continuing declines in literature sales, formerly two-thirds of our revenue, that meant we no longer were supporting the services we provide to ourselves through the World Service Office. We told our members, who responded with an all-time high in personal contributions that balanced the budget.

Yes, our members *are* our hope for the future. They continue supporting newcomers with sharing in meetings that gave me hope, and they are self-supporting.

## Yvonne de G., California North

I came, unheard, unseen, not talking, not dealing, not feeling, lots a guilt and anger and isolating because it was too painful to see my self-esteem reflected in other people's eyes.

Hope for the future? Me? The girl who never looked back, an illegal alien, an only child who was told she was never born, and her name shall never be mentioned again.

Abandonment—that feeling of abject terror in the pit of my stomach. Living in the prison of my own tortured mind, insanity ate away at me like an already well-chewed bone. I kept coming.

I listened to dead people and heard other peoples' experiences. Lois and others. There were many voices that reached from the past through time and sponsorship. They accompanied me when I was alone and thought I never was going anywhere or would be anything.

They carried me when I was scared, illegal, homeless, destitute, hospitalized and brokenhearted. They lifted me up when I started a monthly speaker meeting, a yearly Day in Al-Anon, the yearly Alateen Sponsors R&R weekend, the Al-Anon meetings in California's state prisons.

When I became the Area Chair and prayed for the willingness to be wrong, they lifted me even higher onto their shoulders, and here I stand before you—*beyond my wildest dreams*.

I am a product of our members who did the work and guided me to: God is, God is mine, and that moment of knowing. I get to dance with God in the honesty of my own truth. I've worked hard, but the Steps have worked me harder.

You gave me voice through your language of the heart. You gave me choice—do I build comfort over character or character over comfort? Do I want to feel better, or do I want to get better?

I am seen because you gifted me your most precious, nonrefundable gift—*time*. You raised me in honesty and strong principles—a facilitator of experience, strength and hope. You expanded my vision to reach my spiritual potential.

*Recovery* is obtaining useable substances from formerly unusable sources. Service is to be of use. No longer do I have a sense of uselessness, for my purpose is to be of use to the God of my understanding. Hope, for me, is the ability to help those who look out upon the world with vacant, frightened eyes living in the solitude of their own insanity.

I am a member. I am the hope. *We* are our members. Our hope for the future? I am waiting for you. I know you'll come, don't worry, I am here for as long as God has a purpose for me to be here. I may not know you yet, but I love you!

## Pat M., Delaware

When I walked through the doors of Al-Anon, I didn't do it for myself. My loved one told me that if he couldn't stop drinking on his own this time, he was going to rehab. What was my response? No, it's not that bad—but, it was. I knew that I was not happy, that I had changed. I thought if I love this person and want to stay with him, then this is my lot in life. I experienced moments of happiness, but was always waiting for the next disappointment or crisis.

Well, he went and I attended the family program. At each meeting, all I said was, "My name is Pat, and I'm here to support my husband." After each meeting, one woman would pat me on my back and say, "Honey, you need Al-Anon." So basically, I went to Al-Anon to shut her up—so I could say, "Okay, I went." And here I am, I kept coming back.

Very early on, wonderful women took me along with them. Through their example, I thought everyone participated in service. It is just what you do. I became the Group Treasurer in disbelief that my home group members would trust me with their money, and I continued on to serve at all levels. I attended my first Conference as our Area's Alternate Delegate. I felt unworthy and unsure of myself and my place, but I was warmly welcomed and felt a part of.

The day after I returned from Conference, my father became ill, and because I listened to my Higher Power, I was there and spent the next week caring for him until he died. Within two weeks, after giving my Delegate's Report as the Alternate Delegate, our Delegate called me and said she had to step down. It took me two weeks to process everything, praying and then talking to my Service Sponsor and the Area Chairperson. I, of course, felt I wasn't ready. My life was not in balance, this wasn't of my choosing. But, I realized that was my old thinking, that I wasn't good enough or that I had to do it perfectly. I came to trust that my Higher Power would provide what was best for my growth.

In my early service positions, I wasn't thinking about our Three Legacies of recovery, unity and service or how service ensures we are here for "Our Members: Our Hope for the Future," as our Conference theme says. As I continued on this path, I came to realize the vital importance of stepping up to ensure that Al-Anon, the fellowship and the organization, is here for generations.

I am so full of gratitude and forever changed. Thank you for being part of my journey of recovery.

## Wendy R., Florida North

I came into Al-Anon full of fear, anger and hurt, carrying a lot of arrogance and denial. I credit my life and sanity today to the wonderful members of Al-Anon who gave me unconditional love and showed me how to truly love myself and others. I had no Higher Power when I came to Al-Anon. I knew there was one; I just did not know how to start a relationship.

Today, I look back and realize how committed I was to looking "out there" at people, places and things for my happiness and joy. There was no self-knowledge, no responsibility taken by me for the life I had created. If only this relationship or that job or my children would do what I wanted I would be happy. My Sponsor told me to look in the mirror, and I would see the problem. Today, I can thank my Higher Power that I am the problem, because if *you* are the problem, then I must wait for you to change for me to feel better.

I began to look at my choices. I made some bad choices and no one forced me to make them. And my behavior! I behaved badly, but before Al-Anon, it was always justified because *you* did something

first. The thought of looking "in-to-me-I-see," was way too scary to even contemplate for a long time. Page 45 in *Courage to Change* (B-16) says, "I can only learn to love myself if I am willing to learn who I am." Today, I still must work very hard at welcoming intimacy. It is one of my biggest character defects. I know I unconsciously chose relationships where there was little chance of intimacy.

I began to understand that my "helping" my loved ones was a way for me to feel more comfortable. If I "fixed it," I didn't have to be afraid of the pain and confusion I would feel when they suffered the consequences. It was self-centered, all about me, fear-based thinking.

After six meetings, I asked a woman I admired to be my Sponsor, she is still my Sponsor today. She said, "Well, if you want me to Sponsor you, you'll have to do service." I didn't have any idea what *that* meant, so I said okay! Service and the wonderful members who do service have taught me courtesy, kindness and respect for others. I want to thank all our members who open their arms and hearts to the newcomer. Our Legacies, my Higher Power, strong sponsorship, service and the loving arms of members continue to help me walk the path of my recovery.

## Patricia K., Florida South

As I look back to my first Al-Anon meeting so many years ago, I remember how angry and fearful I was going to a meeting because someone I knew had a drinking problem. As I sat and listened, I realized that I may not be drinking, but I too had a problem with alcohol, and it was affecting my life.

There are people from my first meeting who are still in my life, people who loved me when I couldn't love myself. They taught me to feel my feelings, not judge them; that everything wasn't black and white. God made colors too.

A meeting that I didn't want to go to became a meeting I couldn't stay away from. This was especially true when I became involved in service. My first service position was greeter—still one of my favorites. Where else could I share a hug, or extend a hand to someone who needs it? You might have noticed my name tag. We used them at our home group during my greeting days. It keeps me grounded and reminds me what I was like back then, when someone was there to welcome me.

Many years and many hugs later, my Al-Anon journey has been amazing. I've stretched and grown in every position I've held. I've met some wonderful people, especially my Sponsor, who always has my back when I ask for help. During Panel 55 elections, she encouraged me to stand for all positions I was qualified for, and that "God will do the rest." Here I am standing at the podium of the World Service Conference. Delegate from Florida South. How awesome is that?

Of all the experiences, information, comments and questions that were part of my first World Service Conference; there was one question that was more thought-provoking than the rest. It was, "What can you do to ensure that Al-Anon will be there in the future?"

I've learned about finances and for the first time, I understand them and can talk intelligently about them. Apparently, I'm not alone, because we had an amazing financial year. I will take those lessons with me and remind others that although we are a loving organization, it takes money to keep it going. Let's keep those contributions flowing and literature selling.

As my third and final year as a Delegate ends, I have no idea what the future holds. I do know that God will take me where I'm meant to be. I'll share a favorite quote from Lois W., "Anybody can

start something, but carrying it out is the real challenge. And all the rest of you are doing that job. You're all founders in your own right, carrying the message." (*Many Voices, One Journey* [B-31], page 1)

## Dana Rae H., Hawaii

"Anonymity makes it possible to leave not only our surnames, but all labels and expectations with which we have been burdened outside the Al-Anon rooms." (*Courage to Change* [B-16], page 20).

What a gift it is, to be here in Virginia Beach, to be both physically and mentally present at my third and final World Service Conference, as a fellow member, a representative of my Area and most importantly, inspired by the spiritual principle of Tradition Twelve—anonymity.

Working the first three Steps with a new Sponsor brought me to my current service position. Through what felt like an arduous bout of personal prayer and meditation, I came to a new understanding of humility, which allowed me to put my name forward for Delegate. During this period of service, I have had an opportunity to witness my insanity and sanity, focusing on spirituality equally in my personal life and in my journey of service. This has allowed me to find balance for myself.

I believe the main goal I can achieve for myself and for our fellowship is to be a willing member who continues to open the door to welcome newcomers and returning members with a smile and a hug and by opening my heart and really listening to everyone. The grace of my changing perspective is seeing that we are all vulnerable human beings with unique gifts, assets and character traits to live with or change as we like. I truly feel that no one of us is any more important than another.

This past January I celebrated my 25th Al-Anon birthday. Because of that and other opportunities to share my story, I had the motivation to look back and fondly recall the members who were in the rooms when I arrived, hurt, broken, not knowing what hope was. Even though they are not physically present anymore, their experience, strength and hope is what keeps me coming back. What was said? Who was there? I didn't know what I didn't know, but I did feel the love and hope. Today that hope is planted in my heart and my promise is to do my best to pass it on, as it was so freely given to me.

"Today's reminder" from *Courage to Change*, (B-16), page 20 states, "In taking my place among the thousands of anonymous individuals who make up the Al-Anon Family Groups, I know that I never again have to be alone...."

## Sandy W., Illinois North

I walked into Al-Anon bringing with me all the despair I had stored up from a lifetime of living with the alcoholism of loved ones. I was always looking for a solution to fix others, or to fix the unhappiness in my own life. Al-Anon was my last resort, and I only came because I wanted to commiserate with others. Instead, what I heard was strength from the members who shared how the application of the Al-Anon program helped them work through life issues with positive results. The honesty and actions of those members gave me my first glimpse of hope that my life could improve as well.

When the Group Representative of my meeting invited me to attend a family night at a local treatment center for alcoholics, I received another ray of hope. Prior to the family night meeting, I was arguing with the alcoholic and kept replaying my frustrations over and over. But my anger dissipated and my attitude improved after sharing with those family members at the treatment center

how Al-Anon had improved my life. I realized that helping others would not only provide relief, but would also provide a feeling of positive self-worth.

Becoming a Delegate has been the pinnacle of all my service achievements in Al-Anon. I wouldn't be here today without the support and encouragement from the Al-Anon members in my Area. As I walked through this experience, and not always gracefully, it was the acceptance and encouragement of my World Service Conference peers that paved the way for me to express myself and my beliefs for the issues brought before the Conference these past three years.

There is still much work to be done as alcoholism is still as pervasive as it was when Al-Anon was founded—and maybe even more so today. Further, as technology changes and as our culture adapts to new behaviors, there are both challenges and opportunities in Al-Anon's future. Helen Keller once said, "Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence." I have optimism for the future of Al-Anon. I have faith in the Panel 56 and 57 Delegates, and all those forthcoming, that they will meet future challenges head-on, using the spirit of the Legacies to guide them. I believe that there is much to be achieved on the horizon. It is through the relevance of this Conference theme that Al-Anon will sustain its growth. It is through our members. That is "Our Hope for the Future."

## Brenda L., Indiana

I'm very grateful that two women many years ago sitting in a kitchen while their significant others participated in an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting had the foresight to think into the future and realize the need for help for the friends and families of alcoholics. I'm also extremely grateful that 60 years ago, a young man in Pasadena, California wrote to Lois W. to ask if it would be possible to have meetings for teens of alcoholics.

Several months ago, I had the opportunity to participate in an Al-Anon workshop based on the booklet *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78). One part of the workshop was titled, "Learning to Care." We were asked, "What do I care about in Al-Anon?" The answer came to me immediately. I care about those still suffering who haven't found the rooms of our fellowship.

When I found the rooms of Al-Anon, I'd never heard of Alcoholics Anonymous or Al-Anon or Alateen. I went to a counselor because I was concerned that my significant other would kill himself the next time, and I didn't know what to do. I think outreach for our fellowship is very important. I want everyone to know there is help if you're troubled by someone else's drinking. I think about our children; I was an adult when I found the rooms of our fellowship. I needed that help so desperately, and I can only imagine what it's like to be a child and not understand why mom or dad has this disease.

I'm so grateful for the many gifts I've received in this fellowship. The greatest gift of course is my spirituality and a relationship with the God of my understanding. I'm so grateful for the many Al-Anon friends worldwide who are there anywhere in the world I go.

Here at the World Service Conference, we talk about things that impact Al-Anon and the future of Al-Anon. What does the future of Al-Anon look like? As the Delegate, I bring back to my Area the things we discuss at the Conference every year. I tell the membership that I'm only the messenger. Don't shoot the messenger, especially when we talk about finances. It's not *my* fellowship, it's our fellowship.

I feel so much gratitude to be recovering from the effects of

someone else's drinking and my own "stinking thinking." Can we make sure that Al-Anon and Alateen will be there for those newcomers who so desperately need the help and hope that I've been so blessed to enjoy? It is only in giving that we receive. We are all the future, the hope of Al-Anon and Alateen!

## Betty R., Kansas

Tradition One says, "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity." Concept One says, "The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups." This Tradition and Concept point to who is important in our program—the members. When we come to the World Service Conference, we are bringing with us the thoughts and observations of the members of our Areas.

In my hometown, groups have members of all ages, from mid-20s to 80-plus. The young ones bring us energy, excitement and dedication to our program; the older ones bring us wisdom through their experience, strength and hope. We work together to make our groups the best they can be. This gives me hope for the future, that, because we work together, we make our little corner of the world the best it can be.

I came into service work afraid of people. I grew up on an isolated farm in the middle of Kansas. I was taught by my well-meaning parents not to trust people outside the family. Once I got into service work, I found that my opinion counts. As District Representative, then Area Chairperson, Alternate Delegate, and now Delegate, I had to learn tact and diplomacy, in order to deal effectively and compassionately with others. I studied the *Service Manual*, as well as the Traditions and Concepts. I know that there is hope, for everyone, as we work our program.

This program gave me confidence to do what I think is right. It changed me from being the mouse in the corner, afraid to say anything, to being able to speak up in groups and to tell my story at Area events. It gave me the ability to face confrontation. By what I say and do, I can give others hope that they can have a better future, if they work for it.

I tell people that I keep coming back partly because I want to give back the hope that I have received, as well as the help I continue to receive. I thank everyone for being part of my journey.

## Lori H., Kentucky

When I thought about this talk, it made me realize that this is my last year as Delegate and how fast it all has gone. There is so much to do to help carry the message as Delegate. All of you here and those who left in the previous two years have helped me grow to become the person I am today.

My first year as Delegate was so scary; yet, many helped me with a smile, a hug or just a welcoming seat at the lunch table. As I got to know you, we shared "our stories," and just as we do with newcomers at our meetings, I began to feel a common bond and not so alone anymore.

Last year, I was very ill. In fact, just the day before I left for Conference, I spent all day in the emergency room with a large blood clot in my neck. My doctor advised me not to come. But, who would come in my place at such short notice? Who would represent Kentucky? Who would carry the message to and from my groups?

I had to ask for a wheel-chair assist in the airport. I got to the Conference and people saw me trying to get my luggage and our

Panel shirts up to my room. They jumped right up and helped me. I had to leave for medical treatments three times while I was here last year. First, I had to set up the appointments to do that, and then, I had to ask fellow Delegates who I had only known a short year to take notes and cover for me while I was gone. All of this was huge for me! It was very humbling. I am not used to asking for help. People helped me; *you* helped me and more. You sent cards, emails, gifts and you prayed for me through a really hard surgery. Most of all, you loved me.

This is what we do in Al-Anon. We give help to people who have been affected by someone else's drinking, and there are many ways we've been affected. Tradition Five tells me that. I want to be there for someone else as you and countless others have been there for me.

We are all members of Al-Anon. We must continue to do what we do so that we are the "shining stars" for future members. The friendships I have made as Delegate have made my world larger. I have gotten to travel to Tennessee, California, Georgia and Hawaii to see my fellow Delegates. There is a great big world out there, and I want to continue to carry this message of hope and help.

## Debbie H., Manitoba/Northwest Ontario

Professionally, I knew about Al-Anon and A.A. long before alcoholism came knocking at my door and infiltrated my personal life. The alcoholic in my life got started in A.A. Of course, I thought I wasn't the one with the problem, and thought I could manage things as long as sobriety was working. Not so.

When a significant relapse happened, that's when I became overwhelmed and desperate and realized I needed help as well. It took time for me to realize that my well-being—physical health, mental health and spiritual health—had taken a toll as well. I wasn't living. I was existing—but barely; always feeling like I was on "the edge." Not what I preached in professional workshops. It was time to practice what I preached and make changes to my own life.

I found a group close by and started my Al-Anon journey in 2004. The compassion and support from members at my first meeting, which incidentally almost didn't happen because the doors were locked at the church and we had to improvise at a coffee shop, was just what I needed. I felt welcomed and cared for very quickly.

Many of us in Al-Anon/Alateen do not feel we have anything to offer when we first arrive at the doors of Al-Anon. We have feelings of despair, worthlessness, frustration, and disappointment regarding the path our lives have taken. We don't see ourselves as healthy individuals with purpose and value until we fully understand how the family disease of alcoholism has affected us and those we love.

It is through our fellowship, with caring and compassionate new and long-time members that we find comfort, hope, and finally, peace and serenity. Our attitudes change over time—fear becomes hope, anger becomes compassion, and self-pity becomes self-worth.

Service work has kept me focused on what I need to do in my personal recovery. It is a commitment to myself to expand my recovery and learn from those with experience. I feel privileged to have been able to do service work in several areas—Group Representative, District Representative, Special Events, and now as Delegate. I am rewarded daily because my recovery has come from participating in service work and meeting people in Al-Anon from many different Areas.

There are challenges and successes in any organization, and our fellowship has also experienced them. We will continue to grow

from our mistakes and share with others on improvements, as well as celebrate the achievements that our fellowship has had, as we continue to help those in need. "I try to be happy with what is..." *The Forum*, page 22, March 2017.

## Connie C., Maryland/DC

My name is Connie, and I'm a grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen. Back when I first uttered these words, I never dreamed that I would become part of the future for the fellowship of Al-Anon and that someday, I would be a Delegate to the World Service Conference.

I entered Al-Anon because I had been raised by parents who both had alcoholics. They tried hard to break that cycle, but I think some of it was just in my DNA. From a very early age, I felt different and fearful. I felt that everyone else had life's answers. I was so confused about my feelings, and I couldn't understand why people did the things they do. My parents gave me clear, strong moral guidelines, but no one around me seemed to be following the rules!

When I married an alcoholic, fear of his disease and envy of his recovery brought me to Al-Anon. But I found so much more than I expected. You people had life's answers and you were willing to share them with me. You helped me understand and learn to navigate the world I live in. What a relief. It wasn't easy, but I went to meetings, listened, got a Sponsor and did everything she said. She taught me how to live the recovery program of Al-Anon.

The gift of our Three Legacies and the 36 spiritual principles that they contain is the greatest gift I have ever received. The Twelve Steps help me put myself in the right context and clear away the wreckage of my past. The Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts guide me every day in my relationships with everyone around me, whether I'm dealing with my significant other, my family, fellow Al-Anon members, coworkers or those in the marketplace. I've never had a problem in my life that I haven't been able to solve by using these spiritual guidelines. Therefore, I am a lifelong student of our program's spiritual principles and spend a great deal of time learning to apply them to my life and sharing my experience with others.

I cannot express my gratitude for the Al-Anon program and the people who have been my guides through my recovery. It is a debt I can only repay by passing it on and being a responsible, accountable, loving and giving trusted servant, to the best of my ability every day.

## Mike D., Michigan

Thank you God and Michigan AFG! In October 2014, I was honored and humbled by my fellow members of Michigan AFG who voted me to be their voice at the World Service Conference. I was not ready and did not feel worthy.

God doesn't choose those who are ready, God readies those who are chosen! In my many years in service, I have only volunteered to serve twice. Every other position I was asked, or told it was my time to serve. God had a plan. My early Sponsors drilled into me, "When asked to serve the answer is yes!" I learned to trust in those around me; that they saw in me what I did not see in myself. My Higher Power has always been there for me and those who had gone before me.

I have felt for many years that the newcomer is the most important person in the meeting. Since my early days in Al-Anon, I have always wanted Al-Anon to be there for the newcomer as it was there for me.

I am very grateful for my participation in the 2016 Task Force on "Welcoming Other Communities, Cultures and Beliefs." Presenting this at Assembly, along with "The Big Question" and "Dream" in 2015 have been major highlights of my time as Delegate. This year, the "Spirituality in Area Money Discussions" has added more objectivity to my experience. Communicating with the membership about the "Prayer for Today," I am learning that the membership, their voices and their views, are a lot different than I had thought. I have learned much about our membership from those who speak loudly and from the "silent voices."

As a member in recovery, I practice what I am taught until I learn something different and hopefully better. Our membership is like a beautiful crystal. Have we become so rigid that we may shatter? For "Our Members: Our Hope for the Future," our membership must evolve and grow along with today's communities, cultures and beliefs as well as those to come in the future. Our Membership must be more like leather; flexible, comfortable and pliable to fit the current society. We must not use the wonderful tools of the Al-Anon program for individual recovery, to hold back the whole program and cause it to become stagnant. Balance between tradition for the individual and evolution for the Al-Anon program is difficult, but balance is a wonderful thing to strive for.

"Our Members: Our Hope for the Future"—let's make all newcomers comfortable at their first meeting so they will want to come back!

## Mary H., Minnesota South

Today, I am honored to thank all of you for welcoming me into the family of Al-Anon service—for the world. Here, I have met a wide breadth of diverse people whom I found to be just like me. Regardless of our differences in age, gender, race, culture, language and income, we share the same fears, complaints, obstacles, attractions and desires.

When I came to Al-Anon, I found a family of friends and supporters in a small meeting group. As Group Representative, my new family grew to include all the groups in our District. By attending the Area Assembly, I discovered I was part of a larger extended family. Service through the Area World Service Committee brought me close to others where I could give and receive love on a scale beyond what I ever imagined. When I became Delegate, I was told that world service expands the circle of bonding love to encompass not just the nation or continent, but the globe. I nevertheless reacted with awe at the magnitude of the Al-Anon message and its power to give hope worldwide.

I came to Al-Anon exhausted from solutions that did not work. I thought if I could only word my lecture correctly, others would change, and I would feel better. Filled with fear and anger, I became obsessed with changing my sick and suffering alcoholic spouse in order to meet my needs. I plotted, I shouted, I raged, I complained, I threatened and, finally, I reluctantly went to Al-Anon. There, I met others whose fear and anger had been relieved.

Strong Al-Anon members who worked the Steps and practiced the Al-Anon principles reached out to me and patiently gave me hope as they shared their experience. Slowly, and sometimes with protest, I did what they did because I wanted the internal spiritual calm that they had. I would not be here today if members had not reached out and made sure "the hand of Al-Anon would always be there."

Today, I stand on the world stage of the hope of Al-Anon. I am here because of the members who came before me. Group members and trusted servants in all aspects of service gave me the hope I seek to share. In every meeting we attend, every service

we perform, and every action we take, we carry hope. We know that as we share ourselves, we save ourselves. We believe that every person, affected by someone else's drinking, can learn to live happily and love completely. Our hope will continue into the future as we reach out to share our lives and our love and boldly declare, "Let It Begin with Me." Together, we are the hope for the future of Al-Anon.

## Diane C., New York North

As a member of Al-Anon for over 30 years, I am reminded of the part of Tradition Three that says, "The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend." When I walked through the doors of Al-Anon, I was both. Though these people whom I loved and cared about are no longer in my life, I am still recovering from the effects of these relationships.

Growing up in the family disease of alcoholism, I felt like I was a nobody, and the only thing that I could do to show that I was somebody was to take care of others. I learned that doing a good deed every day would make me a good person. I became a minister and eventually a union steward—professions that do good.

When a friend of mine whom I represented was on the verge of getting fired because of a problem with alcohol, I felt that I needed to do something to fix the situation. I asked myself what I should have done to prevent this. Should I have noticed this and tried harder to help her? I became devastated enough by this situation to enter the rooms of Al-Anon. There, I learned that it was not what I did or did not do. I also learned that I was suffering from the effects of living with the family secret of alcoholism and that there was a program of recovery available for me. I continue to be helped through practicing the Twelve Steps each day and trying to apply the Traditions and Concepts to my daily life.

Many people come to my meetings for the same reason I did. Today, I Sponsor four people who grew up similar to me and who share the need to do good. I am so grateful that I can share my experience, strength and hope with them. As members of this worldwide fellowship, we are recovering together.

Just last week, I had lunch with eight lovely former Alateen members who are now starting their adult lives. They are still feeling the effects of having grown up with the family disease of alcoholism. Some of them are struggling to figure out life and want a better life for their own children. Some of them admitted that they needed to start coming to Al-Anon even though they had not transitioned into Al-Anon directly from Alateen. They continue to need the experience, strength and hope that this program gives to us. I know Al-Anon will be there to meet their needs because I feel the hope every week at my home group. "Let It Begin with Me"!

## Ginny C., Ohio

One of my favorite book titles is *Courage to Change*. Al-Anon has given me the courage to change in ways I never could have anticipated. Every time I have listened to these three-minute talks, I am always amazed by the personal trials many of the Delegates experienced during their term. Until a few months ago, I thought mine was my husband being unemployed for the first time in his life. Then my cardiologist told me I had to have my heart repaired soon.

Once I was over the shock, I thought to myself, Al-Anon has gotten me through much more emotionally painful experiences; it can get me through this, "One Day at a Time" changing the things I can, "First Things First." I recognized the familiar denial I had slipped

into over the years. After all, my mother lived till she was 94-years old. I had thought maybe the doctor was wrong in his earlier prediction. Now I needed to use my program and the "Three A's," Awareness. Acceptance. Action.

Facing fear is not new to me. At my first World Service Conference as an Alternate Delegate, my goal was to go to the mic once a day! Every time I face a new service challenge, I remember my first. Only six months into my Al-Anon program, I was an Alternate Group Representative at the Ohio Assembly. I had little idea what I was supposed to do or what the Assembly even did. Thanks to more seasoned members in service, I was taken under their wings, and gradually, I learned to overcome my fear. Whenever I am trying to encourage others to become a Group Representative, I tell them, "If I could do it, you could do it, too."

The other thing I tell new members in service is that I got here by a series of "yeses." I only hope that I can mentor someone else just as our Past Delegate had repeatedly asked me if I had considered this position or that. Always keep an open mind.

The opportunity to participate in this Conference humbles me. I still sometimes feel like that scared little Alternate GR. I hope my fear and my courage to change will inspire those in the future.

Our members are our hope for the future. It is my job, as a seasoned member, to help them have the courage to change and to face their fears, whatever they may be. God willing, my example will help others face their fears and forge forward into the future.

## Debbie P. Ontario South

Last year, when the Conference Leadership Team asked for words that could be included in this year's Conference theme, there was no question I would submit the word *hope*. I can also share, without a doubt, when asked of my Area's greatest asset, it would be our *members*. Without our members sharing their hope, I am not sure there would be a *future*. At least not the one I now envision that will continue to offer recovery from the devastating effects of the family disease of alcoholism. To me, hope is the essence of what I have gained in Al-Anon and what I most want to share.

I was hopeless, filled with despair and fear when I arrived. Working the Steps, I have uncovered what I honestly didn't know existed. A valuable and very precious *me*. Working the Traditions, I discovered "how to play well with others," and not to be a door mat or "Miss Bossy Boots." Offering myself in service, and trying my best to apply the Concepts of Service especially in this current role of Delegate, my character defects have been placed on steroids and my personal recovery has been forcefully propelled onto a fast track.

I struggled with putting my name forward to be Delegate. Once elected, I experienced an amazing spiritual awareness. I knew I was no better than anyone else and now perhaps no less than. Experiencing this awareness was a great equalizer for me.

I have been challenged with expectations of myself and of Al-Anon. But I have discovered neither of us is perfect. In my humanness and that of others, have we at times fallen short? Have we always been transparent and inclusive? I have been at times disillusioned and disappointed with unrealistic expectations. But the spiritual principles of what we are all about have not disappointed any of us. There is passion, willingness, unity, humility, courage, wisdom, grace, gratitude, forgiveness, strength and hope to be found.

It is the individual members working collectively, striving to move forward into the future. It is a power greater than each of us as

individuals. It is the collective wisdom of a Power greater than ourselves.

Recovery from the family disease of alcoholism does not work when I am in isolation. I need you. I may not always like or want you, but I need you. And maybe, just maybe, you need me too.

I have discovered there is a “self-correcting wisdom in Al-Anon.” The spiritual principles are tougher, stronger and more powerful than any personality. My belief and trust may be naïve, but the transformations I have witnessed and been a part of, have been nothing short of miraculous! My gratitude is beyond words!

## Barbara G., Pennsylvania

After having grown up in an alcoholic family, I was living in the rubble of a second failed marriage to an alcoholic. I appeared to be standing on my feet, but emotionally and psychologically, I crawled into that first Al-Anon meeting on my hands and knees. Then, something amazing happened for me—as members shared, I knew I had come home.

Almost immediately, I was “adopted” by my first Al-Anon Sponsor. She was a longtime member with 20-plus years. She knew what it took to recover in this program.

I was the oldest of three. As the disease progressed in our home, I became the other mother, the protector, the manager of calm. I learned well how to be overly responsible. Always judging the safety of a situation, I could scan for a mood from the next room. Over the years, I had lots of opportunities to perfect my defects.

When I met my first husband, everything seemed to be perfect. Everything, that is, except *that one thing*. You see, I had no idea that alcohol was the problem, and it would take me 15 more years to discover that. One day, I woke up and realized life looked a lot like the family I grew up in.

In a matter of months after the first marriage ended, I fell *madly* in love with my second alcoholic husband. *Madly* being the operative word. Do you know the definition of insanity? That’s right!

When I finally crawled into the rooms of Al-Anon, my Sponsor did what good Sponsors do, she put me to work. Within a month, I was getting our literature from the women’s locker room. I still have that locker combination in the back of my *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) book.

Later, she suggested that I take on a real job, Group Treasurer/Literature, then Group Representative. Seven years into my recovery journey, I became District Representative. I worked with amazing members in service and had countless opportunities to practice the program.

In 2014, after much prayer and reflection, I stood for Delegate. My first World Service Conference was a magical experience and once again my extended Al-Anon family was there to guide and inspire me.

Then, in 2015 my mom died suddenly. She had been ill, but not at the point of death. It was a shock and my Al-Anon family was there to love me through it.

Even though I grieve the loss of my mother, I have no regrets because the members of Al-Anon showed me how to love her. My mother and I were reconciled in the last few years of her life. I count that as a true Al-Anon miracle.

## Lorraine D., Quebec West

There was alcohol in my life from a very early age, and I was very deeply affected by it.

I first heard about Al-Anon while I was studying to be a nurse, at age 20. The teacher said that there was help for the wives of alcoholics. I remember her exact words: “These wives can be happy, even if their husbands are drinking too much.”

A little later, my sister was very unhappy because her husband was drinking so much. I was able to tell her that there was help for her in Al-Anon. With the help of the program, she learned to be serene, despite many problems in her life.

In my marriage, alcoholism was becoming very present, and I began to wish for the serenity Al-Anon was giving my sister. During my first meeting, I cried my eyes out. I kept going each week, because I loved the members and what I heard. As a result, I stopped obsessing with the alcoholic, was able to sleep even when my husband got home late, stopped making lists of things for him to do and I even bought myself a car. Just as I had heard so many years before, I was happy, even if my husband drank too much.

I have always been involved in service work, living by the idea that “when I got busy, I got better.” In my various service positions, I felt loved and supported by the Al-Anon members. I must also admit that serving our fellowship is not always an easy task. However, because serving gives me energy and because it is a much-needed tool of recovery for me, I never give up.

In my Area, many parents and grandparents are coming to our meetings. Younger members are also coming, but they seldom stay long enough to get involved in service work beyond the group level. This is when our theme, “Our Members: Our Hope for the Future,” speaks volumes to me and this is where my heart and my work will be after I finish my term as Delegate. The needs are great for the families affected by alcoholism, and because I can attest that Al-Anon changes our lives for the better, as a member, I am responsible, and I must be part of our hope for the future.

Serving as Delegate has been a blessing in my life. I wish to thank my Service Sponsor, all of the Trustees and Delegates and all of the staff at WSO, because you were always there for me. Because of all of you, I have been a better trusted servant.

To know Al-Anon is a blessing; staying in Al-Anon is a greater blessing.

## Phyllis H., Rhode Island

When I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting 31 years ago, I had no hope for the future. Although I did not yet know that I was powerless, I did know that my life was completely unmanageable. Through the gift of desperation, I reached out to a friend in the program. He put me in touch with a member and she took me to my first meeting. I still remember the love and acceptance that I received from that room full of strangers. They were happy to see me, even though they didn’t know me, and they encouraged me to keep coming back. That night was the beginning of my hope for the future.

Recently, when I was discussing this talk with my Sponsor, whom I met two years ago when she was my World Service Conference mentor, I was reminded that we learn from the past, we live in the present, and that hope is our future. As I look back on my path of recovery, I can see how different my life is because I now have hope, even in the darkest of moments.

In 2009, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. This diagnosis and the subsequent treatment was a life-changing event. Thanks to

Al-Anon and my commitment to my recovery, life went on. I continued working my program and getting more and more involved in service.

Then, in 2013, I learned that the breast cancer had returned. For the first time, I realized that someone had to be in the two percent to have a recurrence, and I was one of them. My best option was surgery. Unfortunately, because of the earlier radiation treatment, there were complications, requiring multiple surgeries over the past three years.

At the same time that I learned that my cancer had returned, a dear friend of mine in the program was diagnosed with stage four lung cancer. Eight months later, she passed away. During those eight months, recovery enabled me to be present in the here and now, to accept where I was at any given moment and to be a listening person with an open heart and open mind.

Although I miss my friend every day, I am so grateful for the past when she was in my life, for the present where I am carrying on with the important service work that she and I were involved in, and that, as Delegate, I am continuing to play a role in ensuring that Al-Anon will always be here for anyone in need—that there is hope for the future.

## Tarcila F., Tennessee

I have long been destined for Al-Anon, but I would not have been one who found it in a “Dear Abby” column. I quit reading her because I thought I had better answers. For a while I thought of having my own advice column. I’d call it, “Tarcila Talks.”

I was married to an alcoholic when I realized that I would have to be the one to financially support our children. The disease of alcoholism had just given me my first gift; I started to college! There, I read a brief description of Al-Anon in a psychology textbook. It said that I could be happy whether he was still drinking or not. I went home and tried not reacting to my husband’s extreme behaviors and my life got better. I didn’t know that was detachment.

I graduated with high honors and as the president of my class, but I would come home from a good day at school to be belittled and criticized, so deep inside I felt I was a failure. Our marriage dissolved as his alcoholism progressed. Ten years later, I realized my son had an alcohol problem.

When I finally worked up the courage to go to a meeting, no one was there. I went back much later, and at first, the slogans sounded hokey. The hand-holding felt foolish. I hated the part that said, “... the same way we already love you.” I certainly didn’t love any of you, and I only came because I could drop my son at an A.A. meeting down the hall. But, under the guise of taking my son to A.A. meetings, my Higher Power held me captive in Al-Anon meetings until He gave me another gift. I finally began to hear what was being said! The first thing I heard was the “Three Cs” which actually gave me my life back. For the first time in many years, I felt joy! As my mind opened, my life began to change.

I have heard it said, “Oh what if the newcomer comes and there is no one there?” Or “What if the newcomer comes and they hear this or that?” I believe that God only brings us to Al-Anon when we are ready, and that no matter what is actually said, He will open our hearts to hear just exactly what we need to hear, when we need to hear it.

No meeting is perfect, nor is any member, or potential member. They don’t have to be, because it is God who changes us from within, to assure our individual recovery and to assure the future of Al-Anon through its members, for they *are* our hope for the future.

## Joyce Y., Texas East

When I walked through the doors of Al-Anon I was very fearful with low self-esteem, but survived by being arrogant and self-righteous. The pamphlet *Alcoholism, a Merry-Go-Round Named Denial* (P-3), family counseling and my inability to like myself brought me to my first meeting. I was immediately hooked through the love, acceptance and hope I heard and felt. Face-to-face Al-Anon meetings were welcomed. My introduction to service came when I was elected Group Representative after six months. Maybe something not generally recommended, but it worked for me and provided an opportunity to regularly have five hours of in-depth Al-Anon meetings in the car. It also provided a healthier focus in my life while allowing my husband to find his way without my help and interference. Practicing the Traditions in the safe environment of Al-Anon business taught me ways to practice them in my family. Through service, I learned to trust myself and others. This allowed me to do my job while being offered experience, strength and hope without criticism.

Lessons in healthy grieving of the loss of hopes and dreams for our family came during my husband’s choice to go out for a “Third Masters Degree” in drinking. I stayed through the Masters, but realized I was not willing to stay if he worked on his PhD. I am so grateful he never chose to pursue that next degree.

My midlife crisis was accepting a job transfer from Arkansas to Houston. Thanks to our programs of A.A. and Al-Anon, we had the courage to see it as an adventure with a grateful attitude. My service sabbatical was brief as I realized program and service were my lifelines. Lessons in compassion and letting go came while watching our son go through his own addictions and sobriety and later while walking with my husband as we faced his cancer and eventual death with courage and serenity.

As a Delegate, I have experienced tremendous spiritual growth through “obedience to the unenforceable,” presuming goodwill, and the ability to listen and learn during discussions about deficit budgets, the Just for Today prayer, reaching out to others using technology and social media, understanding spiritual abundance in finances, accepting and welcoming newcomers to meetings, and communicating effectively through the links of service.

The *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 190 brings understanding to the importance of Concept Four, my favorite. It states, “Participation also responds to our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong. The Al-Anon ideal of a working partnership could never regard any member as second class....” I have gone from second class to first class. Thank you for your willingness to serve and assure this program will be here for future generations. But most importantly, thank you Higher Power for the gift of awareness and enlightenment I have been given.

## Chris C., Texas West

“Our Members: Our Hope for the Future” means a lot of different things to me today. What comes to mind is that I am a member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon before I am anything else. I feel that I know what it feels like to be a member, and yet, I wonder where are the other potential members today? Where are the new members to take the place of those that have gone before me?

In my home group, there were way more than 30 chairs—not anymore. On the best days, we have five or six members. We choose to not give up the group and close the door. We are connected to an A.A. family, and we felt that in working in Tradition Five, it was important to carry the message to family and friends of

alcoholics. So, we persevered, changed our meeting time, changed our meeting type and continued to be present. We prayed, we did a lot of praying and giving. We gave our money to all our service arms as much as possible. We continued to be present at our Assembly with a Group Representative. We keep coming back, and we are still there.

Al-Anon is my passion. I love Al-Anon and what it has given me—a life beyond my wildest dreams. How can I share this with people who are not here? Where are they? Today, I know if I am not willing to continue to carry the message, who will? I was privileged to be on the committee of a rally in Dallas this past year. I was not an Al-Anon member there; I was the local Twelfth Step representative. It felt very strange to convince my Area to attend, and all they were worried about was their personal-anonymity.

Do we know how to carry the message? Are we sure? How can we assure ourselves and others that this wonderful program that was so freely given over 65 years ago, will always be there for my children and grandchildren, your children and grandchildren, if we are not willing to carry the message ourselves? It's not just about who sits in the chair in the home group, but who still walks the street alone, damaged by the disease of alcoholism with no place to go. Only we know the answer for that—Step Twelve! Carry the message, sit in the chairs, buy the literature and never give up! I will *always* be a member of Al-Anon, and being a member, I will *never* be afraid to carry the message.

# INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

## Maria M., Mexico

Hello, I am Maria from Mexico. I am going to read my sharing with all of my love for you.

I grew up in a home where alcohol was present even before I was born. I am the eldest daughter of four children.

My mother took me to Al-Anon meetings. Confused and angry, I thought my alcoholic husband was responsible for my emotional issues. After years of attending the meetings, I realized those conflicts were originated by my father's alcoholism. Memories frozen, my fear came out. I recognized that I did not want to remember the crazy shouting of my father in his progressive disease. My siblings and I hid under the bed and trembled when we saw my father's desperation as he raged. He used to tell my mother, "Please take off those giant spiders!" He suffered so much. Many times, he tried to kill himself. Once, I told him with my heart filled with fear and crying, "Dad, please don't hang yourself." As a child, I was in true pain when I saw that.

On March 21, this year, we celebrated 45 years of my father in A.A. With love, we thank God for life, for my sister's recovery, and he is so happy that his eldest daughter is here today. I am convinced of the spiritual benefits the Al-Anon recovery program gives to families of alcoholics.

Now I can tell you that I share with my loved ones that new quality of life. I'm learning that one of my blessings is that now my two children are in the recovery process. My son in NA, and my daughter in Al-Anon. That fills me with satisfaction and gives me hope that my grandchildren's lives will be healthier.

I want to thank God for the opportunity to be here with you today, for being allowed to be in service at the General Service Office in Mexico, and to be part of this Conference with all of you. Thank you.

## Arnold H., New Zealand

My journey in Al-Anon Family Groups started back in 1990. My wife wrote me a note that said, "I think I'm an alcoholic." Being a bloke, that wasn't an issue. I just said, "I can fix that!" I rang a sober alcoholic whom we both knew, and my wife started her recovery journey.

On her return from her introduction into A.A., I was instructed, "You'll have to go to Al-Anon."

I, being eager to please and always trying to minimize any tension which I felt existed in our relationship, said "okay" of course, and I went off to the weekly meeting held in our town.

On reflection, I found a new family that day. It was a comfortable feeling from the start and this was confirmed when the people present shared their stories. But I was stubborn, and I had a clear view of how people should act in and around me to meet my needs. So, I didn't do any deep, meaningful searches of self for quite some time.

I continued attending my meeting and slowly started to grasp some of the message shared. I ran around telling people that Al-Anon was the best thing since sliced bread, but I had yet to work the Steps in my own life. I still waited in eager anticipation for others to do my bidding, believing that by coming to Al-Anon, I had made the necessary changes for our relationship to improve. I hadn't made the necessary changes, and the relationship didn't improve.

Back then, I tried to please everyone, so when the group needed a Group Representative, I said, "Yes." This meant I travelled to A.A. Assemblies with Al-Anon participation, where I heard both sides of the struggle, and I met people in service who appeared to be serene and confident. That was when my recovery really began. Our Area needed a Delegate, so I said "yes" and off to our annual Conference I went. Selfishly, those roles got me out of the house and amongst the fellowship where there were fewer disagreements, less blaming and less finger-pointing. Instead, people encouraged, laughed and were cheerful. This was a complete contrast to my personal relationship as I viewed it at that time.

My marriage ended. I continued in Al-Anon, found a Sponsor, worked the Steps and, through service, was introduced to the Traditions and Concepts.

After attending a number of Conferences, I ultimately ended up on the New Zealand Board of Trustees. I have since held several roles—Editor of our New Zealand magazine, Regional Board member, International Delegate attending International Al-Anon General Services Meetings, Chair of our Board and currently General Secretary (trial). This continuing involvement in service has placed me with the winners in both fellowships.

New Zealand has 85 meetings nationally, we have a General Service Office (GSO) based in Auckland and employ an office manager three days a week, 5.5 hours a day. We went through a major restructure in 2013 to achieve this. We have two Alateen meetings in Auckland. Our Trustees number eight presently, and we end up holding several different positions. Our only Area Information Service Office was lost in the 2010 Canterbury earthquakes and has not reopened.

Without the hundreds of hours our dedicated Trustees put in and the volunteers who assist with tasks at our GSO, our structure would struggle to provide the services it does today. I say thank you to my fellow Trustees and the New Zealand Conference for allowing me to represent them here. I also say thanks to you, the WSO and its service arms which continue to find better ways to deliver the message. We are lucky to be able to access the information.

## Kim A., UK & Eire

It's wonderful to be here and a privilege to be invited to share with you this evening.

In May 2016, I started as General Secretary, a varied and challenging position. The role calls for me to be patient. I try to apply Al-Anon principles to the job by listening to the points of view of staff, volunteers and other members. The role involves supporting the Executive Committee and the General Services Board (GSB), creating a link between them and the groups.

Al-Anon in the UK & Eire celebrated its 65th anniversary last year. 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, who serves for three years, to Conference.

The GSB consists of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire who may also have a service role as a chairman of a standing committee or be a Regional Trustee. Six Regional Trustees bring regional diversity to the Board, the General Secretary is also a

Trustee. One of the Trustees serves as International Al-Anon General Services Meeting Delegate. The GSB meets three times a year.

The Executive Committee consists of past Trustees and the Chairman of the Finance Committee, also a Trustee. The Finance Committee now meets alongside the Executive Committee and is known as the Finance Sub Group.

Following the WSO model, the first TEAM event took place in April 2013, and since then, over 20 Areas have held TEAM events either individually or with other Areas.

After three and a half years, we purchased and settled into our own office. We have three full-time and four part-time staff and a growing number of volunteers who man the help line and help with tasks such as the quarterly all group mailing, archiving and sending leaflets and books.

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 2014. This quarterly magazine is available to members on our website.

Our GSO is the hub of all activity in our Structure. Committee meetings take place on weekends and the organization of Conference and TEAM events generates quite a bit of work. Alateen membership and groups continue to fall, but we are looking at new ways to engage young people, such as use of social media.

In 2016, Al-Anon marked its 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a meeting at the House of Commons, hosted by an elected member of parliament (MP) who had announced a year earlier that he was the child of an alcoholic. He and other MPs recently published a manifesto, which we hope will raise awareness of the subject of children of alcoholics in the UK and the help available through the fellowship.

I attended my first Al-Anon meeting in America. Having experienced depression on and off for years, a friend referred me to her counsellor. After several sessions, she suggested I go for treatment.

I had no idea what Al-Anon was and initially didn't believe I should be at the centre—everyone else seemed to have had a far

tougher time. However, I remember sharing about growing up with emotional abuse and someone who'd been physically mistreated came up to me afterwards and said, "I could recover from bruises. What you had in your head was much harder to deal with."

My mother knew exactly how to press my buttons. Al-Anon taught me I had choices and that I needn't go back in the ring. I was surprised to meet others with similar stories and grateful to them for listening to me without interrupting, something I wasn't used to. I found a Higher Power, a God of my understanding, who would support me through every aspect of my life. I used Al-Anon tools in all sorts of situations.

I detached from Mom and wrote letters to her for a year, which seemed to really improve our relationship.

In 2015, I spent her last Christmas with her, and I had thought I would want to get out after three or four days. I was pleasantly surprised that I was really enjoying her company.

There was one incident. She was very frail at that time, and my siblings and I had been looking at care for her in the next best stage after she had care-givers visiting her. We had mentioned the subject of a home, but Mom was fiercely independent. She burst out at me, "You're all trying to suffocate me! You're not letting me be myself!" I just said, "I'm going to go for a walk, Mom."

That was pure Al-Anon. I wouldn't have been able to do that a few years ago. I went down to the beach, had a tour up and down, came back, and walked in the front door. She came out to meet me and apologized to me, which was something that had never happened. She said, "I'm really sorry." I gave her a hug, and said, "Don't worry. We're just trying to keep you safe."

I'm extremely grateful to have had that moment and to have gotten our relationship on much better footing. In the last few months of her life, I was able to give back a little bit of everything she had done for me. I am very grateful to Al-Anon for helping me with a very important relationship in my life. Thank you.

## OPENING DINNER SPEAKER

Mary G. • Executive Director

How honored and humbled I am to be able to open this 57th Annual World Service Conference in the capacity of Executive Director. I have found that life and this program have unexpected ways of stretching us, fulfilling us and protecting us. When I open myself to the guidance of a Power greater than myself, I open myself to spiritual experiences neither sought nor expected.

At 29 years old, I came into the loving arms of Al-Anon. I found friends, fun and service. It was clear, moving water for a parched and thirsty soul. Although I had a loving extended family, children and a job, the effects of my husband's active alcoholism and the residue of family behaviors ran deep. I was a smiley-faced, make-it-look-good achiever on the outside and, a melancholy, confused and angry woman on the inside.

The rooms of Al-Anon held something for me—a strong sense that I had come home to where I was supposed to be. As it healed me, I wanted to be part of it, to take it into my being. I fell in love. There is no other way to describe it. Everything about it—the people, the structure, the principles which I came to understand as I worked the Legacies, were a connection to something big and

wonderful that I couldn't explain. It was the members of that first group that were my hope reaching out to me with love and understanding.

I committed to be at my home group, to wash cups, to bring dessert, to take the newcomers meeting. I took on jobs because that's what you did in my group. I anticipated what we might do next. There was a connection and a bond among us that I felt from the first. If someone went missing for a couple of weeks, we were on the phone checking to see if everything was okay. It was members caring for members.

Participating in the group, I certainly started to see the character defects that had been promised were there by the friend who first told me that I needed Al-Anon. There was always someone there to explain why I felt discomfort, and I began to recognize how the traits causing it were manifested in my household and my relationships. Fortunately, my husband was also recovering in A.A. and gradually, as I gave up working on his character defects, I had plenty of time to work on my own. We lived A.A. and Al-Anon. It was often not pretty, and many times I didn't want our marriage to con-

tinue. But despite my will, the plan of my Higher Power won out, as always happens, and we stayed married for 47 years, 40 of them in supportive relationships with our program friends. It was members of both programs who formed the fellowship around us that kept us on our paths to recovery and it was members who were with us through the end. I am still amazed at the power of fellowship—that part of the program that happens just outside the doors to the meetings. I wonder if that still exists everywhere—that very definition of our program.

Service was built into my meeting. I went into it a bit at a time and always with the winners that were involved. It was fun: laughing in the car, laughing in the rooms, laughing in the meetings. As my service circle widened, new laughing people and then dancing people came into my life. When it wasn't fun at home, it was always fun in service.

In 1982, I found myself coordinating the Al-Anon portion of an A.A. Regional Service Convention. I received a letter saying that an Al-Anon Trustee was coming and would gladly speak if we wanted her. Although none of us knew what a Trustee was, it sounded important, and we needed a speaker, so we invited her. She was just like us, her story was our story and we all grew by seeing Al-Anon grow bigger right before our eyes. She sent me a letter following the Convention which I recently found. I want to read you part of it.

*"Mary, I have just returned from New York City where I spent the last three days at meetings of the Board of Trustees. On Friday, during one of our free times, I shared the description of the work that went into the Al-Anon participation in Buffalo. It so happened that Lois felt well enough to attend these meetings, so she heard all about your efforts and your enthusiastic committees. Tell them that their outstanding efforts reached the meetings of the Board and will be carried back to the Regions. ... Mary, stay active and look to the future for your involvement in service. I know of nothing that brings quality to our recovery any better than service. I'd hope someday to see you as a nominee for Delegate. You have all the qualities and more."*

Seed planting—one member planting a seed in another.

So, through service I went: Public Information (PI), Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) Chair, Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Convention Chair, Area Newsletter Editor, Area Chairman, Delegate. Somehow, everyone put up with me, greeted me, loved me despite my ever-present character defects. I received encouragement and love from fellow members—not conflict and critique.

My first World Service Conference (WSC)—1988. I was in the program for about 12 years. Lois attended the opening dinner in a wheel chair. I was on the Public Information (PI) Committee, and I read a Concept. The World Service Office (WSO) was in a period of restructuring following an outside study, word processing was a new requirement for staff, *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B-3) was a new publication. Major topics of discussion included dual membership and conflict of interest, the term 'cross-talk,' and Archives computerization. We watched a film from the Loretta Young show called 'The Understanding Heart.' The expansion of Regions was underway. There were remnants of the hostile issues around adult children. There were 26 motions!

What I remember most distinctly is this: I was a Delegate. I knew about Trustees, but I wondered who all these other people were and why they had a right to participate. I felt resentful of them, and

I kept asking my fellow Delegates who they were and what right they had to be there. We were the Delegates, not them. Of course, what I never grasped was that the World Service Conference was made up of Trustees, WSO Staff, Delegates, Committee members, and that we all had equal and important roles. I really thought it was about us, the Delegates, and our voice. This persisted through my three-year term and never became real to me until my first Conference as a Trustee. "Live and Learn"!

In 1989, Lois passed just prior to the WSC as well as did Henrietta, the first General Secretary (now called Executive Director). We visited Stepping Stones that year and it felt like Lois was still living there. One hundred and forty people jammed into the living room for a plaque presentation. My husband who was an A.A. Delegate came on the train from New York to join me, and we cried our way through Stepping Stones.

Dual members, Adult Children, and Alateen safety issues started emerging as topics. Obedience to the unenforceable was our answer to the use of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* in meetings. A motion was passed for a feasibility study to relocate the WSO out of the New York City area.

I began to feel more confident in my role as a Delegate. I had a lot of 'viewpoints' and was glad to share them at the mic. I thought we should delist 'bad' groups who caused us problems, and I thought the WSO was at fault for not helping with this. I was reminded by a Trustee of the General Warranties of the Conference. We often felt shut down by the kinds of answers we would get when we asked pointed questions. There was little to no transparency about anything back then. Thirty-one Motions were made including one for every individual change to the "World Service Handbook."

In 1990, my last year as Delegate, conversations were about language in the Legacies, expanding the Al-Anon focus to include drugs, service arms holding too much money, the Regional Trustee (RT) plan, getting more male members. A "Resolution of Gratitude" was passed to send to A.A.

After serving as Delegate and Past Delegate in my Area, I submitted a résumé to be a Trustee and was not accepted. Imagine that! So, I heard my Higher Power telling me to refocus on expanding my career, which I did and ultimately became an Administrator. For the next ten years, I was simply a member of my group except for chairing a Regional Service Seminar (RSS) and continuing to speak.

When it was time to retire, I was encouraged by my former Delegate buddies to consider service as a Trustee. I found that during my years as an Administrator, using the Concepts and the Traditions in my daily work had become part of me and defined my leadership style. I learned so much in those ten years in so many areas of my life that when I submitted my name for Trustee, I had something to offer other than viewpoints. My Higher Power apparently thought the time was right as well.

As a Trustee, I found that whatever "glamour" there seemed to have been as a Delegate did not transfer to being a Trustee. It was a part-time job for sure, but I loved every minute of it. During those nine years at the WSO from 2004 - 2013, I was exposed to Al-Anon around the world in ways I couldn't have imagined; like Chairing the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in Brazil, visiting Ghana, Togo and Cameroon in Africa to carry our message of hope and recovery. The Finance Committee and the Executive Committee gave me a deep understanding of our organizational structure. Applying the Concepts became necessary in a way they had never been before. Chairing the Policy Committee deepened my understanding of the importance of interpreting and

protecting our Legacies; Chairing the WSC during the transfer from Parliamentary procedure to the use of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) was fun, exciting and felt much more authentically Al-Anon. We paid off the mortgage on our building and voted to own it. The nine WSCs I attended as a Trustee or an Executive Committee member were mind-expanding. Many of the very same conversations and concerns about our fellowship—dual members, groups that function outside of our Traditions and Alateen were still present. There is nothing new under the sun and my belief is that a Higher Power still rests a benevolent hand on our fellowship as we address the issues that seem to sound our doom but never do. The tough issues just give us opportunities time and again to apply the basic principles that have always guided our program, to hold fast to our core beliefs and to be flexible with our methodologies.

The lessons I have learned in service at every level resonate within me today. I can never abandon our principles, but I need to

allow myself to hear how others see them. I need not be afraid of conflict that comes from passion about our program but learn to manage it in a loving way that will create unity. I can give up rigidity knowing that the group conscience will lead to the right decision and that members are in all stages of growth and recovery.

Above all, I am grateful for this last opportunity to serve this fellowship. It is personally saving me and giving me purpose following the loss of my partner in life and recovery. I pray that I am contributing half of what I am gaining.

I always end with this quotation from St. Francis. It speaks to the life that has been given to us as members and trusted servants. “When you leave this life, you can take nothing that you have received...but only what you have given; a full heart, enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage.”

We are the membership—the Hope for the Future—our own and our fellowship’s.

## SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

### Connie C. • Panel 55, Maryland/DC

My name is Connie, and I’m a grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen. Back when I first uttered these words, I never dreamed that I would become part of the future for the fellowship of Al-Anon and that someday, I would be a Delegate to the World Service Conference. My first elected service position was Group Treasurer, and I was so surprised at the level of trust the members put in me. No one was second-guessing what I was doing or asking me if I had paid the rent—and I had control of the money! I learned a lot about being a “trusted servant” in the following 30 years through good sponsorship. My Sponsors believe that their job is to help me with recovery through working the Steps, through unity in both meetings and relationships, and through service in the service structure and as a Sponsor.

I entered Al-Anon because I had married an alcoholic, and he had joined Alcoholics Anonymous. I was glad he had found the help he needed and hoped that would give him, and me, a life of sobriety. I started going to A.A. meetings with him to be supportive to him. I watched him change very quickly and profoundly into the man I always hoped I’d marry. He got better, and I got worse. I became resentful, mostly because I was jealous of his spiritual growth, and I wanted that for myself.

One night, I attended an A.A. meeting with him, and I heard the A.A. promises read aloud. Oh, how I loved those promises and wanted them to come true for me! On the ride home, I asked him if those promises could come true for anyone. (I think I was preparing to become an alcoholic.) He said that they would come true for anyone who worked the Steps and tried to live a spiritual life. He must have been so grateful for this miracle segue and told me that there was a meeting for friends and family of alcoholics, just down the hall from his home group meeting. The rest is history. I had no idea what I was getting into, but I loved what I found in Al-Anon.

I can’t say that I grabbed onto Al-Anon right away and took off the way my husband did with A.A. The thing that kept me coming back was that the stories I heard there were so much worse than mine, yet there was so much happiness, love, joy and laughter, despite the pain. I couldn’t articulate it then, but I think I learned that “pain is inevitable, misery is optional” that first night. What a rev-

elation! How could I not come back?

Sponsorship was expected in my first home group. After a while, I got my first Sponsor. She gave me her phone number and asked me to call to talk anytime. I did, and I had so many questions. She was someone I would not have picked as a mentor. In my sickness and immaturity, I would have picked someone about my age, with the same background and education. In fact, she was almost my grandmother’s age and was very different from me in all the external ways that don’t matter. On the inside, however, it was as if she had lived inside me. It seemed she knew what I was thinking and what I had done—and she knew why. She was my Sponsor for eight years before she died, and she left with me everything that was good in her.

I have only been short periods in my recovery without a Sponsor, and I did not do well during those times. I have tried to work this program in a “pick-and-choose” way and always ended up unhappy. When I practice unity, recovery and service consistently, I remain happy, joyous and free.

My first assigned service position was door greeter, which I thought was the most stupid thing I had ever heard. How quickly I forgot how wonderful it was to have that person shake my hand, welcome me and ask me if I was new when I walked through that door the first time. It took about three meetings before members were lined up trying to get in because I had to talk with everyone who came through the door. That may have been my first clue that I don’t know everything. I continue to receive many clues.

I am so profoundly grateful for the spiritual growth and emotional sobriety that this program has given me. I owe a debt of gratitude to four Sponsors and scores of fellow members that I can never repay no matter how long I work as a Sponsor and trusted servant. The gift is just too big. I try so hard to pass along to others what I have learned from those who walked this path before me. I often say that I have never had an original idea, but what I will take credit for is listening, remembering and using what was said to and around me.

The gift of our Three Legacies and the 36 spiritual principles that they contain are the greatest life gift I have received, and I can’t imagine anything that can top that. The Twelve Steps help me put myself in the right context and clear away the wreckage of my past.

The Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts guide me every day in my relationships with everyone around me, whether I'm dealing with my significant other, fellow Al-Anon members, co-workers or those in the marketplace. I've never had a problem in my life that I haven't been able to solve by using these spiritual guidelines. Therefore, I am a lifelong student of the Traditions and Concepts and spend a great deal of time learning to apply them to my life and sharing my experience with others.

I would be completely remiss if I didn't express my gratitude for the members of A.A. who have contributed to my journey. I found compassion for alcoholics by attending open A.A. meetings and by talking to members who were willing to tell me about what it feels like to be trapped in that hell with seemingly no way out. These A.A. members helped me apply the spiritual principles of this program in my life and taught me a happier way to live. They continually amaze me with their love and appreciation for the life that they have been given. They know with absolute certainty that they would be dead without their program. They are my mentors and my heroes. They have supported me and Al-Anon in our Area and they pray for our World Service Conference every year.

I live in a recovery-based home. My husband and I practice our program's spiritual principles every day and in every situation. We know that we cannot expect anything from the other, without being willing to give it first. We practice autonomy *except in matters affecting the other or the marriage as a whole*. We practice "right of decision" and avoid "double-headed management" in doing daily tasks and running the household.

Most important of all, we've learned how to talk to each other. We have banished the common tactics of manipulation—the cold shoulder, holding each other hostage to our feelings or moods and withholding love, sex or affection to force our will. We have agreed that we can speak honestly of anything without fear of the other being "personally punitive" by threatening emotional or physical abandonment or other repercussions.

We work very hard to practice the spirituality of money and finances and to think abundantly. We know we don't have to be fearful because God will provide for us. The phrase "it's just money" has saved our sanity many times. Through experience, we have made the decision to help others financially only through gifts, never by loan, giving relationships the best chance of remaining healthy.

How does one repay for so many beautiful, life-giving gifts? The answer is one cannot. The only thing we can do is pay it forward. My first Sponsor told me that "Service is gratitude in action." She taught me that the only way that I can serve is to give back and that there *is* actually a catch—you have to give it away to keep it. May I never, ever forget. Thank you for loving me and for helping me to love me. That is where all this started.

## Tarcila F., Panel 55, Tennessee

I first went to Al-Anon when my son got a DUI and 30 days in jail. I didn't want to go because the meeting was in an A.A. clubhouse near my home. If someone saw me go in, would they think there was a problem of alcoholism in my family? Even worse, what if they thought I was an alcoholic! I finally worked up my courage and went to a meeting, but no one was there. I waited until a man came in and invited me to an open A.A. meeting just down the hall. He said it might help to hear the A.A. side, and I would be welcome there. I had a fear of alcoholics. I thought they were bums on the streets, and although my son had a drinking problem, he was not an alcoholic. I took some free literature, thanked him and left. That

literature helped me for the next two years until I came back to the rooms of Al-Anon.

When my son got a second DUI, part of his probation was to go to A.A. meetings. I decided to go to Al-Anon, because A.A. met just down the hall, and I could be sure he went to his meetings. While I sat in Al-Anon, it became obvious that the program didn't work and they needed my help, because many of them were still dealing with alcoholics! I had lots of advice to offer.

For six months, I didn't listen to anything, and I ran my mouth. I endured because getting my son to A.A. meetings was the important thing. Since he didn't have a driver's license, I took him to meetings, drove him to work, and picked him up after work. I tried to manage his time, money and friends so he couldn't drink, but somehow, he always found a way. Our diseases progressed. Soon, I quit going to meetings, but I found Online Al-Anon meetings. I became active in four of them.

One of the online groups needed a moderator. I was picking up some recovery there, but I was very new in the program. I became the moderator of one group, and when someone wanted to join whose loved one was an addict, I changed the Suggested Welcome to include addicts. Why not? The program could help everyone, couldn't it?

A member emailed me to ask who the other trusted servants were, and how the change to the welcome was made. I had never heard the term, "trusted servant," but I assured her that I could be trusted, that no one else had volunteered to do the job, and I was glad to do it. She didn't try to set me straight, she just thanked me and said that she would find another group that adhered to the Traditions of Al-Anon. The Traditions? That was another foreign term to me. Her response astounded me. In my world, if someone did not agree, we argued and tried to make the other change their mind.

I was happy there in my little Al-Anon kingdom of my own making. I liked being in charge. However, the program was beginning to change me. I decided to start going to face-to-face meetings again, and this time, I began to listen. At that point, my life was filled with anxiety. I couldn't eat, had shortness of breath, headaches and my mind raced all day. Every thought was about how to help my son. I couldn't sleep at night, and when I did fall asleep, I would startle awake, jumping straight up in bed gasping for air!

When I began to listen in meetings, I began to learn. I learned that just because he had made bad choices, my son was not a bad person. I learned I didn't have the right to check up on him, or to limit his friends or his money.

At one meeting, I heard the Three C's (I didn't cause it, I can't control it, I can't cure it). Had they been discussed before? Suddenly, I understood about control. I realized that despite my best plans, I had never been able to control his drinking. My every thought and all my energy had been devoted to the impossible feat of helping my son to stop drinking. It dawned on me that my schemes had never worked and that they never would work. I realized I had neglected myself, my other four children, and a loving husband, none of whom were alcoholics. When I stopped trying to plan his recovery, I suddenly had time for family and interests that I had long since let go.

My hardest lesson was learning that alcoholism is a disease. One morning after a night of drinking, he came home, and for once, I didn't yell at him. I'm sure he was prepared to fight because I usually attacked, but when I welcomed him and offered him breakfast, I caught the disarmed shock on his face and a look in his eyes that told me that he was much more afraid for himself than I could comprehend. Suddenly, I saw how terrifying a blackout was. He was a slave to that first drink, even though he knew taking it could be his

last conscious choice. It absolutely broke my heart.

He was debilitated from not eating. He only drank. He would come home when he was sick and at least then I could feed him. Once, he came home after being beaten up. It was his birthday, and I asked him what he would like for a present. He just wanted to sit and watch movies, he felt too bad to do anything else. I made him some soup and sat with him to watch movies. We talked and laughed that day, and he told me he loved me. Without Al-Anon, I would have never heard those words or spent that day with him. I would have been too busy telling him what to do, and he wouldn't have wanted to be with me.

We have a purple martin box, and the birds had not taken up residence in the six years we had been in our new house. The martins arrived while my son was there on his birthday. He teased me about being a bird nerd, but three martin couples moved into the house that day. I suddenly remembered that once when I was praying, as an afterthought, I told God that if the martins ever came to that house, I would take it as a sign that He was taking care of my son.

A few months later, my son was going to lose his apartment the next day. He couldn't quit drinking and said A.A. didn't work for him. I talked to him about a rescue mission and said it is not like A.A. in that it is a Bible-based organization. What he didn't like about A.A. was the "God part." So, it surprised me when he said he thought that would be good for him. Had he made peace with God? He wouldn't let me help him pack, but I took him some food, I kissed him on the head and said I would be back in the morning.

That night, I was on my knees asking for mercy for my son. At some point, I realized I was pacing the floor and begging for God's mercy.

The next morning, I called and he didn't answer. I went to his door and knocked. He didn't answer. Eventually, I got the apartment manager to give me a key. I found my son, laying on the floor. He had died in the night. When I got the approximate time of death, I realized it had been during the time I was praying and pacing the floor asking for mercy. That was not the mercy that I wanted, I wanted him to have hit his bottom and be headed to recovery. Yet, I felt a relief that he was no longer suffering. Of course, for a long time, I felt guilty that I felt relief. But recently, I heard an A.A. speaker, and God showed me through that speaker, that He really had answered my prayers for mercy. The A.A. speaker said, "If it weren't for A.A., I would be dead, or worse. What could be worse than death? Living in the disease of alcoholism." My comfort came from the heart of an alcoholic.

Once, my daughter asked me why I kept going to those meetings, since my son was still drinking. After he died, a lot of people, both in the program and out of the program, asked me if I would still go

to those meetings now that he was dead.

I can tell you this, without Al-Anon, I would be harboring guilt and shame. I would not have been able to forgive him or myself. I would be angry and would have blamed everyone from myself and my first husband and the choices we made when he was young, to my son and his friends and the choices that were made as the disease progressed. I would be a very bitter woman. But that is not how I feel. Today, I grieve, I miss him, but I do not hate anyone or anything except the disease itself.

Because of this program, I have learned to listen. I heard him tell me that he loved me. Before his death, I was able to see him as a good, tender-hearted, talented person with a horrible disease. I was able to apologize for hurts I had caused, and I enjoyed the look of shock on his face when I did. When he died, all the wounded parts of our relationship had been healed, and only the alcoholism was left. That is the work of a loving God, and it came as a result of living this program.

Since his death, the purple martins have continued to return each spring, and each year, I thank God that my son is in His hands. One year, a heat wave killed the baby birds in one of the six nesting families. My husband took the dead babies out of the nest, and when the parents came back to feed them, they went into their nest and stayed a full minute. Then, they came back out with the food in their beaks and took it to feed the babies of the bird family next door. From this, God showed me that I wasn't the only parent who had lost a child. In nature, parents lose their babies, and though they are temporarily stunned, something tells them to go on living and to do what they can to help others. That is what God told me through the sharings I heard in Al-Anon meetings. That is why I keep coming back and serving in this program. I want to be like that momma bird taking food to another baby so it can survive. To keep on living, I have to carry this message to others so they can find the strength and hope to keep on living.

This program has replaced hate with love, bitterness with compassion, and put God's will in place of my will. I know that my son is in the tender, caring, and merciful plan of a loving God who is much greater than the God I knew before I found this program.

By God's grace, when I was a new member, and thought I could tell you people a thing or two, you loved me. When I didn't want to come to these meetings and even quit coming, you welcomed me back. When I felt I didn't belong, you treated me as an equal. When I made mistakes in service, you thanked me for serving. When I was in desperate grief, you comforted me. Because of God's grace and the fellowship of Al-Anon, I am one member with hope for the future.

# CLOSING SESSION

Debbie G. • Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

Tina B. • Trustee, Conference Chairperson

The 2017 World Service Conference theme, “Our Members: Our Hope for the Future,” provided a goal for the week. On the last day of the Conference, the Chairperson of the Board shared the following thoughts and observations on the Conference theme.

“Throughout this week, we have heard and witnessed hope for the future within the voices and actions of our fellow Conference members: A collective voice of trust, confidence and reason.

“We were invited to participate in discussions, address our problems and seek solutions, our hope for the future. We sought the wisdom of our Higher Power throughout all our discussions. We visited our home. We continued the conversation about our spiritual principles as they relate to our finances and saw first-hand the response of the members of our fellowship when they receive the information needed to make informed decisions regarding our finances.

“We updated our Policies to reflect the continued conversation of applying our spiritual principles to all our discussions and actions. We learned that none of us is perfect and that from those mistakes, we can become open to reviewing old procedures and seeking new solutions.

“We were part of Tradition Two, bringing it alive and applying it to all our discussions: ‘For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.’

“As we leave our Conference, know that the Board, our staff and Executive Committee members are here to support you in any way we can. We want you, *we need you* to leave the Conference with a clear understanding of the discussions and information presented, for *you* are the links to our current and future members. *You* are our ‘Hope for the Future.’

“May we continue to lead by carrying the message of this Conference with laughter, love and an enthusiasm for all that has been given and all that can be.”

The Conference Chairperson commented, “The 2017 World Service Conference theme, ‘Our Members: Our Hope for the Future,’ resides in each of us. We will each endeavor to take the information and knowledge we have gained—wrapped in program principles and spiritual enthusiasm—to share with our Areas, Districts and home groups.

“As I was preparing for the Conference and seeking guidance from my Higher Power for words to share with you, I was reminded of one of my all-time favorite pages (page 348) in our *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) book.

‘Let us imagine a person coming into Al-Anon, despairing and confused by the havoc wrought by alcoholism. She finds warm friendship from people willing to share their time, thought and experience with her. She gets Al-Anon literature and studies it. Finally, she learns how to achieve serenity in the midst of turmoil. Her life gets better. Much has been done for her in Al-Anon.

‘Has she an obligation to the group, to the fellowship, and to the newcomers who need her help? The obvious answer is *yes*. The real answer is *no*. She is not required to pay back in kind for any of the benefits she has had. Her only obligation is to herself; she owes herself the continued growth she will derive from giving to others what she has received.’

“You are carrying forward the hope for recovery. This is not an obligation, but an act of love and continued recovery for ourselves as well as for others.”

## Several Conference members shared their reflections throughout the Conference:

- I saw a huge difference today—I trust the process of the Trustees and the Conference Leadership Team.
- I loved the breakouts and working with other Delegates; there were commonalities and ideas we hadn’t considered.
- I have spent three years at the World Service Conference. It is a fabulous feeling to feel like I know everyone in the room.
- Our spiritual principles went from my head to my heart, and I realized how they related to the budget. I learned a lot at the Open Board and Policy Committee meetings and from the Trustee Task Force.
- I was exhausted and energized, which is what service does for me.
- I am so grateful for the Conference Agenda app.
- I saw the Board Mission statement, “Anticipate the future...,” being carried out this year in the Open Policy and Open Board meetings and last year when the Board sought and found an Executive Director to get us through the transition. I thank her for her time and energy. I will ask my Area to flood her office with cards!
- We’ve been living our principles, not just talking them.
- Al-Anon has given me the tools to walk through this process. I came early and Panel 55 welcomed me and squashed my feelings of feeling apart from.
- The more we talk about spiritual principles, the more we put them into play. I like that the WSO has become more involved with opportunities to share with us. It made an impression on me to realize the WSO is practicing our principles in all its affairs.
- I thank the Board of Trustees for hiring a fantastic staff. I see us moving forward in a way I couldn’t have imagined three years ago.
- What I learned most is how to apply the spiritual principles to every situation. Look for spiritual principles and we will find the answer. I can tell that the Board and the WSO have been using those principles because I see the difference between this year’s Conference and last year’s Conference.
- This was an extraordinary week. We seem to be able to stretch the days, but I can’t believe its Friday. I heard you face the same issues we do. It is helpful to get ideas and points of view that we can use. Thank you for the laughter in such an intense week.

As the Closing Dinner began, the Conference Chairperson addressed the participants saying, “To our guests and World Service Conference members, thank you for celebrating with us this evening as we take a deep breath and revel in our ability to work through the long days with our spiritual principles in the forefront.

It is difficult to describe to others the spiritual nature of this extraordinary 'business meeting' and 'group conscience' of the Al-Anon Family Groups. We have lived and breathed our Legacies—The Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and, most especially, the Twelve Concepts of Service.

"You are carrying forward the hope for recovery. This is not an obligation, but an act of love and continued recovery for ourselves as well as for others. In Concept Twelve on page 216 of "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service" in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) it says, 'Another sort of authority and power that the Conference cannot be without is the spiritual power that flows from the activities and attitudes of truly humble, unselfish,

and dedicated Al-Anon servants. They do not rule by mandate, they lead by example.'"

Your example and the message you carry to our Areas and groups is what guarantees that Al-Anon Family Groups will be available when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help."

Following the dinner, scroll presentations to Panel 55 Delegates and other outgoing Conference members including the Spiritual Speakers, the Conference Chairperson thanked Conference members for their commitment and applauded their willingness to continue in service to Al-Anon Family Groups. With a tap of the gavel, the Conference Chairperson brought the 2017 World Service Conference to a close.

## WORLD SERVICE OFFICE VISIT

Conference members boarded buses for a short trip to the World Service Office (WSO). WSO Trustees and Executive Committee members greeted the Delegates and their guests with applause prior to ushering them into the lobby. The Executive Director welcomed everyone to their home and explained the unique architectural features of the building. Portraits of Al-Anon's cofounders, Lois and Anne, as well as Lois's typewriter, used to write to the first 87 groups, were pointed out.

The Delegates assembled into small groups and Trustees conducted tours of the office. Prior to returning the hotel, the Delegates had the opportunity to walk around the grounds and take pictures to share with their Areas.

### **During Conference week, several Delegates commented about their experience visiting the WSO:**

- This visit will be forever in my life.

- You welcomed us home. I was impressed with what the WSO is doing in the changes. I see us stepping into future with the changes. It means a lot. It gives me hope and gives the membership hope.
- When the bus pulled up and the Board and Executive Committee members were waving and welcoming us, it got to me. The WSO staff was so friendly and welcoming. It made me feel appreciated. I know each person loves what they do and it shows.
- It was obvious how dedicated the staff is in sharing how they are making new tools available, what they are and the history behind them. It was a free atmosphere in sharing what they did every day. All the openness of the Trustees and Executive Committee members and their willingness to work with everybody has been moving the program forward.



# 2017 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

## MOTION #1 – CARRIED

(BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2017 World Service Conference.

**With voice, but no vote:**

**Niketa Bailey**

Director of Finance, Non-AI-Anon Member

**Arnold H.**

International Representative—New Zealand, AI-Anon Member

**Maria M.**

International Representative—Mexico, AI-Anon Member

**Kim A.**

International Representative—UK & Eire, AI-Anon Member

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

**Jeffrey K.**

Chairperson, ECRPM, AI-Anon Member

**With voice limited to Finance Presentation Breakouts, but no vote:**

**Friday, April 28, 2017**

**Ken Pearl**

Controller, Non-AI-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office staff members be seated as part of their ongoing training at the 2017 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

**All days**

**Scot Powers**

Digital Strategy Manager, Non-AI-Anon Member

**Wednesday, April 26, 2017**

**Norman A.**

Language Services Coordinator (Spanish), AI-Anon Member

**Michele Ogonowski**

Group Records Clerk I, Non-AI-Anon Member

**Thursday, April 27, 2017**

**Sarah C.**

Member Services Secretary (French), AI-Anon Member

## MOTION #2 – CARRIED

(89 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 3 void)

To approve the 2016 Annual Report.

## MOTION #3 – CARRIED

(90 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 2 void)

To approve the 2016 Audited Financial Report.

## MOTION #4 – CARRIED

(92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2017 Finance Committee Report.

## MOTION #5 – CARRIED

(91 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend the text on pages 131-165 in the “World Service Handbook” section of the *2014-2017 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) as follows:

*(See Appendix II on pages 90-104 for text as approved.)*

## MOTION #6 – CARRIED

(91 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

To amend the text on pages 95-99 in the “Financial Matters” section in the “Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2014-2017 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) as follows:

*(See Appendix III on pages 105-107 for text as approved.)*

## MOTION #7 – CARRIED

(92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend the text on pages 85-86 and 123-124 in the “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions” section in the “Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2014-2017 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) as follows:

*(See Appendix IV on pages 108-109 for text as approved.)*

# 2016 Annual Report

Executive Director's Report

# ADMINISTRATION

Ric B., • Executive Director | Mary G., • Executive Director (interim)

## 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 about 49 full-time employees) and for administration of the organization's policies.

- Note: A new organizational structure is in trial. In the new structure, the Director of Programs and the Director of Finance supervise day-to-day operations of the office. An Administrative Team including the Associate Directors, the Controller, the Digital Strategy Manager, and the Employee Resources and Organizational Development Manager serve as a resource to the Executive Director, share information with one another, and are consulted on office wide projects.

**AFG, Inc.** is committed to equal employment opportunity and is in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local fair employment laws and guidelines. AFG, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or disability status. Every effort is made to maintain a work atmosphere that is free from harassment.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Paula B./Debbie G., Chairperson

The Trustees, along with members of the Executive Committee, direct business operations of the World Service Office, observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board acts as the chief service arm of the World Service Conference as it guards the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship and controls the finances. The Board serves as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter.

To aid in members' better understanding of the actions and duties of the Board of Trustees, it is important to know that Trustees, Executive Committee members, and employed staff have a fiduciary duty to the organization of AFG, Inc., including duties of Care, Loyalty, Obedience, and Foresight. In short, this means they are required to act reasonably, prudently, in the best interests of the

organization, to avoid negligence and fraud, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to look continuously into the future.

### Duty of Care

- Exercise ordinary and reasonable care in performance of duties
- Exhibit honesty and good faith
- Make decisions based on information, not opinion
- Act in the best interest of the fellowship
- Listen to experts, if needed
- Be knowledgeable about the fellowship
- Show up and ask questions

### Duty of Loyalty

- Undivided commitment to the fellowship
- Faithfulness
- Obligation to be accountable
- Interest of AFG as a whole, not as region or group
- Supportive of any group conscience decision, despite personal opinions

### Duty of Obedience (adherence to)

- Laws and regulations
- Financial responsibilities
- Legal issues
- Articles of Incorporation
- By-Laws

### Duty of Foresight

- Strategic legitimacy
- Board Stewardship
- Readiness to learn

### The Board approved Interim Actions of the Executive Committee:

- To approve posting the Property Ownership documents on the Members' website.
- To approve ending the trial and adopt permanently publishing and mailing six issues of *en acción* and *Le lien* per year.
- To approve discontinuing hosting Area and GSO websites on the WSO Server following a six months' notification.
- To approve the "Audit Report Memo" and the "2016 Salary Range with Comparative Ranges" for distribution at the 2016 World Service Conference.
- To approve staff travel to the 66th Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Conference opening dinner and appointment with National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence President on April 17-18, 2016.
- To approve At-Large members for the Literature Committee,

Audit Committee, Public Outreach Committee, and Forum Editorial Advisory Committee.

- To approve posting of an MP3 version of the two-part audio recording of Lois W. and the Pioneers (A-4) on the Members' website.
- To approve development of a new *Paths to Recovery Workbook* (P-93) in English, French, and Spanish.
- To accept revised guidelines for the Finance Committee, Policy Committee, Strategic Plan Oversight Work Group, Audit Committee, International Coordination Committee, Literature Committee, Forum Editorial Advisory Committee, Nominating Committee, Conference Committee on Trustees, Conference Leadership Team, Executive Committee, Public Outreach Committee, and Compensation Committee.
- To accept updates and revisions to the WSO Employee Manual
- To approve establishment of WSO Instagram social media account for Public Outreach to young adults (18-29 years old)

### **The Board, in its legal and financial capacity, took the following actions:**

- At the Annual Meeting:
  - ◆ To approve the 2015 Annual Report
  - ◆ To approve the 2015 Auditor's Report
  - ◆ To accept the recommendations of the Audit Committee to accept the Dixon Hughes Goodman audit firm and letter of engagement for audit services for the financial year ending December 31, 2016
  - ◆ To approve the 2016 World Service Conference Motions
  - ◆ To approve the banking regulation for the AI-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc.
  - ◆ To elect three Trustee at Large (TAL) nominees, elect three Regional Trustee (RT) nominees, elect the At-Large member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee At-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and ECRPM
  - ◆ To approve the Committee Chairperson appointments for 2016-2017
- To approve the revised 2016 Budget
- To accept the revised Compensation Guidelines and Compensation Philosophy
- To approve that the Equalized Expense for the 2017 World Service Conference be \$1,260.00 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the 2017 World Service Conference is \$1,909.00 U.S.
- To accept the revised Travel Reimbursement Policy
- To extend the Meet the Board event trial period for an additional three years, 2017 through 2019
- To appoint an interim Executive Director
- To accept the notification of retirement from the Director of Business Services
- To change the title of Meet the Board events to: Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

- To appoint a new Director of Finance (non-member)
- To approve ending the trial of selling the soft cover version of *How AI-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32) within the World Service Conference Structure and adopt printing the book in soft cover in English, French, and Spanish

### **The Board, in its oversight capacity, took the following actions:**

- To approve the 2017 World Service Conference theme as follows:
  - Our Members: Our Hope for the Future
- To approve the theme for the 2018 International Convention as HashtagODAT2018
- To accept the revision of the 2018 International Convention Theme as Celebrating One Day at a Time  
2018 International Convention
- To approve the dissolution of the following Thought and Task Forces:
  - a. Task Force: Acceptance of Communities, Cultures, and Beliefs
  - b. Task Force: Communication and Strengthening the Links of Service
  - c. Task Force: Meeting Types
  - d. Task Force: Policy on Memorial Contributions
  - e. Task Force: Technology and Anonymity
  - f. Task Force: TEAM World Service Conference Presentation
  - g. Task Force: Update of Concept Eleven Text

## **Strategic Planning, Board of Trustees**

Terry F., Chairperson, Strategic Plan Oversight Work

Strategic planning for AI-Anon began in the 1990s. The Strategic Plan is connected to the Vision and Mission and is the plan for how the Vision and Mission will be carried out. The Board of Trustees strives to have its work focused on 80 percent forward thinking toward AI-Anon's future.

The current Strategic Plan of the Board of Trustees of AFG, Inc. is:

### **BOARD VISION STATEMENT**

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

### **BOARD MISSION STATEMENT**

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

### **STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES**

AI-Anon's spiritual principles permeate our policies and practices; we apply emerging technology and communication options:

- To increase the visibility of AI-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 AI-Anon fellowship to be vibrant, inclusive and flexible.
- To achieve a viable future for AI-Anon Family Groups, the

Board will be adaptive and strategic in its use of talents, skills, and abilities.

Under Strategic Plan Priority three, the Board had formulated a goal with objectives in 2015. The goal is:

The AFG, Inc. Board of Trustees will raise the fellowship's awareness of the Trustees' relationship to the AI-Anon groups and WSO, while articulating and expressing the "why" of the Board's work.

**The current objectives are:**

1. To empower Trustees to use existing tools to articulate the "why" of the Board (Blogs, Skits, Webinars)
2. Increase members' understanding that Trustees are AI-Anon members
3. Increase the personal connection of Trustees with the fellowship in order to increase Trustee role education; demystify the role: why BOT meetings are not open, etc.

Moving into 2016, the Board formed two task forces under the Strategic Plan Oversight Work Group to begin work on a one-year *Forum* article by Trustees campaign to address Objective one of the Board goal under Priority three. The first article was published in

October 2016, with articles to be written through September 2017.

Due to changes in staff and the need for office restructuring, the Board agreed to suspend the Strategic Plan goals and objectives previously carried out by the staff under the Strategic Plan Priorities one and two. The Strategic Plan timeline was also suspended while discussion and evaluation of the Strategic Plan, and the staff and Board roles in meeting the Priorities occurs.

The Board of Trustees and WSO staff began looking at ways to be more collaborative on the Strategic Plan. Also, the staff office sections began assessing where their work overlapped and how to more effectively work together on strategic planning. In July 2016, a joint Board and Staff development session occurred focusing on foresight and strategic thinking. As a result of that discussion, the Board and staff determined that each needed to evaluate how they are currently meeting all three of the Strategic Plan Priorities, not just the first, second, or third Priority, and where foresight and strategic thinking can take the Board and WSO in the future.

The conversation regarding strategic planning will continue. Evaluation of the entire Strategic Plan is an ongoing responsibility of the Board. As our world continues to change, the Strategic Plan must evolve, as must our thinking in order to meet these changes.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bev A., Chairperson

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, Director of Programs, the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees, and three AI-Anon members elected by the Board of Trustees, who contribute experience in specific fields and situations. The Chairperson of the Board also attends the meeting with voice but no vote to bring the Board perspective.

**Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval. On-going work of the Executive Committee includes:**

- To approve the minutes and actions of the Finance Committee.
- To accept the monthly unaudited Financial Statement.
- To approve special projects for the Board and staff that involve day-to-day operations.
- To receive monthly updates of departmental activities from the Executive Director, Director of Finance, and Director of Programs.
- To review additions, updates, and corrections to policies and procedures for the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc.
- To review and update policies and procedures regarding the WSO Archives.
- To approve Committee Guidelines.
- To approve résumés for At-Large Committee members and certain Thought and Task Force members.

- To review all presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference.
- To review the annual letter from the WSO's Copyright lawyer, regarding current trends in Copyright laws and the Internet.
- To approve and receive updates on the progress of Project Approvals and Proposals to Study submitted by the staff.
- To oversee the Alateen Work Group, as delegated by the Board of Trustees.
- To approve and receive updates on the progress of the Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives, as delegated by the Board of Trustees.
- To discuss spiritual principles that guide the work of the Executive Committee.

**Actions approved by the Executive Committee and presented to the Board of Trustees:**

- ◆ To authorize WSO staff to add hyperlinks to each specific e-book or audiobook to the page of the vendors' websites.
- ◆ To approve as a cost saving measure the printing of the *2018-2021 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* with spiral binding, no tabs, no amendments, no labels, with color coding on page edges to designate separate books.
- ◆ To accept the recommendations from the Alateen Work Group for the trial period ending in October 2017 not be extended and the Alateen Advisory Committee as described in Concept Eleven be disbanded.

## POLICY COMMITTEE

Judy K., • Chairperson | Donna E., • Co-Chairperson  
Claire R., Secretary

The Policy Committee is the largest group conscience representing Al-Anon as a whole, with the exception of the World Service Conference. The Committee is comprised of members of the Board of Trustees, WSO staff who are World Service Conference members, and 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 Traditions and spiritual principles.

Topics at the quarterly Policy Committee meetings are generated by members of the fellowship. If the Policy Committee determines that more clarity on a topic is necessary, the Committee then makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. If the Board approves any recommended change to the Policy Digest, that change requires approval by no less than a two-thirds vote at the World Service Conference (WSC).

In 2016, the WSC voted to accept a proposed policy change regarding Memorial Contributions. The World Service Office now accepts contributions in memory of deceased Al-Anon members from “family” who are not Al-Anon members. The WSC defines “family” as anyone who has a close relationship of loving care and concern for another. The individual donor defines his or her relationship to the deceased Al-Anon member. The fellowship recognizes that accepting such memorial contributions can give comfort to families of alcoholics as described in Tradition Five.

This one-time gift of gratitude is limited to an amount no greater than \$500. This change in policy reinstates a similar one that had been in place from Al-Anon’s early days until 1986. Memorial contributions by non-members are not solicited.

The Open Policy Committee meeting at the 2016 WSC gave Conference members an opportunity to hear discussion on Al-Anon’s practice of referring to meetings as either “open” or “closed” and how those terms are interpreted by the interested public, potential Al-Anon members, and current members.

It came to the attention of the Policy Committee that individuals who order on-line from a major retailer could designate their favorite non-profit, charitable organization. In turn, the retailer would donate a percentage of the amount spent by consumers as a donation to that organization. The retailer listed Al-Anon as one of many charitable organizations. The Policy Committee affirmed that Al-Anon does not accept contributions from any program of this type because it is impossible to know whether or not the donations come from Al-Anon members. Furthermore, accepting donations from any merchant charitable foundation program, an outside entity, is contrary to Al-Anon’s Traditions.

The Policy Committee continues work on revising the “Financial Matters” and “Announcing Events at Meetings” sections of the Policy Digest, incorporating spiritual principles and clear language into the text.

## ADMINISTRATION

KBDM vs Minority Appeal

The Executive Director clarified for an Area when to use KBDM and when to respond to a minority appeal. KBDM is used to address a new question, but to reconsider a previous action is a minority appeal. Issues that were previously discussed are not appropriate for a minority appeal unless new facts not previously stated are contained in the appeal.

## Strategic Planning

A WSO Goal of the Strategic Plan was reconsidered because of major staff changes that occurred in the office. The Board invited members of the staff to meet with them in a Strategic Plan Development Session in July. It was a productive session in which the staff and the Board began to share together in the understanding and work of the Strategic Plan. The Board first considered a “refresh” of the joint goal, but later asked the staff to report to them on the way that the reorganized Department’s work met the Strategic Priorities of the Board. This document was completed in December. The joint meeting served as a means of connecting the staff and the Board in important conversations and understanding of the Plan and of Strategic Thinking.

## Annual Report

The volunteers and staff completed their reports for the December deadline. Final reviews, adding missing information, and editing were completed in early January.

## Volunteer Letter/Nominating

The semiannual letter reminding Delegates and Area Chairs of openings in a variety of positions at the world service level was revised prior to posting. In reviewing with the Nominating Chair, it was decided to move the sentence about the right of Delegates to file a minority opinion regarding a Trustee at Large (TAL) candidate to the beginning of the letter. It is hoped that this change in placement will alert Delegates to give attention to the process. The chart that shows the work flow of processing TAL résumés was added after a few minor changes in chronological order were completed. The letter was posted for the Delegates.

## Complimentary Forum to Groups

Based on the decision of the Finance Committee in December 2015 to suspend the complimentary copy, a note to be inserted in the February 2016 *Forum* was created by the WSO Treasurer and included in the mid-January mailing. The message was also posted on the Announcement community in mid-January.

## Surveys

The Member Services Section pulled the survey regarding the use of the Declaration card which was part of its Strategic Plan objectives. Once the staff learned of the discontinuance of the complimentary *Forum* to the English-speaking groups, it was realized that the tone and direction of the questions needed to be revised. The Strategic Goal has since been eliminated by the Board.

## An Amusing Outside Issue

The WSO gazebo was identified by game creators of a popular on-line phone game. The site was removed from their game upon WSO request to avoid liability.

## Administrative Team

A team made up of the Director of Business Services, the Associate Directors, and the Controller met daily pending the hiring of the Interim Executive Director (ED) to have discussions and make decisions about the work of the WSO. The team was joined weekly by the Chairman of Executive and Chairman of the Board via conference call. With the hiring of the Interim Executive Director, the team gradually evolved to include additional staff as they were hired and as they were needed, and meetings were reduced to once a week. The team continues to meet to share information and solve problems.

## Interim Executive Director

The Interim Executive Director, appointed by the Board of Trustees, began in April and has contact daily with staff via technology and in-office visits to conduct business. At an initial all-staff meeting, she shared the message that her intent was to forge an open and collaborative office environment and explained her management style. The ED announced that the office structural redesign begun earlier was underway and would continue. The staff was asked to participate with the Board of Trustees to address organizational financial concerns, primarily in the area of staff benefits but also seeking their ideas on other ways to save or earn revenue. The message was well-received by staff. The Interim Executive Director has continued to work successfully in this way throughout the year.

## Structural Transition of the WSO

As a result of the vacancies left by the two Department Directors, the WSO worked with a consultant to redefine the office structure. The conversations resulted in the creation of two departments: Programs and Finance and an additional section for Administration/Conference. The structure was rolled out to the staff in July and is in an 18-month trial. The staff continues to work within the trial structure, discussing what to name the various areas of work and examining whether the structure is working. The staff will continue conversations around these issues to ensure that it is serving the needs of the office and the fellowship.

## Staff

The new Director of Programs position (part of the office restructuring) was posted and filled in June. The Director of Finance was hired and began training in November. The vacancy in Associate Director—International was filled as was the Associate Director—Groups position. A new position titled Magazine Coordinator was created and filled. This position will produce *The Forum* and *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. Another new position titled Digital Strategy Manager was created and filled in September. This position is intended to assist the organization to move forward in all aspects of technology, including public outreach through social media. Various levels of staff were invited to be part of the interview process. Many of the interviews were successfully conducted by using remote technology.

To assist us in both the structural transition and the change to a more project-based environment which would use talents and expertise across the organization, the Human Resources Manager provided training for the Associate Directors and other staff members in cross-organizational planning and project-based approaches. The workshops were well received. Middle level staff has also been trained with the aim of providing additional training for working in this type of environment to more of the staff as needed.

We have conducted two staff surveys to determine talents and interests which will help us to provide training and also to help us determine where the WSO talents and expertise lie as we put together teams. This is especially important in a project-oriented environment. A project prioritization study has begun.

A change was made to the staff evaluation process allowing the staff to participate in a more collaborative manner by doing a self-reflection on their performance to form the basis for a conversation with their managers. The new process worked well and all staff were evaluated by the end of June. The reflection helps fulfill the goal of the evaluation to be a conversation between manager and staff member, furthering the process of an open, collaborative environment.

A new bulleted newsletter called Board Week Briefs was written and distributed to the staff informing them of the activities and decisions immediately following Board meetings. It was met with appreciation by the staff.

In an effort to cement the relationship between WSO staff, the Board, and the Executive Committee, as described in Concept Eleven (“These staff members not only support the world leadership of the Trustees, they share world leadership with them.” *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2014-2017* p. 208), the staff had a Meet and Greet with the Board in July, invited the Executive Committee Members to a staff luncheon in November, and have encouraged them to get to know each other in other ways throughout the year.

## Part-Time Assistance

The newly-hired Associate Director—Groups/Alateen resigned after a short time and a former staff member agreed to assist with the work on a part-time basis until November when a new employee was hired. Other departments that experienced overload as a result of unfilled positions were supported in a similar way.

## AFG Connects

A work group of staff members has formed to address on-going issues, maintenance, potential, and progress of the AFG Connects platform. The team is an example of cross-departmental work.

## Working with the Areas

We continue to work with the Areas on issues they may have encouraging them to contact other Areas for experience and information and to trust in their own capacity to resolve their Area issues through the application of the Traditions and Concepts as well as by accessing the deep experience and strength of their members.

An e-mail from an enthusiastic member, who wished to provide information regarding bequests to members at a convention she was chairing, was advised that her career to advise people on such issues could look like affiliation and self-promotion. She was sent information on setting up bequests.

## 2018 International Convention Theme

We discovered an issue regarding the Board approved theme for the 2018 International Convention, which included a hashtag, when a Delegate posted the Chairperson of the Board (COB) Letter on her unprotected Area website. We realized that anytime the theme was used, it took a searcher to the recent COB Letter which contained full names putting anonymity at risk. We followed up by asking the Area to take the letter down and we reposted it on AFG Connects in a format that was not searchable. We later found that many COB letters that included full names have been posted on unprotected sites for many years and were all found in a search of a previous convention themes. We now post the COB Letters on our own Members’ website and on AFG Connects after removing full names and signatures. This occurrence gave us the opportunity to refer the Delegates to the Policy regarding not posting any information on their unprotected sites without first removing names. With input from the Chairman of the Board, all past COB Letters were removed from our website informing the Conference members why we were doing so and setting an example for the fellowship.

### A new theme was selected for the 2018 International:

Celebrating One Day at a Time  
2018 International Convention

This brings focus to our slogan and way of living as well as the 50th anniversary of the publication of our daily reader *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*. The convention will be held in Baltimore, MD in July 2018.

### Tagline

In working on our website, we discovered that our tagline “Strength and Hope for Friends and Families of Problem Drinkers” used on our stationery, pamphlets, etc., which was adopted in 2008, is not the most helpful to people searching the Internet for the help Al-Anon offers. We therefore returned to an earlier tagline: “Help and Hope for Families and Friends of Alcoholics.” We will change this tagline as we reprint stationery and literature, and it will appear on our updated website.

### Website

The process is underway to design a new website which will also be easily useable on a mobile device. We are in discussion about whether we need a separate Members’ website or if the Public Outreach website can serve both needs. A cross-departmental team is working on development, and we are having conversations in the office around its content.

### Meeting Search

The WSO’s Meeting Search web application as it appears on al-anon.org was made available in October as a hyperlink for all service arm websites to use. The application provides real-time access to Al-Anon, Alateen, and phone meeting information stored in the WSO database, allowing users to quickly locate a meeting that suits their needs. The announcement was made to all Web Coordinators and Delegates via AFG Connects.

### “Contribute Now” Button

The button was added to the Members’ website and has resulted in a high degree of usage. It allows for one-time and recurring contributions with a receipt and is also accessible by mobile phone. In its first six and a half months of usage, it brought in nearly \$38,000 in member contributions. It has been accepted by the membership as easy and useful to them.

### Social Media

Facebook and Twitter are being successfully used to expand exposure of Al-Anon to the public. The fellowship has come to understand that by sharing and liking the messages, they are doing Twelfth Step work while maintaining their anonymity since those two actions do not indicate membership. Our Instagram account went live in November, and it is hoped that through it, we will be able to reach a younger demographic. We continue to seek ways to reach those who need and want our message of hope.

### Trademarks

A thorough review of our trademarks as used in the U.S. and around the world was undertaken with the assistance of a Trademark and Copyright attorney who conducted the research and provided us with a timeline and a financial plan for ensuring that our logo and trademark registrations are accurate and up-to-date. Registering our trademarks in other structures and re-registering those that are expiring may be a multi-year project which we will budget and plan for based on prioritization.

We are finding that our trademarks are being used inappropriately on social media and on the Internet as apps, etc. and that it is difficult to get to the groups’ organizers to engage in conversation.

We are working to seek a monitoring solution. In at least one case, a staff member managed to reach one of the Facebook groups and after a discussion, the group agreed to make itself a “secret” meeting thereby avoiding anonymity breaks of its members on the Internet. The group also chose to register as our first social media group. Other groups we have reached are not willing as yet and so we will move forward in another way to protect our name.

### Archives: Lois’s Story (AV-1) and Lois W. & the Pioneers (AV-24) translations

The translation with closed-captioning of the AV-1 and AV-24 DVDs was completed and offered to the fellowship in March. In celebration of Al-Anon’s 65th Anniversary, *Al-Anon: Then & Now a brief history* (AR-2) leaflet was updated.

### AFG Announcements

In response to the 2015 World Service Conference Motion #8, “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 first announcement was e-mailed on August 19, 2016. The statistics:

**Subject matter:** AFG mentioned in national media

**Total sent:** 120 e-mails

**Open rate:** 73.33%

**Click through rate:** 25.83% (There was a link to Dear Abby.)

**Bounce rate:** 1.67%

**Unsubscribe rate:** 4.17% (Note: This percentage is mostly attributed to staff members who unsubscribed after testing the “opt-out” feature of the program.)

The December 22, 2016 statistics:

**Subject matter:** WSO Job Openings

**Total sent:** 983 e-mails

**Open rate:** 56%

**Click through rate:** 10% (There was a link to the Members’ website.)

**Bounce rate:** 0%

**Unsubscribe rate:** 0%

Marketing has included an announcement in the Announcements community on AFG Connects, as well as ads in *The Forum* and *Group e-News* that point individuals to a sign up “form” on the Members’ website home page.

For a benchmarking reference, as a general rule of thumb, the non-profit sector experiences the average statistics of 25.06% open rate, 2.83% click through rate, and a 0.50% bounce rate. Using those numbers as a point of reference, this communication system is performing well above the industry standards.

### 65th Anniversary Celebration

An Open House took place at the World Service Office (WSO) on Saturday, April 16, 2016 from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. as part of Al-Anon’s 65th Anniversary Celebration. An estimated 300 people toured the WSO, which elicited emotion from members.

That evening, the 65th Anniversary Banquet was held; 361 attended the banquet. Two longtime members shared their stories.

# COMMUNICATION SERVICES PUBLIC OUTREACH

## Public Outreach—Professionals

Claire R., Associate Director—Professionals

### ***Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)***

The 2016 issue of Al-Anon's outreach magazine was produced by the WSO and distributed by members. It is the largest fellowship-wide public outreach activity in our service structure. Al-Anon members distributed a total of 354,075 copies in English, Spanish, and French. Although this was a nine percent decrease in the number of copies purchased by members in comparison to 2015, members are still actively engaged in the project. The decline may be attributed to less marketing by staff due to challenges resulting from staff transitions.

The 2017 magazine cover featured an African-American family. Images throughout the magazine highlighted diversity to convey that Al-Anon welcomes all people from any ethnicity, culture, or background.

Canadian Public Outreach Coordinators assisted the WSO by appealing to members and Canadian professionals to submit articles for AFA. This was done in an effort to increase representation of Canadian members in the magazine. The request for submissions has been successful to date.

### ***Cooperation with the U.S. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), National Recovery Month planning meetings (U.S.)***

The WSO's role as a resource, and representation of Al-Anon/Alateen as a mutual support group program for families and friends of alcoholics, continued throughout the year. For the second consecutive year, a family-focused theme was selected for National Recovery Month. A WSO staff member attended two planning meetings in Rockville, MD, and participated in two conference call meetings. "Al-Anon friendly" professionals suggested by the WSO were panelists in the "Generational Issues Affecting Recovery from Childhood to Grandparenthood" and "Building Family Resiliency: Supporting Recovery 'Road to Recovery'" webinar series. Although it is not always possible for the panelists to refer to Al-Anon or Alateen directly, the importance of family recovery is conveyed.

The Texas West Delegate and local members staffed an Al-Anon information table with bilingual literature at the 2016 Rally for Recovery, the national kick-off event for Recovery Month in Dallas, TX. Local members as individuals participated in a "walk across the bridge" carrying "family member in recovery" signs, which conveyed the importance of our recovery without use of the Al-Anon name (affiliation with an outside entity) and maintained their anonymity.

Thirteen Area Public Outreach Coordinators were informed about Recovery Month activities being planned so they could forward the information to local service arms. Each event on the Recovery Month website calendar has the contact information of the local sponsor. This allows service arms to inquire whether or not Al-Anon can have a presence at the event, e.g., information table. It is sometimes necessary to clarify the definitions and differences between attraction and promotion, and cooperation and affiliation to members who are hesitant to provide Al-Anon services because they are violating Al-Anon's public relations policies.

### ***National Recovery Day (Canada)***

Like its U.S. Recovery Month counterpart, Recovery Day Canada activities are designed to draw public attention to addiction, its effects on individuals and their families, and the benefits of recovery. The WSO notifies Area Public Outreach Coordinators about special events taking place in their respective Areas in September when the information is received. Local members staffed Al-Anon information tables at three of 28 events across Canada. In one Area, members ascertained that they could not participate because of concerns for protecting their anonymity.

### ***National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Council Meetings, Rockville, MD***

WSO staff continues to represent Al-Anon and families of alcoholics by observing the council meetings and providing updates at the agenda session open to the public. Although this meeting is focused on scientific research findings, comments from WSO website podcasts are shared to highlight the struggles faced by family members addressing a loved one's alcoholism. The NIAAA Council finds our vignettes to be a meaningful reminder of the reality of alcoholism's effects in American homes and communities.

Staff and three Al-Anon members who are parents of alcoholic children participated in a conference call with NIAAA staff. The members were asked to share their stories and to describe how and what resources they used to receive help for themselves and their alcoholic children. Members reiterated the importance of finding help and remaining actively involved in Al-Anon. The information is being used to help NIAAA develop a web-based navigator for individuals and families seeking treatment.

### ***2016 Mental Health for All Conference, Toronto, ON***

Staff attended the first conference sponsored by the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse and Canadian Mental Health Association. Like the U.S., there is a growing effort for addiction and mental health organizations to collaborate with each other and to address addiction treatment and recovery as a behavioral health issue. Attendance at this event gave staff the opportunity to interact and hear presentations from professionals across Canada as well as the Executive Directors of national government agencies. Many of the sessions focused on support services for young adults, particularly those attending college. Professionals reported that special strategies are required to help with this transition as opposed to expecting young adults to simply mainstream into existing adult service programs. This type of information is useful to Al-Anon as a whole in our efforts to attract more 20- to 39-year-old adults.

### ***e-News for Professionals***

Two issues were released in March and June: "Al-Anon helps adult children deal with the repercussion of a parent's alcoholism," and "Resources to help reduce clients' and consumers' fears about attending Al-Anon." The "open rates" were 18.3 for 3,268 subscribers and 20.3 percent for 3,243 subscribers respectively. The March issue was slightly below the electronic newsletter standard of 20 percent "open rate."

The newsletter currently has more than 3,700 subscribers. Its template was reformatted to accommodate links to pertinent WSO

website pages and renamed “Al-Anon Alateen News about Families of Alcoholics.” The new name is designed to help professionals seeking information about us because it is more descriptive of our program and stands out. Distribution is being planned on a quarterly basis. It was decided to increase the content from one article to one feature and two small articles as well as a “resources” link to the WSO’s Al-Anon and Alateen meeting information databases and the Al-Anon Information Services (AISs) in its redesigned template.

An automated welcome e-mail letter was created for new professional subscribers. This template reiterates the basic information provided on the WSO Public Outreach website and materials sent to professionals. It also reinforces WSO services such as links to our meeting information and AISs.

### **Initiation of Al-Anon meetings by professionals in remote locations**

While professionals are allowed to initiate an Al-Anon group cited in the “Who Can Start a Group” section of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), professionals in rural, frontier communities frequently do not have Al-Anon groups close by to use as resources to conduct the meetings. The WSO developed a new strategy of encouraging the professionals to attend “open” Al-Anon conference call meetings so that they have an idea of how our meetings are conducted. Area Public Outreach Coordinators were asked to provide an Al-Anon contact who could mentor the professionals regarding our meeting format and operation of the group until members are able to do so. This strategy is ideal for groups on Native American reservations and First Nation/Aboriginal reserve bands in Canada. It provides professionals with guidance from Al-Anon.

### **Staff presentation, International Doctors of Alcoholics Anonymous, New Orleans, LA**

An estimated 60 professionals attended the Al-Anon workshop, “Balancing and Bridging Our Twelve Step Work in Our Personal and Professionals Lives.” An explanation of anonymity, suggestions for making client/patient referrals to Al-Anon without disclosing members, and the benefits of Tradition Eight (“forever nonprofessional”) at meetings were included.

### **First Annual Native American Al-Anon Conference**

WSO staff was invited to participate in a conference call with the New Mexico/El Paso Minorities Community Coordinator to provide information and suggestions regarding the Area’s sponsorship of this conference. Information about the importance of announcing the event hosted by the New Mexico/El Paso Area was reiterated so that it has credibility as an Al-Anon event.

### **Cooperation with researchers**

The WSO cooperates with researchers when a review by a Policy Committee Work Group determines that the project could be beneficial to Al-Anon and to increase the amount of evidence-based information about the effects and recovery of family members from a relative’s or friend’s drinking. Research findings enhance professional referrals to our program and awareness of the importance of family recovery, and support our recovery stories. It is interesting to note that some of the Master and doctoral students requesting assistance from the WSO are Al-Anon members.

The Florida North Delegate was contacted and asked to pass on information to members about the opportunity to participate in a thesis survey, “How Al-Anon can benefit the self-esteem of the alcoholic’s family members.” As a result, 39 members participated

in the on-line survey. The WSO verified statements made about Al-Anon in the final report.

Regional conference calls for Canadian incoming and outgoing Delegates and Area Public Outreach Coordinators

For the first time, conference calls were held by Region. The purpose was to facilitate the transition of trusted servants, provide an opportunity for trusted servants to exchange information and ideas with each other, and to provide the WSO and Area updates about public outreach activities and projects, e.g., Canadian 2015 Membership Survey regarding professionals, and AFA magazine. The calls were more personal and allowed more opportunity for sharing because there were fewer participants. A fourth bilingual call was held with the Quebec East and Quebec West trusted servants. This model of regional calls could be adapted to the U.S., Puerto Rico, and Bermuda.

## **Public Outreach Committee**

Maria N., Chairperson;

Donna E., Acting Chairperson

Pat Q., Staff Liaison, Associate Director—Media

The Public Outreach Committee includes Delegates from the current three panels, 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 Trustee Liaison and the Staff Liaison are non-voting members. The Committee meets three times per year via conference call, and as needed.

During 2016, the WSO Public Outreach Committee provided guidance to staff by identifying priority audiences for Public Outreach messages. By recommending young people as a top priority, Committee members encouraged the WSO to use new methods for communicating with this important audience, including an expansion of social media. The Committee reviewed and approved scripts for new public service announcements (PSA), including a PSA aimed for the first time at potential Alateens. The Committee continued to recommend the annual Public Outreach magazine, Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism, for all members to distribute in professional lobbies and waiting rooms.

## **Public Outreach—Media**

Al-Anon members continued to expand the Al-Anon message of recovery through a variety of communication tools during 2016. Members increased their “likes” and “shares” of WSO posts on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and most recently on Instagram. In the spirit of Step Eleven, WSO reminded members to protect their personal anonymity by not posting comments or using screen names that would divulge their membership in Al-Anon or Alateen. The concept of attraction versus promotion provided the stimulus to use creative graphics on many WSO posts. The spirit of Step Eleven cautions everyone to guard with special care the anonymity of all A.A. members.

New graphics on the Members’ website led to a proliferation of flyers, posters, billboards, and digital reader boards by service arms throughout the fellowship. A choice of images appeared on the Members’ website under “Public Outreach, some helpful Public Outreach tools,” and “Road Sign design for local adaptation.” The graphics offered regional and seasonal images in a range of sizes and resolutions and included two designs for Alateen. Service arms were able to choose one of the designs and add local contact information without asking for WSO review or approval. Service arms

could also submit their own images to WSO for review, to include national as well as local contact information.

New public service announcements (PSA) for TV and radio presented at the 2016 World Service Conference included the first PSA for Alateen since the WSO moved to Virginia Beach. The principle character was a 14-year-old actress who portrayed the daughter of an Al-Anon member. The character's invitation to young people to attend Alateen, or an Al-Anon meeting if a local Alateen meeting was not available, could offer extra motivation to local Public Outreach efforts. Shortly after the World Service Conference, all Area Public Outreach Coordinators received access to the new PSAs to share with the fellowship. The latest PSAs are now available on the Public Outreach website at [alanon.org](http://alanon.org).

The WSO contracted with a vendor late in 2016 to distribute and measure news releases and features about family recovery through

mass media outlets. The service offers opportunities to educate and attract more families and friends of alcoholics through published, posted, and broadcasted recovery stories about Al-Anon and Alateen. The WSO will seek Al-Anon members in major media markets who are willing to localize Al-Anon news releases for distribution through the vendor's service. Experienced or beginning writers are encouraged to contact their Area Public Outreach Coordinator or Public Information Coordinator for more information.

"First Steps to Al-Anon Recovery" podcasts continued to attract thousands of visitors who submitted hundreds of comments. A new round of podcasts requires members who are willing to share for three minutes during a 15-minute Al-Anon topic meeting on the phone. Interested members can call Public Outreach at (757) 563-1600 to volunteer.

## FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

### Literature Services

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

#### **Paths to Recovery Workbook (P-93) and Paths to Recovery Set (K-71):**

The WSO received a member's request for a workbook made up of the questions from *Paths to Recovery* (B-24), which the Literature Committee recommended to the Executive Committee, since the workbook entails the reformatting or excerpting of existing Conference Approved Literature. The Executive Committee approved the project, and the 112-page workbook will be available in January 2017 for \$10 U.S., with a set of the book and workbook available for \$25 U.S. French and Spanish translations should be available in April 2017.

#### **NEW DAILY READER (working title):**

The WSO has received more than 960 sharings from the fellowship so far for this book in progress. However, many more sharings are needed, and it seems unlikely that it can be completed in time for the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention. Notices in WSO publications and requests to Literature Coordinators continued throughout the year.

#### **INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title):**

At this point, the WSO has received more than 1,279 sharings for this book in development. Selection of a freelance writer/editor who is an Al-Anon member is in process.

#### **PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS OF YOUNG PROBLEM DRINKERS (working title):**

The number of sharings received for consideration in this pamphlet have been considerably lower than for other projects, with only 234 over the last three-and-a-half years, despite continued requests for sharings. Selection of a freelance writer/editor who is an Al-Anon member is in process.

#### **Electronic Literature:**

This year the WSO introduced e-book and audiobook versions of *Courage to Change* (eB-16) (eA-16), bringing the total number of available e-books to four and audiobooks to three, as well as an electronic version of *The Forum*. In April, the Policy Committee

agreed that staff could include the names of the electronic vendors through which these products are available in announcements and listings, provided a disclaimer was included regarding affiliation.

#### **Literature Coordinators:**

Regular postings were made throughout the year to the Literature Coordinator community of AFG Connects. In October, two hour-long conference calls were held with Area Literature Coordinators to continue enhancing communication and cooperation regarding their role.

#### **CAL Quotations:**

Twenty quotations from a variety of Conference Approved Literature were posted on AFG Connects for Areas and other service arms to use in their 2017 fundraising calendars without having to obtain written permission. Also, throughout the year, quotations from the quarterly "Sample Chapters" that are posted on the WSO websites were posted on the Al-Anon Facebook page.

#### **World Service Conference Report:**

Because groups no longer receive a complimentary copy of *The Forum* magazine, the "News from the WSC" article was posted on the Members' website in June, with a link in the June and July issues of *Group e-News*. A full-page ad for the report was placed in the July and August issues of *The Forum* as well. This allowed more time and care to be spent in writing the report, and it was available to the fellowship considerably sooner than it had been in the past. It preceded the full Conference Summary, which was in print by late July.

#### **Literature Revisions:**

This year, revisions recommended by the Literature Committee were included in *Alateens Share with Adults in Their Lives* (P-67) (formerly titled *Dear Mom & Dad*); *Information for the Newcomer* (S-4); and *Lois Remembers* (B-7), which had changes to the historical timeline in the back of the book. Revisions were also made to two service tools, Al-Anon: Then and Now (AR-2), which is posted on the Members' website and the Al-Anon On-line Store; and *Getting Started* (S-15R), which is included in the Newcomer Packets to introduce Al-Anon literature to newcomers.

### **Forum Legacy sharing shortage:**

*The Forum* is in serious need of submissions about each of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service for use in the back pages of the magazine. Notices were included in *The Forum*, *Group e-News*, and the Announcements community of AFG Connects. Also needed are sharings from Canada and from Alateen members.

### **New Department in *The Forum*:**

In October, *The Forum* began a yearlong series of articles written by members of the Board of Trustees, providing an inside look at the work the Board does for our fellowship and reinforces that they are regular AI-Anon members.

### **THE FORUM BOOK (working title):**

So far, members have sent in over 270 titles and publication dates of *Forum* articles they consider the best of recent years. The WSO welcomes additional suggestions.

### **Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC)**

Brian R., Chairperson  
Julie M., Staff Liaison

Tom C./Claire R., Interim Staff Liaison  
Annette T., Trustee Liaison to the Board

Due to staff transitions, the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) met twice this year rather than quarterly. The Board Liaison and two WSO Staff Liaisons provided feedback on several topics:

A suggestion was made that the “Here’s an instant meeting” department in *The Forum* address a variety of topics. However, the Committee agreed that the articles need to remain focused on the Steps, so that groups have a resource for Step meetings. It is recommended that, beginning in January 2017, discussion questions be added to further support sharings on the Step of the month.

The Committee was informed of the ongoing shortage of Legacy sharings—particularly for the Traditions and Concepts of Service. The Committee prefers that each *Forum* issue continue to provide Step, Tradition, and Concept articles rather than reverting to the former practice of only covering one Legacy per year. To help increase member awareness and motivation to submit Legacy sharings, the Committee recommended including articles and ads in *The Forum*, *Group e-News*, AFG Connects, and AFG Announcements.

The Committee also recommended changes to the *Forum Writing Guideline* (F1).

## **MEMBER SERVICES**

### **GROUP SERVICES**

Sue P., Associate Director—Groups

#### **AI-Anon Information Services**

The 2016 *Getting in Touch with AI-Anon and Alateen* pamphlet (S-23) was postal-mailed to 202 AISs and AIS/LDCs and 105 LDCs and to all the AI-Anon groups in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda.

#### **Electronic Meetings**

Group Services staff held conference calls with members of the phone meetings to discuss the topics of Open/Closed Meetings, Practicing the Seventh Tradition on the Members’ website, and Service on the phone meetings. The two calls were held in June with over 50 percent of the phone meetings participating.

The WSO received registrations for electronic meetings held on social media platforms. The WSO staff worked with the meeting administrators to establish that the settings for the meetings reflected the principles of Tradition Eleven—maintaining members’ personAI-Anonymity in the media—so that no full names and faces are visible to the public.

#### **Guidelines**

The process of revising the guidelines on a rotating basis continued. Several more guidelines were revised, translated into French and Spanish, and posted on the Members’ website.

#### **Special Needs**

##### *Hearing Impaired*

As a result of an increase in requests from hearing-impaired AI-Anon members for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at AI-Anon meetings, several Areas and AI-Anon Information Services (AISs) began compiling lists of current AI-Anon members in their Areas who are skilled in ASL and willing to assist hear-

ing-impaired members at meetings. Hearing-impaired members are also directed to the AI-Anon Public Outreach website to find the AI-Anon On-line Meeting List, as there are a number of on-line meetings in a written format.

##### *Vision-impaired*

The WSO worked with an organization for the blind in the San Francisco area to create Braille interpretations of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service, the Suggested Meeting Format Readings (Serenity Prayer, Suggested AI-Anon/Alateen Welcome, Suggested AI-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps, Suggested AI-Anon/Alateen Closing, and the AI-Anon Declaration), and the “Three Obstacles to Success in AI-Anon” from the “Groups at Work” section of the *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) at the request of an AI-Anon member so that disabled members in the meeting could participate.

The WSO referred another member in another Area in need of this service, and the organization provided that member with the already-translated Braille materials. As more requests are made, more Braille translations of AI-Anon Conference Approved Literature can be made available to our vision-impaired members.

#### **Insurance**

AI-Anon and Alateen groups are increasingly being asked by the facility where they meet to provide liability insurance. Another Area began providing liability insurance to its groups for a nominal fee in 2016.

#### **Correspondence/e-mails/phone calls**

The Group Services Department responds to numerous questions from groups and members regarding AI-Anon policies and procedures. Frequent topics include service participation by all AI-Anon members, group bank accounts, conflict resolution, and how to hold group business meetings to make an informed group conscience decision.

## ALATEEN

### Area Alateen Coordinators

Two conference calls with Area Alateen Coordinators took place to review the new training modules, results of the Alateen survey, and the recertification process.

Updated PowerPoint training modules and accompanying guide for Area Alateen Coordinators was posted on the Alateen Coordinator community in AFG Connects.

### Alateen Chat Meetings

Chat meetings were held with Alateen Group Sponsors of Alateen Chat meetings to discuss the future of the chat meetings and get feedback from those who are serving Alateen.

Two conference calls were held for the Alateen Chat Meeting Sponsors. These calls provided an opportunity for Sponsors to talk about chat meeting challenges and successes. Sponsors discussed the future of the chat meeting and whether changing to a discussion board format would be more helpful to the teens.

### Alateen Service e-Manual

The "Alateen Service e-Manual" has been revised and posted in a downloadable/printable PDF version under the Alateen tab of the Members' website.

### Alateen's 60th Anniversary

Preparations for Alateen's 60th anniversary are underway with announcements published in Group e-News and *The Forum*.

## GROUP RECORDS

In July 2016, the Group Records Department introduced a new meeting status, "Reported Not Meeting," to the Area Group Records Coordinators and Area Alateen Process Persons. This new status allows the WSO to stop directing people to groups that are not meeting. Information about the flagged meetings is temporarily removed from the WSO toll-free meeting line and the Public Outreach website meeting search results, until the status of the meeting can be verified.

The Manitoba Area has registered the first videoconferencing meeting, using Telehealth technology. It allows individuals who live in remote areas to go to a nursing station or hospital and attend an Al-Anon meeting via conference video. Over a hundred stations are available throughout Manitoba. This monthly meeting is supported by three other groups in the cities of Dawson, Dauphin, and Winnipeg.

### Group Records Conference Calls and Training Sessions

The first new Area Group Records Coordinator and Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) "Anywhere" Web conference calls, which included PowerPoint presentations, were held on January 30, 2016. The incoming panel was very excited to participate in the Web conference calls. All the Areas were represented, except the Areas where Coordinators were serving a second term.

Feedback showed that the participants valued the information provided on the call. It was noted that the PowerPoint presentation animation was not coordinated for all participants, and that new Area Group Records Coordinators experienced some disruption with background noise. The Group Records Department foresees these issues to be resolved with the next Web conference call training sessions that will be held for the incoming panel in early February 2017.

Two World Service Office (WSO) On-line Group Records Web conference training sessions for new Area Group Records Coordinators and Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) were held on February 9 and 11, 2016. An average of five Area Group Records Coordinators and AAPPs attended each training session. The smaller groups allowed participants to ask in-depth questions and gave staff the opportunity to go over specific scenarios.

### 2016 AI-Anon Annual Group Update

The Group Records Department experienced some lengthy delays in processing the AI-Anon Annual Update Sheets. The almost simultaneous mailing, by the mailer, of the already late Canadian mailings and the March US Northeast and US Southeast Regions' mailings resulted in an unusually large volume of returned updates.

### WSO On-line Group Records Application Upgrades

Three WSO On-line Group Records application upgrades were released in 2016, which included the submission of new Alateen group registrations on the application, a WSO On-line Group Records video tutorial for Area Group Records Coordinators, links to AFG Connects, and other minor upgrades. Search features were upgraded to better navigate the database with ease.

### Surveys

The World Service Office (WSO) conducted two concurrent WSO On-line Group Records Surveys, one for Area Group Records Coordinators and the other for Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) on AFG Connects. The surveys were open for participation from October 11 to November 6, 2016. The main purpose of the surveys was to gather feedback as the WSO continues to refine the WSO On-line Group Records application to better meet the users' needs.

All 67 Area Group Record Coordinators were invited to participate in the survey. Fifty-two unique responses were received citing positive use of the new features. Overall, the Group Records Coordinators found the enhancements to the On-line Group Records application have afforded Area trusted servants improved ability to pull necessary reports. The upgrades allow them to print out group lists to share within the Area service structure, including Al-Anon Information Services (AISs), and Area Web-site Coordinators.

#### The Group Records Coordinators responded as follows:

- 86% rated the usability of the WSO On-line Group Records application as easy to use (n=50)
- 86% selected "Reports" as a useful feature; followed by "Search" selected by 70% (n=50)
- 95.8% felt the WSO On-line Group Records application met their needs (n=48)
  - ♦ The remaining entries were neutral.
- 87.8% use the data for "Group Printouts," followed by "E-mail Lists," which is used by 42.9% (n=49)
  - ♦ The most common "Other" response is: 36.8% use it to upload meeting information onto the Area websites (n=19)
- 22.9% indicate they share reports with AISs (n=48)

All 67 AAPPs were invited to participate in the AAPP survey. Thirty-eight unique responses were received. Overall, the AAPPs also found the WSO On-line Group Records application easier to navigate and the search and reports functions to be useful. The AAPPs use the application primarily to print out the group lists and Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) information.

### The AAPPs responded as follows:

- 92% rated the usability of the WSO On-line Group Records application as easy to use (n=38)
- 92% selected “Search” as a useful feature; followed by “Reports” selected by 71% (n=38)
- 97.4% felt the WSO On-line Group Records application met their needs (n=38)
  - ♦ The remaining entries were neutral.
- 68.4% use the data for “Group Printouts,” followed by “E-mail Lists,” which is used by 42.1% (n=38)
  - ♦ The most common “Other” response is: 50% use it to pull AMIAS information (n=12)
- 97.3% indicate the WSO On-line AMIAS Recertification timeline accommodated the Area Recertification process (n=37)

Results of the survey will be reported to the Area Group Records Coordinators and AAPPs on AFG Connects.

Four thousand, five hundred and eighty-five (4,585) Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) were certified in 2016.

The total number of Al-Anon and Alateen groups worldwide in 2016 is: 24,919

US/PR/BDA Al-Anon 12,786

US/PR/BDA Alateen 866

Canada Al-Anon 1,217

Canada Alateen 56

International Al-Anon 9,307

International Alateen 687

The total number of electronic meetings for 2016 is 157.

106 phone meetings include:

- 99 English
- 7 Spanish

51 on-line meetings include:

- 20 English
- 17 Spanish
- 4 German
- 3 Russian
- 3 French
- 1 Danish
- 1 Polish
- 1 Portuguese
- 1 Icelandic

## MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

### World Service Conference and Area Delegates:

The Conference Communication Kit, a set of documents that provides information on travel, housing, and dates to remember, was streamlined from 12 documents to four documents. A “Recap” document was added to the kit to provide a concise source of information regarding Conference travel/lodging.

The Chosen Agenda Items Task Force, comprised of two Delegates and the Conference Chairperson, combined like topics that resulted in the 22 Chosen Agenda Items (CAIs) submitted for the 2016 Conference, one of which was referred to a WSO department for response since it was a question related to the work of the WSO, becoming 12 CAIs.

The Sharing Area Highlights meeting, an out-of-Conference session that takes place the day before Conference convenes and is organized and chaired by Delegates, was reformatted so that Delegates met in small groups to share and discuss several topics, which were meant to initiate discussion, and then they reported highlights of the discussions to the whole group. The response to this new format was positive.

The 2016 World Service Conference (WSC) members used leftover 2013 International Convention lanyards to display their badges as a cost-saving measure. The difference between the 2015 Conference lanyards and the 2016 lanyards was that one side displayed “Celebrating Worldwide Unity” in addition to “Al-Anon Family Groups.”

Ninety-two voting members attended the 56th WSC in Virginia Beach, Virginia April 11-15, 2016. The Alternate Delegate represented West Virginia. Mexico sent a General Service Office (GSO) Representative to attend the Conference. The GSO in Mexico also sent a translator to assist its representative.

Conference evaluations indicated that the Conference was very successful. One Conference member noted, “There was a sense of unity, freedom, and willingness to participate.”

The *2016 Conference Summary* arrived ahead of schedule on July 26th. Shipping the bulk orders of the *Conference Summary* to the Delegates for the members of their Area World Service Committees was completed on schedule. 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 *2016 World Service Conference Summary* was posted on the Members’ website.

A fully-executed contract was reached to record the 2017 WSC. A contract with a former staff member to write the *2017 Conference Summary* is pending. Panel 55 Delegates were invited to mentor a Panel 57 Delegate.

New Zealand is sending a representative to attend the 2017 WSC.

### AFG Connects:

Panel 56 Delegates, Area Chairs, and District Representatives (DRs) were welcomed and given access to AFG Connects—the on-line system the WSO uses to communicate with trusted servants.

Delegates continue to share on a variety of discussion topics including closing the budget deficit. One topic the Area Chairs discussed was whether Areas encourage Delegates to serve as Area Chairs. The DRs discussed numerous topics including DRs visiting the groups in their Districts, fund-raising events, and the possibility of virtual District meetings.

## Conference Leadership Team

*Tina B., Chairperson*

*Karen W.-P./Rosie M., Co-Chairperson*

*Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference*

Members of the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) agreed to include a CLT Update as an addition to the quarterly Chairperson of the Board Letter that is posted on the Members’ website.

In addition to recognizing outgoing Delegates during the Closing Dinner, the CLT also agreed to recognize outgoing Trustees, Executive

Committee members, and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson by presenting them with a certificate of appreciation.

In initial planning for the 2017 WSC, the CLT unanimously agreed on (and the Board approved) the 2017 Conference theme, “Our Members: Our Hope for the Future.”

Staff has a fully executed contract for the 2017 WSC, which will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia April 24-28, 2017. The following sessions will take place on Monday, April 24: The New Member Orientation Session, Committees/Task Forces, Sharing Area Highlights, and the Opening Dinner. The Conference will begin Tuesday, April 25, and the Closing Dinner will be held Friday, April 28.

## TEAM Events

Seven TEAM Events were held in 2016: Tennessee (May 13), Maritime Provinces (June 2-3), Iowa (August 12-13), Pennsylvania (September 24), North Carolina/Bermuda (October 1), Hawaii (November 4-5), and Illinois North (November 12).

## Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect (formerly Meet the Board)

The 2016 Meet the Board event was held in Fayetteville, Arkansas on Saturday, October 22, 2016. This was a very successful event drawing 103 registrants. The event had very positive feedback from the evaluation forms, as well as from the Board members in attendance. This event has been in a trial phase from 2013 to 2016. In January 2016, the Meet the Board event, now called “Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect” trial was extended through 2019.

## 2018 AI-Anon International Convention

Baltimore, Maryland

July 6-8, 2018

Mary G., Chairperson, 2018

Marsha W., Coordinator

Suzanne M., Co-Coordinator

The Executive Director, Coordinator, Co-Coordinator, and Meeting Planner had a planned site visit to Baltimore, Maryland in November. During the visit, a meeting took place with the Delegate for Maryland/DC to provide her with information needed to elect a chair for a Host Committee and the duties and responsibilities of a local Host Committee during this event. In addition to a tour of four of the nine hotels that are a part of the World Service Office (WSO) current contracted room block for the event, staff also met with key representatives from Visit Baltimore and the Baltimore Convention Center.

The Planning Committee also met to begin discussions about the WSO Volunteer/Staff attending, and the overall budget and registration fee for the Convention.

## International Coordination Committee

Debbie G./Marilyn M., Chairperson

Marilyn M./Karen W.- P., Co-Chairperson

Marsha W./Kerri K., Associate Director—International

The theme of the 18th International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) was Sharing Worldwide Diversity: Strengthening

Our Growth. Twenty-one structures, which included the United States and Canada, were represented in Rome, Italy.

The nine general sessions, which were led by Delegates, reflected the service work and experience on topics such as “How Structures Are Developing and Implementing Strategic Plans” and “Inspiring and Supporting Group Members to Participate in Public Information/Outreach.” The six workshops gave participants opportunities to continue discussions on various service-related topics in a smaller group setting.

Guatemala, India, and Paraguay sent representatives for the first time to the IAGSM. There were 37 attendees to the meeting.

The site for the 19th IAGSM in 2018 is Virginia Beach, Virginia.

## Translation Department

The following items were translated into French and Spanish in 2016:

### Magazines

• *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2017*

• *Le lien*—a French-language publication compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues)

• *en acción*—a Spanish-language publication compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues)

### Presentations

• Anonymity Within the Fellowship

• Anonymity Outside the Fellowship

### Guidelines

• *Alateen Meetings in Schools* (G-5)

### Pamphlets/Service Tools

• *Information for the Newcomer* (S-4)

• *Links of Service* (S-28)

• *Joy of Service* (S-57)

• *Alateens Share with Adults in Their Lives* (P-67)

### Other Items

• Instructions for Areas and GSOs interested in setting up Facebook pages

• 2017 World Service Conference theme for use on posters, letterhead, and other materials

• News from the World Service Conference bulletin

• World Service Conference motions

• Appeal Letter (quarterly)

• Chairperson of the Board Letter (quarterly)

• *Group eNews* (monthly)

• Updates to the on-line *Service Manual*

• Updates to content for the Public Outreach and Members' websites

• Membership surveys

# AI-Anon/Alateen Internationally

## Africa

**Ghana** – The WSO received a request for “educational resource materials and teaching aids” from the Centre for Youth Careers and Development in Ghana, West Africa. Because AI-Anon doesn’t provide this kind of material, a letter was sent in reply. The letter was an opportunity to provide information about what AI-Anon is and is not. A small sample of literature was provided to aid this understanding.

**South Africa** – In June, the contact for the GSO in South Africa shared that their final paper work dealing with the transfer of the Trademark to the WSO is on track in their process to register the Trademarks in South Africa under the name AI-Anon Family Groups, Inc. This original request was made by the WSO in 2014 to the GSOs that had erroneously registered the Trademarks in the name of their structures. The contact on behalf of the GSO advised that because of their previous success with using the magazine *AI-Anon Faces Alcoholism* as a public outreach tool with professionals in South Africa, they plan to reprint the 2017 content for this WSO publication. In November, the GSO received permission to print *How AI-Anon Works* (B-32).

## Europe

**Belgium** – The GSO for French-speaking Belgium has reduced its office hours to cut down on costs. The GSO is now open four days a week.

**Denmark** – In November, Denmark published a translation of *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4). Two copies were provided to the WSO, as per the requirements for first printings.

**Finland** – A representative on behalf of the GSO advised that they are still interested in starting an Alateen Chat meeting on the WSO platform. WSO relayed that the Web Architect advised that there are pending changes concerning the current platform for Alateen Chat Meetings. It was explained that the current formatting will only allow the user to access a meeting using a computer, not a phone. It was further explained that WSO is waiting for a definitive answer from the vendor.

**France** – In January, the GSO in France asked the WSO for permission to use the public service announcements (PSAs) from the Public Outreach website on their website. The WSO was able to provide them with files from the vendor so they could make appropriate modifications to the contents for their structure. They reported in July that there has been more activity and interest in AI-Anon since then.

**Hungary** – In October, Hungary submitted requests to translate and print *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4), *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4), and *Group Inventory: Use of Conference Approved Literature* (S-62).

**Iceland** – A contact for the GSO in Iceland advised that their Literature/Translation Committee is completing their translation of the book *Paths to Recovery—AI-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24). The GSO expects that this book will be published later this year. Iceland has also started using Facebook for Public Outreach.

**Germany** – The General Secretary for the GSO in Germany advised they have decided to update their translation of the pamphlet of *A Guide to the Family of the Alcoholic* (GP-7) and to change the cover to the cover that the World Service Office (WSO) is currently using.

The European Zonal Meeting is scheduled for August 18-20, 2017 in Essen, Germany. They are welcoming all members of the European AI-Anon community to participate in this event.

**Italy** – In May, a contact on behalf of the GSO in Italy advised that their Board of Trustees and Executive Committee members, including the General Secretary, resigned during their 2016 service conference. These resignations stemmed from dissatisfaction expressed by Conference members and members within the structure about the unauthorized translation changes made in the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. Although these were published in the *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2014 - 2017*, translated and published in October 2015, the proposed changes in translation were not discussed within the structure, nor were the groups in Italy given the opportunity to participate in a discussion about the changes. In June, members held a special service meeting to elect new Trustees. The WSO was asked to provide a letter of encouragement to be read to those attending this special meeting. The Executive Director sent a letter on behalf of the WSO. In an inspiring example of AI-Anon members rising to meet their challenges, the newly-elected Board of Trustees hosted the International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in October, as planned and committed to by the previous Board. In December, the GSO sent the leaflet *Detachment* (S-19) to print.

**Netherlands** – After a long absence, the WSO heard from the GSO in the Netherlands in November. They are preparing a translation of *Hope for Today* (B-27) and are newly connected to the WSO through AFG Connects.

**Poland** – The contact for the GSO in Poland asked if the Request for Permission to Translate and Print AI-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature allowed them to publish current books in audio format. WSO replied that the current form (which is a “license”) only allows the GSO to produce literature in the format currently published by the World Service Office; not in audio or electronic format. A primary reason for this is that the current license does not authorize a country to sell literature outside of its geographic boundaries. The GSO was advised to submit a written request, prior to starting work on a project, if they would like to translate any electronic or audio versions of CAL available in English.

**Romania** – A member in Romania requested assistance in forming a GSO. The member was provided guidance about how to access the Members’ website and the materials available on the International page for evolving structures. It was suggested they consider forming an AIS first, and they were provided with the Guidelines *AI-Anon Information Services* (G-4) and *The Open AI-Anon Meeting* (G-27). The member was also provided with contact information for the 2017 European Zonal Meeting and encouraged to attend this and use it as a resource.

**Russia** – The contact on behalf of the Russian Service Board for AFG reported on a rotation of service roles. This included appointing an English-speaking liaison to ensure that communication continues with the WSO. This person also works to coordinate translations of CAL for their structure.

The contact reported that Russia is considering doing TEAM events and requested WSO experience regarding the organization of the content for these events. The Service Board is planning a 30th anniversary celebration for November 2018.

**Slovakia** – In October, the AIS in Slovakia submitted the necessary paperwork to request reprint permission. This is an initial request for Slovakia. Their request was discussed by the International Coordination Committee and a recommendation for approval will be presented to the Board of Trustees.

**Slovenia** – The International Coordination Committee received a request from Slovenia to modify their service structure to become a General Service Office. The service structure that has been operating in the city of Ljubljana registered with the WSO in 2010 as an AIS. This was approved by the Board of Trustees in July.

**Sweden** – A contact from Sweden on behalf of the GSO advised that they are planning to do some public outreach activities during 2016. One activity included using the publication *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* with English-speaking professionals within their community. In October, the GSO submitted a request to translate and print *Hope for Today* (B-27).

**Ukraine** – In May, the AIS in Ukraine submitted the necessary paperwork to request reprint permission. This is an initial request for Ukraine. Their request was discussed by the International Coordination Committee and subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees. They submitted requests to translate and print *Information for the Newcomer* (S-4), *What Do YOU Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking?* (P-19), and *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (P-48).

A representative from the Ukraine reported they held their fourth service meeting June 11-12, 2016. Their next meeting is scheduled to take place June 17-18, 2017 in Kiev; the WSO has been asked to consider sending representation to this meeting.

**UK & Eire** – The General Secretary for the UK & Eire reported that they are currently struggling with an AIS in Dublin, which, although it is a part of their structure, has started operating independently. To raise capital, the AIS is selling literature that is available from the GSO free of charge. In addition, the AIS has asked some members to purchase literature on their behalf when they travel to the United States. The literature is then sold to members in Dublin and the surrounding service structure. The UK & Eire Board of Trustees is trying to resolve this issue using conflict resolution service tools.

## Asia

**India** – Delegates from India attended the IAGSM for the first time in 2016. At this meeting, they brought copies of three pieces of literature translated into Punjabi. These were *Information for the Newcomer* (S-4), *Troubled by Someone's Drinking?* (S-17), and *Understanding Ourselves & Alcoholism* (P-48). These are the first materials ever translated and printed in Punjabi. India has 22 official languages so their GSO is taking a standardized approach to translation. These three pieces will be the first translated into any new language because of their usefulness in Public Outreach and helping newcomers to understand what Al-Anon is about.

**Iran** – The book *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24) was translated and printed by members in Iran without WSO approval; WSO has been assured that, to date, no books have been sold. A copy was received by the WSO from a

liaison for Iran who currently lives in the United States.

**Israel** – A member advised that the groups in Israel are exploring the possibility of forming an Al-Anon Information Service (AIS). The member was provided the *Guidelines Al-Anon Information Services* (G-4) and *The Open Al-Anon Meeting* (G-27). There are currently four groups in Israel registered with the WSO, three in Jerusalem and one located in the city of Raanana. The latter is the oldest group; it was registered in April 1998. The WSO was advised, however, that they will most likely locate the AIS in Jerusalem.

**Japan** – A member on behalf of a new English-speaking meeting in Japan contacted the WSO to find out if the group could register with the WSO only and not the GSO in Japan. WSO advised the group could register with our office; however, since any Al-Anon or Alateen group that starts in Japan is a part of the service structure for that country, the group would also register with the Al-Anon Japan GSO. The member did include in the correspondence that Al-Anon Japan GSO continues its practice of “taxing” each group that registers in its structure. This long-standing problem has been addressed by the WSO with the GSO in the past.

**Philippines** – A member located in Imus Cavite, Philippines contacted the WSO requesting registration materials to start an Al-Anon group. She indicated that during her search, she came across A.A. groups, had the opportunity to attend one as a guest, and was able to make a connection with another member who was also looking for an Al-Anon group. Since that time, the two members have met twice in a face-to-face setting. The contact advised, “At least for now we have each other, but I somehow feel I needed more guidance from those who have been in the group for a longer time.” She indicated that they are currently using *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) and *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) for study materials. In addition, this individual advised they have also connected to an on-line group.

**Thailand** – The WSO has heard from members in Thailand looking for ways to make the meeting information more accessible to newcomers visiting the WSO's “Find an International Meeting” page. They have also asked about the availability of CAL in the Thai language. In each case, the members were provided background information about the role of the WSO and the role of local service arms such as GSOs and AISs and how they can work cooperatively to support local members, newcomers, and conduct Public Outreach.

## Australia/New Zealand

**Australia** – The General Secretary for Australia contacted the WSO to ask that we review a public outreach poster that was created by an Area within their service structure. After a review, the WSO advised that the poster did not conflict with policy.

The GSO's Board of Trustees is discussing ways they can do more national public outreach campaigns in Australia. She advised that they are frustrated with the free airtime offered by the television stations as the airtime that is most available is often during the early hours of the morning.

In sharing their recent public outreach activities, the General Secretary reported that they took part in an “amazing” weekend convention in Fiji. Al-Anon was invited by A.A. in Australia to participate in the inaugural A.A. Australasian Convention in Suva, Fiji. The convention was organized by the A.A. General Service Office

(GSO) in Sydney, and the General Secretary was asked to be on the planning committee representing Al-Anon and Alateen. In preparation, they met by Skype each week for about eight months with people in Sydney, Adelaide, Fiji, and Melbourne.

The report indicated:

A big Public Awareness Day on the Thursday was held which took the interest of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Fiji and the Fiji Department of Health based in Suva. One hundred and fifty professionals and interested village council members were bussed to the meeting in Suva. In Australia, we are lucky to get one or two professionals to attend a public awareness meeting! We had the chance to talk with these visitors during the breaks in the day's program, and it was heart-warming to see many of them attend the A.A. and Al-Anon meetings on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. They were just so interested in finding out more about solutions to their problem of alcohol addiction in Fijian society.

For us, it was fantastic that the WHO and the Ministry of Health were so enthusiastic about Al-Anon Family Groups to help families who are suffering badly in Fiji with family violence problems caused by alcohol abuse a big worry. Some wonderful articles were written in the newspapers.

Best of all, a new Al-Anon group is starting tomorrow in Suva. How fantastic is that? We will get them to register with the WSO as soon as we can. The generosity of the 40 Australian Al-Anon members who went to Suva was astounding—they donated many Al-Anon books and pamphlets, gave their time to talk to the local Fijian visitors each day, and the Australian Al-Anon Groups have donated around \$1,500 to keep up the support of this fledgling Al-Anon Group.

**New Zealand** – The General Secretary for New Zealand advised that their structure has continued interest in starting an Alateen Chat meeting using the WSO platform. WSO advised that, to date, adding new Alateen Chat meetings remains on hold as the current platform in place needs updating.

The General Secretary also reported that their structure is very interested in hosting the 2020 IAGSM. WSO advised that the Board of Trustees believes this would be a great opportunity for their membership. WSO shared the experience of working with South Africa as that service structure was so grateful after they were selected to host the 2012 meeting. The bid process for 2020 will take place in 2018.

The General Secretary for New Zealand plans to attend the 2017 World Service Conference in Virginia Beach, VA.

## North and Central America

**Belize** – A member contacted the WSO requesting information to start a Spanish-speaking meeting. There is currently only one meeting registered with WSO located in Belize; the meeting is English-speaking and is located in San Pedro. A member has also made inquiries into trying to organize a small structure there. The member was provided the Guidelines *Al-Anon Information Services* (G-4) and *The Open Al-Anon Meeting* (G-27).

**Mexico** – A contact on behalf of the GSO in Mexico asked if they were able to update the statistical information in the book *Al-Anon Family Groups* (SB-5). WSO advised that because we no longer print this book, information could not be updated as the copyright only allows the reprint of the content last published.

## South America

**Brazil** – The contact on behalf of the General Service Office in Brazil advised that because of the financial crises in their country, the Board of Trustees decided that their financial resources were best spent on Al-Anon services within Brazil. As a result of this decision, Brazil's Board voted not to send a representative to the 2016 IAGSM.

The ICC made a recommendation to the WSO Board which subsequently approved a motion to fund Brazil's attendance at the IAGSM.

WSO made Brazil aware that it would cover expenses through a scholarship that was available to IAGSM attendees. (In 2015, a Task Force of the Board, came up with three ways to help countries to attend the IAGSM, among which was a scholarship for new countries to attend). It had not as yet been used, so it was determined that since Brazil was a strong support to new South American structures, the funds could be used to assist Brazil to attend. Brazil wrote to express thanks for the opportunity to attend and subsequently, their GSO reversed their earlier decision and did send representation to the 2016 IAGSM.

Taken from the letter of thanks:

We could write "thank you" a million times and it wouldn't be enough to express our gratitude with this wonderful opportunity! Please pass on our words of gratitude to everyone involved in this marvellous outcome for Brazil.

**Colombia** – The WSO received word from the GSO in Colombia that their website is not operational. They continue to operate a toll-free telephone hotline.

**Ecuador** – Ecuador is hosting the Ibero-American meeting (RIA-SA) in 2017. The dates for this event are October 14 and 15, 2017. In November, the GSO sent out a request to know how many delegations plan to participate and to solicit ideas about the topics for discussion.

**Paraguay** – The WSO received and translated a copy of the report from the Ibero-American meeting which took place November 2015 in Asuncion, Paraguay. It was shared with the International Coordination Committee during their July meeting. Paraguay participated in an International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) for the first time in 2016.

**Peru** – The General Secretary for Peru advised it is more cost-effective for them to reprint Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature than to buy it and pay for shipping. They expect to reprint one book, *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (SB-4) and seven pamphlets over the coming year. In November, they received permission and were provided materials to translate *Seventh Tradition* (S-21).

In August, the GSO contact advised they have reduced their office hours to cut down on expenses. They are now open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

## Zonal Meetings

A Zonal Meeting is an informational meeting held every two years for countries with General Service Offices or evolving service structures.

### European Zonal Meeting (EZM)

The European Zonal Meeting is scheduled for August 18-20, 2017 in Essen, Germany. The Director of Programs will attend.

### Central American Zonal Meeting (RECACSA)

The Central American Zonal Meeting is scheduled for May 18-20, 2017 in Antigua, Guatemala. The Associate Director—International will attend.

### Ibero-American Zonal Meeting (RIASA)

The Ibero-American Zonal Meeting is scheduled for October 14-15, 2017 in Ecuador. The Associate Director—International will attend.

## BUSINESS SERVICES

During 2016, we added the ability for members to subscribe to e-mail announcements regarding important information from the WSO. For ease of understanding, the “Announcements—WSO Structure” community has been renamed, “Announcements.”

A PayPal feature was added to the website to allow members to contribute and receive a contribution receipt immediately. Members can choose to send a one-time contribution or set up a recurring contribution.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Jennie McC., Chairperson

David Zach, Director of Business Services (Non-member)

Niketa Bailey, Director of Finance (Non-member)

The Finance Committee meets monthly and reports to the Executive Committee immediately following the Finance meeting. During the Conference, the Finance Committee reports directly to the Board.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee include monitoring expenses, cash flow, aligning the budget of estimated income and expenses, and recommending that the Board of Trustees set aside funds in reserve when appropriate. The Committee’s oversight ensures that we remain solvent.

The Committee reviews the financial feasibility of proposed projects not already included in the budget, taking into consideration the goals and desired outcomes, cost-effectiveness, timing, and the relationship to the Strategic Plan. Additionally, it sets prices for new or existing literature. The Committee reports those actions to the Executive Committee.

### Other routine functions include:

- Approval of the quarterly Appeal letters.
- Review of handouts on previous year’s contributions received from the U.S. and Canada for distribution at the World Service Conference.
- Recommendation to the Board of Trustees the Equalized Expense amount to send a Delegate to the World Service Conference.
- Review, revise when appropriate, and submit recommendations for the Investment Strategy Goals to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- Review of each department’s budget with the Director of that service in preparing the Preliminary 2017 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January.
- Review the Audit Report and Management Letter.

- Review Investment Philosophy.
- Review the 990.
- Review Finance Committee Goals and Objectives.
- Review the Investments in the Reserve Fund.
- Meeting with the Investment Managers twice a year.

### Other non-routine actions included:

- Recommended to the Board of Trustees to print the soft cover version of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) in English, French, and Spanish, and to no longer consider it a trial.
- Reviewed and modified the Travel Reimbursement Policy.
- Made recommendations to staff about improvements to the Contribute Now button on the Al-Anon website.
- Approved the pricing and financial feasibility of the companion workbook for *Paths to Recovery*.
- Worked on the Finance Committee presentation for the 2017 World Service Conference and discussed various ways to make it more meaningful and helpful to Conference members.
- Reviewed and analyzed packing and shipping charges to ensure the fairness and validity.
- Discussed and agreed upon using AFG Connects to communicate important financial decisions and activity to the membership.
- Recommended to the Board of Trustees the discontinuation of the complimentary printed copy of the *Service Manual* (P-24/27) to existing groups. It is recommended that newly registered groups receive a printed copy.
- Recommended to the Board of Trustees the discontinuation of the complimentary printed copies of the *World Service Conference Summaries* (P-46).

## Digital Strategy Section

The WSO’s Digital Strategy has been established and has begun to use our digital properties and Internet best practices to support the Strategic Plan of the Board of Trustees of AFG, Inc.

### Al-Anon Website

The WSO has been working with a Web design agency to update our website, al-anon.org. The site will be made more effective for use on a mobile device and the pages will be structured to make it easier to find newcomer content as well as member content. Additionally, podcasts and blog content will be merged into the new website.

### Analytics

In October, we added Google Analytics tags to all Al-Anon websites (previously it was only on al-anon.org): al-anon.info, Members’ site, Groups Blog, First Steps Podcast, and The Steps Blog. This provides a more complete view of how the digital content is viewed. Comparing November (2016 vs 2015) website visits are up 61% (+112,378), page views are up 63%. We can expect about 4 million website visits in 2017.

The complete tagging also indicates approximately 38% of the page views across all website properties (listed above) are on “find a meeting” pages; compared to about 16% for the period prior to the tagging update.

## Search Engines

Google AdWords ads supplement our Search Engine Optimization (SEO) efforts by allowing the WSO to access Google's non-profit program. From 12/1/15 – 11/30/16, search engines accounted for over 64% of all visits to an Al-Anon website (listed above). SEO search makes up 85% of the total search engine traffic. During 2017, the Google AdWords search strategy will be used more often for searches not familiar with the Al-Anon/Alateen names in an effort to broaden our reach.

## Social Media

Our social media pages have engaged audiences in 125 countries, 6 continents, speaking 98 different languages. We have a total of 55,057 followers.

### Facebook

We are currently managing four Facebook pages: Al-Anon WSO, Grupos de Familia Al-Anon OSM (Spanish), Les Groupes Familiaux Al-Anon BSM, and Alateen WSO. In 2016, we have seen substantial growth in our Facebook pages. In November 2015, we had a total of 28,968 "likes" or followers. At the close of November 2016, we had 50,420 total "likes." This is a 74 percent increase over 2015. The growth of our pages has allowed us to reach over four million people in more than 90 countries.

Our English Facebook page was verified in 2015. In 2016, our Spanish and French Facebook pages were verified as well. We an-

ticipate the Alateen Facebook page will be verified during the first quarter of 2017. The verification designation means that Facebook has verified the authenticity of the page, that it is an official page for Al-Anon Family Groups. This designation also improves the chance that our page will be first in a search as all verified pages are listed before any of the other search results.

### Twitter

In 2015, we had 1,914 followers. We currently have 4,539 followers, a 137% increase. Three hundred sixty-nine tweets rendered more than 780 thousand impressions, and almost 14 thousand engagements.

### Instagram

The Al-Anon WSO Instagram account was launched in November 2016 to broaden our Social Media Outreach to include Instagram. The primary objective is to reach as many people as possible who could benefit from the support of Al-Anon Family Groups. Instagram will allow us to reach the "Millennials" aged 18-35. There are roughly 85 million millennials in the U.S. and Canada (24% of the population).

Members have been invited to follow us on Instagram and to "like" our posts.



# APPENDIX I

## BY-LAWS OF AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

Effective April 30, 1988

### ARTICLE I ~ NAMES

The name of this Corporation, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, is Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. In these BY-LAWS, the Corporation is sometimes referred to as the Corporation or as the World Service Office. For the purpose of these BY-LAWS, the term Corporation and the name World Service Office shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable with each other and with the name Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

1. As used in these BY-LAWS:
  - a. Al-Anon group means a group of relatives and friends of alcoholics organized and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
  - b. Alateen group means a group of teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics organized and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
  - c. World Service Conference means the organization described in Article XI of these BY-LAWS.
  - d. Trustee means a person who is or becomes a Trustee pursuant to these BY-LAWS.

### ARTICLE II ~ PURPOSES

1. The purposes for which the Corporation was formed, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, are: "To encourage, assist and serve the families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with the problems concerning and attendant on alcoholism; to reinforce their efforts to understand the alcoholic and to foster his or her restoration to normal life; to disseminate information in relation thereto and to conduct, and participate in, any other classes of service to assist families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with their problems."
2. In furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Certificate of Incorporation, the World Service Office will:
  - a. Coordinate policy among the Al-Anon and Alateen groups throughout the world;
  - b. Assist Al-Anon and Alateen groups in the conduct of their activities;
  - c. Provide relatives and friends of alcoholics with information about the principles and Traditions of Al-Anon and locations of Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
  - d. Assist in the formation of new Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
  - e. Publish literature of interest to Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
  - f. Bring Al-Anon or Alateen groups to the attention of the concerned public;

- g. Provide information and other assistance to persons for whom regular attendance at meetings of Al-Anon or Alateen groups is difficult or impractical;
- h. Establish and maintain national and international public relations; and
- i. Establish and maintain policies for the work of the World Service Office.

### ARTICLE III ~ MEMBERS

1. The members of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a member upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a member upon ceasing to be a Trustee.
2. Members shall not be required to pay dues or any other compensation to the Corporation, or to any one else, as a condition of membership.
3. Members will be required to sign appropriate documents to avoid potential conflicts of interest and clarify desired conduct as set by the Board of Trustees.

### ARTICLE IV ~ TRUSTEES

1. The Directors of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a Director upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a Director upon ceasing to be a Trustee. For the purpose of these BY-LAWS, the term Director and Trustee shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable so far as necessary to conform to the Certificate of Incorporation of the Corporation which contemplates, and refers to, Directors.
2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than seven nor more than twenty-one persons of the following classifications: Trustees at Large, Regional Trustees, Lifetime Trustees, and a Sustaining Trustee, as those terms are described in these BY-LAWS. The actual number of Trustees and the composition of the Board as among the classifications referred to shall be as established by the Board from time to time and in this regard the Board will generally be guided by the directions of the World Service Conference.
3. Trustees at Large are Trustees whose nomination originates with, or with the consent of, the Board of Trustees. The total number of such Trustees shall be set by the Board of Trustees from time to time and shall always be a number evenly divisible by three. One-third of the number of Trustees at Large shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, and shall take office on the day following such meeting.
4. The Nominating Committee, prior to the next annual meeting of the Board, is charged to submit nominations for Trustee at Large positions to replace those whose term will expire. In the event a nominee for Trustee at Large is not elected by the Board of Trustees, the nominee shall be withdrawn and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 9.

5. Regional Trustees are Trustees who live in geographic areas of the United States and Canada designated as official regions by the World Service Conference. Their purpose is to bring a regional perspective to the Board. They do not represent the members of the region, nor are they responsible to the region. Nominees for Regional Trustee shall be designated annually by the World Service Conference in accordance with such procedures as that body may establish. The total number of Regional Trustees shall be a number evenly divisible by three and one-third of the number shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees to take office on the day following such meeting. In the event that a World Service Conference's nominee is not elected by the Board of Trustees, the nominee shall be withdrawn, and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 9.
  6. The Sustaining Trustee is the person employed by the World Service Office established by AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to hold the office of Executive Director of the World Service Office. The term of office of the Sustaining Trustee shall be for the same period as the person is employed by the World Service Office as Executive Director.
  7. Lois W. and Anne B., the co-founders of AI-Anon, were Lifetime Trustees who served as Trustee as long as each lived.
  8. Any Trustee may resign by sending written notice to the Secretary of the Corporation.
  9. Any vacancy in the office of a Trustee at Large or Regional Trustee which occurs in any year between the annual meeting and the next World Service Conference may be filled by the Board of Trustees until the next annual meeting.
  10. The length of time any Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee may serve on the Board is two three-year terms which may be consecutive.
  11. Any member of the Board of Trustees may be removed for just cause by a vote of two-thirds of the written ballots cast by the Board of Trustees. Just cause is defined as absence from two meetings 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 of Trustees. Such removal shall occur at a regular or specifically called meeting of the Board of Trustees. Upon a finding of just cause by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer and the Executive Committee Chairperson, the Secretary of the Board of Trustees 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 of Trustees before final action is taken.
  12. Trustees shall serve without remuneration but they shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.
1. The Board of Trustees shall control and manage the affairs of the Corporation.
  2. Without limiting the generality of the preceding paragraph, the Board of Trustees shall have the following powers:
    - a. To establish and maintain the policies of the World Service Office;
    - b. To control the property and finances of the World Service Office;
    - c. To establish plans and conduct the operations of the World Service Office;
    - d. To authorize expenditures;
    - e. To elect the officers of the Corporation;
    - f. To elect the at-large members of the Executive Committee and appoint members of other committees in accordance with these BY-LAWS;
    - g. To appoint an Executive Director and a ~~Director of Business Services~~ **Director of Finance** for the World Service Office; and
    - h. To take such measures as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the World Service Office.
  3. Any Trustee having a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorization by the Board of Trustees shall not vote on the matter.

#### ARTICLE VI ~ OFFICERS

1. The Officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer and a Secretary, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary from time to time by the Board. The Executive Director serves as the Secretary of the Corporation.
2. The President, the Vice President, and the Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting of Trustees from among the Trustees for a term of one year each.
3. The President shall also be known as the Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Chairperson), and the Vice President shall also be known as the Vice Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Vice Chairperson).
4. Any vacancy may be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the Trustees.
5. Any Officer may be removed from office by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

#### ARTICLE VII ~ DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. **THE PRESIDENT.** The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees, and shall perform all the necessary duties, and exercise all the customary powers incident to the office of President, including appointment of committee Chairpersons, with the exception of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The President shall have general supervision of all of the affairs of the World Service Office, and shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
2. **THE VICE PRESIDENT.** The Vice President shall be an aide to the President and shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President. The

Board of Trustees shall in its sole discretion determine the matter of the President's disability. In the event the Board determines that disability has occurred, the office shall be deemed vacant. The Board of Trustees may elect a successor to serve until the next annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.

3. **THE TREASURER.** The Treasurer shall be the financial officer of the Corporation and shall provide advice to the Corporation with respect to general financial policy and ancillary matters such as the collection, custody, and control of funds of the World Service Office and maintenance of books of accounts and financial records subject to such directions as may be given by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer is responsible for having the books of account of the Corporation audited by a Certified Public Accountant at regular intervals as directed by the Board of Trustees. He may be an authorized signatory for disposition of funds of the Corporation on deposit in banks and other holding accounts. The Treasurer shall not be individually responsible for accounting procedures, security of funds, books of accounts or financial records, but does have general oversight authority respecting these matters.
4. **THE SECRETARY.** The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Corporation, shall be the custodian of books and records of the Corporation and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated. The Secretary shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
5. The Officers of the Corporation shall each perform such other duties as may be delegated to them by the Board of Trustees as well as such other duties as shall pertain to their respective offices.

#### **ARTICLE VIII ~ FINANCES**

1. The fiscal year of the World Service Office shall begin on the first day of January in each year and end on the 31st day of December thereof.
2. Checks shall be made in the name of the Corporation and shall be signed by two officers or employees as may from time to time be designated by the Board of Trustees.

#### **ARTICLE IX ~ MEETINGS**

1. The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be held on the day following the World Service Conference in April of each year at such place as is designated by the Board of Trustees, except when special circumstances warrant a change of date of the Conference.
2. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held three times a year in January, July and October at a time and place designated by the Chairperson. In addition, there will be a regular meeting in April of each year on a date to be determined by the Board of Trustees.  
If all the Trustees consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting, a Trustee may participate in a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and a Trustee participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.
3. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called

by the Chairperson at any time. The Chairperson shall call a special meeting upon the written application of three Trustees or upon the written application of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for the transaction of such business as may be described in such application.

4. At least fourteen days' notice of each meeting shall be given to the Trustees by mail. Forty-eight hours written notice of any meeting may be sent by electronic means. Trustees may waive notice of meetings by executing appropriate waivers.
5. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in any meeting. Each member shall have one vote. The vote of the majority of the Trustees present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is then present, shall be the act of the Board of Trustees, except as otherwise provided by law. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Trustees present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is obtained.
6. Any member unable to attend any meeting of the Board shall give advance notice of the absence to the Chairperson or Secretary of the Board and indicate the reason for the absence. Any member who fails to attend two meetings per year for reasons deemed inadequate by the Board shall be subject to dismissal by the Board for such cause. For the purposes of this paragraph, the Board of Trustees meetings during the World Service Conference shall be deemed to be one meeting.
7. Unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson, the order of business at all meetings shall be as follows:
  - a. Calling of roll;
  - b. Approval of minutes;
  - c. Report of Treasurer;
  - d. Committee reports and communications;
  - e. Elections (if such action is scheduled for such meetings);
  - f. New Business.

#### **ARTICLE X ~ INDEMNIFICATION**

1. Each individual serving or having served as Trustee or Officer, or both, of the Corporation shall be indemnified in the circumstances and to the full extent permitted by law, against any and all costs, expenses and financial consequences of whatever nature, including legal fees actually incurred in connection with any action, suit or legal proceeding of any kind in which such an individual is a defendant by reason of serving or having served as an Officer or Trustee, or both, of the corporation. This indemnification shall also extend to any individual made party defendant to any actions, suits or legal proceedings referenced in the preceding sentence by reason of the fact that his testator or intestate served as Trustee or Officer of the Corporation.
2. The foregoing indemnification shall apply also to each individual serving or having served (in his individual capacity, and not as a Trustee or officer) as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees or of any special committee as may be authorized from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

## ARTICLE XI ~ WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

1. The World Service Conference consists of the following persons:
  - a. Al-Anon Delegates from the United States and Canada;
  - b. Trustees of the Corporation;
  - c. Al-Anon members who serve as Directors and Associate Directors of the World Service Office;
  - d. The Chairpersons of committees established by the Board of Trustees;
  - e. The persons comprising the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees; and
  - f. Such other persons as deemed necessary for Conference business and representatives from countries not served by the World Service Conference Structure may be admitted by Conference vote. These persons may participate but not vote.
2. The World Service Conference shall be the permanent body empowered to express the conscience of the Al-Anon fellowship.
3. The Board of Trustees shall consult with the World Service Conference and, when required, accept its decision. However, the Board of Trustees shall continue to be vested with the full legal powers and responsibilities for the World Service Office.
4. Three-fourths of all authorized participants registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the World Service Office as or when it is deemed essential. They may request the resignation of the entire Board of Trustees and nominate a new slate of Trustees. In this regard the annual election of Trustees shall be conditional upon the understanding of each, that his resignation is required on call for the same by the Conference, subject to the further understanding that prior to any such resignation becoming effective each Trustee shall be deemed to vote for the successor slate of Trustees presented by the Conference. For the purpose of bringing about a reorganization of the World Service Office, the number of World Service Office participants voting shall be limited to one-fourth of the total Conference vote.

## ARTICLE XII ~ COMMITTEES

1. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall elect at each annual meeting an Executive Committee consisting of seven persons. The Executive Committee shall include the Executive Director of the World Service Office, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee, an Al-Anon member from the administrative staff of the World Service Office, and three Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees. The Executive Committee shall meet at such times as the Board of Trustees may direct and shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees. The Committee shall report all such action to the full Board no later than the next meeting of the Board. The Board of Trustees shall elect one volunteer member of the Executive Committee as the Chairperson. The Executive Director is the Secretary. The President, an ex officio member, shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee in that person's absence.

## 2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR REAL PROPERTY

**MANAGEMENT.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint at each annual meeting the necessary members to complete an Executive Committee for Real Property Management consisting of five persons. The Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall include the Business Manager (~~Director of Business Services~~ **Director of Finance**), the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and three Al-Anon members who are not trustees. The Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall meet at such time as the Board of Trustees may direct but at least twice per year. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Executive Committee for Real Property Management the oversight and the management of the real property owned by the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. in accordance with Motion 6 of the 2011 World Service Conference. For the purposes outlined in Motion 6, the Executive Director and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees are not ex-officio members of this Executive Committee and may not attend its meetings unless invited to do so. The nomination of the three Al-Anon members, who are not trustees, for the Executive Committee for Real Property Management will be conducted by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Conference Committee on Trustees. After said nominees receive traditional approval by the Conference, the Board will elect them. The Board of Trustees shall elect annually one of the volunteer members, who are not trustees, as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management. The Chairperson of the Finance Committee shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management in that person's absence, or, once an opening has been declared, until a new Chairperson is appointed.

3. **FINANCE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Finance Committee consisting of the following members: the Treasurer of the Corporation, the President, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, one other Trustee designated by the President, and the Executive Director. The Treasurer shall be the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The Executive Director is the Secretary. The Finance Committee shall plan the yearly budget of the World Service Office and shall render such other services as may be requested by the Board of Trustees. The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee in the absence of the Treasurer.

4. **POLICY COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Policy Committee consisting of the following members: Trustees, Executive Committee members, the Chairpersons of all committees of the World Service Office, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff. The Chairperson of the Policy Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Board of Trustees. The Policy Committee shall consider Al-Anon policies particularly in relation to Al-Anon's Traditions, make recommendations to the Board of Trustees, and render such other services as the Board of Trustees may request. The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Policy Committee in that person's absence.

5. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** At each annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board appoints the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, with Board approval. After the annual meeting, the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board, appoints the members of the Nominating Committee.
6. The Board of Trustees may appoint such other committees as they may from time to time determine appropriate.
7. Committee members with the exception of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall hold office for a term of one (1) year. Executive Committee for Real Property Management members shall hold office for a maximum of one three (3) year term or part thereof.
8. Committee members shall serve without remuneration but shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.
9. Any Committee member may be removed from office for cause by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

#### **ARTICLE XIII ~ AMENDMENTS**

The Board of Trustees shall have the power to amend or alter these BY-LAWS in whole or in part by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees at a meeting called for the purpose of amending the BY-LAWS.

**Amended:** January 25, 2017

Presented to the 2017 World Service Conference

# APPENDIX II

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; bold and underlined indicates new text; moved text is only underlined.)

## WORLD SERVICE HANDBOOK

Revised 2017 World Service Conference

### Introduction

This is your “World Service Handbook.” It is for every member of our fellowship who has found the personal benefits and satisfactions that come from taking an active part in Al-Anon’s growth.

The opportunities to serve described here can take us far beyond the boundaries of the group and our personal problems. While our Ninth Tradition provides that Al-Anon, as such, shall remain unorganized, it does suggest that an orderly structure and logical procedures will make it possible for Al-Anon to carry its message with maximum effectiveness.

This “World Service Handbook” explains how Al-Anon is held together worldwide, how it is structured; **and** how each member who is elected or appointed to a particular responsibility can best function in it.

Since our growth depends on how well we serve the fellowship, this book can be helpful as a guide. It gives the methods that have long been standard practice in service work worldwide. All these procedures have been drawn from trial-and-error experience and should be changed only when an Area Assembly is fully agreed that such changes will better adapt these guidelines to its needs.\*

The suggestions offered here differ in some details from those in earlier versions of the “World Service Handbook.” This came about because of the more ~~comprehensive~~ **varied** experience with the procedures that many groups **and individuals** shared with the ~~committee~~ **those** entrusted with this revision.

#### **[footnote to this section]**

\*If ~~and when the Area Assembly is agreed on alterations in the procedures recommended, it is vital that all groups in the Area be informed of the changes and why they were necessary.~~

**Suggested Procedures** [Moved from page 143 after “Composition of the Conference.”]

While the procedures outlined in the “World Service Handbook” are suggestions, they have been found by Al-Anon **and Alateen members who have followed them to be a simple and direct method of selecting Delegates for the Conference and for conducting Assembly and Conference affairs free of political friction.**

Al-Anon experience suggests that we follow these procedures **before deciding on changes and to make changes only when they clearly become necessary. Using the same structural plan makes it simple for all of us to understand each other’s Assembly procedures. In addition, such uniformity does much to lessen the Conference workload at our World Service Office. The help of every Assembly is needed in forming the best possible framework and to make our future secure. However, if by majority agreement an Assembly decides to alter one or more of these guidelines, the changes should be a matter of record so all members of the Area Assembly can clearly understand them.**

### Terms Used in Al-Anon

*The term “Al-Anon” is always understood to include Alateen. To keep it simple, the pronoun “he” is used throughout.*

**Alternate An eligible member elected or appointed who can temporarily step in and/or complete the service term of a person unable to**

**do so. Some examples of this service role are Alternate Group Representative, Alternate District Representative and Alternate Delegate.**

**Area Coordinator** An Al-Anon/~~Alateen~~ member, not necessarily a Group Representative (GR), appointed by the World Service Delegate or Assembly Chairman, or elected or appointed according to Area autonomy. The Coordinator usually serves for a three-year term and votes at the Area World Service Committee (**AWSC**) meetings, but not at the Assembly unless he is a GR. An Area Coordinator unifies one of the Al-Anon special services for an Area (such as Alateen, Archives, *The Forum*, Group Records, Newsletter Editor, Literature, Public Outreach [Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions]).

**Area World Service Committee (AWSC)** This Committee consists of the officers of the Assembly, District Representatives, Coordinators and liaison members, who meet between Assemblies to discuss Area and District matters, plan the agenda for the Assembly, initiate projects and make recommendations to the Assembly. All Committee members may vote at the meetings of the Area World Service Committee.

**Assembly** A meeting of the Group Representatives (GRs) for the purpose of electing a Delegate to the annual World Service Conference, an Alternate Delegate and Assembly officers. The Assembly also meets between elections to receive and distribute reports on Area and world service affairs. It reviews and approves interim reports of the Area World Service Committee. If a District Representative has not been previously elected by the GRs of a District, his election may take place at the Assembly (see “Caucus”).

**Assembly Area** A state, province, or territory represented at our World Service Conference by a Delegate. Some states and provinces that are populous have been divided into two Areas, each with its own Delegate (See “Conference Structure” section).

**Assembly Center** The city where the Assembly meets.

**Caucus** A meeting at the Assembly of GRs from a given District, convened for the purpose of electing a District Representative if none has been elected in his home District prior to the Assembly.

**Director of Business Services Finance** An individual (**not a member of Al-Anon**) who is responsible for all financial aspects of the World Service Office (WSO) and with direct oversight of Business Services.

**Districts** Convenient segments into which an Area is divided by the Area World Service Committee, with the approval of the Assembly.

**District Meeting** A meeting of GRs held as necessary in a central location within a District to elect a District Representative, to hear his reports, and to Discuss District matters.

**District Representative (DR)** An incoming, outgoing or active past GR who is elected by the other GRs in his District either in his home District or at an Assembly. He assists the Delegate in passing on information about World Service Office activities and Conference decisions to the GRs in his District. He is a member of the Area World Service Committee.

**Evolving National Structures** A network of Al-Anon groups (outside the World Service Conference Structure) in the process of developing a service structure.

**Executive Director** Chief Executive Officer of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., (**an Al-Anon member**) who has oversight responsibility for all functions of the World Service Office.

**General Service Office (GSO)** A service structure of one or more nations outside the World Service Conference Structure with a Board of Trustees and other elected AI-Anon members responsible for AI-Anon service-related activities in their respective structure.

**Group Representative (GR)** A member, preferably with a basic understanding of the AI-Anon program, who is elected, subject to the dual-member policy on *Service Participation by Members of AI-Anon Family Groups Who Are also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous, in the "Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Polices" section of the Service Manual*, for a three-year term by his group (AI-Anon or Alateen). He attends Assembly and District meetings and acts as a contact between the group and the DR, and between the group and the Area World Service Committee **Assembly**.

**Liaison Member** A member appointed or elected by the local AI-Anon Information Service (Intergroup), which serves one or more Districts. He provides a link between this service and the Area World Service Committee and encourages the exchange of information between the two. He usually serves for three years. He votes at the Area World Service Committee meetings, but not at the Assembly unless he is a GR.

**Panel** A panel consists of one-third of the Delegates attending the World Service Conference. A panel is elected every year for a three-year term. The elections of the three panels are staggered so that a Conference always includes one panel of Delegates with two years' experience. A non-panel Area is one that has not yet joined the Conference.

**Region A geographical grouping of Areas. There are nine Regions in the World Service Conference Structure; six in the U.S. and three in Canada.**

**Volunteer Selected Committees** Consist of AI-Anon/Alateen members with a broad understanding of our program who concentrate on one of the elements of our fellowship, such as Alateen or literature. (See "World Service Office, How It **WSO** Is Structured" section and "Concept Eleven".)

**World Services** Services rendered to groups all over the world by our World Service Office (WSO), also known as AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and by General Service Offices (GSOs) outside the World Service Conference Structure. These services are channeled through the Area World Service Committees and the General Service Committees in other countries. To keep communication open between the WSO and GSOs, an International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) has become part of our **Structure**.

**World Service Office Administrative Staff** Paid employees of the World Service Office who coordinate activities and projects for the service functions of the department to which they are assigned. The Directors (with the exception of the Director of **Business Services Finance**) and Associate Directors must be AI-Anon members and are voting members of the World Service Conference.

**World Service Conference (WSC)** AI-Anon's annual business meeting, attended by all ~~World Service Delegates~~ from the United States, Canada, their territorial areas, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico **World Service Conference Structure**; representatives from overseas **other** countries; members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee; chairmen of selected committees (other than The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee); and the WSO administrative staff and other office personnel. The Conference provides guidance to the WSO in service matters brought to its attention.

**World Service Conference Structure A service structure composed of state, provincial and territorial areas of the United States and Canada with a Board of Trustees and other elected AI-Anon members responsible for AI-Anon service-related activities.**

**World Service Delegate** A District Representative who has been elected World Service Delegate for a three-year term by the GRs at an Assembly. The World Service Delegate shares Area experience at three annual Conferences, which serve AI-Anon worldwide. He brings the views and the spirit of worldwide AI-Anon back to his Area.

**World Service Delegate's Alternate** A DR elected to work closely with the World Service Delegate, to participate in Area world service activities, and to replace the Delegate if the latter cannot fulfill his three-year term.

**Conference Structure Links of Service** [Moved from page 141 after "AI-Anon/Alateen Relationship."]

The AI-Anon fellowship is represented annually at a World Service Conference (WSC). It is attended by one elected Delegate from each Assembly Area, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee volunteer Chairmen, and the voting members of the World Service Office administrative staff. Representatives from non-panel Areas (those not yet electing a Delegate) and countries other than the United States and Canada may attend with voice but no vote.

The Group Representative (GR) is the first link in the chain that leads to the World Service Conference. Each GR is chosen by members of the group and may serve as GR in no more than one group at a time.

The District Representative (DR) is the next link. The Area is divided into Districts, each with one DR, who is chosen by the GRs in his District to serve on the Area World Service Committee.

If a GR becomes a DR, he fulfills both functions unless the Area Assembly chooses to have its groups elect new GRs to replace those who have taken on the duties of DR.

If the DR does not continue to be his group's representative, he relinquishes his vote at the Assembly to his GR replacement. This follows the long-standing principle of one vote per group, which was reaffirmed by the 1975 World Service Conference and applies as well to officers of the Area World Service Committee. They retain their vote at the Assembly only if they have been re-elected GR.

The Delegate and new Assembly officers are elected by the GRs at an election Assembly, held prior to December 31 at a convenient location in the Area every three years. The Assembly is attended by all GRs in addition to members of the Area World Service Committee. AI-Anon members are encouraged to attend their Area Assemblies.

In Areas where terms of office begin on January 1, only the outgoing GRs vote for an incoming Delegate and officers—from among the outgoing DRs **only and others eligible according to Area autonomy**. Under this procedure, the new GRs do not vote for the Delegate and officers with whom they will be working for the next three years.

However, an Assembly may prefer to have the incoming GRs elect the Delegate and officers. Under this method both the incoming and outgoing DRs are eligible to stand for office, provided they have previously served at the Area level.

Before the important decision is made as to whether the incoming or outgoing GR has the vote, all the elements of its particular situation should be carefully weighed by the Assembly.

Once the Delegate has been elected, he is no longer either a DR or a GR, so his group would elect a new GR, and his District would elect a new DR. The Delegate votes at Area World Service Committee meetings but not at the Assembly.

**Duties of Assembly Members** [Moved from page 155 after "General Information for Assemblies."]

## Group Representative (GR)

A GR is a vital link in the continuing function, growth and unity of world AI-Anon. He is a member elected by his group for a three-year term. He attends Assemblies, maintains contact between the group and the District and between the group and the Area World Service Committee. He should also make himself thoroughly familiar with the *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* ("World Service Handbook," "AI-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work," "AI-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service" and the "Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies").

GRs should be members with experience, stability and an understanding of the Traditions and how they work, as applied in the "Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies." It can be a challenging job. Ample time is needed for GRs to perform their many duties.

If a group also has an Alternate GR, the following duties may be shared:

- **Mailing Address at the WSO The GR and the Group** The GR should be allowed regular time at group meetings to convey information concerning AI-Anon **in his District, Area, and World Service** affairs. [Previous sentence moved text from "GR and World Service" below.] The GR has the responsibility of seeing that **mail correspondence** from the World Service Office is reaching his group. If **mail correspondence** is not being brought to meetings by the person who is listed as the Current Mailing Address (CMA), the GR consults first with the CMA and, if a change is warranted, contacts the District Representative and the WSO to provide an up-to-date CMA (possibly his own), a telephone listing, and other pertinent group information. If the group has a PO Box, or if for any other reason the GR is not the group's CMA, all **mail correspondence** should be referred to him. Although he does not replace the group Secretary, he can explain communications in light of his understanding of the world AI-Anon picture. [Order of paragraphs in the following section has changed.]
- **The GR and World Service** Through the contacts he makes with other GRs and the Area World Service Committee members **at Assembly**, the GR can gain knowledge of AI-Anon world service and the purpose and work of the Conference. This will enable him to explain these to the group. **The GR should be allowed regular time at group meetings to convey information concerning AI-Anon world service affairs.**
- **The GR and District Meetings** The GR is **expected to** attend all meetings of his District. **The GR or the Alternate GR, in the GR's absence, votes at the District meeting. Each group has one vote. Communicating at District meetings, the GR can bring his group's viewpoint on any situation or problem concerning AI-Anon to the attention of the DR. In turn, he informs his group of the outcome of the meetings.**
- **The GR and the Area Assembly** In addition to attending the election Assembly, the GR is expected to attend all scheduled Assemblies (and any interim Assembly the Chairman or Delegate considers necessary) and to report back to the group. The GR or Alternate GR, in the GR's absence, votes at the Assembly. Each group has one vote.

## • **The GR and The Forum**

The GR is also *The Forum* representative. He encourages the group to subscribe for at least one copy, acquaints members with its value, and urges them to subscribe. He also suggests stories of interest be sent to *The Forum* at the WSO.

- **The GR as Pipeline** Communicating at District meetings, the GR can bring his group's viewpoint on any situation or problem concerning AI-Anon to the attention of the DR. In turn, he informs his group of the outcome of the meetings.
- **The GR and Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions)** Local public outreach activities in the immediate community may be spearheaded by the GR, who may recommend forming a committee within the District, using material available from our WSO. If there is an Information Service, public outreach work affecting all the groups within its area of activity may be its responsibility. Liaison and cooperation should be maintained between the Information Service, the Districts, and the Area Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions) Coordinators.\*
- **The GR and the World Service Delegate's Report** If the DR or the Delegate cannot personally give the Conference report to the group, the GR may do so and explain the functions and purpose of the Area Assembly and the Conference. **The GR encourages group discussion of these matters and relays group concerns to the Delegate.**
- **Finances The GR and Appeal Letters to individual members** The GR should be mindful of AI-Anon and Alateen's **principle of self-support** traditional insistence on being self-supporting. He makes sure the appeal letters **to individual members** for support of the WSO, sent four times a year (February, May, August, and November), are read to the group. He may personally present to his group the appeal **letters** sent by the Area Treasurer for support of the Assembly and **provide to** give the group Treasurer the name and address of the Area Treasurer, **if necessary.**
- **The GR and Conference Approved Literature (CAL)** The GR, recognizing the importance of CAL, makes sure that the pamphlet *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (P-35) is always available at the meeting. He encourages use of a variety of CAL for meeting topics.

*\*When the World Service Office structure changed in 2002, some Areas chose a combination of these Coordinators and named them Public Outreach.*

## District Representative (DR)

The DR is elected from among the incoming, outgoing, or active past GRs in his home District prior to the Assembly or by caucus at the Assembly. Each DR represents one District within the Area. He helps the groups in his District understand their relationship and responsibility to the worldwide fellowship.

### **The duties of the DR are:**

- **To call and chair District meetings at regular intervals.**
- **To help the Delegate in every way possible in disseminating Conference information and reports.**
- **To keep in touch with the GRs of his District to learn the views of the groups and their problems, which, in turn, he may report to the Area World Service Committee or the Delegate.**

- To visit all the groups in his District, particularly new groups, to make sure they are getting necessary information and help.
- To help the groups understand and apply the Traditions, which guide us in our fellowship activities.
- **To encourage members to become involved in service.**
- **To coordinate program-related service events and public outreach projects for the District.**
- To prepare and update a mailing **contact** list of the GRs in his District for the Area World Service Committee.
- To urge every group to complete and promptly return the group data sheets sent out annually by the World Service Office.
- To check the group's Current Mailing Address (CMA) with each GR in the District to determine if it is correct.
- To make sure mail **correspondence** from the WSO is reaching the groups and being shared with the members.
- To attend Area World Service Committee meetings and **Area Assemblies** and report to the Area World Service Committee on activities within his District.
- To notify the Area **Group Records Coordinator** World Service Committee of **group changes, new groups or disbanded** groups that have disbanded.
- **To communicate with the local AI-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup/LDC).**
- **To help groups understand AI-Anon is a worldwide fellowship and help them understand the structure of their Assembly and WSO.**
- **To get to know the Alateen Group Sponsors in the District and encourage the Alateen groups to send GRs to District meetings.**
- **To fulfill any duties as stated in the Area Alateen Behavioral and Safety Requirements**
- **To refer to resources available on the members' section of the website ([alanon.org/members](http://alanon.org/members)) including **Area Highlights** and various service guidelines.**

### **Temporary Chairman**

This office is necessary only in an Area preparing for its first Assembly. The temporary Chairman immediately notifies the WSO of his election. He sees that the time and place for a pre-Assembly meeting are chosen and that all groups in the Assembly center are invited to help with the planning. He chairs this meeting, where all preparations for the election Assembly are made, including notifying all groups in the Area. He serves as Chairman of the Assembly until a full-term Chairman is elected; the latter then takes over the balance of the meeting.

### **Chairman**

A Chairman should have leadership and organizational abilities, serving rather than dictating. It is essential to be able to plan an agenda and conduct meetings in an orderly manner. Communication and cooperation with others are key of good chairmanship.

#### **Duties of the Chairman are:**

- The Chairman **To** conduct all Assemblies and Area World Service Committee meetings during his three-year term of office.

- He asks **To** ask the Secretary to send out notices of all meetings to the Delegate, the Alternate, Area officers, and all voting members.
- If any officer other than the Delegate resigns before the end of his term, **To appoint another DR to fill the office temporarily** if any officer other than the Delegate resigns before the end of his term. As soon as convenient, an Assembly should be called to elect a successor for the unexpired term. If the Chairman resigns, the Area World Service Committee names a Chairman pro tem or the Delegate may serve as Chairman until an election can be held.
- The Chairman, after consulting with the Delegate, **To** call an Assembly, **after consulting with the Delegate**, soon after the Delegate's return from the Conference to hear the report of WSC proceedings and decisions. He may also call an Assembly at other times deemed necessary by the Delegate or the Area World Service Committee.
- He calls **To call** meetings of the Area World Service Committee, preferably at regular intervals, to discuss Area matters.
- Before the end of the Delegate's three year term of office and allowing ample time for a new Delegate to take office by the first of January, the Chairman **To calls the Assembly for the election of a Delegate and other officers before the end of the Delegate's three-year term of office, allowing ample time for a new Delegate to take office by the first of January.**

### **Secretary**

#### **Duties of the Secretary are:**

- The Secretary or Group Records Coordinator complies a complete mailing list of all GRs, DRs, officers and Coordinators and keeps it up-to-date. **To work with the Group Records Coordinator, according to the Area's procedure, to maintain current contact information of all GRs, DRs, officers and Coordinators.**
- He sends **To send** out all notices of Assembly and Area World Service Committee meetings.
- He **To** attend to all regular secretarial work and takes minutes of all meetings. These should be sent to the Area World Service Committee members soon after the meeting and be recorded in a permanent minutes book to be passed along to his successor.
- **To send out the minutes to the Area World Service Committee members soon after the meeting and maintain a permanent copy to be passed along to his successor and possibly a copy to the Area archives.**
- At election Assemblies, he **To** calls the roll of all voting members **at Assemblies** and lists on the board candidates for office.
- **To display the list of candidates for office at election Assemblies.**
- **To ensure that the names and addresses of the Area World Service Committee members are sent to the Associate Director of Member Services Conference at the WSO the names and addresses of the Area World Service Committee members.**

## Treasurer

### Duties of the Treasurer are:

- The Treasurer To handles all Assembly collections and funds.
- At least once a year he To prepares a special appeal letter to be sent at least once a year to all groups asking them to contribute to the Area treasury to cover Assembly expenses, including contributions to the Delegate's Equalized Expense.
- He To forwards to the WSO, before January 1, the Delegate's Equalized Expense amount.
- He To issues receipts to GRs for any contributions received they make on behalf of their groups for the Assembly.
- He To pays all bills for approved expenditures approved by the Area World Service Committee. It is a sound business practice to have four members authorized to sign checks; of these, two signatures should be required on every check.
- He To makes quarterly written financial reports to the Area World Service Committee and periodic reports to the Assembly.

## World Service Delegate

The Delegate is a channel through which information flows. The group conscience of AI-Anon can work effectively only if it is informed. Much depends on the Delegate being thoroughly familiar with the *Service Manual* throughout his term of service.

### In general

#### The duties of the World Service Delegate are:

- He To brings to the Conference the viewpoint of his Area's viewpoint on matters affecting the entire fellowship to the Conference and returns to his Area to return with a broader perspective of AI-Anon worldwide.
- He is To be the bridge of understanding that links the groups in his the Area with world AI-Anon to help them continue to function in unity.
- He is To be the servant of AI-Anon as a whole.

[The order of some of the following bullets has changed from original list on pages 160-161.]

### At the World Service Conference

- The Delegate To attends all sessions of the Conference in order so that he may to consider carefully the issues brought up, to cast an informed vote intelligently on them, and thus help to guide the Board of Trustees in making their decisions.
- He tries to get To acquire a clear and comprehensive picture of our worldwide fellowship to bring back to his home the groups in the Area.
- In order to broaden the scope of certain selected committees at the WSO, Delegates are appointed to them as members in the field. They are kept informed of interim committee meetings at the WSO. They can only attend special meetings of these committees at the Conference. They may later be consulted, by correspondence, on any related matter.
- To attend and participate in meetings of a selected

committee, thought force or task force in order to broaden the scope of participation. Delegates meet and participate by conference call and/or email throughout the year and attend face-to-face meetings at Conference.

- He To brings issues of concern to him and the Area to the attention of the Conference either through the Conference Committee Leadership Team or directly from the floor in an open Conference session.
- He To learns facts and figures; and, even more importantly, he to gains a vision of this great movement in action.
- He To learns what our World Service Office has meant to AI-Anon in the past and what it, with the guidance of the Conference, will mean to the future welfare of the fellowship.

### In the His Area

- The Delegate To gives his Conference report to the Area World Service Committee and GRs to carry back to their groups. As often as possible, he makes his report in person at group or District meetings; nothing is more impressive than an eyewitness account.
- He To meets with the Area World Service Committee often to learn and evaluate the groups' reaction to his report and to hear their ideas on other pertinent matters. He can thus be better prepared to present his the Area's views at the next Conference.
- To get and report a cross section of groups' ideas and opinions through the DRs and GRs, if between Conferences the WSO needs overall group opinion on some urgent matter the Delegate can get a cross section of his groups' ideas through his DRs and GFs and report his findings. Thus, through the guidance of the Delegates, it becomes possible for the WSO to take any necessary action during the year.
- He may To serve as a contact for public inquiries within his Area if the Coordinator is unavailable.
- The Delegate To sends to the Associate Director of Member Services Conference items to be considered for the Conference agenda to the WSO.
- The Delegate To submits to the WSO no later than August 15 of the regional election year, either the Regional Trustee (RT) resumé or notification that the Area does not have a candidate.

### World Service Delegate's Alternate

The Alternate Delegate works along with the Delegate as much as possible in communicating with the groups. He acquaints himself with all the Delegate's duties, so that if the Delegate is unable to finish his three-year term, the Alternate can step in to complete it.

If the Alternate must complete the term, a temporary Alternate is at once appointed by the Chairman from among the DRs to act until a special Assembly can be called to elect a new Alternate.

Many Areas have assigned or appointed the Alternate Delegate to serve, for example, as one or more of the following:

- Alternate Area Chairman
- Area Alateen Process Person
- Area Newsletter Editor

- Assisting **ant to** Area committees
- Chairman of Area Budget Committee
- Chairman of Area convention planning committee
- Forum Coordinator
- Group Records Coordinator

The Alternate Delegate can also provide valuable service to the Area by:

- Visiting Area groups and Districts
- Developing Alateen groups, encouraging Al-Anon members to sponsor them, and setting up Alateen workshops
- Other responsibilities as assigned by the Area

## **Elections**

At the Group Level [Moved from page 146.]

### **Election of a Group Representative (GR) and an Alternate**

The GR is elected by his group for a three-year term by any election procedure it chooses. **The term of office for a Group Representative is recommended to be three years. Service is a vital part of recovery and it benefits both the Group Representative and the group if a full three-year term is served.**

**An Al-Anon or Alateen member who is also a member of A.A. is not eligible to serve as GR.**

**Since the newly elected GR may be attending the election Assembly, the group's elections should precede the date of the Assembly. To emphasize the need for selecting informed GRs, a special election meeting may be called by the group, with time devoted to consider the role of the GR in our service structure and his work in the District and Area. A group may re-elect its GR for another term.**

Since a GR may be unable to attend all District and Area meetings, an Alternate GR is needed and is elected at the same time. The Alternate may be runner-up in the elections. The Alternate GR's duties may include serving as the group's public outreach contact, newsletter reporter, and official greeter of newcomers and visitors.

If the GR resigns or proves to be inactive, the Alternate completes the term and may then be elected for a three-year term of his own. Another Alternate may then be elected.

**No one An Al-Anon or Alateen member who is also an A.A. a member of A.A. is not eligible to** may serve as Alternate GR.

In a city where there is an Al-Anon Information Service (Inter-group), the Alternate GR may serve as the Information Service Representative (ISR). The GR generally serves as the Alternate Information Service Representative (AISR).

### **When the GR Has Been Elected**

He immediately sends his name and address to the Area Secretary or Group Records Coordinator, so he can be informed of the time and place of the next Assembly. In a new Area the GR informs the temporary Chairman.

The GR attends the Assembly, bringing this "World Service Handbook."

He **becomes** makes himself thoroughly familiar with his duties. (See "Duties of Assembly Members" section.)

## **At the District Level**

### **Election of a District Representative (DR) and Alternate**

**The District is the first link from the groups to the Area, the WSO**

and the WSO, connecting the groups in unity and for mutual aid.

The election of the DR and Alternate DR from among the incoming, outgoing, or active past GRs (see next paragraph), none of whom are members of A.A., takes place in the fall of the year after the election of GRs and before election of Area officers. This is often done at a District meeting, unless geographical distances make this impractical. In the latter case, the DR is elected by a caucus of GRs at the Assembly. This term of office is three years, coinciding with those of Area officers and Delegate. Each District may choose its own method of electing, including **who is eligible to vote.**

The DR who is completing his term calls the District election meeting and notifies each group of the meeting, inviting the incoming, outgoing, and active past GRs and others who wish to attend.

If the DR resigns, proves to be inactive in his District or for any reason is unable to serve, the Alternate DR completes the term. If the GRs of a District are not aware of the DR's failure to attend Area World Service Committee meetings, the Area World Service Committee may request a replacement.

In a city where there is an Al-Anon Information Service (Inter-group), the Alternate DR may be a member of its service board. The DR generally serves as the Alternate Information Service board member.

Other duties of the Alternate DR may include serving as Treasurer or Secretary of the District, as public outreach contact from the District to the Area, or as chairman of meetings on the service structure, Traditions, and Concepts.

### **When the DR Has Been Elected**

He notifies the Area Secretary or Group Records Coordinator of his election and that of his Alternate. He acquaints himself thoroughly with the duties of a DR. (See "Duties of Assembly Members" section.)

## **At the Assembly Level**

### **The Election Assembly**

This is held once every three years before the end of December. The Area World Service Committee may also schedule interim Assemblies, which are called by the Chairman at such other times as it is deemed necessary. One such Assembly could be held to hear the Delegate's post-Conference report. Some Delegates prefer to give their reports at combined District meetings arranged by two or more DRs.

**Preparing for Election Assemblies.** Before the Assembly is to convene, the Chairman (or temporary Chairman) prepares for the meeting by making sure as follows:

- **A book is provided in which each GR is to register, giving his name, address, and group name. GRs follow their Area's registration process.**
- **A map of the Area, with District boundaries indicated, is hung in the Assembly room provided.**
- **Pencils and slips of paper are available for the voting. Preparations are made and necessary supplies are available for closed balloting.**
- **A chalkboard is at hand means of tallying and displaying the voting results is available.**
- **All GRs have this "World Service Handbook." to guide them in the election procedure.**
- **Al-Anon members who are not GRs are may be invited to assist in the election process.**

## Election Assembly Procedure

If and when the Area Assembly is agreed on alterations in the procedures recommended, it is vital that all groups in the Area be informed of the changes and why they were necessary.

### At the Assembly: Preparation

The Chairman (see "Duties of Assembly Members" section):

1. Calls the meeting to order. (If this is the Area's first Assembly, the temporary Chairman conducts the meeting, but only until a three-year Chairman is elected.)
2. Asks for a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.
3. Reviews the procedure in this "World Service Handbook" or any other preferred method for the election of the District Representative, the Delegate, and an Alternate. It is important that everyone also understands the method agreed upon for the election of Area officers.
4. Asks for a vote of acceptance of the proposed method of election. Years of experience have shown the method described in this "World Service Handbook" to be fair and trouble-free. If another method is considered, it should be clearly understood and agreed upon by a two-thirds vote of the Assembly. In keeping with the principle of one vote per group, the Chairman has a vote only if he is still a GR.

## Elections

### Election of District Representative (DR)

In many Areas, it is practical to elect DRs in their home Districts prior to the election Assembly. Where this is not possible, the election takes place at the Assembly. (**See Elections at the District Level**)

#### The Chairman: [Changed to not bold.]

- Points out on the Area map the division of the Area into Districts. If questions arise about the division or number of Districts, the Chairman asks for discussion and a vote on changes of District boundaries. An advantage of dividing into smaller Districts is that they can be covered more conveniently by the DRs.
- Asks the GRs from each District that has not yet elected a DR to gather in groups to caucus. If the caucus is small, only informal discussion and agreement may be needed. Otherwise, written ballots should be cast and the same procedure followed as for electing Area officers. A DR may repeat his term, provided that the GRs in his District re-elect him.

### Election of World Service Delegate\*

The Chairman asks the **voting** GRs who have the right to vote to elect a Delegate who is not also a member of A.A.\* A Delegate may not succeed himself, but may be re-elected after an interim three-year term provided he has remained active in service at the Area level. (**See note #7 under "General Information for Assemblies" later in this Handbook.**) Each group has one vote.

*\*At the 1977 World Service Conference, it was voted that our Policy is clearly defined, that Al-Anon/Alateens holding dual-membership members who are members of A.A. are not eligible for the office of Group Representative; therefore, the [Admissions/Handbook Committee of the Conference\*\*] Conference Leadership Team would refuse admission of a Delegate who holds dual-membership in Al-Anon/Alateen and is also a member of A.A.*

*\*\*This Committee is no longer used in World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, the Committee may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.*

1. The Chairman asks each DR and others eligible, if any according to Area autonomy, whether he is prepared to serve as Delegate for three years. If so, he becomes a candidate.
2. As suggested in Warranty Three, the voting process should be followed even if there is only one candidate.
- 2.3. Names of all candidates for the post position of Delegate are displayed listed on the board by the Secretary.
3. The Secretary calls the roll of voting members.
4. Paper and pencils are distributed for written ballots.
5. Non-voting members are selected to serve as tellers, collectors of ballots, and to record and tally votes on the board.
6. Written ballots are cast, collected, and given to the tellers to count.
7. 4. Votes will be are cast. Candidates leave the room while votes are written on the board alongside the names of the candidates tallied and displayed.
8. 5. In the spirit of substantial unanimity, the first candidate to receive a two-thirds vote is elected.
9. 6. If no one has the required two-thirds vote after several ballots have been taken and if two candidates each have 40 percent or more of the total vote, the Chairman may suggest that the two candidates with the largest percentage of votes remain on the ballot stay and the others withdraw.
10. 7. Whether or not any names are withdrawn, another ballot is taken.
11. 8. If still no election occurs, the Chairman asks for a motion to close the balloting and that the choice be made by lot between the two with the highest number of votes candidates. The first one drawn becomes the Delegate. Instead of this Alternatively, many some Assemblies prefer to have a final ballot taken. Then in which case the candidate with the most votes becomes the Delegate.

### Election of Alternate Delegate

The Chairman then calls for the election of a World Service Delegate's Alternate who is not also a member of A.A., following the same procedure as for Delegate.

In case the Delegate cannot complete his three-year term, the Alternate automatically becomes the Delegate for the balance of the Delegate's term. Another Alternate should be elected as soon as possible from among the DRs and officers. Since a Delegate should **always have** never be long without the assistance of an Alternate, the Delegate who has taken over may ask the Chairman to appoint an interim Alternate until a special meeting of the Assembly can be called. When a DR becomes Delegate, he is no longer a DR and his District elects a new DR. He has a vote at the Area World Service Committee but not at the Assembly, as this would mean more than one vote per group.

### Election of Officers

The Chairman then calls for the election of Assembly officers, usually the Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, from among DRs and others according to Area autonomy. Each officer serves for a three-year term. **Names of candidates are announced and a vote is taken**

following the same procedure as for Delegate. He asks tellers to pass ballots to all GRs and to place all DRs' names on the board.

Some Areas may elect the outgoing Delegate as Chairman of the Assembly. Where this occurs, he does not vote. Other Areas use the Past Delegate's Conference experience by electing or appointing him them into Area Coordinator or other Area service positions. of a special service (e.g., Alateen, Archives, The Forum, Literature, Public Outreach [Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions]) [Moved from "General Information for Assemblies," #9.]

1. GRs vote for a Chairman by written ballot. In addition to the DRs, the outgoing Delegate may be included on the slate for this office. If the Delegate is elected Chairman, he has no vote at the Assembly.
2. Tellers count ballots and check the names on the board.
3. Balloting continues until one name receives a majority of the votes. This elects the new Chairman.
4. A Secretary and a Treasurer are elected from among the DRs by the same method.
5. Assembly officers, including the Alternate Delegate, may continue to serve as DRs. **When a DR becomes Delegate, he resigns as DR and his District elects a new DR.**
6. If a vacancy occurs among the Assembly officers between meetings or an officer is unable to attend meetings, another DR may be appointed by the Chairman to replace the officer until another can be elected. The Assembly Area should never be long without a full quota of officers.

### Post-Election Activities

The Chairman directs the Secretary or other designated AWSC member to send a report of the election Assembly to the Associate Director of Member Services—Conference at the WSO with a duplicate to the newly elected Secretary, giving names and addresses contact information of the Delegate, the Alternate, officers, DRs, and Area Coordinators.

### District Meetings [Moved from page 164.]

Various types of meetings may be held within a District to unite and inform local groups: meetings to hear reports about the activities and business of the Area progress reports of the Area World Service Committee, sharing sessions for discussion of group and District matters, round-robins or program related social events evenings. At regular intervals, meetings scheduled and chaired by the DR are held to talk over for such matters as:

- Discussing ~~the~~ the need for local service committees such as Alateen, Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions), a telephone answering service, or an Information Service. (~~Attention should be called~~ Refer to the respective Guidelines available from WSO.)
- Ways to Familiarize ~~ing~~ groups, Information Services, and local service committees in the vicinity District with the wide variety of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) available for friends and families of alcoholics, with emphasis on specialized items available for teenagers, parents, men, and public outreach.
- Sharing with the fellowship worldwide by submitting articles or photographs items of general interest to *The Forum*.

- Encouraging members to subscribe to The Forum, either singly or through bulk group orders. (When a group pays for multiple subscriptions, a small profit realized on the sale of single copies at meetings.)
- Communicating ~~the~~ the value of "Inside Al-Anon" found in The Forum as a sharing vehicle from the WSO to the groups.
- Raising money to support a telephone answering service, website or other means of outreach to members and potential members or to expand an existing one services.
- Means of stimulating contributions from the groups in the District to Al-Anon's World Service Office. (Our WSO informs the Delegate of all contributions from the groups in his Area; this information can be relayed by each DR so that GRs will know whether their groups have contributed.)
- Ensuring that all groups are aware of how to make contributions to the District, AIS, Area and WSO.
- Encouraging Means ways of stimulating contributions from the groups in the District to Al-Anon's World Service Office. (Our WSO informs the Delegate of all contributions from the groups in his Area; this information can be relayed by each DR so that GRs will know whether their groups have contributed.) (moved from above)
- Discussing how to deal with problems that arise when Al-Anon Traditions are disregarded or other concerns that groups and committees have presented for consideration.
- Planning workshops on Alateen, Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions), Literature or any other Al-Anon service topics of interest to the groups.

Collections at District meetings are a practical way to raise money

### Area World Service Committee Meetings

The primary function of the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) is to plan for the general improvement of both the Assembly and the groups. Voting members of this committee are usually the officers of the Assembly, the DRs, Coordinators of services (such as Alateen, Archives, Public Outreach [Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions], Literature, Group Records, Forum, or Newsletter), and liaison members from any Information Services (Intergroups). The Chairman of Al-Anon/ Alateen activities at an A.A. area convention or Chairman of Area Al-Anon and Alateen conventions should also participate in Area World Service Committee AWSC meetings.

These meetings, called and chaired by the Area Chairman, may be held at stated intervals to hear and discuss the Delegate's report, to consider Area matters, to suggest items of interest for the Area newsletter, all with the purpose of informing and unifying the groups in the Area. To equalize travel expenses, successive meetings may be held in various localities within the Area.

Throughout the year, the AWSC Area World Service Committee is responsible for submitting questions that cannot be resolved at the District or Assembly level to the WSO. It also plans the Assembly agendas, prepares the Area budget and studies the need for alternatives to these "World Service Handbook" suggestions and presents its findings to the Area Assembly. When advisable, the AWSC Area World Service Committee suggests revisions of boundaries of existing Districts to be approved at the Area Assembly.

When Al-Anon and Alateen groups are to participate in an A.A.

or Al-Anon convention, a separate convention planning committee may be formed, using the talents of the membership as a whole. To assure liaison with the convention planning committee, a convention Chairman may be appointed or elected by the **AWSC Area World Service Committee**. He is responsible to the Area and submits reports to the Area Chairman.

All Al-Anon/Alateen members, except those who are also members of A.A., are eligible to serve as an Area Coordinator. (Guidelines for Area Coordinators are available from the WSO or on the **members section of the WSO Members' website**.)

### **Interim Assemblies**

The purpose of the interim Assembly is to assure adequate interchange of information and ideas about service activities, not only in the immediate Area, but where worldwide Al-Anon is concerned. (A typical election Assembly was previously outlined in this "World Service Handbook.")

Topics the agenda might include are:

- Approval of Assembly minutes
- Chairman's report on Area World Service Committee since previous Assembly
- Delegate's report on Conference and/or recent communications from WSO
- Secretary's report
- Treasurer's report
- **Voting on issues of concern to the Area brought by the AWSC**
- District reports from DRs on progress and problems
- GR time for ideas, opinions and questions
- Application of the Twelve Traditions of Al-Anon
- Interpretation of the Twelve Concepts of Service
- Workshops intensive and group discussions in small groups
- Town-hall meeting led by panel with all GRs participating
- **Panel or open mic discussions**
- Films and Videos (for a list of current available films videos contact the WSO)
- Report on Area newsletter
- Reports from Coordinators of special services: Alateen, Archives, Public Outreach (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions), *The Forum*, Literature, Group Records
- Reports from any other committees, such as Al-Anon Information Service (Intergroup), convention
- Brief information session on WSO service—conducted by the Delegate

**General Information for Assemblies** [Moved from page 153.]

**(Refer to other sections of the Handbook for more complete descriptions of Job Duties, Responsibilities, etc.)**

### **Assembly Structure, Elections, Etc.:**

- 5:Assemblies are usually held at regularly scheduled intervals. The Area Al-Anon and Alateen groups are notified of each Assembly by the Chairman through the Secretary, the Area newsletter or by any other effective method.

- 4:A full **Area** Assembly is comprised of the Delegate, **Area** officers and **Coordinators**, DRs and GRs. **Some Areas include or invite other members to attend their Assemblies.**
- 13:In order to draw on experience gained in service, an Area may choose to permit anyone who has served a three-year term as DR, has remained active at their the Area level (as Newsletter Editor, Coordinator, etc.), and regularly attends Al-Anon meetings to stand for the office of Delegate. **It is recommended that Areas have a process or procedure for handling this possibility.**
- 8:After the Delegate's third Conference, an Assembly is called to elect a Delegate and officers whose terms begin the following January 1.
- 3:The Chairman, elected for a three-year term, calls and conducts all subsequent Assemblies and Area committee meetings.
- 11:In Areas that have not as yet formed **Districts**, the Delegate and officers are elected from among the GRs.
- 10:The Area World Service Committee meets whenever need arises to develop the Assembly agenda and to discuss Area affairs.
- 14:A member One may **not** hold an **Area** Assembly officer position in **multiple** only one Assembly Areas at a **the same time.**
- 12: A DR who has resigned to take a current Assembly assignment (e.g. Newsletter Editor, Assembly officer or Coordinator of a special service) may stand for the office of Delegate.

### **Communications:**

- 1:Upon receiving the results of an election, our **the** World Service Office sends a letter of welcome to each new Delegate, with the date of the next Conference.
- The Delegate, not the Alternate, receives all communications from our WSO, even if the Delegate was not able to attend the Conference.
- **In the event the Delegate is not able to attend the Conference, he will continue to receive all WSO communications.**

### **Processes, Resignations, Vacancies, Etc.:**

- 6:If the Alternate Delegate resigns, a new Alternate should be elected as soon as possible. If lack of time before the date of the Conference makes this impossible, and the Delegate has also resigned, the Chairman may attend the Conference in the Delegate's place. If the Chairman is unable to attend, next in line would be a past Delegate, beginning with the most recent one.
- 7:If an officer resigns or for any reason is unable to serve, a DR may be appointed by the Chairman to replace the officer until another can be elected to complete the term. He may then be elected for a three-year term of his own. In case the Delegate resigns, the Alternate finishes the Delegate's term and then may be elected for a three-year term as Delegate.

### **Miscellaneous: Renaming an Area, Changing a group/District to a new Area**

9. Some Areas may elect the outgoing Delegate as Chairman of the Assembly. Where this occurs, he does not vote. Other Areas use the Delegate's Conference experience by electing or appointing him an Area Coordinator of a special service (e.g., Alateen, Archives, The Forum, Literature, Public Outreach [Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Institutions]). *[moved to 'Election of Officers']*

- **If an Area has voted to formally change its name to more accurately reflect its boundaries, the Area would submit the request to the WSO. The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) would review the request. If the CLT agreed, it would make a recommendation, in the form of a motion, at the next WSC.**
- **Groups or Districts located in one Area which have a contiguous boundary with another Area may, through group conscience and following Area procedures, choose to participate in the second Area and give up participation in the first Area, as agreed upon by both Areas.**

**Finances** [Moved from page 147.]

### **At the Group Level**

~~The Assembly appeals to each group in the Area for contributions to be sent to the Area Treasurer. The Treasurer sends the equalized expense amount to the WSO and reimburses the Delegate and Area committee for expenses in the Area and for all Assembly overhead.~~

**In gratitude and recognition of the principle of self-support, AI-Anon groups are financially responsible in the following ways:**

- **Each group covers its group expenses such as rent and literature.**
- **Each group provides its GR with sufficient funds to fulfill the GR duties including participation in the Assembly. Expenses may include meals, transportation, **lodging accommodations** and registration fees.**

~~Overhead expenses of the Assembly and the cost of sending the Delegate to the World Service Conference are paid by the Assembly with contributions from the groups within the Assembly Area.~~

- **Each group supports the District **activities**, in the purchase of public outreach materials and activities (e.g., literature displays, mailings of special announcements, rent for District meetings).**
- **Each group supports the Area by contributing to cover expenses of the Assembly and the cost of sending the Delegate to the World Service Conference. The Area Treasurer may send the group an appeal letter.**
- **Each group supports the WSO in recognition of the services provided to the groups.**

### **At the District Level**

#### **Finances**

**Just as a member or a group does, a District also practices the principle of self-support by being financially responsible.**

**Each District provides its District Representative with sufficient funds to fulfill the DR duties including participation in the Assembly and Area World Service Committee meetings. These expenses may include meals, transportation, **lodging accommodations**, and registration fees. [From "GR Finances," page 147.]**

**(When the DR is also a GR, the Assembly expenses are normally may be fully or partially paid by the group he represents.)**

~~Overhead expenses of the Assembly and the cost of sending the Delegate to the World Service Conference are paid by the Assembly with contributions from the groups within the Assembly Area.~~

**Each District supports the District in budgets for:**

- **The funding of public outreach materials and activities (e.g., literature displays, mailings of special announcements)**
- **Rent for District meetings**
- **Contributions of support for the Area**
- **Contributions of support for WSO in recognition of the services provided to the groups and the District**

~~The DR's expenses to attend Assemblies and Area World Service Committee meetings are shared by the groups within the District. When the DR is also a GR, the Assembly expenses are normally paid by the group he represents. Funds for the budget Money for this purpose may also be raised by contributions from groups in the District, special events such as District workshops and potlucks, rummage sales, and other cooperative ventures.~~

**At the Area Level** [Moved from "Finances" pages 152-153.]

~~The Chairman introduces the matter of financing. He explains that Delegates' expenses to and from the World Service Conference are equalized so that each Area pays the same amount. The portion of the Delegates' expenses not covered by the equalized expense contributions is paid by the WSO.~~ **Areas plan for their financial responsibilities with an understanding and appreciation of the principle of self-support.**

~~Delegates' interim expenses include telephone, postage, and the cost of visiting the groups in the Area. These will be met from the Area treasury. Finally, there will be the overhead expenses of the Assembly, rent, newsletter, incidental expenses, and others incurred by the Area World Service Committee.~~

~~The Chairman then presents a budget developed by members of the Area World Service Committee for the approval of the Assembly. The anticipated expense will be shared by each group and District in the Area as they each recognize their individual and collective responsibility. The GRs attending the Assembly should come prepared to discuss, approve, and vote on the Area budget, act upon methods of raising funds.~~

~~The Chairman directs the Assembly Area Treasurer to collect these funds group, District and individual contributions and to issues receipts in return to the GRs so the GRs can account for the outlay to their respective group Treasurers. The Assembly Area Treasurer disburses the collected funds to the appropriate people as the budgeted financial plan and Area policy allows.~~

**A typical Area budget might include:**

- **Rent for the Area meeting rooms**
- **Allowances for travel for AWSC members**
- **Allowances for lodging for AWSC members**
- **Allowances for materials for AWSC members to carry out their duties**
- **An amount for the Delegate's Equalized Expense**
- **An Area contribution to the WSO**
- **Other incidental expenses**
- **Anticipated revenues from Area events**
- **Anticipated revenues from other service arms, groups and members**

- An amount set aside for an ample reserve.

Absent GRs should be asked to have their groups' share of costs remitted to the Assembly Treasurer.

If GRs are not prepared for the full outlay, the Chairman asks that group donations for the Delegate's expenses be sent to the Treasurer by December 1.

A check to cover the Delegate's Equalized Expenses for the Delegate is sent by the Assembly Area Treasurer to the Associate Director of Member Services—Conference at the WSO before January 1.

By March 15, the Associate Director of Member Services—Conference at the WSO sends each Delegate a check for transportation and incidental expenses. This amount may be more or less than the Equalized Expense amount payment sent by the Assembly Area Treasurer. (see also 'Duties of the Treasurer' and 'Delegate's Equalized Expense')

If there is no other business, the Assembly is then adjourned.

## World Service Conference

[Moved from page 139.]

### Purposes

Al-Anon's Tradition Two states: "For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern."

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

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

### Historical Background

From 1951, when Al-Anon began, until 1961, when the Conference was born, the world services for Al-Anon were conducted from the Clearing House office in New York. All the work was done by a group of volunteers and a few paid workers, all of them living in the New York area. In 1954, our services were incorporated as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., solely for business purposes. There was a Board of Directors that took care of the business and policy matters with the help of an Advisory Board.

When our fellowship was still small, this service arrangement worked well and did much to unify Al-Anon and spread its message around the world.

This meant, however, that Al-Anon services were not linked to our growing groups. There was no way for the services to share with and account to those they served. It was only by means of mail polls and correspondence that the World Service Office was able to receive the guidance and direction of the whole Al-Anon membership.

This degree of isolation from the fellowship as a whole could have proved hazardous for our future. If an unauthorized decision proved to be a serious error, confidence in the World Service Office could be weakened; this would affect the whole vital service effort. Without direct linkage with the widespread Al-Anon groups, it might not have been possible to repair such a condition.

Al-Anon has followed A.A.'s path from the beginning, using its principles and adapting its service structure to our own needs. A.A. had found that the group conscience of its fellowship as a whole could best be heard through the establishment of a conference of delegates representing all sections of the continent and meeting yearly with the Board of Trustees and the General Service staff. A.A.'s first conference met in the spring of 1951.

From 1955 until 1962, Bill W. spent much time developing suitable principles and philosophies for the guidance of all A.A.'s services. These, he felt, should agree with the principles and philosophies expressed or implied in the Steps and Traditions and with A.A.'s experience. The resulting document is divided into two parts: "The A.A. Service Manual" and "Twelve Concepts for World Service."

By 1961, Al-Anon had agreed that its group conscience should have the same means of being guided in the performance of its services worldwide. A simple, inexpensive plan worked out by Bill and Lois W. was put into effect on a three-year trial basis.

When the Conference was first initiated, in order to obtain equal representation from all sections of the United States and Canada, the continent was divided into four quadrants by lines drawn through its approximate center from east to west and north to south, coinciding with state and provincial boundaries. Three Delegates were chosen in the first year from each of the four quadrants. These came from the states and provinces with the greatest number of Al-Anon groups. In each of the second and third years, 12 more Delegates were chosen from those states and provinces with the next greatest number of Al-Anon groups. Following this formula, all states and provinces have had the opportunity to join the Conference.

By 1963, the experiment had proved this linkage between the groups and headquarters so effective that the members of the trial Conference voted unanimously to make it permanent. With A.A.'s Service Manual as a guide, our "World Service Handbook" was developed for Al-Anon by a Handbook Committee, chaired by Lois W. The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter (see index), long in the process of development, was unanimously adopted by the 1967 Conference. This is a traditional, not a legal, framework within which the Conference functions.

In the meantime, in 1965, the name "Board of Directors" was changed to "Board of Trustees," and since the Conference itself now serves as an advisory board, the previous advisory board was dropped. An Executive Committee was established to aid the Board of Trustees in the conduct of administrative affairs.

### The Al-Anon–Alateen Relationship

Alateen is an integral part of our fellowship. Area World Service Committees are urged to encourage Alateen participation at District and Assembly levels.

An Alateen Group Representative (GR) has both voice and vote in the District and Area Assembly and may hold office (if elected by Al-Anon and Alateen GRs) at all world service levels: District Representative, Assembly officer, and Delegate.

## CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

[Section from pages 141-142 deleted.]

The Al-Anon fellowship is represented annually at a World Service Conference (WSC). It is attended by one elected Delegate from each Assembly Area, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, volunteer Chairmen, and the voting members of the World Service Office administrative staff. Representatives from non-panel

Areas (those not yet electing a Delegate) and countries other than the United States and Canada may attend with voice but no vote.

The Group Representative (GR) is the first link in the chain that leads to the World Service Conference. Each GR is chosen by members of the group and may serve as GR in no more than one group at a time.

The District Representative (DR) is the next link. The Area is divided into Districts, each with one DR, who is chosen by the GRs in his District to serve on the Area World Service Committee.

If a GR becomes a DR, he fulfills both functions unless the Area Assembly chooses to have its groups elect new GRs to replace those who have taken on the duties of DR.

If the DR does not continue to be his group's representative, he relinquishes his vote at the Assembly to his GR replacement. This follows the long-standing principle of one vote per group, which was reaffirmed by the 1975 World Service Conference and applies as well to officers of the Area World Service Committee. They retain their vote at the Assembly only if they have been re-elected GR.

The Delegate and new Assembly officers are elected by the GRs at an election Assembly, held prior to December 31 at a convenient location in the Area every three years. The Assembly is attended by all GRs in addition to members of the Area World Service Committee. AI-Anon members are encouraged to attend their Area Assemblies.

In Areas where terms of office begin on January 1, only the outgoing GRs vote for an incoming Delegate and officers—from among the outgoing DRs only. Under this procedure, the new GRs do not vote for the Delegate and officers with whom they will be working for the next three years.

However, an Assembly may prefer to have the incoming GRs elect the Delegate and officers. Under this method both the incoming and outgoing DRs are eligible to stand for office, provided they have previously served at the Area level.

Before the important decision is made as to whether the incoming or outgoing GR has the vote, all the elements of its particular situation should be carefully weighed by the Assembly.

Once the Delegate has been elected, he is no longer either a DR or a GR, so his group would elect a new GR, and his District would elect a new DR. The Delegate votes at Area World Service Committee meetings but not at the Assembly.

### Composition of the Conference

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

A non-panel Area may ask the Conference for permission to send a representative to the Conference. Such representation is limited to two years, under the following stipulations:

- The representative's expenses are to be paid by the Area.
- The WSO is to be notified of his attendance no later than February 1.
- The representative is to have voice but no vote at the Conference. These conditions also apply to other countries, except that they may continue to send representatives indefinitely.

Unlike elected government officials, our Delegates do not represent local interests. They may reflect Area opinion and contribute Area ideas, but they are not bound by directives from their groups. The Delegates as well as all other Conference members are the trusted servants of worldwide AI-Anon.

## Suggested Procedures

[Section from page 143 deleted and moved to after Introduction.]

While the procedures outlined in the "World Service Handbook" are suggestions, they have been found by AI-Anon/Alateen members who have followed them to be a simple and direct method of selecting Delegates for the Conference and for conducting Assembly and Conference affairs free of political friction.

AI-Anon experience suggests that we follow these procedures before deciding on changes and to make changes only when they clearly become necessary. Using the same structural plan makes it simple for all of us to understand each other's Assembly procedures. In addition, such uniformity does much to lessen the Conference workload at our World Service Office. The help of every Assembly is needed in forming the best possible framework and to make our future secure. However, if by majority agreement an Assembly decides to alter one or more of these guidelines, the changes should be a matter of record so all members of the Area Assembly can clearly understand them.

## How It Works

[Moved from pages 143-144.]

A majority vote of the Conference constitutes only a suggestion to the Board of Trustees and our WSO; a two-thirds vote is binding upon them, subject to the provisions of Concept Seven ("The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional").

On overall policy matters, the Conference makes final decisions. The Board of Trustees and the World Service Office are service arms of the Conference, a part of the whole fellowship.

The Conference is empowered to pass resolutions, make recommendations to the WSO, direct committees to further study, or refuse to act at all in a given situation. It cannot, however, mandate or govern the AI-Anon fellowship, which it serves. The Conference represents the AI-Anon membership, but does not rule it.

Prior to their first Conference, all newly elected Delegates are assigned **invited to serve on a Thought Force, Task Force or one of the WSO selected Delegate Member** committees.

Upon arrival at the Conference, newly elected Delegates become acquainted with second- and third-year Delegates, as well as with members of the Board, **members of the Executive Committee** and staff. They are invited to visit their World Service Office.

The following are typical Conference activities **in addition to those outlined in Section 11 of the AI-Anon World Service Conference Charter:**

- The Conference members are greeted by the Conference Chairman or Co-Chairman, who introduces the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. **Conference members-Delegates, WSO staff, Board of Trustees and Executive Committee members-interact and discuss matters affecting AI-Anon as a whole.**
- The Executive Director gives a summary of the year's work.
- The staff **Conference** members and volunteer Chairmen of committees report on activities of the year of **Thought Forces, Task Forces and Work Groups make relevant presentations.**
- The Treasurer gives a detailed financial accounting, prepared by a certified public accountant, and presents a clear picture of our situation.

- The Conference discusses these reports and may name committees for further study if necessary;
- If such committees are appointed, they make recommendations and appropriate action is taken;
- Delegates have an opportunity to discuss successes and concerns with each other report on Area matters;
- Other items on the agenda are taken up;

## Conference Agenda

[Moved from page 144.]

The **Conference** agenda is developed over the previous months by the **derived from input through the Delegates**, Conference Committee **Leadership Team (CLT) and the Board of Trustees**. In addition, suggestions **made to the CLT** of all **by any** Conference members and the membership-at-large are carefully considered.

A typical agenda might include: [Order of bullets has changed.]

- Deviations from AI-Anon Traditions affecting AI-Anon as a whole.
- Proposed amendments to the descriptive text of the Twelve Concepts of Service.
- Consideration of proposed new literature.
- Questions and decisions in the field of overall public outreach.
- State of voluntary contributions—how noncontributing groups can be better informed.
- Consideration of local problems, provided they do or may affect AI-Anon as a whole.
- Special requests for guidance from Trustees or members of our WSO staff.
- Any action proposed by the Trustees affecting AI-Anon as a whole, to be presented for Conference debate **discussion** and **deliberation** approval.
- Workshops and town-hall type meetings on service functions; how returning Delegates can best serve their Areas.
- Matters concerning Conference procedure, structure, and function.

## How the Conference Is Financed

[Moved from page 145.]

**General Conference Expenses.** The cost of the Conference, as well as that of other worldwide AI-Anon services, is covered by the **Delegates' Equalized Expenses and the WSO General Fund**. **All members reap the benefits of the Conference which makes the group conscience available and effective for worldwide AI-Anon.** It is the responsibility of the WSO to ask all members to respond generously to the four appeals sent annually (in February, May, August, and November) to support of these services:

The general Conference expenses include the salary of a staff administrator and his assistants to handle the daily affairs of the Conference while in session; the cost of holding the Conference sessions; the cost of WSO members' (volunteers **Trustees, Executive Committee members** and paid staff) attendance at the Conference; and the expenses involved in writing and editing the **World Service Conference Summary**

**Delegates' Equalized Expenses.** Because costs of travel to the World Service Conference (WSC) are different for each Delegate, a formula was developed to provide a fair equalization of expenses:

The Delegate's **Equalized Expense** cost is calculated by dividing the **Full Amount for Delegates to attend Conference by the number of Delegates**. The **Full Amount** is the total estimated travel, hotel, meal, and incidental expenses for the Delegates, including their portion of the costs of the Conference Notebook **supplies**, and printing and mailing of the Conference Summary to Area World Service Committee members by the number of Delegates. This cost **Full Amount** is reported to the Board of Trustees. A substantial portion of this cost the Full Amount, as determined by the Board of Trustees, is the **Equalized Expense** and is paid by the Areas. **The balance of the Conference costs are paid out of AFG Inc.'s General Fund**. The Conference Committee **Leadership Team** informs each Area that this amount **Equalized Expense** is to be sent to the WSO by the Area Treasurer before January 1. The Delegates' **travel and incidental** expenses are then defrayed by these funds, regardless of traveling distance **traveled**.

**In gratitude, many Any Areas** may choose to contribute additional funds, up to and including **or more than** the entire cost **Full Amount** of sending a Delegate to the WSC.

## Conference Procedures

[Moved from page 146.]

### Area Procedures for Joining the Conference

The **newly formed** Area must first submit a request for admission to the World Service Conference. The **Conference Leadership Team (formerly handled by the Admissions/Handbook Committee)** will review the request and will make a decision based on policies previously accepted by the Conference. If permission is granted, the Area may proceed as follows:

Our WSO suggests, as an Assembly center, the city with the largest number of groups. The most active registered group in this Assembly center is then invited to elect a temporary Chairman. (See "Duties of Assembly Members, Temporary Chairman" section.) The temporary Chairman notifies our WSO of his election.

The WSO sends each registered group in the Area the name and address of the temporary Chairman and a copy of this "World Service Handbook" for the GRs to study prior to the election Assembly.

Well in advance of the Assembly, the temporary Chairman calls a planning meeting of all groups in the Assembly center to

- Select a date and meeting place for the Area election Assembly. (If this designated Assembly center is not convenient, another site may be chosen for the election Assembly.)
- Notify all groups in the Area of the time and place of the Assembly where the election will be held to elect a DR from each District, Assembly officers, a Delegate to the annual World Service Conference, and an Alternate Delegate.

[The following paragraph was moved from "Composition of the Conference" page 152, last paragraph.]

A state, province, or territory having more than 400 groups may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference (see Article 6. b. of the AI-Anon World Service Conference Charter). A state, province, or territory may divide only once, as reaffirmed at the 1982 World Service Conference.

## World Service Office

[Moved from page 135.]

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., better known to most members as the World Service Office or WSO, is the headquarters of the entire fellowship.

### What It WSO Does [Moved from page 135.]

#### **The World Service Office**

- Acts as the clearinghouse worldwide for inquiries from those who need help or want information about Al-Anon and Alateen.
- Registers Lone Members, new groups, electronic meetings, Information Services, and Literature Distribution Centers; provides them with literature, information, and help.
- Advises the Delegates of the formation or disbanding of groups in their Areas.
- Maintains data of worldwide Al-Anon/ and Alateen groups and Lone Members.
- Guides Al-Anon's public outreach efforts worldwide.
- Generates cooperation between Al-Anon and the professional community.
- Prepares and distributes Conference Approved Literature.
- Publishes and distributes Al-Anon materials to individuals and groups throughout the world.
- Plans and coordinates the World Service Conference.
- Gives an annual report of its activities and those of the World Service Conference in a *Conference Summary*.
- Carries the Al-Anon message to institutions and encourages the formation of *Institutions groups introductory meetings* to help those affected by someone else's alcoholism.
- Strives to stimulate interest in service through TEAM events.
- Cooperates with A.A.'s General Service Office, located in New York City, in all matters affecting both fellowships.
- Guides countries outside the United States and Canada in developing their structures and establishing General Service Offices.
- Is responsible for services to Al-Anon Family Groups all over the world, directly or through the Al-Anon General Service Office of each country.
- Maintains translation review of Al-Anon/Alateen literature into foreign languages and supervises the legal aspects of its distribution.
- Plans, coordinates, and participates in the biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM).
- Reports its activities quarterly to the Board of Trustees and annually to the World Service Conference.
- Organizes and preserves historical Al-Anon/Alateen material worldwide, past and present.
- Maintains the WSO Public Outreach and Members' websites.
- Maintains and protects copyrights and trademarks.

## How It WSO Is Structured

[Moved from pages 136-139.]

The World Service Office is headed by an Executive Director with assistance provided by a staff of paid employees, volunteer Chairmen of selected committees, and other volunteers.

The Executive Director and the staff handle correspondence with all parts of the fellowship to make sure that current information is disseminated to those concerned. Bilingual secretaries and translators are employed to help with foreign language correspondence.

The Delegate member committees\* are Literature, Admissions/ Handbook\*\*, Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), Group Services\*\*, Public Outreach and Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT).

Other committees\* in alphabetical order are: Alateen Advisory\*\*, Archives Advisory\*\*, **Audit Committee**, Conference **Leadership Team (CLT)**, Executive, Finance\*, Forum Editorial Advisory (**FEAC**), International Coordination (**ICC**), Nominating\*, Outreach to Professionals Advisory\*\*, Policy\* and Regional Service Seminar (RSS)\*\*. Guidelines for most committees, which list committee composition and responsibilities, are available from the **WSO on the members' section of the website**.

*\*The entire WSO committee structure is under review. Text will be updated in the next printing.*

*\*Committees having permanent status, sometimes referred to as standing committees.*

*\*\*This Committee is no longer used in the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure; however, the Committee may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.*

Ad hoc committees may be established for specific purposes when the need arises.

**The WSO Policy Committee** is composed of a Chairman, person, all members of the Board of Trustees, members of the Executive Committee, the Chairmen of all WSO selected committees (except the Conference Committee on Trustees), and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff. It meets quarterly in advance of the meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Its function is to consider problems or projects brought to its attention by any Al-Anon or Alateen member. Its statements of policy, based on our Traditions, are subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference. In particularly sensitive or debatable questions, the decision may be deferred until the Conference convenes.

**The Executive Committee** which meets each month 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 Chairman, are appointed by the Trustees. They include the Executive Director, one member of the administrative staff, the Chairmen of the Policy and Finance Committees, and three Al-Anon members elected by the Board of Trustees who contribute experience in specific fields and situations.

**The Board of Trustees** is composed of seven to 21 volunteer members: one sustaining member (the Executive Director), Trustees at Large, and Regional Trustees. Our cofounders Lois W. and Anne B., now deceased, were honorary lifetime members. The term of office for Trustee at Large (**TAL**) and Regional Trustee (**RT**) is three years; they may serve two terms, which may be consecutive.

Trustee at Large candidates submit qualifying résumés **are submitted directly** to the WSO. Nominees are interviewed and selected by the full Board of Trustees. Each year, in January, the Board nominates three Trustees at Large.

The Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) reviews the résumés and submits the results of the review to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee also reviews the résumés and selects potential candidates to be presented to the Board for consideration.

Regional Trustee candidates submit qualifying résumés are presented to, and are nominated by, their respective Areas and the qualifying chosen résumé is submitted to the WSO by the Area Delegate. At the World Service Conference the nominee is selected by Members of each the WSC Regional Nominating Committee on Trustees (RCT) composed of the Delegates from the region, Delegates chosen by lot from outside the region and Board members chosen by lot review the résumés and submit the results of the review to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee also reviews the résumés and selects candidates to be presented to the Board for consideration.

The Board of Trustees selects names of Regional Trustee and Trustee at Large nominees are to be presented to the Conference for an expression of traditional approval. All the These nominees are may then be elected by the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting.\*

[Footnote from page 137 has been deleted.]

*\*Revisions to the Regional Trustee Plan were approved at the 2010 World Service Conference. For details, contact the WSO. The "World Service Handbook" will be updated with the next printing.*

The Trustees, along with the members of the Executive Committee, direct the business operations of the World Service Office, observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. They are concerned with guarding the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship against those who may try to profit from our ever-growing public acceptance, with protecting our principles from distortion and dilution, and in general, with acting as the chief service arm of the World Service Conference. The Board serves as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter. **The role of the Board is explained in the descriptive text of Concept Seven ("The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional").**

The purposes for which the corporation was formed, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, are "to encourage, assist and

serve the families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with the problems concerning and attendant on alcoholism; to reinforce their efforts to understand the alcoholic and to foster his or her restoration to normal life; to disseminate information in relation thereto and to conduct and participate in any other classes of service to assist families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with their problems." To serve these purposes, it is the responsibility of the Trustees to review all operations of the World Service Office.

In managing the affairs of the corporation, the Board is authorized to:

- Establish and maintain the policies of the World Service Office.
- Control its property and finances.
- Make long-range plans.
- Authorize expenditures.
- Appoint the Executive Committee and other committees.
- Appoint an Executive Director and Director of Business Services Finance for the World Service Office.
- Take whatever measures are prudent and effective in carrying out the purpose of our fellowship.
- Approve the final agenda for the World Service Conference.

Any Trustee who has a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorization by the Board may not vote on the matter.

Three-fourths of all authorized participants registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the World Service Office if or when it is deemed essential. They may request the resignation of the entire Board of Trustees and nominate a new slate of Trustees. Prior to resignation, it is the responsibility of the outgoing Trustees to vote on the successor slate presented by the Conference. For the purpose of bringing about a reorganization of the World Service Office, the number of World Service Office participants voting shall be limited to one-fourth of the total Conference vote.

In this instance, the final decision-making body is the World Service Conference. (Further details of the Board's composition, jurisdiction, and responsibilities will be found in Article 10 of the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter.)

# APPENDIX III

To amend the text on pages 95-99 in the “Financial Matters” section in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)* as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; bold and underlined indicates new text; moved text is only underlined)

## **Spiritual Principles of Al-Anon’s Self Support**

**Tradition Seven is Gratitude in Action. Al-Anon is supported by members’ financial and service contributions together with the sale of our literature.**

**Our spiritual principles inspire members to support the fellowship as it serves both members and prospective members. As we receive the hope and help we each sought, we use these spiritual principles to ensure that those following in our footsteps have the same opportunities:**

**Abundance—We learn to change our thinking from what we don’t have to an awareness of gratitude for what we do have. As that idea expands, we continue to give of our time and money, realizing we can never give back all we have been given. Thinking abundantly allows us to accomplish our primary purpose of reaching out to families and friends of alcoholics.**

**Anonymity—Within our practice of anonymity we are reminded that our personal donations are made without recognition or public acknowledgement.**

**Gratitude—We express our gratitude by giving generously of our time and resources. We want to ensure that Al-Anon will continue to be available to others.**

**Responsibility—Step Twelve suggests that reaching out is essential as we strive to carry out our responsibility to be there for the newcomer. To fund this very important work, we consider what combination of service and money each of us is willing to provide.**

**Trust—We believe our trusted servants practice these spiritual principles when making informed decisions about the use of our resources. We realize that we all want what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. As we trust others, we come to understand that we too are worthy of trust.**

**Unity—Our contributions provide the means to create, maintain, and expand the services that are necessary to enhance the sense of belonging so all members are connected in fulfilling our primary spiritual aim.**

## **Contributions to WSO**

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, Al-Anon is supported by members’ contributions and from the sale of our literature. All contributions are used to meet expenses for worldwide services, including a portion of the operating expense of the World Service Conference. All income from contributions and literature sales is allocated to the General Fund. Contributions to the WSO cannot be earmarked for special purposes unless recommended by the World Service Conference. (Also see “Outside Contributions.”)

***By As Individual Members, we give through:***

## **Direct Contributions**

In any calendar year, an Al-Anon member may contribute **in gratitude** to the WSO any amount up to one percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year’s audit. (Also see “Incorporation/Taxes, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.” regarding charitable deductions.)

—Members may authorize a monthly deduction from their bank accounts. (Contact the WSO for details.)

**When giving locally to our groups, Districts, Al-Anon Information Services/Literature Distribution Centers (AIS/LDCs), Areas, or General Service Offices, we make our gifts in a similar proportion to the revenue and expenses of these service arms, keeping in mind that all members want to have responsibility for supporting our structures. Our contributions express our individual abundance so no one donation, regardless of amount, is more important than another.** (Also see “Incorporation/Taxes, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.” regarding charitable deductions.)

**In addition to checks, money orders, and online contributions, members may authorize a monthly deductions from their bank accounts.** (Contact the WSO for details.)

## **Combined Giving Campaigns:**

Members may contribute to the WSO via a combined giving campaign. Matching funds from non-members cannot be accepted. (Contact the WSO for details.)

**Birthday Plan.** In honor of their Al-Anon/Alateen birthdays, members may express their gratitude by contributing an amount for each year’s membership.

(Contact the WSO for details.)

**Memorial Contributions.** Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of any relationship in accordance with the direct contribution limit. (Contact the WSO for details.)

The World Service Office accepts contributions in memory of deceased Al-Anon members from “family” who are not Al-Anon members. The Fellowship recognizes that accepting such contributions can give comfort to families as described in Tradition Five.

The World Service Conference defines family as anyone who has a close relationship of loving care and concern for another. The individual donor defines his or her relationship to the deceased Al-Anon member.

This one-time gift of gratitude is limited to an amount no greater than \$500. Memorial contributions by non-members are not solicited.

## **Quarterly Appeal to Members.**

The quarterly appeal gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level. Since the WSO does not maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon/Alateen, quarterly appeal letters are mailed to the groups **in February, May, August and November.** It is requested that the letters be read at two successive meetings, followed by a special collection in addition to the regular group collection: **to allow individual members to contribute directly to the WSO in addition to their regular group donations. Members give in accordance with spiritual principles and the opportunity to contribute is offered to all.**

The 1966 World Service Conference voted that three letters of appeal for individual contributions be sent annually from the WSO to Al-Anon/Alateen members in the United States and Canada. In

1998, the World Service Conference voted to increase the appeal frequency to quarterly (February, May, August, and November). In November the appeal is extended to members of groups worldwide.

**Workplace Combined Giving Campaigns.** Members may contribute to the WSO via a combined giving campaign through their employers. **In keeping with members' individual responsibility to be self-supporting, such contributions come directly from their income and matching funds from employers (non-members) cannot be accepted. Members notify the WSO of their intent to make such contributions so it is clear the money is coming from a member.** (Contact the WSO for details.)

### Bequests

The WSO may accept a *one-time* bequest from an Al-Anon member's **estate or trust** in any amount, provided its use is not restricted by the donor. Bequest amounts, up to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit will be placed in the General Fund. Members may give **designate, in a spirit of gratitude**, more than the ten percent; however, the portion of the bequest above **the** ten percent will be reported separately on the financial statements. The World Service Conference will authorize the use of these excess amounts and the authorized expenditures will be administered by the Board of Trustees. These excess amounts are not available for general purposes, unless further authorized by the Conference. (Contact the WSO for details.)

**In maintaining the principle of anonymity, no individual's gift is acknowledged publicly nor can the gift be earmarked for any specific purpose or program. Al-Anon members give knowing that the money will be spent continuing to support and expand the program that brought us peace and serenity during our lives.**

**By As Groups and Other Service Entities, Members Give Through: Al-Anon/Alateen Groups**

**As an expression of gratitude**, groups may make donations to the WSO on a regular basis without limit **after meeting the group's expenses and contributions to local and Area service entities.**

### Al-Anon/Alateen Service Arms

Districts, Al-Anon Information Services (Intergroups), Literature Distribution Centers, Areas, General Service Offices, and other Al-Anon/**Alateen** service entities may also contribute **in a spirit of unity** directly to the WSO without limit.

### Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions

A portion of the funds derived from Al-Anon and Alateen conventions may be contributed to the WSO. (See "Conventions," "Distribution of Proceeds.")

### A.A. Conferences/Conventions

Contributions received from A.A. conferences/conventions that are offered as an acknowledgment of Al-Anon's participation in these functions may be accepted by the WSO or its service arms.

### Reserve Fund

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. has the right and obligation to establish and maintain a Reserve Fund. This fund, established in 1970, has a two-fold purpose: ensuring the continuation of Al-Anon's essential services and **Warranty One recommends that an ample reserve be the prudent financial principle of the World Service Conference. This ample reserve, created from the generosity and abundance of the members, ensures the continuation of the important Twelfth Step work of Al-Anon Family Groups and the funding of special projects.** (See *Reserve Fund Guideline* [G-41].)

### Discounts and Services

WSO and other Al-Anon service entities may accept discounts or services that are routinely available to other non-profit organizations (e.g. non-profit postal rates, free placement for public service announcements, etc.). Discounts may not be accepted if the discount is given only to Al-Anon and not to other non-profit organizations.

### Fund-Raising

Many groups, Districts, Areas, Information Services, Conventions, Conferences, Assemblies, or other gatherings of Al-Anon/Alateen members often raise funds to provide services.

Fund-raising activities such as potluck suppers, dances, or other social events are conducted only within the fellowship and in agreement with the groups directly involved. If, however, such events are open to the public, use of the name Al-Anon or Alateen would violate the spirit of our Traditions.

### **Outside Contributions of Money, Goods and Services**

**Members' personal contributions of money, time, and experience are appropriate expressions of our spiritual principles.**

### Fund-Raising

**As part of our responsibility to be self-supporting, many groups, Districts, Areas, Information Services, Conventions, Conferences, and Assemblies, or other gatherings of Al-Anon/Alateen members often raise funds to provide services.**

Fundraisers raising activities such as potlucks, suppers, dances, or other social events, are **usually** conducted only within the fellowship and in agreement with the **Al-Anon/Alateen** groups directly involved. If, however, such events are open to the **general** public, use of the name Al-Anon or Alateen would violate the spirit of our Traditions **of anonymity and self-support. (Also see "Announcing Events.")**

### Discounts of Goods and Services

WSO and other Al-Anon service entities may accept discounts or **of** goods and services that are routinely available to other non-profit **not-for-profit** organizations (e.g. nonprofit postal rates, free placement for public service announcements, etc.). Discounts may not be accepted if the discount is given only to Al-Anon and not to other non-profit organizations. **In addition, service entities may accept discounts of goods and services that are routinely available to other not-for-profit organizations and for-profit entities—e.g., freeware and other digital media—provided that members' anonymity is protected and there are no appearances of affiliation or requirements that would violate our Traditions.**

### **Outside Contributions of Money of Goods and Services**

Al-Anon and Alateen groups do not **solicit or** accept **\* direct** contributions of money, goods, or services from outside the Al-Anon membership in order to adhere to the Seventh Tradition of self-support; **and avoid the appearance of affiliation or influence by others. Seeking or accepting any outside funding through awards, endowments, gifts, grants, scholarships, etc. would not be in keeping with our spiritual principles. (See also "Use of Group Funds," "Use of Group Funds," and "Discounts of Goods and Services.")**

**\*The only exceptions would be subject to the Memorial Contributions Policy for family members.**

### **Avoiding Commercialism**

Raffling various articles at meetings or other gatherings is a matter of autonomy (see “Selling Products/Chances”), but to avoid commercialism in the fellowship, it is suggested that these items relate in some way to our spiritual principles. Items such as Al-Anon or Alateen books, subscriptions to *The Forum*, or the donated products of the creative efforts of individual members are suggested. (Also see “Raffles/Lottery Tickets.”)

### **Program-Related Jewelry and Other Items**

The WSO does not stock or offer program-related jewelry or other items for sale because these actions could divert our service office from our primary purpose of helping families of alcoholics.

In keeping with Tradition Six, the WSO does not provide lists of suppliers for articles associated with the fellowship, e.g., plaques, jewelry.

### **Selling Products/Chances**

#### **Selling Products at Meetings/Conventions/Conferences**

Tradition Five states that the one purpose of each Al-Anon group is to help families of alcoholics. Therefore, it is inappropriate for an individual or outside entity to use Al-Anon meetings or other Al-Anon events as a marketplace before, during, or after these gatherings for the sale of services or products.

### **Avoiding Commercialism**

Raffling various articles at meetings or other gatherings is a matter of autonomy (see “Selling Products/chances”) but to avoid commercialism in the fellowship, it is suggested that these items relate in some way to our spiritual principles. Items such as Al-Anon or Alateen books, subscriptions to *The Forum*, or the donated products of the creative efforts of individual members are suggested. **In keeping with our principle of self-support we do not solicit or accept items from outside the fellowship.** (Also see “Raffles/Lottery Tickets.”)

### **Selling Products at A.A. Meetings**

In keeping with Tradition Seven **and our principle of self-support,** Al-Anon and Alateen members should refrain from soliciting or selling any products at A.A. meetings.

### **Raffles/Lottery Tickets**

Raffles/lotteries are subject to national, state/provincial, and local laws.

U.S. federal law and Canadian federal law make it illegal to send lottery tickets through the mail.

Governmental regulations may prohibit solicitation of ticket money by letter or by the sales of chances on a prize. Similar restrictions may apply outside the United States and Canada.

There may also be other state or provincial laws which regulate the use of fund raising involving the sale of chances or tickets by charitable organizations. Since groups, Districts, and many Areas are not registered as charities with state/provincial or federal authorities, these laws could prohibit such sales.

Local statutes must also be investigated and complied with in order to prevent individual members and Al-Anon as a whole from becoming involved in public controversy.

After determining that the proposed raffle and/or lottery is legally permitted within the Area where it is to be held, additional precautions need to be taken so that we are not diverted from our primary purpose and do not imply endorsement. Distribution and sale of raffle/lottery tickets should be limited to Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and events.

(Also see “Fund Raising” and “Selling Products and Chances.”)

### **Payment for Speaking**

In keeping with the Eighth Tradition, Al-Anon speakers are reimbursed for expenses only. When a member is speaking to an outside organization, the speaker may suggest funds in excess of expenses be used by the organization for the purchase of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) for distribution by the organization as an educational service.

### **Public Meetings**

A basket may be passed at **During** open meetings to which **when** the public is **has been** invited. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition it is **appropriate to read the Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps and the Seventh Tradition before passing the basket to clarify our spiritual principle of self-support,** clear that the fellowship is dependent on its own voluntary contributions.

### **Use of Group Funds**

#### **Rent and Other Group Expenses**

Our Tradition of self-support suggests that the expenses for the group’s operation such as rent, literature, insurance, **public outreach,** supplies, post office box rental, Group Representative, and Information Service Representative expenses be met first. **Funds in excess of an ample reserve** may be **are** used to **help** support local and Area structures, and the World Service Office.

### **Rent**

At locations **In facilities** where rent may **is** not be accepted, **a group may provide** a supply of Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and local meeting schedules may be provided to the facility as an appropriate alternative.

### **Gifts to Members**

**In the spirit of unity,** group funds are used for group purposes only, not for personal gifts to members.

### **Baby-Sitters Child Care**

Some meetings are attended by members who must bring children. Using group funds or taking a special collection to pay for a baby-sitter **child care** at the meetings is within a group’s autonomy. Paying for this type of service does not violate Traditions, since avoiding disruption of a meeting benefits **the unity** of the group as a whole.

### **Outside Agencies/Groups/Organizations**

#### **Fees Payment for Speaking**

**Sharing our experience, strength and hope as Al-Anon/Alateen speakers is an example of the important Twelfth-Step work of carrying the message.** In keeping with the Eighth Tradition, Al-Anon speakers are reimbursed for expenses only. **Fees are not charged or accepted for speaking.** When a member is speaking to an outside organization, **and a fee is offered,** the speaker may suggest funds in excess of expenses be used by the organization for the purchase of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) for distribution by the organization as an educational service.

### **Donations to Outside Agencies**

In keeping with our Sixth Tradition, group funds are to be used for Al-Anon/Alateen purposes only. **As part of their Twelfth-Step responsibility** groups may use their funds to purchase Al-Anon/Alateen literature to donate to outside agencies, activities, and programs for public outreach.

# APPENDIX IV

To amend the text on pages 85-86 and 123-124 in the “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions” section in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; bold and underlined indicates new text; moved text is only underlined)

## Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions

### Conventions

*Al-Anon/Alateen Area-wide Conventions, Rallies, Reunions, Roundups (or Any Other Large Get-Together)*

Conventions attract many members, drawing them to celebrate and share their experiences. Where possible, members planning Area or region-wide conventions work closely with the local Area World Service Committee(s). Good communication assures better attendance as well as goodwill. In many Areas, the Convention Chairperson is appointed or elected at the Area Assembly. The Chairperson or another convention committee liaison member has a voice and may have a vote on the Area World Service Committee.

### Distribution of Proceeds

Surplus funds derived from conventions are usually contributed to the Area treasury and WSO, with a reasonable sum held in reserve to seed the next convention. (See “Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions.”)

### Mini-Conventions, Share-a-Thons, Workshops or Other Get-Togethers

Members may choose to plan get-togethers for public information, service, or other sharing purposes. Chairpersons of these events are not necessarily chosen by, or members of, their Area World Service Committee (AWSC); to avoid calendar conflicts and encourage unity, they can alert the District Representative, the Area Delegate, or some other member of the AWSC, making known their dates, purposes, etc.

### Conventions and Other Events

Al-Anon and Alateen events attract many members, drawing them to celebrate and share their experiences. These events can vary in size and content.

### Conventions

Among common Al-Anon/Alateen events are Area conventions, bringing together members from across the Area to celebrate recovery, often for a weekend. Conventions hosted by Areas for Alateen are often referred to as conferences. (See the Guidelines *Area Conventions* [G-20] and *Alateen Conferences* [G-16] for more specific suggestions on selecting organizers, planning the program, finances, etc.)

### Workshops

An Area, District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), or one or more Al-Anon/Alateen groups may host a weekend, day, or evening of workshops and meetings, luncheons, or banquets. These activities are planned in keeping with the spiritual principles of the Twelve Traditions to address various topics of interest to members or for public outreach purposes. Weekend events often combine workshops and speaker meetings.

### Alateen Participation

Since Alateen is part of the Al-Anon fellowship, Alateen its members are to be included in Al-Anon activities wherever possible at

the Area and local levels. It is within the autonomy of the Planning Committee to make the decision whether or not the Alateens members have a separate agenda. All events that include Alateen must be in compliance with the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Area in which the event is held. (See “Events with Alateen Participation” in the “Alateen Policy” section of the Service Manual.)

### A.A. Events with Al-Anon/Alateen Participation

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) may invite Al-Anon/Alateen to participate in conventions or conferences at the Area or local level. It is within the autonomy of the Area/local service arm to participate or not. (See the Guideline *Participation in an Area A.A. Convention* [G-7].) An A.A. event must have Al-Anon participation in order to have Alateen participation.

### Al-Anon/Alateen Events with A.A. participation

Al-Anon service arms may invite A.A. to participate in an Al-Anon hosted event. (See the Guideline *Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.* [G-3]).

### Distribution of Proceeds

Excess funds are often used to establish the next convention’s “seed” fund. Since accumulating large sums of money is discouraged, in keeping with Al-Anon’s Traditions and Concepts, excess funds over and above a seed fund for the next event can be donated to the District, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), Area, or the WSO.

### Films

Sometimes films are used at large meetings and conventions for entertainment between meetings and workshops. Because of the Sixth Tradition of nonendorsement, the use of Conference Approved films is suggested.

### Videos

Sometimes videos are shown at events for entertainment and education. Because of the Sixth Tradition of non-endorsement, only Conference Approved videos are shown.

### Maintaining Anonymity at Events

#### Videotaping Recording or Filming

In keeping with Tradition Eleven, Videotaping recording or filming in any format does not occur at conventions, workshops, or other events since it is a violation of Tradition Eleven in safeguarding anonymity. is not recommended. (See “Anonymity” in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.”)

### Announcing Events

Various types of events are held for Al-Anon and Alateen members to gather for fun and fellowship, to celebrate recovery and enhance their understanding of the Al-Anon/Alateen program.

It may be helpful for members to consider the following spiritual principles when announcing these events:

- Cooperation
- Participation
- Responsibility
- Singleness of Purpose
- Unity or Common Welfare

## **What to Announce at Meetings**

**Al-Anon/Alateen recovery and service events cultivate a sense of community. Recognizing this spiritual need to belong, the principle of participation links the membership to these events.**

**Members often wonder if a particular event is appropriate to announce. The following should be considered when deciding what to announce at meetings:**

- **Generally those events put on by or connected to Al-Anon service arms are announced at meetings, in our newsletters, and on local websites. These events bring members together to connect through experiences and discussions.**
- **Areas, Districts and AISs often plan program-related activities for fun and fellowship, to encourage participation in service and sometimes fundraising. These gatherings unite groups within the District and neighboring Districts and often improve the health of the groups and lead to the growth of Al-Anon and Alateen as a whole. These events can be announced at Al-Anon meetings and communicated in our publications.**
- **Al-Anon is often invited by A.A. to participate in recovery events. Almost from its beginning, Al-Anon has taken part in these events. Such participation often led to the growth of Al-Anon and an enhanced spirit of cooperation between both fellowships. While we remain a separate entity from A.A., we cooperate whenever possible. When Al-Anon participates in an A.A. event with speakers or workshops, these events may be announced at meetings, in our newsletters and on our websites.**

[Moved from page 123.]

## **Outside the Fellowship**

**Al-Anon does not affiliate with other organizations; neither endorses nor opposes any other philosophies, therapies, or spiritual programs. Our experience suggests that confusion arises when such events are announced in Area newsletters and Al-Anon/Alateen local bulletins, on Al-Anon websites, and at group meetings.**

**The Al-Anon/Alateen name, therefore, cannot properly be used to identify or publicize any retreats, events, or activities sponsored by others. This applies when most or even all of the participants are members of Al-Anon/Alateen. Otherwise there could be a misunderstanding of Al-Anon's purpose and function. In order to avoid any appearance of Al-Anon/Alateen affiliation, it is important to keep promotion of such events outside of Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and meeting locations.**

## **Autonomy of Service Arms When Announcing Events**

**Whether to announce a particular event is a matter of autonomy, keeping in mind other groups, the District, or the Area may have different criteria. For example, an Area may choose to only make announcements at Assemblies of events sponsored by Al-Anon service arms.**

**Just as we have no opinion on outside literature, we have no opinion on events outside of Al-Anon. Members may read or attend whatever helps them in their recovery; but we keep our events focused on Al-Anon principles and topics.**

[From pages 123-124.]

## **Religion/Philosophies**

### **Meetings**

Al-Anon is a spiritual program; thus the discussion of specific religious beliefs at meetings may divert members from Al-Anon's primary purpose. Our meetings are open to all those who are affected by alcoholism whether the member has a religious belief or not.

### **Retreats**

#### **Al-Anon/Alateen Spiritual Meetings**

It has been suggested that the name "retreat" often has religious connotations and could imply affiliation if used in connection with an Al-Anon/Alateen event.

#### **Outside the Fellowship** [Moved.]

Al-Anon does not affiliate with other organizations; neither endorses nor opposes any other philosophies or spiritual programs. The Al-Anon/Alateen name, therefore, cannot properly be used to identify or publicize retreats or activities sponsored by others. This applies when most or even all of the participants are members of Al-Anon/Alateen. Otherwise there could be a misunderstanding of Al-Anon's purpose and function. In order to avoid any appearance of Al-Anon/Alateen affiliation, it is important to keep promotion of such events outside of Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and meeting locations. Our experience suggests that confusion arises when such events are announced in Area newsletters, Al-Anon/Alateen local bulletins and at group meetings.

#### **Within the Fellowship**

Area Newsletters or local Al-Anon/Alateen bulletins should not be used as a means of promoting or announcing retreats of any kind to the Al-Anon/Alateen membership, nor should retreats be promoted before, during, or after Al-Anon/Alateen meetings by use of leaflets or announcements.

### **Conventions**

Religious services and announcements of them are not a part of an Al-Anon/Alateen event.



# 2017 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### TRUSTEES AT LARGE

Tina B.	Jennie McC.	Karen W-P.
Terry F.	John McL.	
Judy K.	Rosie M.	

### REGIONAL TRUSTEES

Bruce F., US Southeast	Joyce B., US Southwest
Joan S., US Northeast	Annette T., US South Central
Marilyn M., Canada West	Debbie G., US North Central
Donna E., US Northwest	Thérèse S., Canada East

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Bev A., Chairperson	Judy K., Policy Chairperson
Mary G., Executive Director	Paula B., Member at Large
Debbie G., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)	Jennie McC., Treasurer
Connie H., Member at Large	Marsha W., Staff member

## NON-TRUSTEE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Jeffrey K., Executive Committee for Real Property Management  
Chairperson\*\*

## WORLD SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Mary G., Executive Director  
Niketa Bailey, Director of Finance\*  
Marsha W., Director of Programs  
Claire R., Associate Director—Professionals  
Kerri K., Associate Director—International  
Pat Q., Associate Director—Media  
Scot Powers, Digital Strategy Manager\*  
Sue P., Associate Director—Groups  
Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference  
Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

## INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Maria M., Mexico**	Kim A., UK & Eire**
Arnold H., New Zealand**	

## AREA DELEGATES

Marty W., Alabama/ Northwest Florida	Janet P., Nevada
Terry T., Alaska	Angela D., Newfoundland/ Labrador
Norma F., Alberta/ Northwest Territories	Nancy D'A., New Hampshire
Barb L., Arizona	Ann Marie Z., New Jersey
Gail F., Arkansas	Stephanie S., New Mexico/ El Paso
Janis A., British Columbia/ Yukon	Diane C., New York North
Yvonne D., California North	Taaj J., New York South
Elizabeth K., California South	Valentina H., North Carolina/ Bermuda
Eloy M., Colorado	Carol T., North Dakota
Gail L., Connecticut	Ginny C., Ohio
Pat M., Delaware	Laura D., Oklahoma
Wendy R., Florida North	Maureen O'S., Ontario North Alternate
Patricia K., Florida South	Debbie P., Ontario South
Renelle M., Georgia	Cindy E., Oregon
Dana Rae H., Hawaii	Barbara G., Pennsylvania
Sandy W., Illinois North	Mabel M., Puerto Rico
Tim E., Illinois South	Gaston A., Quebec East
Brenda L., Indiana	Loraine D., Quebec West
Beth K., Iowa	Phyllis H., Rhode Island
Betty R., Kansas	Jean H., Saskatchewan
Lori H., Kentucky	Dave B., South Carolina
Carmen O'M., Louisiana	Lynette K., South Dakota Alternate
Sonya M., Maine	Tarcila F., Tennessee
Debbie H., Manitoba/ Northwest Ontario	Joyce Y., Texas East
Tony S., Maritime Provinces	Chris C., Texas West
Connie C., Maryland/ District of Columbia	Nancy W., Utah
Richard McC., Massachusetts	Kenneth R., Vermont
Mike D., Michigan	Duane F., Virginia
Rachelle C., Minnesota North	Julie P., Washington
Mary H., Minnesota South	Marilyn M., West Virginia
Kathy E., Mississippi	Don B., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Sarah S., Missouri	Madeline S., Wyoming
Elaine D., Montana	
John I., Nebraska	

\*Non-member, non-voting \*\*Non-voting

## Reflections heard at the 2017 World Service Conference:

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“We’ve been living the principles, not just talking about them.”

“I really enjoyed the Annual Report. I got a feeling of what occurred during the office restructure. I got a feeling of how well organized it was through reading the report. Thank you to everyone who contributed to writing the report.”

“I was impressed with what the WSO is doing. I see us stepping into the future. The changes mean a lot. It gives me hope and gives the membership hope.”

“The more we talk about spiritual principles, the more they are put into play. I like that the WSO has become more involved with opportunities to share with us. It made an impression on me to realize WSO is practicing our principles in all its affairs.”

[WSO Tour] “We met so many people who were not members. It gives me such gratitude. I spoke with one man at length and he talked with such pride about his job. I hope I can take home the way I saw him carrying the message. He is one of us.”

“In the little Board Room [at the WSO], there is a photo of a quilt made by each District in my Area. I took a picture of that. It impacted me. It is like coming home and having a family picture on the wall. The WSO respects us as part of the family.”

“I am impressed with the changes in the financial report. Operating in a positive cash flow is exciting, and I feel relief. I am excited to carry the information back to my Area.”