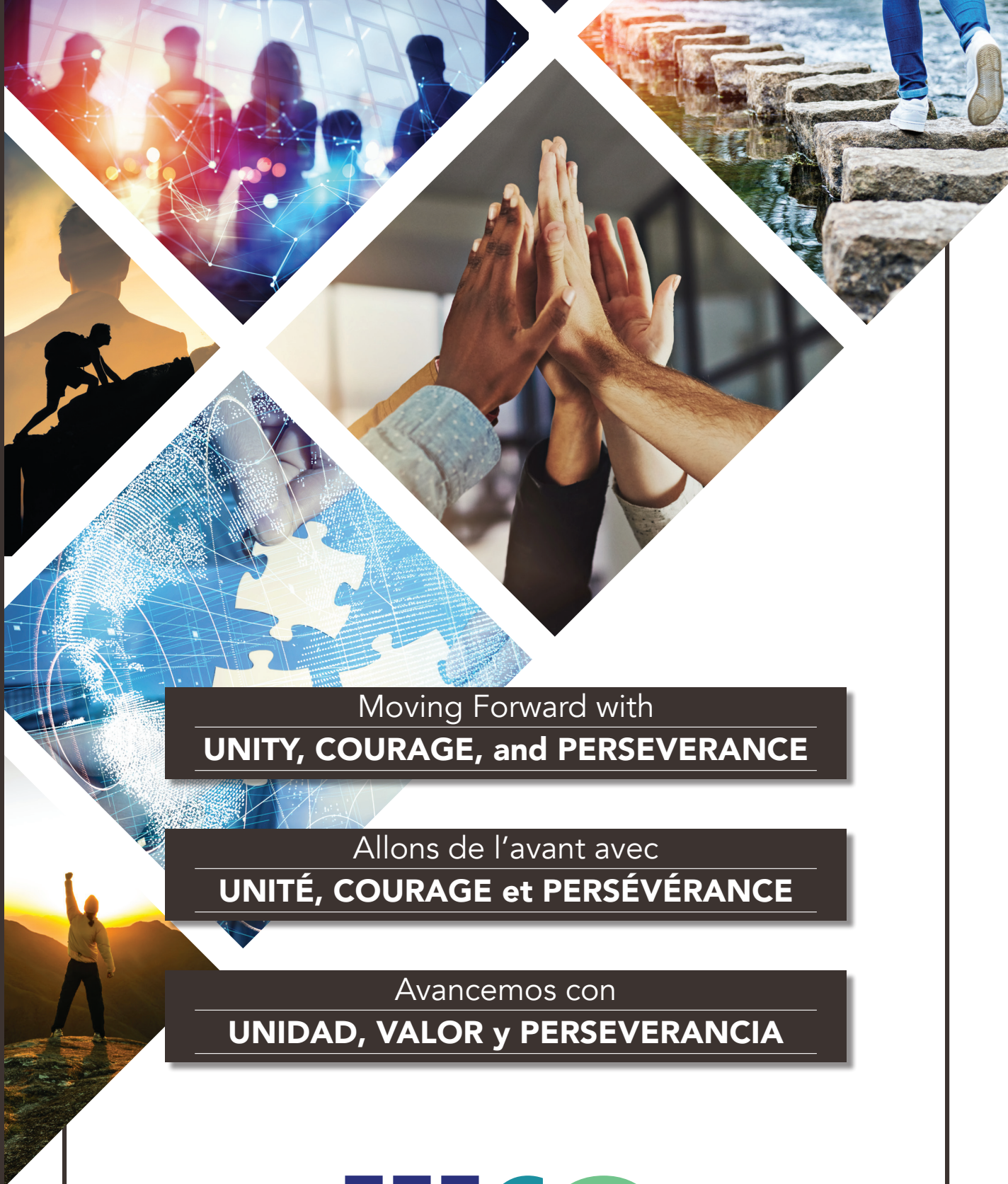


2021

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SUMMARY



Moving Forward with
UNITY, COURAGE, and PERSEVERANCE

Allons de l'avant avec
UNITÉ, COURAGE et PERSÉVÉRANCE

Avancemos con
UNIDAD, VALOR y PERSEVERANCIA



61st Annual
World Service Conference 2021

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2021 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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“Our World Service Conference (WSC) is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.”
2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual
version two (2) [P-24/27], page 179

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

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The 2021 Conference Summary is available in color online at al-anon.org in the Members section. Remember, you can enlarge the text by using the zoom button.



CORE PURPOSE

Helping families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences.



CORE VALUES

- **Spiritually based:** adhering to our Legacies
- **Honest:** treating all equally, with integrity and respect
- **Transparent:** sharing process, content, and information
- **Self-supporting:** refusing outside funding



ENVISIONED FUTURE (2024-2029)

- AFG, Inc. is a global organization with technology-based operations that support the delivery of on-demand, barrier-free access to the program, information, meetings, and Sponsors.
- The research-validated effectiveness of the Al-Anon/Alateen program in addressing the family disease of alcoholism is recognized by professionals, schools, and religious leaders. Their recommendations to this program increase membership and expand its outreach.
- Society as a whole benefits from reduced health care costs, lower levels of incarceration, and increased graduation rates.
- Families and friends of alcoholics benefit from greater connectedness to support, no matter their location or language.

GOALS (2022-2024)

- **Goal: Members**
AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.
- **Goal: Public**
Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.
- **Goal: Organization**
AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.



PRE-CONFERENCE

2021 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES, THOUGHT FORCES, AND TASK FORCES

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

Assignment	Panel 59 (2019-2021)	Panel 60 (2020-2022)	Panel 61 (2021-2023)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Wally C., Chair, MP Kathy D., WA Susan B., WIUPMI	Susan R., Chair Elect, SD DeLynn H., AR Lori H., MO	John M., CA(N) Kristine G., MI Linda C., KY
Literature Committee	Barbara T., GA Claudia M., AZ Katie W., OR Lynn B., BC/YK Sharon F., AB/NWT	Linette L., AK Marcia M., CT Margaret R., NE Noah P., NH	Gregg R., IL(N) Terry R., KS
Public Outreach Committee	Rick G., CO Jennifer M., MS Samantha M., OK Sheri S., ND	Clara C., NM/EP Joy F., SK Sharon B., WY	Peggy D., TX(W) Penni S., HI Tim P., CA(S)
Diversity Today Thought Force	Donna S., NJ Terry W., VA	Emily D-C., Chair, NY(S) Maria V., PR Rae L., ME	Brenda L., MB Emily K., NY(N) Lori F., PA Mattie T., TX(E)
Maintaining a Sustainable Future Using Abundant Thinking Thought Force	Carol S., MT Melissa F., WV	Bob C., Chair, SC JoEllyn P., IL(S) Katy P., IA Robin P., NV	Diane B., FL(S) Gwen D., ON(S) Kit S., MN(S)
Encourage Service Participation Task Force	Anu B., NC/BDA Fred H., MN(N) Joanne P., VT	Tammy M., Chair, LA Bill H., ON(N) Heather M., UT	Evelyn T., FL(N) Jo S., OH Karla K., TN Maureen H., IN

CONFERENCE PROCEDURES DOCUMENT

Teri M., Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson

Information on this topic was posted to AFG Connects prior to Conference so that members would have the opportunity to review it before the Conference discussion.

In June 2020, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) discussed the pros and cons of floor motions and ways to provide clarity regarding the intent of, and the process of, presenting a floor motion. After deliberating, the CLT formed a task force consisting of a subset of the CLT.

The Task Force: WSC Floor Discussions & Motions began its work focusing on the goal of “having a conversation before a motion is presented” in support of one of the key elements of utilizing Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) to reach an informed group conscience, which is “dialogue before deliberation.”

The Task Force recommended combining wording to avoid duplications, clarifying the “Process for Proposing a Topic for Conference Discussion” to support members who propose a topic, adding text regarding “Other factors to consider when thinking about proposing a discussion topic,” and adding a graphic to illustrate the “Conference Agenda” bulleted list to present a visual illustrating the variety of sources from which the Conference Agenda is derived, including Past and current Delegates and the membership at large.



The CLT reviewed the Task Force’s work and recommended the changes to the Board of Trustees. Following the Board’s review, the Board approved the revisions to the Conference Procedures document.

The floor was then opened for any discussion on revisions to the Conference Procedures document.

- Regarding accommodating discussions prior to WSC, do the changes address that?

The Chairperson addressed the procedure to propose a topic for discussion at the WSC; the procedure also covers proposing a topic for discussion before the WSC.

- If Delegates are interested in discussing a topic before it is presented to Conference, do we need permission?

The changes to the Conference procedures supports a Conference member, who wishes to propose a topic, gathering a small group of members together—these could be other Delegates, members of an Area, fellow Volunteers, or some combination thereof, to create a framing and complete KBDM background before submission. However, Delegates are not encouraged to gather together outside of Conference to discuss these topics en masse as to do so would violate Concept Four which ensures all members of Conference, including WSO Volunteers and Staff as well as Delegates, have equal access to participation in conversations to be decided by Conference.

- Does this procedure give the CLT the right to veto suggested topics?

In accordance with Concept Three, the CLT are “trusted to decide, within the framework of their duties, how to interpret and apply their authority and responsibility to each ... situation as it arises.” Thus, the CLT does have the responsibility and authority to decide when not to bring a topic raised by a Conference member before Conference. In exercising its responsibilities, CLT reviews all submissions and evaluates them thoughtfully. When making the decision not to bring a topic forward to Conference to decide whether discussion is necessary, the CLT will offer a considered explanation. Some factors for not pursuing a proposed discussion topic include its having been previously discussed at Conference or its being addressed by other trusted servants.

- Does this minimize the input of new Delegates?

The intention of the procedure is to emphasize the importance of discussion by all voices of Conference—of which Delegates, WSO Volunteers, and WSO Staff are equal participants in accordance with Concept Four.

OPENING SPEAKER AND PINNING OF NEW WSC MEMBERS

The Opening Speaker for the 2021 World Service Conference was Debbie G., Executive Committee Chairperson. (Her talk can be found on page 67.)

At our face-to-face Conferences, new Conference members are “pinned” by their Conference Mentor, receiving a commemorative WSC pin. This year, the pins were mailed to the new Conference members, who were invited to ask a trusted friend or family member to “pin” them, and if desired to submit photos of themselves wearing their pin. The Conference was treated to a slide show of these photos. All Conference members then introduced themselves by name, service position, and Area (if they were a Delegate). This also served as the official “roll call” of Conference members.

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Donna S., Panel 59, New Jersey, Chairperson
Katie W., Panel 59, Oregon, Co-Chairperson
Sheri S., Panel 59, North Dakota, Secretary
Carol S., Panel 59, Montana
Kathy D., Panel 59, Washington

The day before the opening of the 2021 World Service Conference (WSC), the Delegate-led Sharing Area Highlights Committee held a web conferencing session for Delegates to gather in breakouts, to hear Panel 59 Delegates share their experiences, and to hold a Q&A session. All other Conference members were invited to attend as guests with no voice.

During Conference, the Sharing Area Highlights Committee posted a compilation of the Delegates’ written reports sharing their Area successes and challenges that included a pictorial directory. Many of the reports included how the Areas adjusted to the pandemic in order to continue meeting as groups, Districts, and Areas, as well as hosting workshops and conventions.

THE BOARD'S GOALS FOR THE CONFERENCE

Prior to the start of Conference, the Board's Goals for the Conference were posted to AFG Connects, as follows:

The Conference, Al-Anon's largest group conscience, will act in the spirit of unity and goodwill to assure that Al-Anon's world services are continually available to the Al-Anon fellowship:

GOAL 1: The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of Al-Anon's core principles in action.

GOAL 2: The Conference will provide guidance to Al-Anon's Board of Trustees and the World Service Office (WSO) on services to the fellowship and guardianship of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions.

GOAL 3: Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the Structure, and be able to articulate Conference discussions and decisions.

Conference members were asked to select one Goal and share briefly how they will strive to support this goal during the virtual/electronic Conference week. Here is a sampling of what they shared:

GOAL 1: The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of Al-Anon's core principles in action.

- I will give encouragement and support to all World Service Conference members and will concentrate fully on any item at hand during the Conference. I dedicate myself to active participation in our WSC and will respect and follow the General Warranties of the Conference.
- This being my first year, I'm going to listen, learn, participate, and remember my Higher Power is leading all our trusted servants. I plan to have my *Service Manual* on my desk, our three Legacies open, and an empty chair beside me to invite my Higher Power to the meeting.
- Each day I will invite my Higher Power to be with me, to speak through me and to me through the words of other Conference attendees. I will strive to presume goodwill and place principles above personalities.
- At my first Conference, I saw us bringing goodwill; willingness to listen with an open mind; a respectful courtesy, curiosity, courage; and a deep burning desire to bring our help to Al-Anon. It is no longer work, it is the blessing, beauty, and the power of putting love into action! To again assure the presence of our invisible guide, I will do my best to practice selflessness and love, for each of you, and for the success of all our efforts to strengthen Al-Anon to better help the broken families of our world.
- With GOAL 1 firmly in my mind, I will endeavor to fulfill my responsibilities at the WSC to be open, to participate, to be prepared, and to listen spiritually. I will presume goodwill, and I will know that all present love our program and want what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. I will review these Goals each morning, along with a quiet moment of reflection, and I will be reminded that we are all doing the best we can.

GOAL 2: The Conference will provide guidance to Al-Anon's Board of Trustees and the World Service Office (WSO) on services to the fellowship and guardianship of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions.

- For me, this is the *essential* role of being a Delegate. I am obligated to represent my Area members by: sharing their passion/commitment to/for the program; raising their concerns, frustrations, and needs respectfully with the Board and the WSO; and positively working with those gathered to find solutions that will protect both our program and our legacy.
- As a member of the Board of Trustees, I will participate by speaking softly and listening intently to the guidance provided as a result of the largest group conscience of Al-Anon. This will allow the delegation of responsibility and authority to continue as we carry out our oversight of the wishes of the groups.
- I will keep an open mind and always presume goodwill when listening to and reading through information being shared regarding Board and WSO proposed motions, remind myself that these trusted servants have a much larger view of worldwide Al-Anon than I do. I will pray that the information I have from my Area, the Board, and WSO allows me to vote in a manner that will help sustain Al-Anon and move it forward in an approach that will benefit worldwide Al-Anon as a whole.
- As a member of the WSO Staff and the Conference, I will keep in mind my dual role to give *and* receive guidance from my fellow Conference members. I will embrace my part of our shared responsibility to act as guardians of the Twelve Traditions.

GOAL 3: Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the Structure, and be able to articulate Conference discussions and decisions.

- I am a first-year Delegate and am looking forward to better understanding our Service Structure so that I can bring back to my Area all the important information that will be discussed at the Conference.
- I have been studying my *Service Manual*, as per my Sponsor's instructions. I want to be an asset to the Conference; and most of the time, that will be accomplished by listening and learning.
- At this year's Conference, I will strive to deepen and broaden my understanding of relationships within the Al-Anon Structure as well as use of the Concepts in the discussions and decisions made. I will continue to try and find the balance between my role as Delegate in representing the issues and concerns which are important to my Area and bringing the spirituality of the Conference content and its broader perspective back as a trusted servant of Al-Anon as a whole. I will trust in my Higher Power's guidance through the experience, strength, and hope of others.
- Led by a Higher Power, I will focus on our principles of unity, harmony, respect, trust, and understanding while participating in the purpose of our World Service Conference which makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon. May our spiritual tone be present and prevail as we continue the 61 years of conversation in our Conference proceedings, discussions, and decisions so that our world services continue to carry on.

WHO ATTENDS THE CONFERENCE, AND WHY?

Prior to Conference, “Who Attends the Conference, and Why?” was posted to AFG Connects.

In the descriptive text of Concept Four, we find our suggested guide as to who participates and why. The Delegates, WSO Staff, and Volunteers bring different knowledge and perspectives on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. Thus, the Conference has access to spiritual guidance found through the collective wisdom of all Conference participants.

These individuals, despite their different service roles, share two common traits while at Conference:

1. They listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
2. They vote on these matters.

Delegates:

Besides listening, participating, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, Delegates bring the viewpoint of their Areas on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. They also return to their Areas to share a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide. Delegates are the bridge of understanding that links the groups in the Area with world Al-Anon. They are the trusted servants of Al-Anon as a whole. Read more about the Delegates in Concepts Two and Three as well as in the *World Service Handbook*.

WSO Volunteers, our Board of Trustees:

Besides listening, participating, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, members of the Board of Trustees have a legal responsibility for the funds and services provided by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board guards the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship, protects Al-Anon principles from distortion and dilution, and is the chief service arm of the World Service Conference. The Board of Trustees ensures the goals and directions of the Conference are carried out by the WSO in accordance with Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions. Read more about the Board of Trustees in Concept Seven.

WSO Volunteers, our Executive Committee:

Members of the Executive Committee also listen, participate, and vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. They are entrusted with managing the affairs of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This authority is granted to the Executive Committee by the Board of Trustees in order that the Executive Committee can provide oversight on daily affairs at the World Service Office. Delegates might know the Executive Committee best as the body that reviews presentations prior to Conference, but that is just a small part of the Committee's responsibilities delegated to them by the Board of Trustees. Read more about the Executive Committee in Concept Eight.

Voting WSO Staff Members, our Service Workers:

Voting WSO Staff members also listen, participate, and vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. They are Al-Anon members and paid workers at the WSO. Voting WSO Staff are in direct contact with Al-Anon members worldwide through correspondence and sometimes travel. They serve the fellowship in a variety of ways, all of which members have seen listed on the back of the Appeal letters. Voting WSO Staff not only support the world leadership of the Trustees, but they share world leadership with the Trustees. Read more about the Voting WSO Staff in Concept Eleven.

Non-Voting WSO Staff Members:

Non-Voting WSO Staff members work at the World Service Office in service roles affecting both the members of Al-Anon worldwide as well as other Staff and Volunteers. They often develop and implement new plans to more effectively provide services to the fellowship or for the Staff. They are a visible image of world service when members visit the WSO. Read more about non-voting WSO Staff in Concept Eleven and about the functions of the WSO in the “World Service Handbook.”

Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

A task delegated to the ECRPM Chairperson is to ring the bell and keep everyone on time at Conference. However, the ECRPM Chairperson's primary responsibility is to ensure that the spirit and letter of the resolution to create the ECRPM and handle the management of our property is upheld. This includes the actual WSO building and its grounds. This is why the ECRPM Chairperson has voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote at Conference. Read more about the ECRPM in Concept Eight.

Conference Recorders (Conference Summary and Audio Recorders):

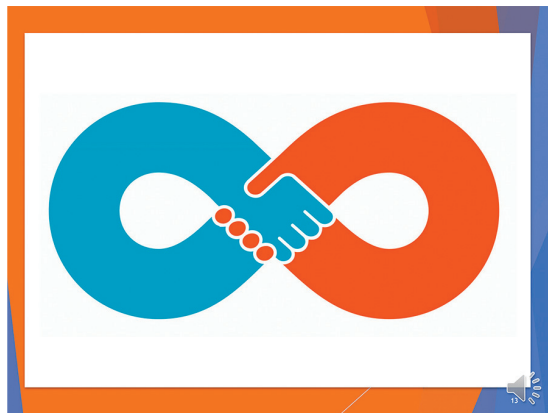
The Conference Recorders ensure that an accurate record of the Conference is available to members and retained for the Al-Anon Archives.

International Representatives:

International Representatives come to gain information regarding the World Service Conference procedures and policies, to share a little about their service structure, and to participate in worldwide Al-Anon. Read their sharings in the *World Service Conference Summaries*.

Interpreters:

The Interpreters provide oral simultaneous translation services from English to French and English to Spanish and vice versa, when required, to make it possible for non-English-speaking WSC Members to participate in the Conference.



WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE ETIQUETTE

Prior to the Conference, members viewed a narrated World Service Conference Etiquette presentation. The presentation highlighted the spiritual principles of integrity (starting and stopping on time), simplicity (stay on topic), and presuming goodwill by practicing humility, harmony, and unity.



WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE VOTING PROCEDURES

Before the Conference, members viewed a narrated World Service Conference Voting Procedures presentation. The presentation highlighted the difference between electronic and open voting; reviewed the terms abstentions, routine motions, and affirmations; as well as reiterated that the principles found in Concept Three allow each Conference member the right to vote one's conscience. The presentation was in addition to the "Essential Voting Information" outlined in the Conference Procedures document, which is available to all Conference members. At Conference, the members agreed that 2/3 of voting members would constitute the amount required to pass motions.

GENERAL SESSIONS

CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Rosie M., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

Greetings and welcome Conference members. This year, the 2021 World Service Conference theme is:

Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance
Avancemos con unidad, valor y perseverancia
Allons de l'avant avec unité, courage et persévérance

Applying this theme, I am inspired by our confident, decisive leadership and Conference members' tenacity, resiliency, and our willingness to continue moving forward. We have prevailed in our capability to hold and participate in our 2021 Virtual/Electronic World Service Conference. We have all lived this theme through our varied individual and combined experiences.

Our commitment can be respectfully displayed through the tolerance, endurance, and courage we have experienced in our pursuit of our common welfare, in reaching our common goal and purpose, even when obstacles tried to obscure our path. It is through our perseverance that we have endured, cultivated to reach milestones, and in collaboration with one another, it is evident that we continue to practice our principles in action.

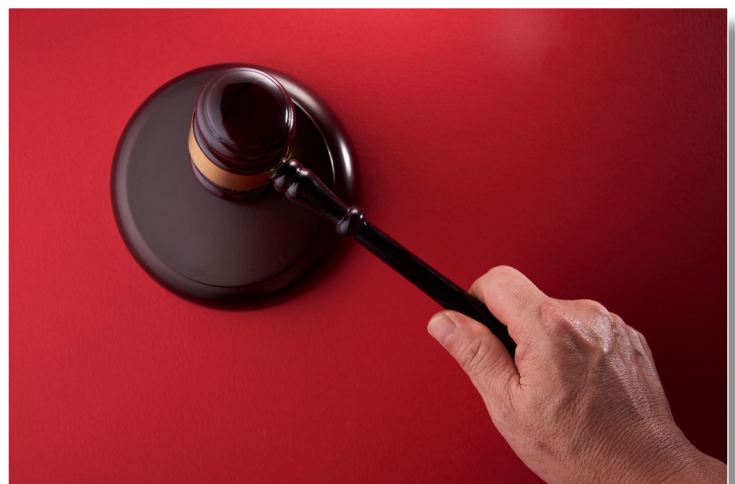


During our 61st Annual World Service Conference, we will continue the 61 years of conversation and safeguard our future. Here our strength binds us, each of us will persevere, focusing on our shared vision with courage, and continually adapting to complete our tasks at hand while we apply our spiritual principles as our foundation. Lois frequently said words to the effect that "It takes only one person to start something, but many others to carry it out" *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), page three. Lois saw the presence of a Higher

Power—"a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience," according to Tradition Two—as the primary force in Al-Anon's growth and development, and thus, this is still evident today.

I remain extremely optimistic about our Al-Anon future for we continually evolve using our spiritual principle of unity within our fellowship. This unity we share, is prevalent through our links of service. The World Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon. It is the voice of world Al-Anon, and the guarantee that our world services shall continue to carry on under all conditions, thereby continually moving forward. During this week, we will act in the spirit of unity and goodwill to carry out our proceedings. "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" *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2) (P-24/27), pages 160-161.

Courage shown and displayed by our extraordinary Conference members spark a heartfelt view of our perseverance and we can collectively perceive how it defines us as we move forward, each one of us striving to do our best. Let's keep in mind that during this week we will represent our Al-Anon membership through our collaborative voices and actions. It is a great privilege, honor, and inspiring endeavor to be here, and your display of dedication, duty, commitment, and resolve will be evident as we focus on the miraculous work we will partake in. May we perceive and appreciate with gratitude, our participation at Conference as Al-Anon trusted servants and act upon the trust we have been bestowed through this privileged service. May our core principles of trust, understanding, honesty, respect, and your Higher Power be with you and guide you in all your thoughts and actions for a productive Conference. It is when passion and purpose align, that leaders are formed. You are all leaders, and we want you all to be successful.



As I tap this gavel, I am excited, grateful, and humbled to officially open the 61st World Service Conference.

WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., it is my privilege to welcome you to the 61st World Service Conference. This year's Conference theme, "Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance," is perfect considering the changes that have happened this past year, not only in Al-Anon, but in the world. This week, we will move forward and continue the conversation that was started 61 years ago.

When I think about unity, I think about working together for the greater good. I look for a balance between what I want and what is best for the common good. I ask myself, are my actions contributing to the unity or am I part of the dis-unity? Unity keeps me focused on the idea that we are all working towards the same goal of fulfilling Al-Anon's primary purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics.

Courage is one of the gifts I receive from a relationship with a Higher Power. Courage helps me to be open-minded enough to take the risks necessary to find effective solutions to problems. With courage, I can trust the process and remember that a Higher Power is in charge.

Perseverance is the ability to keep doing something in spite of obstacles. You, our Al-Anon members, showed amazing perseverance in many ways this past year. Even with all the obstacles brought on by not being able to meet face-to-face, Al-Anon groups are continuing to meet.

In 1961, Bill W. welcomed Conference members at the very first World Service Conference. He concluded his welcome with this quote, "Each one of these yearly meetings, be they dull, be they controversial, are really an insurance policy which can guarantee the future unity and the functioning of your society. You will surely look back upon this day as a great one in the annals of the Al-Anon Family Groups."

I am not expecting that this week will be dull! I will not be surprised if there is some controversy. I hope that this week will, as Bill said, "guarantee the future unity and functioning" of Al-Anon. During this 61st World Service Conference, if we rely on the greater wisdom that guides us, and work together with unity, courage, and perseverance, we will be able to make the best decisions—decisions that will shape the future of Al-Anon Family Groups.

The Chairperson concluded her welcoming remarks with a reading of the Twelve Traditions.

SEATING MOTION

After the official opening of the Conference, the first order of business was to vote on a motion brought forth by the Conference Leadership Team. It dealt with seating certain people who could provide critical information to the Conference (e.g., a Representative from another structure, and Staff members who attended).

The following persons were seated:

With voice, but no vote:

Niketa Williams

Director of Finance & Operations, Non-Al-Anon Member

Scot P.

Associate Director—Digital Strategy, Al-Anon Member

Silvia P.

International Representative—Argentina, Al-Anon Member

Helen G.

International Representative—Australia, Al-Anon Member

Mariana C.

International Representative—Ecuador, Al-Anon Member

Guy D.

International Representative—France, Al-Anon Member

Britt M.

International Representative—Germany, Al-Anon Member

Mario B.

International Representative—Italy, Al-Anon Member

Elvira M.

International Representative—Paraguay, Al-Anon Member

Debora MacD.

International Representative—Peru, Al-Anon Member

Mário C.

International Representative—Portugal, Al-Anon Member

Madelein O'B.

International Representative—South Africa, Al-Anon Member

Miriam L.

International Representative—Spain, Al-Anon Member

Trish B.

International Representative—UK & Eire, Al-Anon Member

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

Kay R.

Chairperson, ECRPM, Al-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office Staff member be seated to observe at the 2021 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Suzette McKinney

Publications Manager, Non-Al-Anon Member

The motion carried. (See WSC Motion #1, page 77)

APPROVALS

2020 Auditor's Report

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Before discussing the Auditor's Report, the Director introduced herself to the World Service Conference saying in part, "I have been with Al-Anon now for four and half years, and this will be my fifth World Service Conference. You may be aware that my position requires me not to be a member. However, I have learned so much about the program since starting. My coworkers, the Executive Director, Trustees, and you all teach me so much about this organization. Each year at Conference, I understand more and more why so many of you devote your time and energy to service. I came from a background in public accounting where I worked as an auditor for many years with a variety of nonprofits. Having the opportunity to work at Al-Anon has allowed me to pursue my goal of working for a nonprofit. I enjoy the feeling that we are helping many people find hope and recovery from the disease of alcoholism."

Independent Auditors Report

On the first page, the auditors attest their opinion about how we present and manage the financial information for the organization. We were issued an unmodified opinion which is the highest opinion that can be given. It reads, "in our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."

What is an audit?

We have an independent organization come to our location. DHG LLP have been our auditors for several years. Auditors ask questions and confirm account and investment balances. They review payroll records, check stubs, and observe our internal controls. Lastly, they conduct inquiries to ensure no fraud has occurred.

Impact of the Pandemic

Al-Anon was impacted immediately last March as many Al-Anon meeting locations closed. Many LDCs also closed. By the end of March, literature sales and contributions had decreased noticeably. In April, there was a significant drop in revenue overall. We recognized at that point that this wasn't temporary and that we needed to examine our operations for the rest of the year. We still needed to provide services—to answer the phones, provide meeting information, and assist members to find resources in this challenging time. We sent out a special appeal to the fellowship with great response. With increased contributions and a reduction in expenses, we were able to endure the year. Despite this, we still need contributions to support operations until literature sales return to normal levels. But again, we are grateful for the support.

Statement of Financial Position

Our assets increased in 2020 when compared to 2019. The area of increase was cash which reflects the increase in contributions. Accounts receivable decreased due to lack of sales to LDCs. Investments decreased due to stock market changes in 2020. There was a slight reduction in property and equipment as it is depreciated. There was a slight increase in intangible assets which reflects procurement of trademarks abroad.

Liabilities are comparable to the prior year. There was a decrease in the post-retirement health liability. That decrease is due to inflation rates that decreased significantly in 2020. New for this year is the unearned *Mobile App* income. For 2020, we had an increase in net assets of \$971,529. Our assets and net assets increased by seven percent.

Statement of Activities

Our total revenue for 2020 was \$5,892,229. Of that, contributions were 60% and literature sales were about 34%. This is the first time since 1954 that contributions have exceeded literature sales. Contributions of \$3,295,721 were the highest in the history of the organization. Magazine sales and investment income make up the rest. Literature sales and contributions make up 94% of our revenue.

The Reserve Fund is important because it provides an annual transfer to the General Fund. The reason for this is that literature sales and contributions alone would not support our work. The transfer from the Reserve fund is needed in order to balance the budget each year.

Functional Expenses

Services for the program and literature distribution make up 71% of our total expenses. General and administrative expenses are 29%.

Program Services are the areas that directly support the Al-Anon program. Program Services register new groups, prepare the WSC, maintain our website, work with our international community, and prepare our Conference Approved Literature. Literature Distribution receives and processes orders and contributions and ships the literature. Our Publications Team designs *The Forum* and CAL and publishes our literature.

General Administration supports the program itself, and includes Finance & Operations, IT, Legal, and Events/Projects, and Administrative functions.

Notes to the Financial Statements

Footnotes are provided to give additional information to help the reader understand the statements better. Most are required by accounting standards, and most are consistent from year to year. In 2020 there are some additional notes, including a required statement on COVID-19.

Summary

In 2020, increased contributions helped to sustain our services. Even with cuts to expenses, we were able to launch the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* and upgrade our website. The translation backlog was reduced.

Following the report, many Conference members commented that this was an excellent report.

Questions asked included:

- What is unearned *Mobile App* income?
This is the prorated amount of content that has not been delivered from the yearly subscriptions.
- How many years have we received an unmodified opinion?
The organization has received an unmodified opinion since 2016. Prior to that, we are not aware of any time the organization received a modified opinion.
- Why do we have a line that says "donor restrictions" since we don't earmark donations?
This is needed in order to show that we don't have funds with donor restrictions.
- The Reserve Fund is down over 100K last year. Is this a trend?
The Reserve Fund is sensitive to market conditions as well as income and withdrawals. The Reserve Fund earned \$400,000 for the year; it is not a trend.
- Is the figure "Investment Expenses" payment to advisors?
Yes, that is the amount paid to our investment advisors.
- What do you mean when you refer to our investors following our standards for investing? How is that defined/what does that mean? And can you cover how having investment accountants fall into our Traditions?

The Board of Trustees adopted a formal Investment Philosophy in 2009 which the Finance Committee reviews and affirms each September. This Philosophy is shared with our investment brokers. On behalf of the Board, the Finance Committee confirms adherence to the Philosophy through its semi-annual review meeting with our investment brokers.

- What does “other” refer to in income?

The “other” category in contributions refers to contributions received from AISs, LDCs, and GSOs.

A motion to approve the 2020 Audited Financial Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #2 on page 77.

2021 Finance Committee Report

Cindy M., Trustee, Treasurer

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

The Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Treasurer opened the session: “My name is Cindy M., and I am a grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon, which includes Alateen! I was elected as the Southwest Regional Trustee, and I am also serving as the Board Treasurer. As the Treasurer of the Board, I am the Chair of the Finance Committee, which meets monthly. The Finance Committee also consists of the Chairperson of the Board, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, the Executive Director, and a Volunteer member of the Board, or the Executive Committee, who is appointed by the Chairperson of the Board. This is currently the Chairperson of the Policy Committee. The Director of Finance & Operations is an ex officio member, which means attends with voice but no vote.

“The primary function of the Finance Committee is to see that our World Service Office (WSO) operation remains financially sound, and always aligns the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program (from the Finance Committee statement of purpose).

“The Director of Finance & Operations has already briefed you on the 2020 Audit Report which highlighted our 2020 finances. On behalf of the Finance Committee, I want to add our sincere thanks to the fellowship for its extremely generous giving in such a challenging year! Every member, group, District, AIS/LDC, Area, and international structure that contributed to the WSO are the reason we were able to continue to provide services to our fellowship.

“Shortly, the Director of Finance & Operations will present the 2021 Budget for you to review and for you to raise questions for clarity, if needed. The Budget process begins in the fall when the Staff at the WSO begins to gather preliminary numbers. Then we spend a majority of time at the December Finance Committee meeting reviewing the details of the preliminary Budget. Due to the pandemic, historical trends were not useful this year. Projections were made based on current information and assumptions.

The Finance Committee approved moving the preliminary Budget forward for the Board to review and approve at the January Board Meeting. Then a memo was put out to the Conference members to allow for questions prior to Conference. After the Budget is presented here today, we will not be holding breakout sessions as we have in past years. Instead, after Conference, the Director of Finance & Operations and I will be holding three different training sessions that will be optional for Conference members to attend. All three sessions will cover the same material, so attending only one is necessary. You should have received the information about these sessions

on AFG Connects. We look forward to supporting you as you pull together the Finance portion of your Delegate’s report.

“As Warranty One states, ‘Sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.’ To me, this means we think abundantly, but use our resources wisely! As we Move Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance, I know that our fellowship will continue to support our goal of being there for those who have not yet found us!”

Presentation of the 2021 Budget

The Budget presentation, questions and answers, and the Budget itself had been posted to AFG Connects prior to the Conference, so that all members would have the chance to become familiar with it before the Conference presentation. The Director began with, “We are going to review the 2021 Operating Budget. First, I want to give you some background on the Budget process, how it is approved, and then discuss the elements of the Budget.

“I want to note that this Budget was different than the past years’ Budgets. We have a certain level of uncertainty when trying to project what will happen in 2021. There is simply no way to predict what will happen. But we are hopeful that our conditions will improve.

“We begin working on the Budget in October each year. The Budget isn’t just prepared by me but all of the stakeholders in the Budget contribute. The Programs Department has different areas that review their role in the Budget process. They review their routine costs as well as their projects for the year.

“The two other major contributors to the Budget are Finance & Operations and Administration. Again, each Department reviews their projects and routine costs. We establish timelines to allow for each step, review, and discussion. We formulate the Budget internally and then present it to the Finance Committee for their review. We make any suggested changes prior to presenting it to the Board of Trustees in January. The Budget is presented to WSC members for review in April. During the year, the Budget to actual is reviewed during Finance Committee meetings and if needed, a Revised Budget is presented in the July Board Meeting. Most important is the oversight that is provided for the Budget. The Budget is constantly reviewed during the year. Any variances are explained and accounted for.

“Each year we have Budget considerations. This year was particularly challenging. We really had to prioritize program and organizational financial goals. We prioritize Strategic Plan Goals based on the direction provided from the Board of Trustees. We review current year income and expenses and compare to current Budget. We analyze variances and discuss what happened during the year. We develop a draft Budget – we determine costs (expenses) needed to reach organizational, program, and Strategic Goals. We also project income based on current revenue activities and any new activities.”

Presentation of the 2021 Operating Budget

The Director began by saying, “The Budget presented today is a deficit budget. Our projected revenues collected will be less than our operating expenses. We prepared the Budget with the projected revenue to maintain operations. Contributions are projected to be the largest source of revenue for the first half of the year. We do have some projects planned such as the electronic *Welcome Newcomer!* pamphlet and the launch of the redesigned online store—for the first time, we will be offering French and Spanish literature online. We reduced expenses where costs were flexible, such as no travel until the second half of the year. We have some fixed costs that are consistent each year and you will see increased printing and postage due to *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* being sold year-round.”

Estimated Revenue

"Net Literature sales are projected to be \$2,435,900 which is slightly higher than 2020 by 5%. Again, we are hopeful that sales will increase in the latter half of the year. In 2021, literature sales are still projected to be lower than historical levels due to LDC closures.

"Contributions are projected to be \$2,445,000 for 2021 which is significantly lower than 2020 actuals. We recognize that we need contributions to help us sustain operations. 2020 was a great year, but we are not expecting to repeat it at such a high level. In 2020, contributions exceeded the Revised Budget by \$850,720. We had two excellent months of impressive contributions. We must continue to communicate the need to the fellowship, that we need funding still.

"In order to fund specific projects, and in line with their role, the Board of Trustees approves transfers from the Reserve Fund to the General Fund for specific things. Approvals include the standing 4% transfer for operations as well as funding for Strategic Plan Initiatives."

Projected Expenses

"Let's take a look at some of the projects for 2021. We are planning to launch the trilingual online store. We also plan to conduct the 2021 Membership Survey. An updated *Service Manual* is being developed this year. And lastly there are Zonal meetings scheduled in the second half of the year. We constantly review expenses and make reductions wherever possible.

"Labor costs are a large part of our total operating expenses. Those elements are salaries, payroll taxes, and employee benefits such as health, life insurance, and pension contributions.

"For 2021, we are budgeting to fill open positions and become fully staffed during the year. We are excited to have our new Magazine Editor and Group Services Specialist onboard. The Budget includes planned merit and cost of living increases. Our salaries and benefits continue to be consistent with nonprofit industry standards.

"Building Occupancy relates to costs to maintain the building. There is a slight increase as there are some specific repairs that will be performed in 2021. Expenses here also include depreciation on the building, insurance, and utilities. Packing and shipping is consistent with 2020 actual. As a result of the increased mailings and postage costs, you will see an increase in postage as we send out updates that were on hold in 2020. Telephone and internet are fixed costs. We do not anticipate changes in stationery and supplies.

"Office services & expenses: this includes our *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*, computer/technology/ accounting software, and website maintenance costs. Repairs and maintenance are consistent with 2020. Legal and audit costs are consistent with the prior year. Conference costs are for the virtual Conference and interpretation.

"Travel and meetings include both Board and Staff travel. All travel is planned for the second half of the year. We have two Zonal meetings planned for September and October. Naturally, all precautions will be taken before traveling to ensure it is safe for Al-Anon employees to travel. The Volunteers also travel for the organization. The Road Trip! is planned for October in Cleveland, OH. In person committee meetings are budgeted to resume in September.

"Under printing costs, we are printing *The Forum* and *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine along with the newsletters *Alateen Talk*, *Le lien*, and *en acción*. We have two PSA campaigns running over multiple years and they will also run on digital TV which plays in doctors' offices. Bank and credit card fees are necessary business costs and fluctuate based on our revenues.

"Miscellaneous costs include costs related to taxes, incidental office expenses, and costs related to employment advertising. We see no significant changes in post-retirement health benefits. Lastly, our depreciation and amortization reflect changes related to the required depreciation of our assets and intangibles.

"We have several Strategies that have a budget impact. Under the Public Goal, we are investing in targeted campaigns on LinkedIn that can reach mental health and addiction professionals. The estimated cost for this program is \$12,000.

"We are anticipating a deficit budget for 2021. We have estimated revenue to be \$5,390,000, slightly lower than 2020 actual, and expenses to be \$5,465,000, which is higher than 2020 actuals. The budgeted deficit is \$73,780.

"We will still need contributions to maintain operations. Literature sales through the first three months of the year have been below historical levels. Staffing is important as most of our projects and services require labor resources. We will adjust the Budget in July as needed."

Questions and comments included:

- Why don't we see the Revised Budget between Conferences?
Normal practice has been not to publish the Revised Budget because changes are usually very small and operational in nature and so we followed the same practice last year. In hindsight though, 2020 has been an anomaly in many ways, including finances, and we should have published the Revised Budget as an exception.
Moving forward the Finance Committee will consider publication of a Revised Budget that demonstrates changes that are beyond small and operational in nature.
- Regarding credit card fees, some giving platforms pay the fees. I'm wondering if this would be feasible for AFG.
This would be a discussion for the Finance Committee.
- Could you explain post-retirement benefits?
These are costs for medical insurance that we pay for retirees. We are currently not enrolling new participants.
- In an electronic age, why are postage costs going up?
We continue to try to find new ways to communicate, but don't always have emails. This expense includes postage costs to mail The Forum.
- What is the best way to submit cost-saving ideas to you?
Send them via email to the WSO, Attention: Treasurer.
- In the Strategic Plan initiative, LinkedIn ads are mentioned. Is this a Public Outreach effort?
Yes, this is a Strategy in the Strategic Plan. Public Outreach was one of the priorities, increasing visibility to professionals.

Following the discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the 2021 Finance Committee Report. See Motion #8, page 78.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC. 2021 BUDGET

	2021 Budget	2020 Actual
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>		
Literature Sales less cost of printing	1,924,400	1,846,492
Contributions	2,882,110	3,295,720
Magazine sales	295,000	291,963
Subscription income	38,400	4,662
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	251,600	38,633
Total Estimated Revenue	5,391,510	5,477,470
<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Salaries	3,292,220	2,977,188
Payroll Taxes	246,770	215,355
Employee Benefits	453,390	428,355
Total Labor Costs	3,992,380	3,620,898
Building Occupancy	278,500	272,702
Packing & Shipping (Net)	(45,000)	(46,412)
Postage	186,050	157,665
Telephone (Phone & Internet)	51,100	50,442
Stationery & Office Supplies	51,900	43,880
Office Services & Expenses	270,000	236,449
Repairs & Maintenance	13,070	11,709
Travel & Meetings	102,090	25,991
Direct Conference Costs (Net)	9,750	8,616
Conference Interpretation	11,250	5,000
Legal & Audit	71,800	76,970
Printing	148,600	167,508
Canadian Office	1,820	1,780
General services meeting	-	-
In-Office Volunteers	100	10
Membership Survey	1,000	-
PSA Campaign	91,000	103,097
Bank and Credit Card Fees	117,000	112,237
Miscellaneous	11,880	7,549
Postretirement Health Benefits	65,000	69,690
Total Operating Expense	5,429,290	4,925,781
Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)	36,000	42,500
Total Expense	5,465,290	4,968,281
Net increase (decrease) from Operations	(73,780)	509,189

2020 Annual Report

The Annual Report was posted to AFG Connects prior to the Conference. The Report includes updates from all WSO Departments as well as Board committees. After review, Conference members were invited to submit any questions to be sure they were clear on the material before arriving at Conference. All questions and answers were compiled and posted for all Conference members.

Updates are provided at the Conference to give members additional information on the work of the Board and Staff for the first three months of 2021.

Board of Trustees

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

In the Strategic Planning Process, the Board of Trustees is responsible for the “what” of the Strategic Plan. This means the Board is responsible for deciding on the direction for AFG, Inc. The WSO Staff is responsible for the “how” of the Strategic Plan. This means Staff is responsible for developing Strategies and the action plans for those Strategies.

At the October 2020 Board meeting, the Board of Trustees approved three new Strategies for 2021. Two of the Strategies are associated with Goal: Public which says, “Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.” The first Goal: Public Strategy is to create a public outreach virtual meeting on wheels and the second Goal: Public Strategy is to commit targeted spending in LinkedIn advertising to raise awareness for which the Board approved a \$12,000 transfer from the Reserve Fund. The third new Strategy is associated with Goal: Organization, which says, “AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.” The Goal: Organization Strategy is to evaluate barriers to the international structures attending WSC.

Along with these three new Strategies for 2021, WSO Staff are also working on the following carryover Strategies from 2020 which are:

- Goal: Members—Upgrading the Online Store
- Goal: Members—*Mobile App*—Premium Content
- Goal: Members—*Mobile App*—Alateen Feasibility Evaluation
- Goal: Members—Update and Translate Guidelines
- Goal: Organization—Improve CAL Availability Globally

Stay tuned for more information regarding the progress of these Strategies!

At the January 2021 Board meeting, the Board prioritized Strategic Plan Objectives for 2022. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) is now working diligently so they can present information at the July 2021 Board meeting to help Trustees prioritize and select the Strategies which we believe will most effectively progress the Goals and Envisioned Future of the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan. After the July 2021 Board meeting, SLT will take the prioritized Strategies and identify detailed resources, such as Staff capacity, implementation time, and cost. This additional information will be brought to the October 2021 Board meeting when we will approve the 2022 Strategies.

The Board of Trustees has the primary responsibility for making sure the Strategic Plan moves forward. To help Board members with this responsibility, the Executive Committee has been given oversight responsibilities and approves monthly Strategic Plan updates between Board meetings. In addition, Board members receive a weekly Directors’ Report which contain Strategic Plan updates and milestone achievements. The Board and Executive Committee

members all have access to the 2021 Strategies portfolio which is in the Asana project management software used at the WSO. In the portfolio Board and Executive Committee members can see in “real time” the progress of each Strategy. As you can see the Strategic Planning Process is happening year-round!

At the April 2021 Quarterly Board Meeting, the Board of Trustees approved a trial through November 2021 to present the COB Letter to the Delegates in a virtual format, similar to the Town Hall events, with interpretation provided as needed.

The presentation will be an hour-long and will involve all Trustees. The agenda will consist of:

- 15 minutes – COB Letter updates
- 10 minutes – Policy update
- 10 minutes – CLT update
- 10 minutes – Finance update
- 15 minutes – Questions and Answers

The presentations will take place on:

- May 1, 2021
- August 7, 2021
- November 6, 2021

(Time of sessions to be determined.)

Don’t worry if those dates don’t work with your schedule. The sessions will be recorded and made available only to WSC members via AFG Connects.

Following the May 1, 2021 presentation there will be breakout rooms available for the purpose of a “meet and greet” so Delegates can have the opportunity to make contact with their newly assigned Trustee.

Administration & Digital Communications

Vali F., Executive Director

I have the privilege of serving as Executive Director (ED) for the World Service Office (WSO) and Sustaining Trustee on the Board. As a leader, I consider my primary role at the WSO to be inspiring others to thoughtful, generous action. With that in mind, I am excited to announce I personally have few updates to share with you. Instead, you will hear from Staff Conference members who are all active contributors to WSO leadership.

This shift reflects the WSO Directors Team’s ongoing commitment to delegating responsibility and decision-making authority across the organization, as envisioned by Concepts One, Two, and Three. Today at the WSO, the Strategic Leadership Team, Staff Management Team, and Staff Policy Implementation Round Table, aka SPIRiT, are empowered to collaborate together and between Teams to:

- Define and execute Strategies to achieve the AFG, Inc.’s Envisioned Future
- Expand our leadership skills so we can engage and support our hardworking WSO Staff
- Navigate the nuances of Al-Anon Policy to support our service arms, groups, and members.

All while recognizing the primary administrative responsibility and legal rights of the Board.

In 2021, I have continued to focus my attention on understanding how the organization is evolving so we can recruit and retain the

talented professionals necessary to meet AFG, Inc.'s needs. Toward that goal, we have:

- Begun the hiring process to fill the Director of Programs role in advance of Marsha W. retiring after the 2022 WSC. We received many qualified résumés and look forward to announcing the successful candidate in July.
- Recognized the need to clarify the name of the Digital Strategy Team and its leader. Scot's role has been retitled Associate Director—Brand Communications to reflect industry-standards for this work and to distinguish his responsibilities from those of our talented IT Team. The Team has been renamed to Digital Communications.
- Incorporated new responsibilities into several roles to provide opportunities for existing employees to utilize their unique skills.

We are working on hiring the Public Outreach Professionals position. Once finalized, we will post the position for an Al-Anon member with relevant professional experience.

Administration

Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies

I oversee a variety of functions that fall under the Administration umbrella: Human Resources, Legal, Event Planning, Technology Training, and the Toll-Free Meeting Line. I am also responsible for facilitating the annual strategy development process. In addition to my Staff role, I serve as a voting member of the Administrative Staff on the Executive Committee. Below I am excited to share with you the hallmarks of my team's early 2021 efforts!

We partnered with the Conference Leadership Team to develop a logistics plan to support this 2021 virtual World Service Conference and secured simultaneous translation. We finalized a contract to host 2022 WSC in New York—fingers crossed! Invites for the Al-Anon 70th Anniversary celebration (July 10 via Zoom) have been distributed and registration is open. It is our hope that the virtual format will attract a diverse audience that is representative of Al-Anon's worldwide fellowship.

The Strategic Leadership Team kicked off project work on the 2021 Strategies; and a roadmap for 2022 Strategy development was presented to the Board.

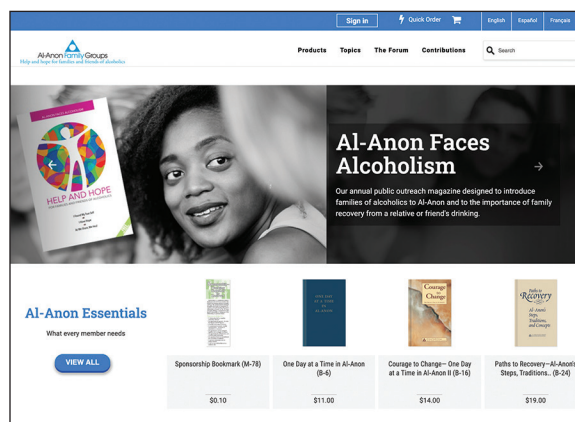
We continued in our efforts to protect Al-Anon's name by forming a new Staff team, Tackling Uniform Legal Implementation of Policy Squad (TULIPS). TULIPS was created in response to the evolving nature of trademark and copyright violations, particularly in the area of sharing and posting digital meeting resources. A non-member website acted on our request to remove copyrighted Conference Approved Literature from its pages.

Our multilingual meeting-line operators captured data on the types of calls they receive so we can look at opportunities to improve the newcomer experience of finding meeting information on al-anon.org.

We returned to full Staff early this year thanks to generous contributions from the fellowship in 2020. Momentum on the hiring front, permitted us to reintroduce our New Hire Orientation program. Significant edits were made to all 45 unique WSO job descriptions. We brought back Anniversary luncheons to recognize and celebrate Staff service milestones.

Big changes were made to the way we evaluate and communicate our employees' performance so that it is reflective of the WSO's unique culture. We rolled out the updates to Staff, emphasizing the connection between individual employee performance and the

success of the entire WSO team. An important component of our Performance Evaluation Process is a new set of WSO Values.



Finance & Operations

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

I oversee several teams that provide support to the rest of the organization and the fellowship. My Department consists of Accounting, Customer Service, Shipping, Publications, Translation, Information Technology, and Building Operations. We have 19 people working in these different teams. We like to think of ourselves as “behind the scenes.” Immediately, you hear “finance” and just think of the financial numbers or data; however, you may have called and spoken with someone in Customer Service to check on your contribution or received your Conference Approved Literature (CAL) that was shipped by our Shipping Team. Most of you should have accessed AFG Connects to receive messages and documents regarding this year's World Service Conference—our IT Team keeps AFG Connects operational. While the Programs Department is charged with creating and executing the services that give voice to recovery, we are responsible for ensuring they have the tools and infrastructure needed to do so. We are constantly finding ways to streamline operations and increase efficiencies throughout the organization.

In addition to my role as the Director, I serve on the Finance Committee, Pension Committee, Audit Committee, and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM).

Since the Annual Report, our Department continues to strive to execute and facilitate the day-to-day operations and understand the changing needs of the organization.

While our Teams have been working on numerous projects since January, I wanted to share one of the projects that we have been working so hard on. I am excited to report that we are nearing completion of the upgrade to our online store. The new store has a more user-friendly format, is mobile ready, and most importantly, is available in all three languages. I am going to show you a sneak peak of the site. The site will be ready in mid-May. First you will notice that the site has a similar look and feel of our website at al-anon.org. The colors are more vibrant, with larger text, and easy-to-follow instructions. The site is mobile friendly so you can order from phone, tablet, or another mobile device. We will feature different books and promotions throughout the year. You will see in products we have created product categories that you will find helpful such as group supplies and digital products. From the landing page, we also have topics. We created topics that a member might find useful if they are new to Al-Anon or a parent or grandparent or someone wanting to know more about our history. On the main page, those topics also appear—Al-Anon Essentials—literature that every member needs as well as newcomers. You can find books and

pamphlets easily and quickly. At the top, you also have the option for a quick order—if you know the product code and the quantity, you can enter and check out right away. Then you can click to order in Spanish, and you can click to order in French. We are now in the user testing phase and working through the technical features to ensure everything is working properly once we launch it. We hope you will visit the site and spread the word to your Spanish and French members.

We want to thank you sincerely and humbly for allowing us to serve you.

Digital Communications

Scot P., Associate Director—Brand Communications

At the end of 2020, al-anon.org started experiencing some strange behavior; the website would crash each night at around 11:15 pm Eastern time. Initially, we thought it was an isolated incident, but after it happened two nights in a row, we began watching for the issue the third night and it occurred again. This began a three-month period of trial and error for our Webmaster Bob, who had to monitor the website each night and run a manual update after each crash to ensure minimal downtime. During this process, we explored many ideas—all of which improved the website even though they did not fix the issue at hand. Finally, we removed a file that had grown too big and was causing the nightly backup to fail. Today, the website is much faster and provides a better user experience.

Our site search capabilities on al-anon.org were improved to include PDFs in our search results. Now website users searching for specific terms receive results not only of website pages but also references to PDFs such as the *World Service Conference Summaries*.

We are pleased to announce the roll-out of new Public Outreach Posters—now available in all three languages—on the Public Outreach page of al-anon.org.

The WSO Calendar “Add Event” has been updated to allow members to include virtual addresses, such as Zoom links or conference call numbers, in addition to physical addresses of venues.

Last year we had a record-setting number of website sessions on al-anon.org. 2021 is off to a great start with 5.6% more sessions than we had this time last year.

The *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* is now an ongoing project with approximately 40,000 users and over 55 meetings taking place each week, including the seven former Alateen Chat meetings. WSO Staff has prioritized several new *Mobile App* suggestions which are currently in development.



We began conducting subject line tests for *In the Loop*. And while our open rates continue to exceed industry standards, we have approximately 28% of group CMAs that have not opened an issue of *In the Loop* in the previous three months.

In February, we had a “children of alcoholics” messaging campaign on social media, because of Children of Alcoholics week. Comments and direct messages received by potential newcomers informed us that our messages are being seen and are resonating with Adult Children and spouses of alcoholics concerned about their children.

Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs

As the Director of the Programs Department, I am also a Conference member; a member of the Policy Committee; International Coordination Committee; the Conference Leadership Team (CLT); and currently, the Staff appointee for the Policy Committee Sub-Committee (PCSC). Programs Department members conduct their day-to-day work within their respective roles covering a variety of services to support the fellowship:

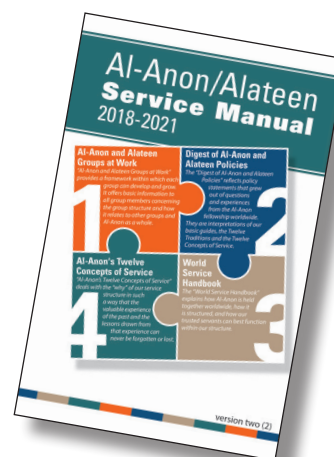
- AFG Records
- Archives
- Conference
- Group Services
- International
- Literature
- Public Outreach to Professionals

Due to the pandemic, we have not had the opportunity to travel to any Area or international structure this year. However, Staff, when invited, continues to participate in Area virtual events.

Conference

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

As the Associate Director—Conference, I am responsible for communicating with Delegates, Area Chairs, District Representatives, and past Conference members in addition to the year-round planning and implementation that takes place in relation to the World Service Conference (WSC). I am a member of the Conference Leadership Team, the Policy Committee, the Staff Management Team, the Staff Policy Implementation Round Table Meeting, and the Tackling Uniform Legal Implementation of Policy Squad. I oversee the full cyclical update process of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), and I am involved in planning International Conventions.



I am thrilled to report that a Task Force comprised entirely of past Delegates is in the midst of fulfilling its charge to review, reflect, and recommend changes to the *Service Manual* Index. As frequent long-time users of the Index, tapping into these past Delegates' experience with using the *Service Manual* will benefit the Al-Anon members who use and study the *Manual*. The important work of these past Delegates will be incorporated into the 2022-2025 edition of the *Manual*.

Although not a member of the Strategic Leadership Team, I am involved, directly or indirectly—as are all of us at the WSO—in some of the Strategies in the works that support the Board’s Strategic Plan. As it relates to the trusted servants with whom I correspond and the areas of my position, I have updated numerous Al-Anon Guidelines that will be translated and/or updated in French and Spanish; and I am involved in a project to develop a process for procuring, reviewing, and publishing premium content for the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*. Both projects support Goal: Members—AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism. Regarding Goal: Organization—AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program, I am a member of the project team evaluating barriers to international structures attending WSC.

These are very exciting times at the World Service Office!

Group Services

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

As the Associate Director—Group Services, I want to share with you how inspired we have been this past year with how our members have not allowed a pandemic to divert us from our primary responsibility of making sure newcomers are able to find help and hope as a result from someone else’s drinking! Group Services oversees activities related to Al-Anon and Alateen including meetings and members, approval of revised Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, the Inmate Correspondence Service, the *Alateen Talk* newsletter, and lastly, we bring the voice of electronic meetings to the WSC.



2020 was a challenging year creating a steep learning curve for all—Group Services was no exception. These are the highlights of our activity so far in 2021:

- In January, Anne P. joined us as our new Group Services Specialist. Anne joins us from Pennsylvania where she previously served as a District Representative and Area Group Records Coordinator.
- For many years, phone and online meetings were not able to welcome newcomers with basic information about Al-Anon. After many discussions between the WSO and the electronic meeting CMAs, the English “Welcome Newcomer” email was launched in March 2020. As meetings began temporarily moving online due to the pandemic, the “Welcome Newcomer” email was shared more broadly. The email has been a tremendous success—with more than 10,000 emails requested to date. The “Welcome Newcomer” email is being translated into Spanish and French. Once available, we will alert the fellowship.
- Electronic Meeting registrations continue to grow. As of March 31, 2021, we had a total of 700 registered meetings—that’s 44 new meetings since January 1. There are:
 - 170 phone meetings (for a total of 212 meetings) and 279 online meetings (for a total of 488 meetings) taking place in a variety of languages. Most recently added languages include Turkish and American Sign Language.

- The number of meeting platforms has grown from 10 platforms last year to 16 platforms this year! Group Services Staff continue to conduct bi-monthly business meetings with both the phone and online meeting CMAs. Our discussions focus on supporting the understanding of the service structure and how, if the WSC approves the Electronic Meeting Work Group recommendations, the landscape will change. These CMAs are eagerly awaiting your support and are ready to take the next steps to create a non-panel Area!

- Al-Anon and Alateen meetings taking place in the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* are growing. Group Services continues to offer support to Areas holding Alateen meetings in the App. AMIAS supporting App meetings meet monthly to share experience, strength, and hope as well as best practices and shortcuts to keep meetings healthy and welcoming to teens.
- We are happy to report that the first Area to successfully complete their Area Alateen Recertification was Vermont on March 18! To date there are 40 Areas that have started the process and 5 Areas are complete. You’ll hear more about the revised communication plan for the Area Alateen Recertification process from Kerri who oversees the AFG Records Team.
- Local AISs and Area Group Record Coordinators have engaged in unforeseen service responsibilities. As Staff members, we relied on you to keep meeting information updated. Trusted servants rose to the occasion and created processes for displaying temporary meeting information for Al-Anon and Alateen groups. Despite the pandemic, no one stood still! Districts and Areas created online meeting accounts. You hosted virtual AWSCs, Assemblies, workshops, and conventions. Through it all, we were able to focus on our principles and work every word of the Legacies. We learned so much from you!

We want to thank you sincerely and humbly for allowing us the privilege to join you on this journey.

International

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

I’m responsible for communicating with and supporting 39 General Service Offices, 16 evolving structures, and local meeting contacts in 73 other countries where Al-Anon has a presence. I am the Staff liaison to the International Coordination Committee. I am also responsible for oversight of the AFG Records team. This team processes group registrations and changes, updates contact information in the WSO database for members in service roles, and provides training and support to AAPPs and AGRCs.

AFG Records

2021 Online Annual Alateen Recertification – In the first half of every year, a significant amount of work is invested in starting, supporting, and completing the Annual Alateen Recertification Process. This year we worked closely with our associates in Group Services to refine roles and responsibilities of our combined team and to improve communication with all trusted servants involved in the process. This includes Area Alateen Process Persons, Alateen Coordinators, District Representatives, and Delegates.

A particular emphasis this year is ensuring that updates to all Alateen groups are included throughout the recertification process and not at the end, as they have sometimes been in the past. We are seeking to strongly support the Policy that states that “to continue use of the Alateen name, each Alateen group must participate in the Area’s annual recertification process” [page 95, 2018-2021 *Al-Anon/*

Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) version two (2)]. The recertification “window” opened for Areas on January 13 and will close June 15.

Support of Area Meeting List Publishing Policies – In 2018, a vote of the Board of Trustees directed the WSO to support the decisions of Areas to unpublish groups provided that the Area had first developed a fair and balanced meeting list publishing policy. In accordance with this direction, the WSO has worked to develop a process to store supported Area policies, receive and direct correspondence about unpublished groups, track the status of such groups as they go through the process of becoming unpublished or re-published, and to organize and document related communication with Area trusted servants. This process was brought to full implementation in February of this year.

International

Zonal Meetings – Both the European and IberoAmerican Zonal Meetings made decisions to move from in-person to online events this year. The European structures plan to use a combination of AFG Connects and video conference. The IberoAmerican ones will only have a video conference. WSO Staff plan to participate in both meetings.

Literature

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

As the Associate Director—Literature, I am the Staff Liaison to the Literature Committee, the Area Literature Coordinators, and Area Newsletter Editors. When the Conference gives conceptual approval for new pieces of literature or revisions to existing pieces, I orchestrate the process for developing Conference Approved Literature (CAL) with the Literature Committee, freelance writers who are Al-Anon members, and all others involved. When the process is done, I let the fellowship know. I also review all reprint permission requests, am part of the monthly review process for *The Forum*, and answer all correspondence about CAL.

NEW DAILY READER (working title): As this year began, the Writer/Editor continued reviewing all comments received from the Literature Committee about the first draft manuscript. A near-final draft was sent to the Committee for CAL approval. We hope that once the book undergoes the rest of the CAL process, it will be introduced at the Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico in July 2023. Our goal is to provide a helpful source of recovery to all Al-Anon members for years to come.

The Forum magazine: After filling in as an interim Editor since last May, I am happy to report that the position of Magazine Editor has been filled by Carol C., an Al-Anon member who began training on March 1. I extend much gratitude to all Staff members who stepped in to help keep the magazine moving in a smooth manner, especially Kerri K. and Suzanne M. for the extra help they gave. Many thanks also go to the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) for their tireless help in reviewing all sharings received from the fellowship. The FEAC has recently recommended condensing *The Forum*’s Statement of Purpose to be less wordy, and to expand the topic of the “Instant Meeting” department beyond the Step of the month.



Le Lien and en acción magazines: The transition of coordinating the Legacy sharings in French and Spanish to match the months in which members receive them has been completed.

2022 Calendar Quotations: For the last ten years, the WSO has provided CAL quotations for use by service arms in fundraising calendars without seeking written permission. In March the WSO posted 20 quotations for use in 2022 calendars on the Announcements community of AFG Connects.

Before the floor was opened for questions and comments, the Executive Director announced that *Welcome, Newcomer!* (eK-10) has been reformatted and streamlined to reflect its new life as an electronic recovery tool. The new eK-10 guides newcomers in finding meetings, understanding Al-Anon and how it can help families and friends, learning about alcoholism, and discovering program tools and Conference Approved Literature. *Welcome, Newcomer!* will be available from eBook vendors in May, with most at \$1.40 per copy.

The Executive Director then ended the Annual Report Updates by thanking “the entire WSO Staff team who, throughout 2020, demonstrated incredible grace, generosity, and commitment to ensuring the families and friends of alcoholics continued to have access to this incredible program.”

Conference members had the following comments and questions:

- This is a great time to celebrate the accomplishments of the Staff.
- Will the new online store offer any new material in electronic format?

What is new initially is the availability of Spanish and French literature.

- Will the electronic newcomer packet look the same as the printed version?

The electronic version has been streamlined with a new cover. The next printing will match the electronic version.

- Does the new daily reader have a title?
The title is not set, the working title is NEW DAILY READER

- How many pages are in eK-10?
This will depend on the device being used.

- Love the new online store. Will it be a stand-alone site, or attached to WSO site?

As it is currently, the online store is accessed through the WSO website.

- Will the electronic newcomer welcome packet be able to be sold in bulk?

Unfortunately, the eBook vendors currently do not allow us to sell Welcome, Newcomer! in bulk. More information about individual gifting will be provided in the formal announcement.

- Can you help me understand better the chart on page five in the Annual Report about cost of services spent by WSO to support WSC groups. (Per group). How are those figures calculated?

The cost per group is determined by dividing the estimated cost of WSO services to the groups by the number of U.S. and Canadian groups. The “Number of U.S. & Canadian Groups” value we are using is the latest number of registered groups figures we have, as Staff were not able to accurately update these groups figures in 2020 due to the pandemic. For the pie chart, the \$263 is allocated across the WSO Departments providing direct services to the fellowship.

Numerous Delegates gave kudos to the Staff for their hard work and accomplishments.

A motion to approve the 2020 Annual Report was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion #9, page 78. The complete report can be found on pages 79-120.

2021 OUT-OF-REGION SELECTION FOR REGIONAL COMMITTEES ON TRUSTEES

Teri M., Trustee, Regional Committee on
Trustees Selection Work Group Chairperson

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 Work Group Chairperson explained the process for selecting the Out-of-Region Delegates. She noted that each RCT would meet the following day to elect the RCT Chairperson and Alternate.

The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE(S)
US Southeast	Lori H., Panel 60, MO Robin P., Panel 60, NV Linette L., Panel 60, AK	Susan B., Panel 59, WIUPMI Kathy D., Panel 59, WA
US Northwest	Sharon F., Panel 59, AB/ NWT Diane B., Panel 61, FL(S) Helene A., Panel 61, QC(W)	DeLynn H., Panel 60, AR Katy P., Panel 60, IA
Canada West	Fred H., Panel 59, MN(N)	Katie W., Panel 59, OR
US North Central	Sheri S., Panel 59, ND Bill H., Panel 60, ON(N) Anu B., Panel 59, NC/ BDA	Margaret R., Panel 60, NE Carol S., Panel 59, MT
US Northeast	Jennifer M., Panel 59, MS Melissa F., Panel 59, WV Maureen H., Panel 61, IN	Terry R., Panel 61, KS Kristine G., Panel 61, MI

RCT Caucus

Each RCT caucused via web conferencing to select a Chairperson (from the Region's Delegates) who was willing to serve and perform the duties within the designated time. An Alternate (from the Region's Delegates) was also selected who will assume the duties of the RCT Chairperson, if he or she cannot fulfill his or her duties as required.

The Chairpersons and Alternates for this year's RCTs are:

REGION	CHAIRPERSON	ALTERNATE
US Southeast	Linda C., Panel 61, KY	Bob C., Panel 60, SC
US Northwest	Sheri S., Panel 59, ND	Carol S., Panel 59, MT
US North Central	Katy P., Panel 60, IA	Maureen H., Panel 61, IN
US Northeast	Donna S., Panel 59, NJ	Irene T., Panel 59, MA
Canada West	Sharon F., Panel 59, AB/ NWT	Lynn B., Panel 59, BC/ YK

After the five Regions caucused, the Regional Committee on Trustees Selection Work Group Chairperson said that since 2010, the process of selecting Out-of-Region Delegates and Alternates, as well as caucusing to elect the Regional Committee on Trustees Chairpersons and Alternates, has taken place in the General Session at the World Service Conference (WSC). She went on to note that during the 2019 WSC Mega Issue discussion, “Hybrid Conference,” several Conference members suggested that the RCT election process could be held in a virtual format.

Following a brief discussion, the Conference voted in favor of the Regional Committee on Trustees Selection Work Group's proposed motion: To allow the election of the RCT Chairperson, Alternate Chairperson and the names drawn for Out-of-Region Delegates (including alternates) to occur outside the general session and prior to the WSC. See Motion #14 on page 78.



70TH ANNIVERSARY VIRTUAL EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies

In 1951, Lois W. and Anne B. received a list of 87 nonalcoholic individuals or family groups that had requested registration with Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). Their first service project was to write to these individuals and groups. In May 1951, they sent a questionnaire with the intention of unifying the family groups. This questionnaire led to selecting the Al-Anon Family Groups name, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Since our World Service Office relocated from New York City to Virginia Beach in 1996, Al-Anon and Alateen members, Staff, Volunteers, and A.A. friends have paused every five years to observe and celebrate Al-Anon's founding and its growth. And 2021 will be no different. In keeping with this relatively new Al-Anon tradition, we will commemorate Al-Anon's 70th Anniversary on Saturday, July 10th from 2:00–4:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time. You are all invited!

Due to the virtual format, we anticipate welcoming members from a wide range of locations representing our global fellowship. While this event is free of charge, please keep in mind that attendance is limited to the first 500 registrants.

We are saving a few surprises for the actual event; however, we can share with you that there will be two Spiritual Speakers. For those of you who have attended Al-Anon Anniversary banquets in the past, we are bringing back some familiar program elements and putting a virtual twist on them.

Simultaneous interpretation is available for Spanish- and French-speaking participants. If you cannot attend the live event, there will be several opportunities to hear an audio playback of our speakers' sharings in the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App* throughout the rest of the year. Those playbacks will also be made available in Spanish and French. You can learn more by reading *In the Loop*.

Please join us on July 10th for Anniversary festivities we think you'll remember for years to come! We hope to see you there!

2023 AL-ANON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATE

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

The Conference participated in a lively exercise of consecutive polls, asking who will attend Al-Anon's next International Convention, to be held June 29–July 2, 2023 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

International Conventions are fabulous combinations of fun, fellowship, and recovery, as well as opportunities to meet new friends, explore new attractions, and vacation in new locales.

Albuquerque is a wonderful, cozy community, perfectly suited for Al-Anon Family Groups to meet and connect with our fellow members and share our message of help and hope with new members.

Our friends in A.A. will join us by holding daytime A.A. meetings on Friday and Saturday, and Al-Anon's daytime offerings will include Book Studies, Next Picks, Panel and Speaker meetings, Table Topics, and Workshops. The daytime options will be in addition to our Big Meetings on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning where we'll hear family stories, talks from members who live outside the World Service Conference Structure, and spiritual sharings.

Members from the New Mexico/El Paso Area will be on hand to welcome Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. members, and guests from all throughout the World Service Conference Structure and from all over the world! We are excited to report that we will be using an event planning resource for the first time to help us create an unforgettable experience in New Mexico—stay tuned for more details as the summer of 2023 approaches.



Meanwhile, what are you looking forward to the most about the upcoming International Convention in Albuquerque?

- Big Meetings
- Daytime options
- Fellowship
- Meeting people from other countries
- Saying the Serenity Prayer with 5,000 people
- Sight-seeing opportunities

International Conventions are a great venue to celebrate our recovery. Now that you've heard more, who is planning to be in Albuquerque June 29 through July 2, 2023 to celebrate recovery at Al-Anon's Seventh International Convention?

Mark your calendar—we look forward to seeing you in Albuquerque June 29 through July 2, 2023!

The following question was asked.

- What is the event planning resource you mentioned?
We are learning from A.A. and using experts to plan the logistics of the Convention. Staff will continue to plan the program.

BYLAWS

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

Prior to the World Service Conference, the members were provided with amendments to the U.S. Bylaws passed at the July 2020 and April 2021 Board Meetings.

Background for changes made in 2020: At the October 2019 Board Meeting, there was a consensus to remove the term limit from the Board Officer Résumé Form to align with the Bylaws of AFG, Inc. At that time, it was agreed that Board Officer positions did not have a term limit.

Early in 2020, during a housekeeping review of the Board Officer and Executive Committee Nomination Process document, the Secretary of the Nominating Committee informed the Committee members that in January 2004, by consensus, “the Board agreed to limit the terms of all officers of the corporation to three one-year terms.” As a result, the Nominating Committee not only added this information to their Nomination Process document, but they made two recommendations to the Board. The first recommendation was for the Board to revise the Board Officer Résumé Form to include that, Trustees can only serve three years in the same Board officer position. The second recommendation was to include similar language in the Bylaws of AFG, Inc.

Bylaws Recommendation: The Nominating Committee recommended to the Board of Trustees the following amendment to the Bylaws of AFG, Inc.:

To modify the Article VI (6)—Officers of the Bylaws of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to include a new paragraph:

“6. A Trustee cannot serve more than three one-year terms in a particular Board Officer position.”

The recommendation to amend was unanimously passed by the Board of Trustees in July 2020.

Background for changes made in 2021: Each year in April, members of the Board of Trustees (BOT) and the Executive Committee (EC) are asked to sign a Board’s Attributes of Leadership (AOL) declaration and a Conflict of Interest declaration. In anticipation of this, our attorney was asked to review the AOL document to ensure no overlap existed between it and the recently updated Conflict of Interest declaration. This request brought to the attorney’s attention that we ask EC members to sign the Attributes of Leadership declaration.

With this new insight into our practice of asking EC members to execute the AOL declaration, the attorney reviewed the Bylaws of AFG, Inc. This review led to the attorney’s observation that the Bylaws of AFG, Inc. contained two statements with language that needed to be changed to be in compliance with New York law.

- Section XII.1—Executive Committee. The statement “... the power to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees ...” suggests the Executive Committee could make decisions binding on the Board of Trustees. Under the law, only “Committees of the Board,” which are those Committees made up exclusively of Trustees of the Board, can make binding decisions on matters upon which only the Board can act. Since the Executive Committee only makes decisions on matters related to the management and oversight of the WSO, our practices are consistent with the law. The attorney recommended the following change, “the power to manage the affairs of the World Service Office on behalf of the Board of Trustees in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees.”

- Section X.2—Indemnification. Given EC Members do not have fiduciary responsibilities to AFG, Inc., they are not exposed to the same liability as Trustees. Indemnifying them in this paragraph runs counter to our Officers & Directors insurance agreement and does not conform with New York law. Since EC Members do not have the same liability, the attorney recommended removing this paragraph and confirmed that doing so does not cause the EC Members or organization risk or harm.

Bylaws Recommendation: Since the attorney was reviewing the Bylaws of AFG, Inc., he recommended the addition of a second sentence to clarify the definition of notice.

- Section IX.5—Meetings. The added sentence reads, “Notice shall be deemed given when sent, and if by mail, when deposited in the United States mail with postage prepaid thereon.”

The attorney recommended changes were unanimously passed by the Board of Trustees.

According to 10.d. of the “Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter” (page 226 of the 2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual [P-24/27] version two [2]), the Conference, in its traditional role, reviews the Bylaws. The Conference does not vote to approve the Bylaw amendments. The Conference may recall the amendments if any are disagreeable. In that event, the Board will review them again and present them to the Conference the following year for review.

See Appendix I on pages 80-99.

CERTAIN WORDS AND PHRASES IN THE SPANISH SERVICE MANUAL

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

The following information was posted to AFG Connects for Conference members to review.

There are Spanish words and phrases that aren’t necessarily accurate in the *Service Manual* that have been carried forward over the years because the English text has not changed.



As the WSO Staff member who oversees the full cyclical update process of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), I met with the Translation Manager (French), Spanish Translator, Executive Director, Director of Finance & Operations, and the Associate Director—Group Services to discuss options moving forward beyond the 2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual version two (2).

Based on discussions during the meeting, this group asked for and received the Board's support in changing:

- The Spanish *Service Manual* currently uses the word, “guía” (Compendio de Guías de Al-Anon y Alateen) in the title of the Policy Digest as well as throughout the *Service Manual*, which means “guide”—something that offers basic information or instructions. We asked for support in changing the word, “guía,” to the word, “política,” which means “policy”—prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs. Of note, the French *Service Manual* uses the word, “politiques” in the Policy Digest title and throughout the *Service Manual*, which means “policy”—prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs.
- The Spanish *Service Manual* currently uses the word, “Presidente,” to describe the Area Chairperson and convention chair, while in reality, Spanish-speaking members use the word, “Coordinador” or “Coordinadora” and reserve the word, “Presidente,” to reference the Chairperson of the Board.
- The Spanish *Service Manual* currently uses the phrase, “Grupos de Delegados,” to describe “Panels.” While the Spanish-speaking members use the word, “paneles.”
- The Spanish *Service Manual* currently uses the word, “Zona,” to describe “Area,” while Spanish-speaking members use the word, “Área,” which means “Area.”

After receiving the Board's support to make these changes, Staff provided the General Service Offices (GSO) an opportunity to comment on the changes and asked the GSOs, “What are your thoughts on using the word, ‘Área,’ in place of the word, ‘Zona,’ when describing ‘Area’ in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*?” The WSO did not receive any negative feedback regarding the use of the word, “Área” in place of the word, “Zona,” when describing “Area.”

Several Spanish-speaking Conference members posted comments in support of these changes, which will appear in the next printing of the Spanish *Service Manual*.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT (ECRPM)

Background:

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

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

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

To fulfill that condition, a motion to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was approved by the WSC in 1995. The Bylaws were amended in January 2012 to include the Executive Committee for Real Property Management and

the amendment was presented to the 2012 Conference. The separate Executive Committee was preferred for its simplicity and the fact that it would cut down on additional forms needed to be filed annually with the Internal Revenue Service. This Committee was established to oversee the management of real property in order to separate property maintenance and management from the day-to-day operation of the Al-Anon fellowship. The Committee consists of three At-Large Al-Anon members, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and the Director of Finance & Operations. The Committee first met June 15, 1996 and has met twice a year since then.

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

1. Has ownership of property been financially feasible?

The Board of Trustees reports that ownership of property has been a very good step financially. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. received tax-exempt financing and thus a lower rate of interest due to non-profit status. A savings of at least \$413,000 a year has been realized by owning property versus leasing it in Virginia.¹ Now that the mortgage is paid in full, the gap between ownership and leasing is expected to widen as costs of ownership decrease and costs of leasing increase.

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

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

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

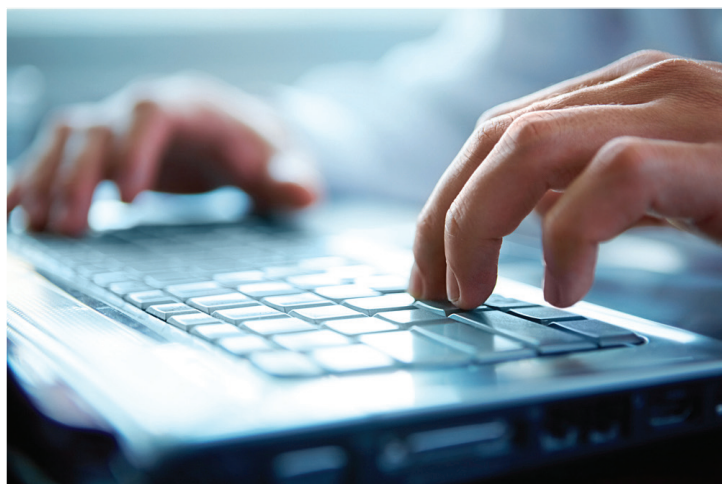
After reviewing the last 24 years of real property ownership, the Board of Trustees has no negative impact to report. In 2004, a small minority of groups attempted to tie the Alateen requirements established by the Board of Trustees to the ownership of property. The Board of Trustees clarified that the only assets it was protecting were our name and safety of our children. The ECRPM is a Committee separate from all other committees. It operates separately from the work and business of the World Service Office (WSO), allowing the WSO to focus on the primary spiritual aim of the fellowship. This real separation is what allows ownership of property to function as well as it does.

¹ Please see budget line item “Occupancy” on page 13 for the actual yearly costs of ownership.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Jean L., Trustee, Committee Chairperson
Diane B., Trustee, Co-Chairperson
Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board
Kerri K., Associate Director—International
Marsha W., Director of Programs
Vali F., Executive Director

This report was provided to Conference members prior to the Conference via AFG Connects. The International Coordination Committee (ICC) provides an avenue of communication to support international growth and to encourage the worldwide unity of Al-Anon and Alateen. The ICC is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees and may make recommendations to the Board on matters affecting Al-Anon outside the World Service Conference Structure. Most years, members of the Committee visit other countries to meet with the structure leadership and provide information and shared experience. Due to the pandemic, no trips were made in 2020. So, the Committee's focus was on the planning of the 2020 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM), held biannually. The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world. It encourages the growth of sound service structures while maintaining worldwide unity through the Twelve Traditions. Each General Service structure can send two Delegates to participate.



The ICC PowerPoint presentation focused on the planning of the ICC as 2020 progressed. In their first web conferencing meeting in April, the plan was to hold the IAGSM in London, England in October 2020. The theme was “Practicing Universal Principles with 20|20 Vision.” Much of the planning was done, the agenda set, the speakers selected. The ICC Chairperson and Co-Chairperson would facilitate the meeting. Two other ICC members would serve as Delegates from the World Service Conference Structure.

Concern was expressed as to whether the pandemic might impact the meeting, but it was felt that this was a “One Day at a Time” program, and surely the pandemic would be over by October!

In July, the Committee had to deal with change! By this time, it was evident that an in-person meeting would not be an option. Whether or not to cancel the meeting was discussed, but it was felt that at this difficult time, the international community needed connection more than ever.

The next option was to hold a virtual event, as was done with the 2020 World Service Conference. However, the participating countries around the world come from 16 different time zones, so there is no feasible time to hold a live virtual meeting. Moving the meeting to 2021 was not an

option, as Zonal meetings are held in different parts of the world.

Having an online discussion was suggested. This would at least give the structures the opportunity to “talk to each other, reason things out with someone else.” Video components could be added, to provide a more personal experience. A unanimous vote was taken to recommend to the Board that the 2020 IAGSM become an online discussion format doing our best to make it as close to previous IAGSMs as possible.

The ICC had its work cut out for it. The Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, and Associate Director—International met weekly to keep plans on track. The World Service Office (WSO) Tech Team held training sessions with the international Delegates to be sure they could participate fully.

The IAGSM was held electronically (using AFG Connects) from 11:00 am New Zealand Summer Time on Sunday, October 4 through 11:00 am New Zealand Summer Time Sunday, October 11.

In January, the ICC reviewed the evaluations from the IAGSM. All had received copies, and a few samples of comments said it all:

- “[It was valuable] knowing how much we all appreciate each other’s participation and contributions. It was a great opportunity to reflect with gratitude how blessed I am to be able to be in service in our worldwide fellowship, particularly when 2020 has turned out nothing like what was planned. All of this was achieved from home sweet home.”
- “[It was valuable] being presented clearly with challenges of the COVID-19 lockdowns worldwide and the way we could relate to the issues—that we are not alone in facing these challenges.”
- “I was very happy to listen to the experiences, the Prayer of Serenity in other languages, and that we are united by wanting to serve Al-Anon.”

For the most part the evaluations were positive. The Delegates truly appreciated being able to connect in this way. They shared with each other and gained different perspectives. Letting them add profile pictures in AFG Connects and tell each other a little bit about themselves made it more personal. So did having the live recordings of our Keynote and Spiritual Speakers.

Posting daily updates and asking IAGSM trivia questions kept participants engaged. They agreed that the sessions fit their needs. A business meeting was included, with some simple motions, and votes were taken in an entirely online format. It was a challenge to discuss complicated motions in writing across 16 time zones. There was participation from Nicaragua and Slovenia—who, because of the format, were able to attend for the very first time. And based on the evaluations, it looks like many structures are interested in participating again in 2022.

The WSO was able to defer the deposit and get approval to host the 2022 IAGSM at the same location in London. Hopefully, it will be in-person, but if it is not, the ICC has a great example to follow; and the ICC can share what they learned with the international structures for use in the Zonal meetings if needed!

Zonal meetings are another opportunity for structures to connect in a less formal way than the IAGSM. They are hosted and attended by structures in Central America, Europe, and South America. Selected WSO Staff and Volunteers attend as guests.

Zonal meetings have more attendees than the IAGSM. Zonal meetings are attended by national service structures as well as evolving structures. There are two scheduled this year, the European Zonal Meeting in September and the IberoAmerican Zonal Meeting in October. If they are not able to happen in person, they can use what was learned from the IAGSM and continue to connect.

For complete information on the 2020 IAGSM, look for the *2020 IAGSM Summary*, when posted on the website, al-anon.org.

ROAD TRIP! YOU AND YOUR BOARD CONNECT WORK GROUP

Jean L., Trustee, Work Group Chairperson

The members of the Work Group began their presentation with an entertaining skit to explain what “Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect” is, and how the fellowship benefits.

Once a year, all the current members of the Board and At-Large Members of the Executive Committee go on a road trip to a different city and present an event to local and visiting members about what is done on the Board.



All members are welcome, however, there is limited space, so members are encouraged to register early. The Board goes to a new Area each year and holds the entire Board Week there. Then at the end of the week, the “Road Trip!” event happens.

2021 marks the seventh Road Trip. The Board has been to Newfoundland, Alberta, Arkansas, Colorado, Texas, and Washington. The 2021 “Road Trip!” event will be in Cleveland, Ohio on October 23, 2021. Registration begins in August 2021.

Delegates were encouraged to ask their Area to put in a bid for 2022! Invitations were distributed to all Delegates. It includes all you need to know about hosting a “Road Trip!” event. We hope all Areas will consider hosting a “Road Trip!” event if you haven’t already done so.

Bids are due by Monday, August 16, 2021. One Area will be randomly selected from all the qualified applications to host the 2022 “Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect.”

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Wally C., Chairperson, Panel 59, Maritime Provinces

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

The CCT is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson each year. Résumés for Trustee At-Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) are submitted to the World Service Office (WSO) in August of each year. The CCT members review the résumés submitted, score each résumé based on skill sets, understanding of current needs of the Board, and the ability of each candidate to effectively answer the résumé questions. The CCT members write comments

related to his or her scoring decisions. When completed, the scoring sheets, and accompanying comments are sent to the CCT Chairperson. The CCT Chairperson reviews the comments and rankings that were submitted by each CCT member, compiles the material, and forwards the compilation of rankings and comments to the WSO in early October.

The Nominating Committee meets during the October Board meeting. Using the information submitted by the CCT and knowledge it has about the current Board needs, the Nominating Committee scores each résumé for TAL and ECRPM. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates that the Nominating Committee has selected. CCT members have the opportunity to file an objection to a potential candidate by December. The final selection of the candidates is decided at the January Board meeting. At the WSC, the TAL candidates are given traditional approval by the Conference and may be elected by the Board at the Annual Board meeting following the WSC.

This year the CCT not only processed submitted résumés in September, but also had to do so again in December, to accommodate several applications for ECRPM. The second round had a much smaller window than September in regard to turn-around time for submissions to be back to WSO for the Nominating Committee review. The nine members of the CCT were efficient in performing the work, which allowed us to meet the required deadlines.

Being a member of the CCT can be difficult. Due to our principles of anonymity and the confidential nature of the information we receive, we are a Committee that does not communicate. We cannot bounce ideas around or ask one another’s opinion on what is presented to us. For the most part, we work alone and have only our Higher Power to talk to and ask for guidance with our work. The Committee members participated in a Zoom meeting in August to review the process, scoring practices, paperwork, and timing.

My first year at Conference, when Trustee affirmation voting came up, there was a fair amount of confusion around the traditional voting process. Some felt that we, as sitting Delegates, were to vet the applicants’ résumés one more time. This is the role of the CCT and the Nominating Committee. By the time a name is put forward by these members for nomination, you can rest assured the vetting processes have been done and done well.

I would like to thank the members of the CCT for all their work this year. You are “silent servants,” ensuring that Al-Anon Family Groups has potential candidates that can continue to serve and protect the longevity of our fellowship. Also, thank you to the Staff at the World Service Office for all their work in this process.

It is now my privilege to introduce the 2021 CCT Chair Elect, Susan R., Panel 60, South Dakota.

It has been my honor and privilege to serve the World Service Conference as the 2020 CCT Chair.

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmations

Gail G., Trustee, Nominating Committee Chairperson

I was excited when I was selected to serve on the Nominating Committee. I thought it would be interesting and perhaps just a bit more familiar to me than some of the other Board committees. I very quickly discovered that I didn’t know what I didn’t know, and I was unaware of the depth of thoughtful spiritual guidance that would be required to serve on the Nominating Committee.

To start preparing for the task of scoring résumés, I read the Nominating Committee Guideline. I read the tips sheet and the instructions for scoring. I read the writings shared in the *Conference*

Summary. I reviewed the Board Profile. And I prayed for my Higher Power to provide me with strength and vision and guidance. The one line that kept going through my mind was *“This Committee makes recommendations that will determine, to a large extent, the continuous success of our services.”* While I felt honored to be entrusted with doing my part in this process, I also felt the weight of responsibility and I found it was imperative for me to be aligned with my Higher Power and the love of our program.

When I was ready mentally and spiritually, I opened and printed the résumés. I read through them all. I sat down and quietly scored each one. I set them aside for a few days and then I repeated the exercise. I prayed for the guidance to score as fairly and as honestly as I was capable of. Most often, the scoring did not change much from the previous day, but if there was variation, I set it aside for another day or two and then I went back and scored it a third time. When it felt right, I submitted my scores.

After all the scores are submitted, the entire Nominating Committee holds a meeting to discuss each résumé in depth, taking into consideration the evaluations submitted by the CCT or RCTs. Sometimes difficult and even painful decisions have arisen, and I have found myself asking my Higher Power for strength, vision, and guidance once again. After all decisions were agreed upon, the Nominating Committee then presents its recommendations to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.

I would like to thank the Conference Committee on Trustees, the Regional Committees on Trustees, and the Nominating Committee for all their time, their considerations, and their prayerful work throughout this year. After experiencing both the solo and the collective sides of Nominating, I can honestly say I trust the process of our collective group conscience and I believe our Higher Power is in the rooms with us guiding our decisions for the future of AFG, Inc.

Regional Trustee Résumé Flow

1. Applicant must complete before the Area deadline for approval—Area deadline could be as early as 2 years in advance of WSO August 15 deadline for Regional Trustee
2. Applicant completes and submits résumé online to the WSO
3. WSO automatically emails the résumé PDF to the Area Delegate
4. Area Delegate processes résumé PDF through the Area approval process
5. Area Delegate responds to the email from the WSO that the résumé was approved or denied.

Following the Nominating Committee Chairperson's report, two Trustees presented a short skit about the Affirmation Process. During the Affirmation Process, Conference members were given the opportunity to ask questions and/or make comments about all of the candidates. Any nominees present were placed in a virtual waiting room during discussion of their candidacy and during the voting process for their candidacy.

The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2021 WSC:

Trustees at Large:

Lynette K., second three-year term
Don B., first three-year term
Kathi M., first three-year term
Nancy S., remaining two years of a first three-year term

Regional Trustee:

Debbie P., Canada Central, first three-year term
Tony S., Canada East, first three-year term
Linda R., US Southeast, remaining one year of a first three-year term

Board Officers:

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board
Marianne B., Vice Chairperson of the Board
Cindy M., Treasurer

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2021–2022:

Deborah (Debbie) G., third one-year term, Chairperson
Terry F., second one-year term
David B., first one-year term
Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies

The Board announced the appointment of Elizabeth (Liz) D. as the ECRPM Chairperson for 2021–2022.

TEAM REPLACEMENT TASK FORCE

Teri M., Trustee, Task Force Chairperson

History of the TEAM Events:

2019 WSC Summary, page 44

“The Chairperson began his report by providing some background on the event. He began, ‘In 2006 the Board began to look at all of the committee structures to determine if they were serving the needs of the fellowship in the best manner possible and, if not, what could be done to improve their effectiveness. Conference members who served on the various committees were given questionnaires to help them evaluate how the committees currently operated and what could be done to improve their connection to the fellowship. One of the committees to be reviewed was the Regional Service Seminar (RSS) Committee.

“The comments and ideas that came from the RSS Committee were reviewed by the Board of Trustees. Following a lengthy discussion, the Chairperson of the Board appointed a thought force whose charge was to generate ideas on what a dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task-oriented RSS would look like. Based on those ideas, and after more discussion by the Board, a task force was formed to create an innovative service event that would better meet the needs of the Areas and their members. From that discussion, Together Empowering Al-Anon Members (TEAM) events were born.

“The first TEAM event was held May 1–2, 2010. The New Mexico/El Paso Area hosted the event. A total of 60 TEAM events (this includes six events scheduled for this year) have been or will be held by the end of 2019.

Twenty-five Areas held one event

Fourteen Areas held two events

Three Areas held three events

One Area held four events

Forty-three of 67 Areas held events

“In 2018, a Board task force was formed to look at restructuring TEAM events. The task force was made up of WSO Volunteers and Staff. During the time the task force was working on improvements to TEAM events, the WSO Staff was looking into ways to more efficiently use its resources. One of the ideas they suggested was to not have Staff members participate in planning TEAM events any longer. Given that there are up to nine TEAM events per year and Staff participates in all of them, it would free up Staff time for other valuable AI-Anon work.

“The Board discussed the Staff idea and thought it made sense. The Board also discussed holding TEAM events without the Staff and decided it would involve much more time on the Volunteers’ part and take away from other Board work. In the end, the Board decided to discontinue TEAM events and begin to look at options to work on a new way of interacting with members, Staff, and Volunteers.

“What will the 2020 vision look like? After the evaluation of the overall impact of TEAM events within our Service Structure, it has been decided that TEAM events will end in 2019. The last scheduled TEAM event will be on September 28, 2019 in Pennsylvania.

“In deciding next steps, we will use the experience gleaned from the Regional Service Seminars and the TEAM events, as well as what we have learned from Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect, as models.

“Today, we have access to technology that was unavailable when RSSs and TEAM events were originally launched. New platforms now provide an opportunity to consider an idea or a redesign for similar events that could reach or be accessible to wider audiences.”

TEAM Replacement Task Force Charge:

Charge: Design an innovative, flexible event that provides an opportunity for Trustees and Staff to connect with members and engage in shared leadership with Area members and present at the October Board Meeting.

At the last Board meeting in January 2021, the TEAM Replacement Task Force presented a program that answered the above charge. The Board, using your suggestions, voted for the name *Shared Leadership in Action*. The Board also considered the resources at the WSO and that the intent was not to have the WSO Staff do as much of the planning. The intent was to enable the Areas to have a greater leadership role and participation.

The Board has had ongoing conversations about how to present an event that is flexible yet provides some guidance and structure with parameters regarding the Board and WSO’s participation and responsibilities. While wanting to honor Concept Ten, our intent is to provide the Areas with latitude to develop an agenda that would be exciting to their members. Creating a unique event that is different from the current interactions with the Trustees and WSO has been a challenge. The Board has been thoughtful in its consideration of what TEAM replacement event to present to the WSC. However, we are stalled at this moment and would like more clarity and guidance from the Conference.

In lieu of that clarity, we are aware that there are still ways to interact with the Board and WSO, as suggested below. Perhaps even more ways that we have not considered. Here are some of the ways in which the Board and WSO currently interact with the membership:

- Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect
- Town Halls
- Trustees and WSO Staff to Area events—i.e., Assemblies, conventions, service events

The current Task Force has been discussing ways in which the Areas could have more autonomy and decision-making opportunities when planning an event, including setting the agenda. We are supplying you with what we have considered as a “Menu” of ways to interact and topics for a TEAM Replacement event—giving most of the responsibilities to the Areas.

A survey taken by the Delegates told us that they do wish to continue an event that brings membership together with the Board and WSO. The Task Force then opened discussion on the following questions:

- Does the membership feel that connecting with WSO Volunteers and Staff is valuable? In what ways?
- What would you like your Area members to take away when they leave an event with WSO Volunteers and Staff?

In answer to the first question, Conference members were in agreement that connecting with WSO Volunteers and Staff is indeed valuable. Members shared personal experience with inspiration received at past events. Many saw an increased interest in service with these events and that members still talk about their Area’s event. Several liked the idea of electronic participation in Area events by Staff and Volunteers, as well as the idea of joint events with neighboring Areas. Limiting events to one per Region per year might encourage more participation.

In answering the question, “What would you like your members to take away when they leave an event with WSO Volunteers and Staff?” Delegates had a lot to say. Here are some of their ideas:

- An understanding of what WSO does for the groups
- An understanding of the AI-Anon service structure
- A connection with Staff and Volunteers as AI-Anon members
- Greater enthusiasm and motivation for service
- A feeling of connection with WSO and worldwide AI-Anon
- A feeling of participation in the event
- The understanding that groups and members are an integral part of the fellowship
- The feeling they were heard and valued
- An understanding of how personal recovery and service are connected
- Eagerness for the next event
- Awareness that it takes all of us to make sure this fellowship survives and thrives
- The belief that, yes, I can do this, and I’m willing to give it a try
- The feeling they are supported, possibly with some direction or guidance towards solutions
- That service at all levels is rewarding, doable, and expands our recovery

WORDING OF THE WARRANTIES (TWELVE CONCEPTS OF SERVICE DESCRIPTIVE TEXT)

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board
Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

In an initial planning meeting with the WSO translators regarding the project to publish the 2022–2025 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), it was brought up that the wording of the Warranties in the descriptive text of each Warranty in “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” section (p. 211–220) of the 2018–2021 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* is different than the actual wording of the “General Warranties of the Conference” portion of the “Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter,” section (p. 226–229) and page 18 of the “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual*. Here is an example:

Actual wording of Warranty One as found in “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” page 18:

(1) that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;

Warranty One as listed in “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” descriptive text on page 212:

Warranty One

Sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.

The reasoning for the differing words is noted at the bottom of page 211 (continuing to the top of page 212) in the *Service Manual*:

“[The wording of the Warranties in this section is an adaptation, by our co-founder Lois W., of A.A.’s Warranties. It is retained here for historical purposes and because it has been in common usage since the adoption of this *Manual* by the 1970 WSC. The formal wording of the Warranties can be found in the Conference Charter.]”

This topic was forwarded to the Staff Policy Implementation Round Table (SPIRiT) for discussion.

Following individual review of this topic and two group discussions by SPIRiT, the members noted that some of the words have quite different meanings, the variance has a significant impact on the international community, and there is a need to be consistent.

Based on SPIRiT’s discussions, the members of SPIRiT asked the Board’s support in the following: It is the consensus of SPIRiT that “The Concepts should reflect what is approved by the Conference.”

SPIRiT proposed:

- announcing the change to the fellowship (to include a link to the Archives section of the website, which would have some context to explain the information)
- including a vertical change bar in the outer margin with the wording of each Warranty in the descriptive text of the 2022–2025 *Service Manual*
- adding an asterisk to each Warranty in the Twelve Concepts of Service section of the 2022–2025 *Service Manual* explaining and referencing the archival information

The Board of Trustees approved supporting these housekeeping changes at its January 2021 meeting.

These changes are similar in nature to the Warranty Three housekeeping change (the comma) that was presented to the 2019 World Service Conference (see page 45 of the 2019 *Summary* for details).

During discussion, Conference members had the following comments and questions:

- What are we proposing to make consistent?
We are adding the actual wording of the Warranties to the descriptive text. We will reference the archival information.
- Will this be only in English?
The adaptations are in all three languages.
- Are we going to vote on this?
No, we are providing the information that we are making this change for the next printing. The Board has the authority to make housekeeping changes and has approved the changes.
- When was Lois’s adaptation changed in the rest of the *Service Manual*?
The Warranties are correct in other places, we are not sure when Lois’s adaptations were added.
- Are all five Warranties involved?
Yes. All five will be corrected.
- I am concerned about including links; links do change.
The link will be in the announcement to fellowship, not in the Service Manual itself.
- The idea of removing Lois’s words is troublesome to me.

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE ANNOUNCEMENT (2022)

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

The dates selected for the 2022 World Service Conference are Tuesday, April 26 through Saturday, April 30, 2022. Delegates are scheduled to arrive on Monday, April 25, and depart on Sunday, May 1. The Conference will be held at the Westchester Marriott in Tarrytown, New York.

All Conference members will visit Stepping Stones during Conference week. There will be a limited number of spaces for guests on a first come, first served basis (the registration fee for guests to join us will be announced prior to the 2022 WSC).

In searching for a site to hold the 2021 Conference, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, meal costs, and dates of religious holidays were taken into consideration. The site for the 2022 WSC was deferred from 2021.

DISCUSSIONS, PRESENTATIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

AREAS' USE OF THE REACHING & UNIFYING RURAL & LARGE GEOGRAPHIC POPULATIONS SURVEY

Teri M., Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson

During the 2020 World Service Conference, the presentation from the Task Force: Reaching & Unifying Rural & Large Geographic Populations was posted on AFG Connects. One of the documents posted was a "Proposed Survey to Gather Information from Rural and Large Geographic Populations." The Board of Trustees polled the Delegates to learn whether Areas used the survey that was presented by this Task Force.

We heard from 37 of the 67 Areas, of which 12 Areas reported that they shared the survey with their Area.

During the Conference session, Delegates shared the following:

- I turned this over to a District Representative (DR), who formed a committee (including six bilingual members). They set the survey up online. We have a 60-page report. People have limits on time, travel, and money. DRs are happy to go on in service, Group Representatives (GRs) not so much. Twenty-seven percent of groups responded.
- We have large rural areas, I got a Past Delegate to help. It seems the main barrier is not distance, but language. Our Spanish-speaking groups are more connected to structure, English-speaking groups are more disconnected. We have a thought force working on suggestions.
- We sent the survey to our 51 active groups via email, then posted it online. The results were disappointing. We got a low response, mostly active members. Distance is a barrier to Area work; we have had more attendance with virtual meetings. We have a task force working on communicating with all groups to determine their needs, wants, preferences.
- I was on the task force and have given it over to an action committee. They haven't met in person and are still working on plans to implement, but the idea was well received. We got some information at Assembly.
- We sent the survey out electronically to our 62 groups. Most responses were focused on the effects of the pandemic. Rural areas with DRs were grateful for virtual Area meetings. Before COVID, many were not in communication with the Area World Service Committee (AWSC), now they do. Area officers are working on questions to outlying areas. We currently have a thought force looking at redistricting.
- The previous Delegate did implement a workshop. Challenges: don't assume they have electronic connection to survey; Spanish-speaking groups may not get the full information. Successes: worked to get more CMAs; a banner was placed on our website to encourage staying in touch; our Area has free conference calling now. We encourage strong personal and service sponsorship and try to offer a personal invite to step up.
- We did not get a big response. Members wanted to discuss as a group, but many groups are not meeting. A Trustee connected me with a member in another Area regarding communicating and storing documents. My Area has been working hard,

adopted an email program, and we are seeing improvement with network communication, file storage, directory, and database.

- We had Assembly in June, shortly after the 2020 WSC. We gave the members a challenge to fill out the survey and return it by the end of August to discuss at our October AWSC. We got a lot of response! Half was about COVID, the rest provided very good information. We started monthly workshops that will pick up again in fall, attendance was great. Members said they weren't getting info from DRs, so the Delegate started visiting District meetings.
- The survey was sent out to GRs, and DRs invited the Delegate to District meetings to do a presentation on the survey. The members wanted more information brought back, instantaneously, via email. We are putting together an Area email system.

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

Board of Trustees CAI

Full Conference Discussion

The Board of Trustees created a topic for discussion in the General Session. Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board, read the topic to the Conference members.

Topic: *Diversity Today—What does diversity mean? In this context, we can define diversity as understanding that each individual is unique. Diversity embraces varying abilities, belief systems, cultures, ethnicity, gender (including sexual identity and orientation), languages, thought processes, and socio-economic status.*

Because alcoholism affects people from all walks of life, respecting and acknowledging these differences as we come together for our common welfare can present challenges. Within the confines of Tradition One, how can we value and adapt to today's diverse population? Are we evolving and growing in our interactions with others and allowing for the creation of a more inclusive environment?

Following the reading of the topic, the floor was opened for discussion. Conference members responded:

- Today more people speak out with their differences. This means less division; we have the same common denominator; we can't group people within our groups; all are seeking recovery; we can focus on similarity, to see where we can reach people.
- The index of *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) includes dual members. We have lost a lot of dual members, giving us a lack of growth. They can keep their programs separate. We need to embrace them, otherwise we are not in keeping with being a spiritual organization.
- This is a powerful subject. I have come to understand how little I understand. This affects my ability to change societal things that affect our fellowship. We have a cultural mentor to help us understand other groups in our public outreach work. We had success in the Spanish community, but not in the Native community.
- I don't like special focus groups (men's, women's, children of alcoholics). These are not inclusive.

- There are a lot of built-in assumptions, we have few people of color. People are offended to hear “spiritual, not religious” or “God is everyone.” There is an assumption about education built in, we have to look at how we do our outreach, how to welcome those with different experiences, get training on diversity.
- Diversity is very clear in my Area, not just Black and Mexican. I love getting to know different cultures. It doesn’t matter how welcoming we are when a culture does not mesh with what Al-Anon is. They may not allow asking for help, or women to speak, or taking things outside of family. My Area is seven percent white, still groups are mostly white. Where do we need to go?
- Our first introductory pamphlet sounded very Christian. Would love to see more statements about inclusivity on all our literature.
- I didn’t want to be recognized for my minority. I wanted to just be a member. For underserved communities, we need to do a better job of outreach to where the people are.
- I have been called hard line. People using different pronouns is part of diversity. People in meetings change pronouns in Steps.
- I spent years opening a meeting in tribal council. Six women came in three years. It’s not okay for them to admit there’s a problem in their home. It’s similar in Spanish communities. I heard a lot in my Area about creating a welcoming and safe atmosphere, inclusive language, gender neutral pronouns, dual members in service.
- I was not welcomed as a person of color; some places are still like that. When I came in, it seemed like a clique. We don’t understand each other when we share. We should go into the communities, be more open, more understanding.
- When I (a man) came in, I saw all white women. I became comfortable there. We are open to all, groups are now multi-racial, multi gender, our literature has become more diverse, more welcoming. The NEW DAILY READER (working title) is a good step.
- I had someone come who couldn’t read. I wish I had offered to read to them. That person never came back. Regarding cultural outreach, I also saw a man who came from a religion where men couldn’t reach out.
- Diversity of beliefs makes working the Steps hard. I sponsored an atheist. A member expressed concerns about a meeting of mostly atheists/agnostics—they don’t feel comfortable at many meetings. They don’t read the Steps but use and work them.
- I think about what I don’t know and don’t understand. I like the idea of a cultural mentor. We need to explain how to deal with words we don’t like in Al-Anon in a gentle, loving way. Help newcomers understand they need to “Keep Coming Back.” Sponsorship helps people to learn and stay.
- I came in 13 years ago looking for similarities not differences. I was the only Asian, a lot of the Indian community has denial. We can explain through outreach. I am open about my journey in coming to understand spirituality.
- My city is extremely diverse, but Al-Anon meetings are still predominately white. I sponsor diverse people, telling them, “I do not share your experience, but I care, and we have both been affected by alcoholism.” Diversity is big. I started in gay meetings because I thought that was where I was supposed to go. I prefer diverse meetings.
- I am on a diversity task force. Where I live, it is very white and older. A speaker said a lot of times people start learning how to stop fixing the alcoholic, then divert to fixing the group. What I can change is my behavior and attitude. Are we growing? “Let It Begin with Me.”
- I love this conversation. We have a lot of diversity in my Area. I love our literature, but it was developed in a culture that was white, female, and Christian. But the Traditions always tell us it is a “God of our understanding.” I don’t think we need to change everything, but we need to make more effort toward public outreach to diverse groups.
- I challenge us as members/Delegates to take inventories in our Areas/groups, looking to ourselves internally regarding diversity.
- Al-Anon is about trust. There is very prevalent religion in language, groups are very white, how we can gain the trust of other communities? A safe space is important.
- This has been a topic in my personal recovery. I transitioned at 17 from Alateen to Al-Anon. I was reading at a third-grade level, the group was made up of grandmothers and I had difficulty reading. They taught me. The people before me did the best they could to be inclusive. Now I take teens to welcoming adult groups.
- We have a small population, mostly Caucasian, not many men. We have people who come in who are not religious. Our members share their difficulties in accepting a Higher Power. We have audio literature now for those who don’t read.
- It starts at the group level, “Let It Begin with Me.” My child is transgender, uses different pronouns, and felt unwelcomed by a group after using what some considered to be the “wrong” bathroom. Now my child goes to other meetings, feels welcomed, included.
- Groups are like where they meet. I am encouraging expanding locations. Awareness and education are important.
- In my rural Area, only 18% of the population is white, but meetings are 100% white. People of color have come, we glom on to them, feel like we are being welcoming. Maybe we need a cultural mentor to help. We may not be giving the right welcome. We need to research on the barriers involved. Pastors are influential in Black churches.
- My granddaughter is mixed-race, she is educating kids in a white school in the buckle of the Bible Belt. I heard lots of church talk in early meetings. I stayed and worked around it.
- There is already built-in inclusivity and diversity in the program. The problem is with us. We need to treat everyone with respect and kindness.
- I have a dear friend who is a person of color. She says we create our own diversities. We are a program of attraction. I like the idea of a cultural mentor, more public outreach to different groups. We need to do multicultural outreach with diverse members.
- I moved from a rural area to a large city, where I was a minority in a meeting. We need to recognize our uncomfortableness with those who are different, we need to talk about inclusivity and help them to understand.

Conference Member Selected CAI Breakouts

Chosen Agenda Item Breakout Sessions

Forty-two Chosen Agenda Items were submitted by the deadline—three were submitted by Panel 58 Delegates; 12 were from Panel 59; 17 came from Panel 60; and ten were submitted by Panel 61 Delegates.

Prior to Conference, members were invited to vote for the 14 topics that were most important to them. This approach is designed to identify the natural grouping of overall priorities.

Conference members met in small group breakouts during Conference to discuss the three topics that received the most votes.

Topic:

Newcomers in a virtual world. How can we serve them?

Why this topic is important:

With all of the challenges facing Al-Anon with current conditions, what can we do to help serve newcomers better during times with limited and fewer face-to-face meetings?

Some comments included:

- Newcomers arrive at physical meeting sites only to find the site closed.
 - ◻ Some trusted servants have placed signs/notes with follow-up contact information.
- Easy to have before or after meeting meetings.
- Growth and attendance of members and newcomers at virtual meetings is phenomenal.
- Newcomers are returning to virtual meetings at higher rates than they returned to face-to-face meetings.
- It has been difficult to distribute CAL to newcomers.
- Give How *Al-Anon Works* (B-32) to newcomers with a phone list.
- Mail or hand deliver *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) and the *Al-Anon Newcomer Packet* (K-10).
- Regular members electing to come 15 to 30 minutes early.
- Older newcomers hesitate to use Zoom.
- It's difficult to identify newcomers because they may remain quiet and there are so many new faces including newcomers, observers, and members traveling from Zoom to Zoom.
- Many meetings were slow to post connection information.
- Many meetings are still uncomfortable posting online connection information.
- Anonymity issues.
- Zoom bombers threat.
- Offer encouragement to keep coming back.
- It is important to update the group information if the location is closed—either temporarily or permanently—and when the location opens back up.
- Post accurate meeting ID and passcode.
- Is anonymity compromised when virtually supplying connection information to every potential newcomer?
- When opening up face-to-face meetings, will groups open an hour early for newcomers?
- Are other platforms such as Gismo and Discord being utilized for connecting with newcomers?

Topic:

Maintaining the relevancy of the links of service in a time of increased and accessible electronic information.

Why this topic is important:

How does the growing rapidity with which information is revealed, shared, and disseminated impact the links of service from the WSO down to the GR? How can we hone our use of various electronic platforms to strengthen open communication, dialogue, and connections between trusted servants and members to ensure that a sense of relevancy and interdependent communication is maintained between all levels of the links of service?

Some comments included:

- Direct communication to GRs from the Area may bypass DRs. This is good when there is not a DR.
- Use a point person to disseminate information to “dark” Districts (a District that does not have a DR).
- Delegate should let DRs know about the importance of passing information on to the GRs. Use a GR/DR 101 session at Assemblies.
- Members want/expect instant updates to information.
- Include the Delegate on all emails reaching the Area website to ensure appropriate dissemination.
- Group email and group records need to be up to date to ensure information reaches the group.
- Too much information decreases connection through links.
- Many people need to hear information multiple times before they absorb it.
- How do we get timely information out without overstepping the links of service? *In the Loop* and multiple categories of AFG Connects creates multiple people with the same information. Who shares?
- We receive enormous amounts of information every day. Information can be broken down and shared in pieces.
- Share all of the details in a written report but only share brief highlights at Assembly.
- Offer specialized virtual gatherings on specific topics.
- Communicate, communicate, communicate.
- Use multiple platforms to connect with members.
- The DR doesn't always relay information from Delegate to the GR; the links of service breaks down.
- Some Areas don't understand the links of service.
- “Dark” Districts are a real challenge. Information does not get passed to them.
- Internet trouble is a big issue, especially in rural areas. Sending info by email may or may not be received. Zoom meetings are difficult.
- Collect sharable info from different sources, such as WSO, *In the Loop*, etc., and send electronic email to DRs monthly. An Area newsletter works well.
- Delegate has the opportunity to be creative and show leadership instead of just giving info.
- District can invite the Delegate in for more information, workshop, etc., virtually.

Topic:

What steps can we take today to let the young members of Al-Anon know that we take diversity and growth seriously and are working towards change and acceptance?

Why this topic is important:

Al-Anon has been discussing diversity frequently. Increasingly, new members who want to feel safe and respected are asking when change will happen. Members are questioning why newly printed literature (books, pamphlets, manuals) are using antiquated language. Young members often struggle to “find” alcoholics in their family tree and choose to embrace family nights at other programs. What can groups do to make everyone feel welcome while WSO moves forward addressing change?

Some comments included:

- In groups and at Area level one of the things that holds young members back is the wording in Steps and Traditions, and it would be difficult to gain world consensus on making any changes.
- In Canada, the word, “God,” is problematic—what can be done to overcome this? It is a legal issue if they’re trying to bring the word, “God,” into schools.
- In the U.S., the word, “God,” is a barrier in schools, too.
- Gender-specific pronoun issue should be discussed openly and not shut down when it’s brought up because it’s “too difficult to change.”
- Every time we’re at a meeting, explain to newcomers that the word, “God,” can be interpreted in any way we choose, we can help them remove those roadblocks by saying, “It’s up to you to decide what that is.”
- Point people to literature passages that discuss “God of our understanding” to help them find a Higher Power, as the wording is not likely to change soon.
- *The Forum* is published monthly. *Alateen Talk* is published six times a year. Let’s use *Alateen Talk* to reach new, young members.
- In our one-on-one conversations, focus on similarities rather than differences.
- Ask younger members what steps they’d like us to take to make Al-Anon more welcoming.
- “Let It Begin with Me.” Young people see us as old people. When they realize what they can find by attending meetings, age becomes less of an issue. Don’t judge their forms of expression.

Al-Anon Declaration

Let It Begin with Me

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen
always be there, and — *Let It Begin with Me.*



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

- Encourage younger members to step into service positions so our leaders aren’t all in an older generation.
- Ask Alateen members to do workshops at Assemblies.

- Hybrid meetings that would be more welcoming to younger people and working people, as opposed to the old model of driving to meetings. We have to be open to doing things differently.
- Younger people like podcasts. When they are out walking and doing things they listen to podcasts. Multiple podcasts like younger people talking about why they go to Al-Anon—having a series of that would be helpful.
- Diversity awareness and not bringing unconscious biases into the interactions. Older members may need to understand LGBTQIA+ or people of color, we need to make sure that we aren’t speaking from our unconscious thinking. Our own bias inventory—is it getting in the way of my being welcoming to new members? “Let It Begin with Me.” Treat each person the same as us, because everyone is there for exactly the same reason as others are.
- We need to support Alateens, we have lost many Alateen meetings in this pandemic.
- Alateens do not want to be treated like they are different. They don’t want to be discounted or made to feel that they made it here before life got too hard. Their experience is as valid as anyone else’s. The same thing carries over to younger newcomers. When people include younger folks in skits, projects, etc., then the younger member stays long enough to realize Al-Anon is for them.

CAI Discussion—Pros and Cons of Holding Discussions Outside of Conference

The purpose of the CAIs is to give all Conference members (Delegates, members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and voting members of the WSO administrative Staff) an opportunity to submit and select topics and issues of concern that affect Al-Anon groups and members worldwide. Including Chosen Agenda Item (CAI) topics has been an important tradition of the Conference for many years.

The results of last fall’s Chosen Agenda Items survey reflected several recurring themes:

- Allow more latitude for topics
- Delegates provide feedback all the time about topics of interest
- Have a “Time to Talk” or “Hot Topics” session to talk about topics of interest
- Timeframe for submitting topics is too short, especially for new Delegates
- Some want to discuss topics relevant to their Area, not worldwide Al-Anon
- There is not enough time to discuss all of the topics that are submitted

During a review of the survey results at the October Conference Leadership Team (CLT) meeting, a question was raised regarding whether CAIs have to take place at Conference. One option would be to have topics submitted throughout the year, therefore alleviating a short period of time for submitting.

In keeping with our 2021 World Service Conference theme, “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance,” the CLT agreed to have this discussion to consider the possibility of holding CAI discussions outside of Conference. What are the pros? What are the cons? The CLT invited Conference members to share their thoughts.

Conference members shared on this topic on AFG Connects. Here is a sampling of the responses:

- The concern I have is that if discussions take place outside of Conference, the voice of the members may get lost and may not be heard in the traditional sense of how a CAI is generated.
- Would love to see discussion of CAIs as an ongoing (quarterly?) activity as they represent the most current needs expressed from Areas on topics not formally being handled through other means/agendas. And the WSC would then be one of those ongoing places where CAIs are discussed (as opposed to only discussing CAIs outside of WSC).
- My thoughts on holding CAI discussions outside of Conference:

Pros:

- We could discuss more topics.
- We would have more time to submit and select topics.
- There would be more time to discuss—possibly more ideas could be generated out of the discussion.
- We would have more time to think about the topic before submitting our thoughts and comments.
- This could reduce the Conference agenda, which would allow more time for other discussions.

Cons:

- Holding discussions via AFG Connects is a bit more disjointed than live discussion at Conference, especially if we get multiple discussion threads running at the same time.
- Would still need some method to limit the number of topics to avoid overwhelming everyone, I don't believe it will ever be possible to discuss all of the topics that are submitted for discussion.
- Would be a challenge to keep the AFG Connects discussion threads on topic for each CAI.
- It seems like someone would need to collect the thoughts shared on AFG Connects and do something with that information, this could be a large task especially with more topics being discussed.
- I'm in favor of discussing CAIs year-round. Having year-round series of discussions on a virtual platform would enable us to cover more of these wonderful topics, while leaving time at Conference for other substantive discussions.
- I would not want it to replace CAI discussions at Conference. One loses the spontaneity of live discussions and the creative thought process that grows out of these.
- As was said at Conference, "Can we have our cake and eat it too?" We could continue our written discussions on AFG Connects but include a "Time to Talk" series either in conjunction with the new live Chairperson of the Board Letter presentation [trial] or as a stand-alone virtual conversation via web conference.
- There never is a perfect way to do Chosen Agenda Items that may please every single Delegate, and I am supportive that the CLT is open-minded and willing to change up the routine to try new ways so that we all feel like our suggestions are value added to the Conference process.
- Thank you to the CLT for putting this together. Having never yet experienced a face-to-face Conference, I must say that I

liked discussing them through AFG Connects last year. I agree that there is a very short period of time for choosing topics, especially for new Delegates, unless the previous Delegate gives them input.

- I'd like to see us hold two Conferences a year. A way to start this would be to hold what I'm calling a "CAI Virtual Quarterly Conference." We could meet online for a day (or two?) and utilize a variety of breakout room configurations to talk about what's going on in our Areas, our roles as trusted servants, WSO updates, etc. We could use this time to share Area updates and innovation. We could ask one another to share, and I know we would give one another support just by gathering together. I think that the Delegates should manage these with the full participation with WSO, the Board of Trustees, and other stakeholders.
- From these quarterly Conferences, I think we could elevate the level of CAI discussions and all stakeholders would have a fair opportunity to be involved in the development of bringing about issues and change for the betterment of the program.

ELECTRONIC MEETING WORK GROUP POLICY AND HANDBOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

J.P. M., Trustee, Electronic Meeting Work Group Chairperson

The report of the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG) was posted to AFG Connects prior to the Conference, so that members could become familiar with the proposals prior to Conference discussion.

The Chairperson introduced the members of the Work Group: Cindy M, Trustee; Karen W-P, Executive Committee member; Scot P, Associate Director—Digital Strategy; Sue P, Associate Director—Group Services; and Vali F, Executive Director, saying, "This was the hardest-working group I've ever experienced!"

Background

During its October 2020 meeting, the Board of Trustees gave the EMWG the following guidance and direction:

15. MOTION was made, seconded, and carried for the Electronic Meeting Work Group to proceed with the following ideas:

1. Per prior discussions, permanent electronic meetings becoming Al-Anon Family Groups.
2. Per prior discussions, an Area serving groups which meet electronically being created and added to the WSC to provide support and representation to AFGs Meeting Electronically that choose to be a part of that Area.
3. The option for AFGs meeting electronically choosing the Area/GSO/emerging structure where they want to register and through which they want to have representation. These groups would be registered as a part of the chosen Area the same as face-to-face groups in the chosen Area.
4. The AFGs meeting electronically language(s) supported would be determined by the service structure with which they registered. (unanimous)

Motion 15.1

Members of the Al-Anon fellowship have been meeting electronically since the mid-90's, originally via telephone. Since then, members share experience, strength, and hope through a diverse set of electronic platforms. These gatherings of members were originally viewed (and treated) as public outreach where non-members would hear about Al-Anon and then seek full recovery by joining face-to-face groups. Today it has become obvious that for many participants these electronic meetings are their primary (or only) gatherings for recovery.

In keeping with Tradition Three, these gatherings of relatives of alcoholics for the purpose of mutual aid meet the requirements to be called Al-Anon Family Groups. Currently they are recognized as only Al-Anon meetings but not groups and they register with the World Service Office with Current Mailing Addressees (CMA) but do not have Group Representatives (GR).

Recommendation - 15.1

The proposed change to the Policy Digest that you are asked to approve is allowing these meetings to be registered as Al-Anon Family Groups that only meet electronically. These groups, like face-to-face groups, will have all the service positions identified in the *Service Manual*, including an elected GR. Everything in the *Service Manual* will apply equally to all groups whether they meet face-to-face or electronically.

Motion 15.2-15.4

EMWG has reviewed the Handbook and determined existing procedures outlined within it will guide and support an Area forming to support Al-Anon Family Groups which meet electronically, for instance:

- The process for selecting a Temporary Chairperson to hold a first Assembly (page 145).
- The "Conference Procedures" portion (pages 165-166) describes the steps necessary for a newly formed Area to request admission to the World Service Conference.

The availability of this documented experience, strength, and hope reassured EMWG in concluding that little change to the Handbook text was required to allow for the creation of an Area supporting a non-geographically based grouping of Al-Anon Family Groups, such as would the case for Al-Anon Family Groups which meet electronically.

Recommendations - 15.2 & 15.4

Pursuing the Board's motion 15.2, EMWG investigated what changes were required to support the creation of such an Area. The changes primarily involved elimination of geographic restrictions or limitations as relates to boundaries and meeting planning.

- One of the most pervasive changes required involves eliminating the restriction for an Area to be defined by geographic boundaries. The definition of "non-geographically based grouping" was added to the definition of Areas throughout the Handbook.
- The terms "place" and "central location" were simplified to "location" as this term is understood to include both physical and virtual locations. Sometimes the text was removed in favor of more flexible meeting formats.
- Since "closed ballots" is often thought to involve physical paper, the term "confidential ballots" was adopted.

Given the magnitude of change being contemplated by this motion, the EMWG was pleased the foresight of our cofounders and

previous trusted servants required relatively little for us to recommend for text changes in the Handbook.

As relates to the Board's motion 15.4, EMWG realized languages for Areas within the WSC Structure are not defined in the Handbook. Instead, the languages available for any new Area within the WSC Structure would be guided by the Conference itself. Currently, the WSC Structure supports English, Spanish, and French and the Conference itself supports only English, notwithstanding the three-year trial supporting interpretation for all three languages.

EMWG also realized that Areas joining the WSC Structure agree to adhere not only to the principles of Al-Anon's Three Legacies but also to the current version of the *Service Manual*. No changes to the Handbook are required to support this expectation. This is handled through the group registration process.

So overall, the EMWG feels comfortable recommending to the Board of Trustees the attached changes to Handbook text to address both 15.2 and 15.4.

Next Steps - Motion 15.3

Contemplating what has been learned, and considering the independent nature of the international structures, EMWG did not feel comfortable making recommendations regarding 15.3 other than to suggest that:

- Any decisions related to registering Al-Anon Family Groups which meet electronically with General Service Offices (GSOs) involve thoughtful dialogue and conversation with these entities. EMWG would recommend such changes be undertaken as trials to allow for adequate consideration of consequences and impacts for GSOs and Al-Anon Family Groups which meet electronically.
- Any Al-Anon Family Groups which meet electronically registering with the WSC Structure or GSO consider and make informed decisions regarding not only language, service, and Seventh Tradition commitment but also which service manual it intends to follow to conduct its meetings.

The EMWG thanks the Conference for the opportunity to pursue this exciting phase of Al-Anon.

The two motions under consideration are to make changes to the World Service Handbook and the Policy Digest.

1. The Handbook changes will remove references limiting the formation of an Area to geographical boundaries, allowing the formation of a non-geographic Area.
2. The Policy Digest change is to remove the entire section titled "Electronic Meetings." This removes the restriction on these meetings being Al-Anon Family Groups.

Discussion

After the presentation, the discussion began. There were many questions, and additional time was added to the agenda to allow all questions to be asked and comments made. Conference members also posted their thoughts and more questions on AFG Connects. Representatives from French- and Spanish-speaking countries offered helpful wording suggestions for terminology around electronic meetings, which will be passed on to the WSO Translation Team. During the discussion session, the following reminders were cited:

- The new, non-geographic, non-panel Area has a lot of work to do to set up the Area and elect a Delegate in order to petition to join the WSC.
- The WSC Areas may want to consider accepting groups meeting electronically in the Area.

- WSO has to evolve technology and forms to support registration of these groups.
- GSOs/Evolving structures may want to consider accepting groups meeting electronically.
- In 2022, the WSC may be asked to decide to accept groups meeting electronically that have formed into the non-panel Area.

Here is a representative sampling of the comments and questions:

- I love the idea that electronic meetings will become groups. Will they be part of any geographic Area, where they originate?
They will initially be part of a non-panel Area which will hold an Assembly and elect a Delegate. They then can petition the WSC to join the Conference. After that, these groups could move to a geographic Area if both Areas agree.
- At the International Convention in 2018, I attended a workshop on electronic meetings. I could see how important it was to these members to be a part of Al-Anon. It touched my heart to see them meet face-to-face for the first time.
- I was an electronic meeting snob before the pandemic. Since then, I have found recovery in these meetings.
- If this non-geographic Area is represented at WSC, when do we address the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter?
That would be one of the next steps if this motion is passed.
- Would the non-geographic Area Delegate attend virtually?
That would be up to the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) as that is procedure, not policy.
- I am the CMA for a Spanish group on the Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App. I assume the group would be in the new non-geographic Area. People from all over the world are in these groups, what would be the process to join a geographic Area?
This is already outlined in the Handbook. The same steps are followed by face-to-face groups who wish to change Areas.
- This is a phenomenal and historic part of the creation of a new world. Many people are more comfortable in an electronic setting. This is long overdue. The limitations are our own thinking.
- My group wants to stay electronic after the pandemic, and I have concern that these former face-to-face groups might want to join the non-geographic Area. I would like to see the groups meeting electronically join existing geographic Areas. I fear this would create chaos.
We are providing guidance for the geographic Areas on handling requests from groups meeting electronically to join their Area.
- We are simplifying what seems to be a complex issue. Might there need to be more than one non-geographic Area?
As outlined in the Handbook (page 166), an Area can petition the Conference to divide once. We are not proposing to start that way, but the option is available.
- Will WSO continue to have groups on the Mobile App? Do groups pay to use the app for meetings?

The WSO is planning to continue to make the Mobile App available to registered Al-Anon Family Groups which meet electronically. The WSO does not charge groups to hold meetings on the App today. Groups meeting on the App typically demonstrate their Seventh Tradition by inviting their members to contribute directly to the WSO through al-anon.org.

- Could we try a trial period of the non-geographic Area?
This question was raised as part of the Policy Committee and Board of Trustees discussions on the EMWG recommendations. Volunteers and Staff recognized there was no easy means of reverting back from having an Area representing groups which meet electronically. It would be within Area or GSO autonomy to make accepting groups which meet electronically into their Area or GSO a trial.
- Are all electronic meetings automatically part of the new non-panel Area?
Yes, all permanently registered electronic meetings will become part of the non-panel Area automatically.
- Will the Alateen meetings taking place on the App be part of the new non-panel Area? Will new electronic Alateen meetings be allowed outside of the App? Can we get more information on how Alateen will fit into this?
As part of a Board approved 2021 Strategic Plan Strategy, WSO Staff are evaluating our Alateens preference for and the legal implications of expanding the availability of Alateen meetings on electronic platforms. Until that time, Alateen meetings are restricted from meeting electronically, except when due to the pandemic, in accordance with Al-Anon policy. The six meetings currently occurring with the Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App are part of a trial running concurrent to that project.
- Thank you for the presentation. It was mentioned this Work Group began five years ago. My question is how has the explosion of electronic meetings changed the direction of the EMWG's work, or did it?
It really didn't change much of the work itself. What did change is our members' perspective of how well electronic meetings could fulfill Al-Anon's purpose and how valuable and critical electronic meetings are to some members of the fellowship.
- If a current registered Al-Anon group, meeting temporarily as electronic, has decided to stay that way, do they stay with the current Area they are registered with? Or are they automatically moved to the new non-panel Area?
Decisions on these situations will require discussion. Technologically, system updates are required to the Online Group Records application before Area Group Record Coordinators can begin maintaining group information for any groups which meet electronically. This system update may take a year or more to complete. The WSO will work to align the timeframe with the timeline expected for Areas, in their autonomy, to make informed group decisions about Area procedures related to groups which meet electronically. (EMWG has created a guide for Areas making these decisions which will be posted, pending approval of Policy Digest and Handbook changes.)

- An electronic meeting in an Area would perhaps necessitate that any member must live in the Area or be willing to travel to the Area to stand for GR. I would like to know how you see it.

EMWG has created a guide and graphic for geographic Areas making group conscience decisions about their procedures for admitting and registering groups which meet electronically. The guide will be posted, pending approval of Policy Digest and Handbook changes.

- With regard to the electronic meetings becoming groups, I love this idea and hope that we can make it happen. I did however have two questions.

1. Is this something that the electronic meetings want or was this started by WSO?
2. It can be difficult, at least in rural areas, to keep track of groups that are active. How will groups meeting electronically be monitored to see if they are still active? (This may be an issue after this becomes a reality.)

1. Electronic meeting CMAs have participated in conversations with the WSO about their meeting needs and hopes and are very excited about the opportunity to be recognized as full-fledged Al-Anon groups within the fellowship.

2. Groups which meet electronically can be monitored in much the same way as face-to-face groups through the Reported Not Meeting feature on the al-anon.org website. This feature allows members who attempt to attend a group but find it not meeting to notify the WSO, and through the WSO to the Area, that the group is not meeting. Groups which are Reported Not Meeting are removed temporarily from the meeting search display until confirmation is received that they are meeting.

- I do appreciate your work. I support the goal of the EMWG. I attend electronic meetings frequently and love them. I want them to be part of the links of service. Making this new non-geographic Area recognizes that. It completes and widens the Al-Anon circle. Thank you for listening.

- Will there be an official way for electronic meetings to streamline the licensing requirements for trademarked CAL? Will there be necessary changes made to the *Electronic Al-Anon Meeting Guideline* (G-39), the *Fact Sheet for Electronic Meetings* (S-60), and a new electronic meeting registration form?

The Electronic Meeting Transformation Staff project involves updating group forms to incorporate simplified trademark and copyrighted material use agreements as well as other materials. The "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" section of the Service Manual will be updated as part of the next edition due in 2022.

- If an electronic group currently in another country (say Italy) wants to join my Area, would we then have to translate into Italian?

To accept the group and whether to translate would be the decision of the Area. The group might be better served by joining a structure in their language. The WSC will remain trilingual.

- This is a very radical change in the definition of an Area. Many groups in our Area are interested in staying electronic. I am afraid groups will leave our Area, and create an "us vs them" with the new Area. Could we do a three-year trial?

Groups changing Areas requires the approval of both Areas. I don't believe WSO can make them groups as a trial, but Areas can do a trial.

- Is there a mechanism for hybrid groups leaving Areas? Some face-to-face groups may move to a hybrid format.

If a face-to-face group decides to become electronic, we will handle that on a case-by-case basis. All are groups, they may be on different platforms or hybrid.

- This should attract younger members! When I take this back to my Area, can I ask to start a task force to start work?

Yes. You will have the packet with guidance. It's going to take work in each Area.

- I see the recommendations as years of work and perseverance. These Al-Anon members are asking to be recognized and serve. It is an opportunity for diversity; we need to think outside the box and they will reason things out. I fully support this.

- Is there a timeline to get all of this done?

The process begins immediately after approval. There is no "must" on a timeline. It would be nice to get it done in a year, but that may not happen.

- I am very keen on these decisions. Australia was considering just registering groups meeting electronically in our geographic Areas.

We are not asking GSOs to create an electronic Area, but just to recognize electronic meetings as groups. How to accept them into your current structure is your decision.

- What do we really need to do? What kind of things do we need to consider?

The guide will offer things to consider, additional positions, Districts, option of hybrid Assembly, etc.

- It is important to remember that nothing is being imposed on Areas. Areas may decide not to accept groups meeting electronically or to let groups leave. What we are doing is giving a large segment of our fellowship the same "rights" as all other members and groups.

- Will you explain what a non-panel Area is?

This term is used in the Handbook and is an Area being formed, that does not have a Delegate seated on a Panel, until they petition to join the WSC.

- My job is to decide if it's good for Al-Anon as a whole, not my Area or electronic meetings. I think it is.

- I support this for the betterment of Al-Anon. Would accepting an electronic group into an Area force the Area to have a hybrid Assembly?

This is up to the Area to decide. You can keep your Assembly face-to-face only.

- There is a huge amount of activity in our Spanish-speaking groups. I wonder if the new Area could incorporate these groups?

It depends on whether they are groups meeting electronically. If so, they would go into the non-panel Area. If they are registered in the geographic Area, they stay there.

- In the documents provided to us, it states on page three of the memo from the EMWG under motion 15.3, 2nd bullet point "...and Seventh Tradition commitment but also which service

manual it intends to follow to conduct its meeting.” Can you elaborate please? I thought there was only one service manual or does this cover GSO organizations in other countries? *Some other international structures modify the Service Manual to meet their unique needs. There is only one Service Manual within the WSC Structure.*

- I heard several folks talk about losing their groups to the non-geographic Area. This is like going in a different car to the family reunion. It doesn't matter what car you are in—it matters that you are part of a big family celebration. We are inviting 700 more members to the family!
- I have questions about the pamphlet *Fact Sheet for Electronic Meetings* (S-60) and the *Electronic Al-Anon Meeting Guideline* (G-39). Will those be discontinued or edited? Or do you feel we will be creating something new?

These documents will be updated to agree with the new policy.

After all questions had been answered and comments heard, two motions were made, seconded, and carried to approve the proposal. See Motions #6 and #7 on page 78.

INTERPRETATION AT THE WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

Norm W., Trustee

During the October 2016 Conference Leadership Team (CLT) meeting, members discussed a letter submitted by a Delegate regarding the use of interpreters for Spanish- and French- speaking Delegates at Conference. In 2018, a questionnaire was sent to the concerned Areas.

At the July 2018 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board discussed a recommendation brought to them by the CLT to offer professional interpretation beginning at the 2019 World Service Conference (WSC). The Board of Trustees approved a motion to adopt the CLT's recommendation to offer professional interpretation at Conference, with the understanding that it is solely for oral interpretation, not written translation of documents, when required by WSC Delegates. The project started in 2019 as a 3-year trial and will end after the 2021 WSC. At the July 2019 Board meeting, a motion was passed that the costs of interpretation be funded as a special project from the Reserve Fund.

At the January 2021 Board meeting, the Board discussed the continuation of interpretation at the WSC. A memo from the Executive Director, with financial considerations, was presented to the Board. A consensus was reached by the Board that in order to make a decision, feedback would be needed from the Delegates regarding whether they would like to continue interpretation at Conference, and whether the Areas would be willing to absorb the cost of interpretation at Conference as part of their payment of the full or Equalized Expense for WSC.

Some comments and questions included the following:

- It benefits an Area to choose the best Delegate candidate rather than being limited to English speakers. We have to think abundantly; we will find the funds. It should be added to the Equalized Expense.
- I visited an Area where they did a lot of interpretation. Since then, our Area has done much more translation, and found it has increased energy.

- The first WSC with interpretation was moving. I saw Delegates go from being frustrated, to being understanding, to being full of joy.
- There may be just two French-speaking Delegates, but lots of members behind them in their Areas will benefit.
- I was inspired by the Board's decision to create a three-year trial. Our Area has a new coordinator position for translation, trying to connect members in our Area. It's important to translate documents as well.
- Spanish-speaking members are embraced in my Area. Thirteen Districts opened a Spanish position. People feel welcome and included with translation.
- I just started translating all written reports and have gotten cards saying how much this meant.
- French- and Spanish-speaking Delegates have to translate all the documents they bring back.
- Our Area can support it financially, though we have no Spanish or French groups.
- Will the motion be for a trial period?

No, it will end the trial. The key point is adding this service to costs in the Equalized Expense. Continuing a trial is problematic, as the Areas don't know if it will continue.

- What happens if an Area can't afford it?
We are asking to add the service to the Equalized Expense. The amount will change from year to year.
- Per the Annual Report on pages eight and nine, I compared the sales of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) and found that approximately 37,000 copies were sold in English, 60 copies in French, and 900 in Spanish. While the emotional rate of return is high, the financial rate of return seems low. Will our members think translation at \$45,000 is prudent use of their donations? I do wonder what my Area will think when I tell them the Delegate expense rose \$800 for translation. Was translation for Spanish only considered? Could the Canadian Areas cover the expense of French translation? Do most Areas contribute the Full Amount or the Equalized Expense?

Translation for Spanish only was not considered. As a trilingual organization, if interpretation is being offered, then we would need to provide it for both Spanish and French if requested.

Some members made alternative suggestions to provide interpretation:

- Our Area has used closed-captioning for translations. There may be technology that could work.
- My city is very diverse. There is an organization that has a language line to translate to any language. Have we researched the options for translation?
- I support this but am concerned with the cost. Closed-captioned is a good option.
- To lower the cost for interpretation, could we look for member volunteers with the skills to do interpretation? Could the Board members or Staff interview members by web conference? Could it be volunteers or people who are partially paid, and could the Board look at some ways of having travel, room and board expenses paid when Conference is face-to-face?

- One possible solution might be to partner with a college/university and develop a program that would benefit both the educational institution and Al-Anon. Some of the benefits could include:
 - For the school, an opportunity for students to utilize their discipline in a “real world” scenario. This could be a course, work-study, independent study, senior thesis, etc.
 - For Al-Anon, because of the experience for the students and their programs, this could be seen as an opportunity for them at little or no cost for the WSO.

All members were thanked for their suggestions, which are all things that could be explored in future discussions.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the proposal. See Motion #10, page 78.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

The Literature Committee presented three separate recommendations during Conference. The three proposals were posted to AFG Connects prior to the WSC, to give the Conference members ample time to review them before discussion.

Just for Tonight for Alateen

The proposal was posted to AFG Connects in advance of the WSC, so that Conference members had time to review it before the Conference began.

Background: The WSO received requests from two Alateen groups in the same Area that love the new *Just for Tonight* Bookmark (M-81) and suggested development of an Alateen version, just as there is an Alateen version of the *Just for Today* Bookmark (M-13). The teens also included sharings for that purpose (eight in all). Before bringing the idea to the Literature Committee, the Staff Liaison sought input from the Associate Director—Group Services, who oversees Alateen services. She was not only aware of the request, but very supportive of the idea.

Discussion: Some Literature Committee members wondered in what ways a new bookmark would be any different than the Al-Anon version, and how the Alateen members who submitted the idea perceived it. Therefore, several excerpts from the sharings submitted were read to the Committee, indicating that the readings would be more specifically tailored to the expressed needs of the Alateen members. Like the *Just for Today* Alateen Bookmark, rather than presenting the perspective of adult Al-Anon members, it would be based on the ideas and sharings of the teens themselves.

The Committee felt that offering teens an opportunity to provide input and submit writings for consideration could increase their investment in and enthusiasm for the piece, especially since the WSO has not produced a new piece of Conference Approved Literature specifically for Alateens in 20 years. Submitted sharings not included on the bookmark could provide additional material for *Alateen Talk* and the “Alateen” department of *The Forum*. The Committee was unanimous in its recommendation of this idea.

During the discussion, many Conference members expressed immediate support for the idea. Suggestions included exploring other formats than a bookmark, perhaps a wallet card, or creating an electronic version. Many suggestions included ways to reach out to teens to obtain sharings for the piece.

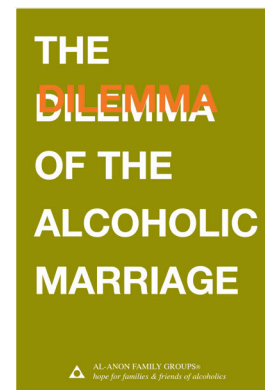
Questions asked included:

- What would be the timeline for completion?
It depends on sharings received. The response is good when Alateen Talk puts out a call for sharings. The Al-Anon version was completed in one year.
- What would be the cost? Is this a good time to spend money?
New literature creates a revenue stream, and producing a bookmark is not expensive.
- Does the motion lock us into a bookmark format?
The Executive Committee can approve changes in format.

Following the discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the proposal. See Motion #4, page 78.

The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage

Background: The following information reflects a discussion begun by the Literature Committee in November 2018. The conversation eventually led to a recommendation for a Conference discussion about adding a new preface to *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4), which would place the book in historical perspective, and developing a booklet of “gems” from this book, possibly also including some new material. Although originally planned for discussion in 2020, it was delayed until now due to last year’s abbreviated Conference.



The Committee began discussing this topic because of two separate requests from the fellowship to revise *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage*. Concerns of the first request included examples of advice-giving and “crosstalk” at meetings, members using “we” statements as if speaking for the group or the fellowship as a whole, and references to the husband as the “head of the household” or “boss.” The second request focused primarily on concerns that the book consistently assumes that the Al-Anon member is a woman and the alcoholic is a man.

Staff noted that a revision to this book was discussed by the Literature Committee in 2001. At that time, rather than revise the book, the Committee recommended that the Conference grant conceptual approval for a new book about alcoholic relationships. The motion carried and the book was released in 2008 as *Discovering Choices—Recovery in Relationships* (B-30).

In initial discussion, members mentioned that although this book is one of our oldest still in print, sales continue to remain strong—better, in fact, than *Discovering Choices*. While this could be attributed to many factors, including a lower price, a smaller page count, and a distinct title, Committee members agreed that the principles of Al-Anon are strongly defined, which provides much value to the book’s readers.

In June 2019 the Committee continued its discussion. In reviewing the replies to the KBDM questions, it became clear that no one solution had majority support, and that there were a variety of options that seemed equally viable. These options were:

1. Archive/discontinue the book
2. Keep printing the book exactly as it is
3. Include a new preface for the book, but otherwise include it as is
4. Rewrite the entire book
5. Print the current book with a new preface and print a booklet that includes "gems" from this book, possibly also including some new material
6. Create a new book about alcoholic marriages and print a booklet that includes "gems" from this book
7. Discontinue the book and print a booklet that includes "gems" from this book.

In September 2019, the Committee continued discussing this topic, after listing the pros and cons of the seven options.

Recommendation:

In recognition of the many members for whom this is a book that has helped them a great deal, and the fact that it is part of Al-Anon's history, the Committee eventually agreed unanimously to recommend a new preface, as well as development of a booklet made up of "gems" from this book that could include some new material. This booklet could appeal to those members who appreciate certain portions of the book, but who find the more dated aspects of the book unappealing.

In discussion, many Conference members valued the information in the book, but agreed that it is dated. One member suggested discontinuing the book, but most supported keeping it. A member suggested a special cover to celebrate the new addition with the next printing.

Questions asked included:

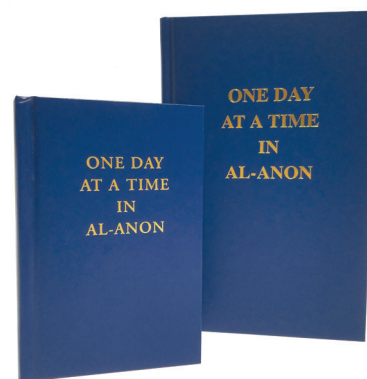
- Would the booklet be sold with the book or separately?
It would be sold separately.
- Was changing the title discussed?
A title change was not brought up in this discussion. It has been previously suggested. The book does talk about marriage.
- Would the preface also apply to General Service Offices (GSOs) in other countries?
The GSOs are not required to print everything that we do, but they usually want to make updates when we do.

Following the discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the proposal. See Motion #12, page 78.

New Introduction for *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*

Background:

In April 1966, the sixth World Service Conference unanimously approved a Literature Committee proposal to develop a book of daily readings, modeled after a daily reader for recovering alcoholics. In September 1968, *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (ODAT) made its debut. In 1978, the WSC carried a motion that no change could be made to the ODAT without "majority approval of the full Conference in session." Since then, only housekeeping changes (such as correcting typos, punctuation changes, changes of address, and style presentation) have been made to the book. Fifty-two years later, the book remains one of our most popular books.



In recent years, the number of concerns received by the World Service Office about *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) has dramatically increased—whether about specific readings or what some members consider the dated or non-inclusive language of the book as a whole. Since 2004, the Literature Committee has received at least 14 individual requests to revise specific pages of the book, none of which have been recommended to the World Service Conference.

At its September 16, 2020 meeting, the Committee discussed another such suggestion from the fellowship to revise the book, and again decided against making any recommendation for change. Then the focus of the discussion shifted to consider possible ways to help members see the book in historical perspective of the time in which it was written. This included ideas such as officially "freezing" the text and providing the subtitle, "Classic Edition," but eventually rested on the idea of creating a new introduction to the book, similar to the Committee's recommendation for *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4). This could provide an historical perspective on the book, and at the same time emphasize the timeless nature of Al-Anon's spiritual principles that the book so wonderfully exemplifies.

During discussion, many members expressed support for the proposal, citing the value of the book, though much of it is dated, so the added introduction is a good solution. On the topic of the religious nature of some sharings, the Associate Director clarified that we respect the individual sharings of writers, and how they refer to their Higher Power.

Questions asked included:

- How long would this take?
It won't take long to develop the new introduction, but when it is reprinted depends on stock in the warehouse.
- When going online to buy, people can't see inside the book. Could there be some historical perspective posted for online orders?
We can certainly do that.
It was also pointed out that when purchasing electronic books, content can be reviewed before purchase.
- Could a sticker be put in books that are in the warehouse?
We will take that under consideration.
- There are several quotes included in the book that are very religious, specifically Christian in nature. Since those are not from the sharings of Al-Anon members, what would it take to replace those?
Because of the 1978 WSC Motion regarding this book, such an action would require majority approval of the full WSC in session. This motion could be made by a

Conference member or from members submitting an idea to the Literature Committee. Then it would be up to the Committee whether to bring a motion to the WSC, and up to the WSC to approve.

After the discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the proposal. See Motion #15, page 78.

MEGA ISSUE: ENCOURAGING MEMBERS TO BECOME TRUSTEES

Norm W., Trustee, Work Group Chairperson

Jean L., Trustee • Jeri W., Trustee • Marianne B., Trustee

The time set aside at Conference for a “Mega Issue” discussion is designed to help us explore, “In what ways can we encourage and support members to share their skills and talents to fulfill the needs of AFG Headquarters, Inc. as a member of the Board of Trustees?”

Background: In 2018, in response to Delegates’ requests for increased participation at the World Service Conference (WSC), the Board of Trustees (BOT) chose to provide an opportunity for Conference members to experience idea-generating conversations, much as the Staff, BOT, and Executive Committee do when a new issue is raised. Thus, a more inclusive and innovative format was developed in which Conference members could identify and discuss ideas on a topic of importance to Al-Anon worldwide. The “Mega Issue” discussion is designed to be more spontaneous and less structured than the past WSC “Big Question” discussions were.

In 2019, the Mega Issue discussion centered around the possibility of a Hybrid Conference. Who knew then how timely those discussions would turn out to be! The 2019 WSC evaluations revealed, and the Board agreed, that the Mega Issue discussion format was very dynamic and successful. As a result, the Board agreed to repeat the Mega Issue format again at the 2020 WSC.

Context: At the October 2019 Board meeting, a discussion of the Nominating Committee report led to concerns that the BOT was not receiving enough qualified candidates to fill its needs. It was felt that input from the Delegates may help address the situation by gathering information about barriers that may prohibit qualified members from sharing their talents on the Board. It may also help provide more information to the Delegates about what is required, so more members will consider stepping forward.

This topic was initially selected for the 2020 WSC Mega Issue. Due to the 2020 WSC being held virtually, the Conference agenda was shortened which resulted in the 2020 Mega Issue not being part of the agenda. At the July 2020 Board Meeting, Board members voted to present the 2020 Mega Issue topic at the 2021 WSC.

Relevance: Lacking volunteers to serve as Trustees can severely affect the primary administrative responsibilities of the Trustees in accordance with Concept Six, as well as the balance of power described in Concept Seven. Concept Nine is about primary leadership, which the BOT assumes. The descriptive text in Concept Eleven explains the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to “...aid the Trustees in discharging their main obligation to see that all vacancies within the Board of Trustees are filled with those of the greatest competence, stability and industry,” as well as the necessary skills and diversity. A Board that does not have a full composition may lack the wide range of experience, strength, and hope necessary to lead Al-Anon into the future. Outreach, fellowship support, connection (like Area visits, Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect, etc.) may be limited because of a reduced number of Trustees.

By identifying barriers, sharing thoughts on removing these roadblocks, and providing information, we hope to be able to encourage more members to share their gifts and talents as Trustees.

Keep in mind Al-Anon’s spiritual principles as expressed in Al-Anon’s three Legacies during this conversation. We value your thoughts, suggestions and comments; it’s important to have a voice around this topic. Because change takes time, no immediate action will occur as a result of this discussion. However, the Board will continue the conversation, considering your input.

The “Mega Issue” discussion takes place in three sessions over the course of the Conference. For the format of the first session, the BOT will begin by seeking additional insights from Conference members in response to the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions. From these insights, the problem is refined.

The second session includes brainstorming and prioritization of potential solutions. The final session focuses on identification of the positive benefits and potential risks of the solutions. These sessions will be guided by the utilization of a parallel thinking process that allows Conference members to better separate thoughts into six clear functions and roles. Each thinking role is identified with a colored symbolic “thinking hat.” By mentally wearing and switching “hats,” Conference members can more easily refocus or redirect thoughts during spontaneous conversations.

Conference Discussion: The discussion took place in three one-hour sessions during the Conference.

In the first session, Conference members brainstormed ideas using the KBDM questions, identifying possible barriers that may keep members from applying to become a Trustee. The answers generated from the KBDM session were posted to AFG Connects for members to review before the next discussion. The Work Group highlighted the key ideas.

The second session asked Conference members to think creatively in looking at the ideas and facts that had been generated, looking for potential solutions and new directions. They then were asked to share their feelings and gut reactions to the list. Again, the ideas were posted, and key ideas were highlighted.

In the third session, Conference members again reviewed the list and were asked to think as “devil’s advocate,” looking for possible pitfalls and problems in the list. Finally, they were asked to look for the advantages and benefits of the list—the good things and why they could work.

It was an intensive exercise, giving lots of good feedback to the Board moving forward, as they look for ways to increase interest in serving as a Trustee. The Work Group Chairperson closed the final session by saying, “What’s next? Where do we go from here? We value your thoughts, suggestions, and comments. Because change takes time, no immediate action will occur as a result of this conversation.

“Thank you for adding your voices and ideas to this exciting Mega Issue discussion about encouraging Trustee candidates! Thank you for your awesome participation!”

MEMBERSHIP AND LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

This proposal was posted in advance of the Conference on AFG Connects, so that members would have time to review it before the Conference discussion.

Background

In 1986, the World Service Conference (WSC) passed a motion that a survey of the Al-Anon fellowship be conducted once every three years (1986 WSC Summary, p. 46). Since that time, the survey has been executed every three years starting with paper surveys and evolving to digital surveys in 2018. The transition to digital surveys has allowed us to reach more members than ever before.

World Service Office (WSO) Staff began the process of developing the 2021 Membership Survey in 2020. In this process, Staff reached out to research professionals in the field of alcoholism/addiction asking for their opinions regarding our survey process, validity, and legitimacy. The responses were positive, in that these professionals felt the WSO process was good and the results were valid. The biggest question they raised related to the lack of a control group. A control group is a group that displays similar symptoms but are not “treated” or are provided a placebo. In this case, finding individuals affected by someone else’s alcoholism who are not attending Al-Anon meetings would be an ideal control group, but the likelihood of assembling such a group is very low.

The professionals suggested an alternative would be to conduct a longitudinal study, which would consist of asking the exact same group of members the exact same questions over a period of five to ten years. This would allow the WSO to track an Al-Anon member cohort—a group of individuals with a statistical factor in common—to understand the impact consistent Al-Anon membership has on mental health, etc. As with the Membership Survey, the data would be anonymous, and all results would be reported at an aggregate level. A suggestion from a researcher was to make the raw anonymous data available to other researchers, who could then run models and provide another viewpoint on the impact Al-Anon has on members’ wellbeing.

At its July 2020 meeting, the Board of Trustees discussed the initial proposal for a Longitudinal Study and requested that Staff:

- Ask professionals to review our survey questions.
- Ask professionals to seek guidance on how to best ensure the results are random.
- Ensure a large enough survey group to include dropouts.
- Identify whether the longitudinal study is expected to run five or 10 years—consider the dropout rate.

Based on this feedback, Staff reached out to mental health professionals as well as researchers including BRX Researchers, the organization which executed the 2015 Membership Survey, and an academic from Stanford University who conducts longitudinal research. They both provided valuable insight about the questions as well as other best practices to help ensure success.

One important suggestion Staff received about executing a successful longitudinal study is the value of developing and maintaining ongoing, frequent communication with members of the test group (cohort) to increase the probability of future responses. By keeping them engaged regularly, Longitudinal Study participants are more likely to complete the annual survey.

The professionals also made suggestions regarding selection of the Longitudinal Study cohort. The key segmentation for the Longitudinal Study is to be time in the Al-Anon program. In order to fulfill the goal of tracking enough members in the four groups of segmentation—two years or less, three-five years, seven-ten years, ten-plus years—over the lifetime of the study, Staff is planning to increase the segment sizes of the newcomer and longtime member groups.

As a result of these two recommendations, Staff has chosen to offer only English-speaking members the opportunity to opt-in to participate in the Longitudinal Study. English-speaking respondents in past Membership Surveys have been the largest language segment represented. Additionally, given Translation Team constraints, this group is also the easiest for Staff to communicate with frequently and regularly. Longitudinal Study participants will be selected at random from those Membership Survey members who opt-in.

We would like this to be trilingual, but according to the last membership survey, Spanish and French members accounted for just 3% of all respondents. And considering the need to maintain an ongoing dialog with these members to ensure higher completion rates for subsequent years, this could become too resource intensive and put the entire project at risk.

Both researchers expressed confidence that a five-year Longitudinal Study would be adequate to achieve the goal of generating valid data and insights to demonstrate to professionals the long-term impacts of attending the Al-Anon program.

Recommendation

To implement a Longitudinal Study which enables Staff to complete analyses and glean insights into the ongoing impact of the Al-Anon program on members, and to offer researchers the opportunity to conduct independent analysis of the anonymous dataset to supplement and corroborate Staff findings and insights.

- Longitudinal Study participants to be selected from members who opt-in when completing the 2021 Membership Survey
- Participant members to be contacted via email and asked a set of ten questions—the questions will not change from year-to-year—each year for a period of five years beginning in 2022 through 2026

Discussion

Discussion was held following the presentation in session and via AFG Connects.

- Professionals always want more data, so this is an excellent idea.
- What are the associated costs of a five- vs ten-year or longer study? Has there been a cost/benefit analysis relative to the study?

There are no incremental out-of-pocket costs associated with the study, nor would it cost more to run it longer. We decided on a five-year study to better ensure quality results at the end of the study. If after this study we learn that members have a high level of engagement throughout the entire period, we could always consider extending it and/or starting a new study. We have not conducted a cost/benefit analysis relative to the study as the primary costs associated are Staff time and the WSO has a Data Analyst on staff who would be facilitating this study as part of his regular duties.

- Approximately how many people are needed for the study?
Since this is our first opportunity to conduct a Longitudinal Study, we were not entirely sure what to expect as an engagement rate; but we would want at least 33% of the members who opt-in to complete the five-year study.
- Is there an expected success rate of the survey? Is there a percent of responses that you are looking for to call the survey a success? I can see that it could be difficult to track progress consistently if you don’t have the same people answering the survey every

time it's taken. The progress of the recovery has to be based on the same people answering the survey, not half one year and the other half the next year. I am a little fuzzy on how to calculate true results.

This is a great clarifying question. In order for members to stay in the study they will be required to complete the survey each year. We are hoping with ongoing communication and with some of the suggestions, including sharing the results with the cohort we will have a strong level of engagement. If a member does not participate for any of the years, they would be removed from the study for any future periods.

- At a time when we are moving forward as a trilingual fellowship, I think it is sad that we do not include French and Spanish. Just as we mentioned today how important it is to open our hearts and minds to what the diversity has to say and what are their needs.

In order to have a successful Longitudinal Study, one of the recommendations is for Staff to develop and maintain ongoing and frequent communication with the members of the test group to ensure that they will complete each annual survey. English-speaking participants will be easier for Staff to communicate with on a regular basis due to Translation Team constraints. The questions would only need to be translated one time, but this ongoing communication would have to be translated each time. So, it is our plan to do English-speaking, but we can expand it in the future.

After all questions were answered, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the Longitudinal Study. See Motion #13, page 78.

POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Alateen Preamble

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

The background and proposal for changes to the Alateen Preamble were posted to AFG Connects prior to the WSC, to allow Conference members the opportunity to review and ask questions prior to the Conference.

Background: In September 2017, the Literature Committee discussed two members' requests for revisions to the Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps. If the Committee agreed, it would need to present a recommendation to the Policy Committee, which is responsible for approving changes to the Preamble, Suggested Welcome, and Closing. Although the Literature Committee agreed that the Alateen Preamble could be more comprehensible and comprehensive, it was reluctant to make changes to a document that has been in use for so long if only two members had concerns. It agreed to postpone any recommendation until additional members of the fellowship expressed concern over the text.

Around the same time, unbeknownst to the Committee, the Associate Director—Group Services sought the input of the Policy Committee Chairperson regarding how to initiate a revision of the Alateen Preamble. Research in the WSO Archives revealed that a recommendation would first need to be submitted to the Literature Committee. If the Committee agreed, it would submit a recommendation for revision to the Policy Committee.

At the December 2017 meeting of the Literature Committee, further background information on the topic was presented from the Associate Director—Group Services, which was followed by discussion. The Committee agreed unanimously to recommend revision of the Alateen Preamble to the Policy Committee.

In January 2018, the Policy Committee began discussion of the topic by first reviewing the background framing for the recommendation. This included concerns that the Alateen Preamble currently uses the words "our parents," therefore excluding siblings, guardians, other relatives, friends, etc. The Literature Committee expressed that this was not welcoming to or reflective of many potential Alateen newcomers.

After considerable discussion, the Policy Committee unanimously decided that a Task Force led by WSO Staff needed to be created to determine specific wording changes to be recommended. By show of hands, the Policy Committee agreed that WSO Staff would determine who would serve on the Task Force. The charge and timeline of the Alateen Preamble Language Task Force was given as follows:

Charge: To recommend to the Policy Committee changes to the Alateen Preamble that will ensure its language is welcoming to potential teenage newcomers who are affected by someone else's alcoholism and can be translated into the three official AFG, Inc. languages.

Timeline: To provide an update at the July 2019 Policy Committee meeting, post a draft by September 1 for Policy Committee review by September 10. Submit proposed text for review during the October 2019 Policy Committee meeting, and make final revisions for review at the January 2020 Policy Committee meeting. The goal is to have text ready for presentation and subsequent approval during the 2020 WSC. Due to the abbreviated 2020 Conference, the proposal could not be considered until 2021.

Once assigned, the Task Force Chairperson and another WSO Staff member collaborated on finding 1) a member from the Literature Committee, 2) a current Area Alateen Coordinator, 3) a current active AMIAS with Alateen Group service experience, and 4) an Alateen member to serve on the Task Force.

The Task Force was formed and provided with the charge, archival information, and current language of both the Alateen and Al-Anon Preamble. The Task Force conducted three web conference calls and multiple email conversation threads in order to develop the revised language for the Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps, which it agreed unanimously to recommend to the Policy Committee. The Task Force found the proposed revision to be reflective of teens affected by the family disease of alcoholism, as well as their connection to Al-Anon, which is why the Al-Anon Preamble was used for comparison.

The Policy Committee, in turn, approved the new wording and now recommends it to the WSC for Conference approval.

Discussion: There was lengthy discussion of the proposal. Most Conference members were supportive of the changes, but some expressed concerns that there was not enough Alateen input. Staff clarified that though there was only one Alateen on the Task Force. The participating adult Alateen trusted servants did seek feedback from Alateen members in their Areas. Numerous specific wording changes were suggested, but most felt the changes made were for the better.

It was asked what would happen if the motion were delayed to next year to get more feedback from Alateen members. Since the next printing of the *Service Manual* (2022-2025 edition) will be in

early 2022, the current edition of the Alateen Preamble would be included. The Conference was reminded that future changes can always be made.

After all comments and questions had been made and answered, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the changes to the Alateen Preamble. See Motion #5, page 78.

Bequests

Thérèse S., Trustee, Bequests Task Force Chairperson

The proposed change to the Policy Digest was posted to AFG Connects prior to the World Service Conference (WSC), so that Conference members had the opportunity to review and ask questions before it came to the floor for discussion.

The background for the proposed change was as follows: The Group Services Staff raised a question regarding the second paragraph under the “Bequests” portion of the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” (Policy Digest) section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) version two (2). After discussion, the question was referred to the Policy Committee for clarification and consideration. The Policy Committee members reviewed the question via AFG Connects and agreed a task force needed to be formed to review this paragraph.

The Task Force was charged to review the second paragraph of the “Bequests” portion at the top of page 105 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) version two (2). The paragraph appears to form part of the “Bequests” portion text; however, the content seems applicable to the “Contributions to WSO” portion of the Policy Digest overall. After review, the Task Force was to recommend the best placement for this paragraph.

The Task Force met by web conference and after reviewing and discussing the second paragraph agreed it belongs right under the “Contributions to WSO” portion because the subject of anonymity and earmarking applies to all the subjects under “Contributions to WSO,” not just to the “Bequests” portion.

Following brief discussion to clarify the change, a motion was made, seconded and carried to approve the change. See Motion #3 on page 77.

Interim Housekeeping Actions Task Force

Teri M., Trustee, Task Force Chairperson

Background:

At the October 2017 Policy Committee meeting, members participated in a discussion about suggested changes to the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) version two (2); the proposed changes would remove specific references to the publication *Getting in Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen*. The Policy Digest lists the publication by name and describes the kind of information that can be found in it (see page 88 in the *Service Manual*).

An Interim Actions Thought Force completed a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process that explored whether or not it would be practical, and useful, to have a procedure for taking interim Conference actions.

The recommendation from the Thought Force was that interim Conference actions for the Policy Committee should only be used for housekeeping issues, like the issue that brought this discussion about. The Thought Force believed this would be the best place to begin with interim actions for now. The Thought Force also recommended that “a Policy Task Force present the Policy Committee with a proposal of how an interim action could be implemented. The

Thought Force also recommended that the Task Force define ‘housekeeping’ changes.”

In April 2019, an Interim Conference Actions Task Force was formed with the charge to: “Draft procedures to allow for the presentation of Policy Committee Interim Conference Actions to the World Service Conference.” In the procedures, the Task Force should also define what constitutes a “housekeeping issue.”

Charge:

Define “housekeeping changes” as they apply to the Policy Digest. Clarify the steps to be taken by the Policy Committee and/or the Staff leading to approval of housekeeping changes within the Policy Digest. Present a recommendation to change the procedure for approval of housekeeping changes to the 2020 WSC.

Task Force Work

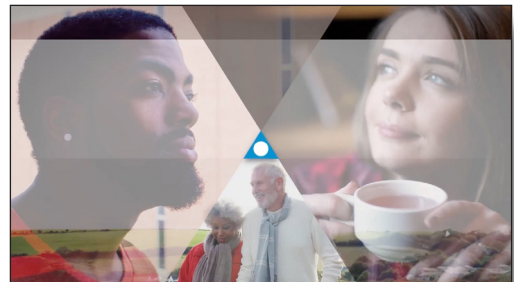
After numerous emails and phone conversations, the Interim Housekeeping Actions Task Force brought their ideas to the full Policy Committee for further discussion. Based on the Policy Committee discussion, there was a consensus to present a motion at Conference to allow the WSO Staff to make housekeeping changes to the Policy Digest. The guidelines and procedure the Staff will use follows.

Proposed procedure for applying housekeeping changes to the Policy Digest

1. Staff routinely reviews the Policy Digest for housekeeping changes (as identified in the “Policy Digest Housekeeping Examples” listed below) as part of the maintenance of the document, as well as in preparation for a new version or edition.
2. Staff applies housekeeping changes to the master document using “Track Changes” and informs the Translation Manager of the changes.
3. Staff uploads a clean copy of the master document to the website.
4. Staff categorizes the changes (such as “added the Oxford comma,” or “corrected typos on pages 37 and 38”) and informs the Policy Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the Conference members of the changes.

Policy Digest Housekeeping Examples

1. Correcting typos, such as “Alanon” instead of Al-Anon or “Ala-Teen” instead of Alateen, and grammatical errors and adding words that were accidentally omitted from Policy text.
2. Removing obsolete terms, processes, or pieces of literature which are no longer in print.
3. Updating the name change of literature or documents referenced.
4. Updating text to adhere to the WSO Style Sheet.



Following a brief discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion # 11 on page 78.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

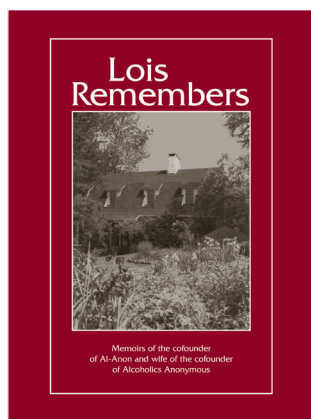
The Associate Director gave the Conference a preview of the new PSA, saying, “We are excited to share with you our new PSA featuring the ‘Benefits of Al-Anon Recovery.’ While the faces and voices are actors, the quotes are from Al-Anon members, taken from the 2018 Membership Survey and reviewed by the Public Outreach Committee Social Media Work Group.”

The PSAs were streamed for the Conference in English, French, and Spanish. After the session, Conference members were provided with links to the PSAs so that Delegates can show them in their Areas.

STEPPING STONES

Sally Corbett-Turco, Stepping Stones Foundation Executive Director

A visit to Stepping Stones, the home of Lois W. (our Cofounder) and her husband, Bill W., in Katonah, NY is usually held every third year during the Conference. The visit to Stepping Stones is usually ranked as one of the peak World Service Conference experiences by Conference members. For many members, visiting Stepping Stones is much more than a sentimental journey, it is a “spiritual homecoming” to the birthplace of our fellowship. Lois started our organization in 1951, with the hope that others would carry it out. Thus, Stepping Stones is an important link from Al-Anon’s past to our present and future. Chapter 13 in *Lois Remembers* (B-7) contains Lois’s personal reflections about life at Stepping Stones and Al-Anon’s formative years.



As the Conference was virtual this year, the Executive Director and Site Operations Manager of the Stepping Stones Foundation provided a narrated and illustrated “tour” highlighting the Katonah, New York and archive of Lois W. and Bill W. Stepping Stones, while a separate entity, was invited to provide a history presentation in the spirit of cooperation. The home is listed on the state and federal registries of historic places and it was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 2015. Outside of Lois’s Al-Anon service, she founded the Stepping Stones Foundation, which maintains and shares Lois and Bill’s 110,000+ manuscripts, eight-acre gardens and grounds, Bill’s writing studio, “Wit’s End,” and the home and all its contents. They work to maintain the house and contents as they were when Bill and Lois lived there. Photos and other materials from the extensive collection highlighted Lois’s and Bill’s early years, the story of their relationship, some of their international service and connections, and the history of the home. They married just before he went to war in 1918. Interestingly, it was from his fellow soldiers that Lois learned of Bill’s drinking problem.

After losing their Brooklyn residence of her childhood, they lived in 51 places during the two years before moving into Stepping Stones in April 1941. Lois loved to work in the flower and vegetable garden. She planned the landscape, including the plants and trees, and she dappled the grounds with blue birdhouses. Inside the house, most of the furniture is from Lois’s family. Bill and Lois both loved music. She played the grand piano and he the cello and violin.

There were houseguests in residence much of the time. Additionally, Lois was prepared for 40 or so people who would drop in for coffee on Saturdays. On the home’s second floor is the desk where Lois and Cofounder Anne B. wrote letters to the 87 prospective members, which led to the naming and founding of Al-Anon Family Groups. The house is filled with memorabilia. Lois organized the upstairs into what she called the “gallery.” Her display included books; items from their travels; gifts; family photos; letters and photos from early A.A. and Al-Anon pioneers and friends; items from international conventions; banners from events; and much more.

Conference members were invited to ask questions and to share their reflections on the Stepping Stones virtual tour following the presentation and on AFG Connects:

- A Delegate shared that her father wrote to Lois to express thanks to Al-Anon from his A.A. groups; she has the response from Lois.
Letters can be donated or can be added to the electronic archives.
- I attended the Stepping Stones virtual family picnic last summer, and that was a wonderful experience, so I didn’t think I’d be surprised by anything on this visit, but I was! I was surprised at how spiritual this visit also felt—how loving and thoughtful the caretaking of the property and memories has been, and the deep connection I felt to a modest home and garden.
- Amazing presentation, it felt real as if we were actually present, and only makes me want to visit all the more. We have that on our list of places to visit when travel is again permitted.
- My first thought is “Thank you” for coordinating the virtual visit to Stepping Stones. The walkthrough of the house was touching for me. I enjoyed hearing all of the background of what occurred in the rooms many years ago that brings us to where we are today. I have always thought that in order to understand where we are today, we need to respect and understand our past. Bill and Lois were spiritual people who were trailblazers for the fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon Family Groups. In reflection, I think about where I am today as a result of our Higher Power showing the way to be a part of this fellowship. I owe so much to this fellowship that I could never put a price on what I could give back compared to the benefits received.
- I was pleasantly surprised how powerful the Stepping Stones virtual tour was. I completed the tour feeling a renewed desire to revisit Al-Anon’s history and immerse myself once again in accounts of Bill and Lois W.’s journey of recovery.
- When our tour guide talked about all the cups of coffee that were consumed at the kitchen table, I was overwhelmed with our heritage. What a legacy we have! Looking at the office upstairs, I remembered the story of Bill approaching Lois to set up a way a fellowship of the families and friends of alcoholics could connect. Her response was no. They had just gotten a house. She wanted to garden and “be domestic,” but she listened to her Higher Power and became willing to accept the responsibility. Where would I be if she hadn’t changed her mind?

- It was truly an overwhelming experience and really helped reinforce the history of our program and the importance of our service work in continuing Al-Anon Traditions. And I was pleasantly surprised how this was still accomplished in a virtual format.
- I really enjoyed getting the tour of Stepping Stones and learning more history about our program. I felt emotional being able to see the place I have heard about for years. I also enjoyed learning more about Bill and Lois and their interests outside of recovery. I liked how they even try to keep Lois's gardens with the same variety of flowers. I can't wait to visit.
- A heartfelt thank you for arranging this special visit for us! It was one of the many times I had to reach for my tissues. My heart swelled with love and gratitude a million times over during Conference week, and this visit was especially meaningful. Can't wait to get there in person! I am still intrigued by the image of Lois with the Ouija board.
- Even though I have visited Stepping Stones for the annual Al-Anon picnic, the images still brought tears to my eyes and gave me goosebumps. The presentation was wonderful, and I learned many new things about Bill and Lois's life together. Thank you for the opportunity to visit in a whole new way. I'm looking forward very much to next year!
- The tour of Stepping Stones was very touching. My tears flowed as I watched. I appreciated Lois's letters, and I liked seeing and hearing about their hobbies and interests. It reminded me of all the beauty of life that comes (or comes back) as one works one's recovery.

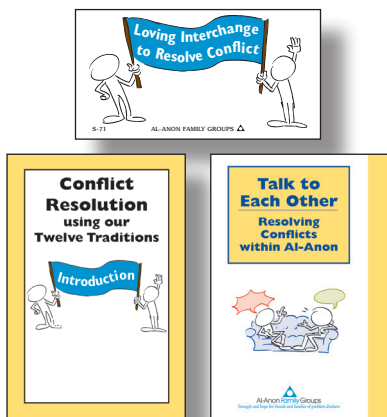
TASK AND THOUGHT FORCES

Task Force: Conflict Resolution

Terry W., Panel 59, Virginia, Task Force Chairperson

Prior to the presentation, a comprehensive conflict resolution packet was posted for Conference members on AFG Connects. The packet included step-by-step ideas for holding a workshop on the topic.

The presentation began with a short video introducing the presentation, along with a skit depicting an Al-Anon meeting entering into conflict until a member thinks to bring out the conflict resolution tools.



Background: The Conflict Resolution Task Force was charged with the task of preparing a workshop that can be used by any Area, District, or group. They were asked to utilize the *Using Al-Anon Principles to*

Resolve Conflicts Kit (K-70), containing three elements: The *Loving Interchange to Resolve Conflict* Wallet Card (S-71), the *Conflict Resolution Using Our Twelve Traditions* cards (S-72), and the *Talk to Each Other—Resolving Conflicts within Al-Anon* booklet (S-73).

The Task Force was also asked to take into consideration Concept Five: “The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.”

The Task Force Created a Workshop Template, with two parts:

- Part One includes a four-member panel discussion.
 - Each member presents for 10-15 minutes after which there is a Question and Answer/comment period.
 - Topics to cover:
 - Coping with Conflict
 - Speaking Respectfully
 - Active Listening
 - Incorporating Concept Five into our discussions
 - The discussion would include an Introduction to the skits/breakout sessions which would follow.
 - This panel discussion could also be used as a stand-alone workshop.
 - Another option could be to use Part One as the first part of a daylong workshop, followed by breakout sessions.
- Part Two includes three skits with breakout sessions to follow.
 - The suggested length is 45 minutes each. This would allow for rotation by members between sessions for exposure to all three Conflict Resolution Kit components.
 - Each skit introduces a Conflict Scenario in a group, District, or Area.
 - In the post-skit discussion:
 - Practice using Al-Anon spiritual principles to resolve conflict
 - Use the *Conflict Resolution Kit* to guide discussion
 - Allow time for participants to share about the workshop
 - Each of the three breakout sessions could stand alone as a 60-to-90-minute workshop, with the addition of a short introduction to the conflict resolution practices covered in Part One's Panel Discussion materials.

The workshop goal is to use the wisdom of Al-Anon principles found in the *Conflict Resolution Kit* and Concept Five to have a loving interchange regarding conflict. We always want to keep Concept Five in mind because every voice is important to have a loving interchange: “The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.”

During discussion, there was high praise from Conference members for this presentation.

Comments included:

- I will use this at an upcoming workshop
- Thanks for the hard work. This could have helped in a recent conflict.
- The document is incredibly thorough.
- The workshop will be really helpful.
- I have used the Kit before. It is very effective.

Following the presentation, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members where they would like to go from here. Suggestions included:

- I would like to see the workshop posted where it is accessible to the membership.
- Send it out in *In the Loop* with a link.
- I will take this back to my Area and would like to post on our website.
- Make a podcast with people interacting using the card.
- Can the video be made available?

The video file size is too big to distribute, WSO could potentially do a streaming option from our website.

The Chairperson of the Board thanked the Conference members for their feedback, saying that the comments will be discussed at the July Board meeting.

Task Force: Using the Concepts in Personal Recovery

Anu B., Panel 59, North Carolina/Bermuda, Task Force Chairperson

At the beginning of Conference week, the Task Force posted two scavenger hunts to AFG Connects with answers to be found in the *Service Manual* and various Conference Approved Literature (CAL). A PowerPoint presentation, titled “Cooking with the Concepts,” was also provided, that goes through the scavenger hunt answers with time for discussion in a workshop setting. This provides a fun and educational exercise to be used in the Areas.

The Task Force’s Conference presentation provided another workshop format to Conference members. In this presentation, titled “Concepts Camp,” there is a brief explanation of each Concept, how it is used in Al-Anon service, and then a list of questions that individuals can ask themselves to help them in applying the Concept to their personal recovery. The Conference presentation included a recorded member sharing to accompany each Concept. The presentation can be modified to include live or recorded local sharings.

Here is a capsule of the presentation:

Frequently the only place we hear of the Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service being applied is in service. Many members do not know that these can also be used in our personal recovery.

This Concept Camp is meant to be used in a meeting or Assembly to go through the Concepts of Service in our personal recovery at home, work, and in groups other than Al-Anon groups.

This Concept Camp has a sports camp theme. We can go through this in 45 minutes, and it can be expanded on to include “live” member sharings in addition to the sharings of members in the notes. There are two slides for each Concept. The first slide states the Concept and asks us to consider several questions related to applying the Concept in our personal recovery. The second slide has a member sharing and provides an opportunity to invite members to share their experience, strength, and hope on the Concept.

Concept One: The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.

Concept One is about sorting out responsibilities. Many of us who have lived with alcoholism don’t have a healthy understanding of what we are and are not responsible for. To apply this Concept in my life I must take responsibility for myself and not try to be the ultimate authority in my family, work, or any other groups.

- What is my responsibility in my personal relationships?
- Who is the ultimate authority in my relationships?
- How can I help make my family groups healthy and vital?

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

Concept Two deals with delegation and authority. Delegating can be difficult for those who have learned to do everything themselves, those who struggle with perfectionism, and those who have lost trust in others.

- Can I learn how to share responsibility, authority and decision making?
- Can I state my view, and Let Go and Let God?
- Can I communicate, and listen, courteously?

Concept Three: The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.

How could I communicate with my fellow trusted servants in a way that reflects mutual trust and accountability? Can I listen to others’ ideas and opinions without clamoring to speak? How do I respond when a change to my plan is suggested? Am I open to the possibility that another course of action or decision might work better?

Concept Three reflects the benefit of a creative working atmosphere which allows for changed minds and new information, versus a rule-book atmosphere. It’s about placing my trust and confidence in the trusted servants and supporting them in their roles.

- Do I make good decisions for myself?
- Do I trust others in their decision making?
- Can I learn to cooperate with others and support them, even if I think their decision is questionable?

Concept Four: Participation is the key to harmony.

When I look at myself through the lens of Concept Four, I ask myself the following questions:

Concept Four



Par-tic-i-pa-tion is cooperation in five syllables

- Do I realize I belong?
- I am a part of...
- Do I respect myself and others?
- Can I keep an open mind?
- All our voices are important!

Concept Five: The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure they be heard.

Embedded in Concept Five is the right for the group conscience not to change and not to force solutions. Remember, though we have the right to be heard, we don’t have the right to be right.

This Concepts reflects spiritual principles of courage and equality.

- How do I encourage others to voice their opinions?
- How willing am I to speak up if I am in the minority?
- How willing am I to listen to my family or co-workers?
- How can I keep an open mind to different ideas?

Concept Six: The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.

In personal recovery, Concept Six is about shared responsibility and shared leadership. What does shared leadership mean to me?

- How is Concept Six a spiritual principle?
- How can I apply this to my work life?
- How can I apply this Concept to my family life?
- How does this Concept relate to Concept Three and Al-Anon's "links of service"?

Concept Seven: The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.

In every group I contribute to harmony by acknowledging my role and its obligations.

- How can Concept Seven apply to my home/work life?
- What are the things that are out of balance in my life?
- What can I do to balance my spiritual aims with my practical living situation?

Concept Eight: The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.

Concept Eight embodies humility—I trust others to carry out our routine obligations and remain willing to seek and offer support when needed.

- How are the management tasks in my home/work life delegated?
- What responsibilities or jobs am I willing to delegate to others?
- Once I delegate a task, am I willing to trust the results?
- In what areas of my life have I had difficulty trusting?

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

Concept Nine is about integrity and leading by example.

- What qualities of leadership have I developed in service?
- How has a growing spirituality led me to the right roles in service?
- How do I act as a leader in my personal life?
- Do I know when to allow others to assume the primary leadership?

Concept Ten: Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.

Concept Ten is about balanced responsibility. I must honor boundaries that come from careful definition of responsibility and authority.

- To what extent am I involved in double-headed management at home or work?
- Am I involved in any situations where one person has responsibility while a different person has the authority?
- What kinds of guidelines and definitions would I need to know before I accepted responsibility for a project?

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

Concept Eleven is about cooperation, collaboration, and unity.

- What roles do I play in my home life? At work? In my community?
- What principles can I focus on to ease the transition between working alone and with others?
- When I delegate a task can I give a general idea of the expected outcome and let go of the process?
- How well do I trust others to do their jobs?

Concept Twelve: The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

This Concept and Warranties are about presuming goodwill, trusting my Higher Power's guidance, and practicing prudence and balance in all my affairs. This Concept reflects the wisdom of all 36 Legacies.

- How do I incorporate prudence into my financial affairs?
- How can I communicate effectively with my family and co-workers to reach decisions that are good for the entire group?
- Do I allow my family members/co-workers the right to think for themselves? Do I presume goodwill as a way of showing mutual respect and love for them?

The floor was opened for sharing. Conference members were unanimous in their praise for the Task Force and its work, some saying it was the best they had seen on the topic. Many Delegates plan to use it in their Area. Several said they would like to see the material in our literature, perhaps in a booklet.

Following the presentation, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members where they would like to go from here. Suggestions included: make it available to everyone, make it into a piece of literature, use an excerpt each month in *The Forum*. The Chairperson of the Board thanked the Conference members for their feedback; the comments will be discussed at the July Board meeting.

Thought Force: Dreaming Big—Envisioning Our Future

Carol S., Panel 59, Montana, Thought Force Chairperson

The 2020 Conference theme, "Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision," led to the formation of this Thought Force. A "Potential Strategies Discussion Handout" was posted to AFG Connects a week prior to the Conference, so that Conference members would have discussion questions in advance.

The Thought Force's charge was to consider Al-Anon's history, from the Area perspective, and envision what the future could hold. In order to envision the future, we had to ask ourselves the following questions. What needs to be replaced in order to evolve? What was and is important and must not change? Using 20|20 vision, what might Al-Anon (from the Area perspective) look like in five, ten, or 20 years? What are barriers to "Dreaming Big" and envisioning the Area's future? With these questions in mind, we had to develop strategies that could be used to "Dream Big" and envision the Area's future.

The first part of our charge was to look at our Areas' histories and see what had to change or evolve. Since alcoholism has no demographic, societal, or economic boundaries, the makeup of our Areas has changed over the last 70 years. Our membership has evolved from

being wives of alcoholics to children, spouses, friends, colleagues, and partners, to name a few. However, our membership is still predominately white. Looking at our histories, we found that many of the barriers that existed in 1951 still exist today. Communication has evolved from making telephone calls, writing letters, and sending postcards to groups and Districts, to communicating through emails, blogs, and Area websites.



Today, technology has made meetings more available to lone members, changed our Areas' public outreach strategies, and made communication among groups, Districts, and Areas more fluid and timelier. To be more inclusive, Areas have had to rethink requirements for service positions and/or create new service positions. While attitudes, biases, and perspectives have somewhat changed in our Areas, we still have more growth to experience.

After looking at our Areas' histories, we discussed what must stay constant in Al-Anon. We decided that the three Legacies, the spiritual principles, and the program of love must remain constant. Spiritual principles include: love, autonomy, participation, listening, courage, safety, acceptance, spiritual program—not religious, diversity, good leadership, fellowship of equals, service Sponsors, unity, trust, living in abundance, ever widening the circle, compassion, respect, and open-mindedness (i.e., being nimble, flexible).

As Lois stated in *Lois Remembers* (B-7), "...these [spiritual] principles must continue to grow or we as a society will perish. For stagnation is retrogression. There is no standing still." (p. 195)

The next portion of our charge was to envision how our Areas would look in five, ten, and 20 years. Five years from now, during the 75th birthday of Al-Anon, we envision an extension of the technology that began in 2020.

- We will see the addition of hybrid communication (a combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings) in group, District, and Area meetings, while incorporating language interpretation and translation for all.
 - We see the Area Delegates attend two World Service Conferences a year, one being virtual and one being face-to-face.
 - And we will see hybrid groups and electronic meetings become part of the Area service structure. In addition, hybrid groups are registered and contribute representatives for District and Area positions.
- It is envisioned that Al-Anon brings hope and solutions for anyone where alcoholism is a problem.
 - Alateens are transitioned smoothly into Al-Anon meetings.
 - And technology-enhanced Assemblies show an increase in attendance, with young people participating, and a diverse group of members holding service positions. Similarly, coordinator positions will have expanded to include a Technology Coordinator and a Diversity Coordinator.

In 2031, ten years from now, we envision that Area Al-Anon members will be younger and from diverse ethnic, cultural, and societal backgrounds.

- Dynamic, integrative, virtual communication platforms are used by the links of service.
- Evolving service positions have resulted in greater participation at the District and Area level. For example, it is envisioned that at the Area level over 50% of groups are represented at Assembly and more than 90% of Districts in an Area have District Representatives.
- Last, but not least, through virtual and face-to-face public outreach, Al-Anon is the first tool professionals recommend to help the families and friends of alcoholics.

Twenty years from now in 2041, the 90th Birthday of Al-Anon, it is an inspiring year, as our membership has grown and become even more diverse. In our Areas, members have a variety of meetings to choose from, and routinely stay connected to the Area service structure. Groups that meet electronically are directly linked to the service structure: Districts, Areas, Regions, and/or Zones.

After dreaming about how we wanted the future to look, we considered what some of the barriers are that keep us from achieving those goals. In order to move forward, and to "Dream Big," we in Al-Anon must not be afraid.

"Living with the fear of what might happen can be emotional static. It occupies our minds and blocks us from moving forward." (*Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* [B-29], page 31).

Fear of discomfort keeps us from stepping out and taking on a new position that helps us, and our groups, grow. Our fear of conflict keeps us from trying a new technique to reach those around us who may need to hear the message of Al-Anon. We fear how we may be perceived by friends, family, and fellow members in service, as well as group members, if we give more of our time or suggest something new. "Once we become aware of our propensity toward fear and worry, we can begin to take steps to change our attitudes." (*Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses*, p. 32).

As we have learned in Al-Anon, as we let go of fear, we increase our capacity to share, to trust, and to love. From *Paths to Recovery* (B-24), "Some members say fear stands for false evidence appearing real" (p. 39).

Another barrier to dreaming big is complacency. It is that feeling of being satisfied with where we are and who we are, so that we no longer think any change is necessary. *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) reminds us, "Smug complacency is often at the root of family dissension" (p. 197).

Complacency can cause us to lose touch with how we felt when we came into this program, and how it helped us. Eventually, we can fall into thinking that our group, District, or Area is working the *right* program and has all the answers. The idea that "we've always done it this way and it has worked" keeps us from progressing. It may cause us to limit our perception of who needs the Al-Anon program or keep us from reaching out to others in need—especially others who are different from us.

Finally, service gaps are a barrier to dreaming big. We have begun to view service as work instead of a path to recovery. Or, when we do serve, we can overcommit, and we may experience burnout. In other cases, our comfort zone, "isolation," keeps us from finding a Sponsor and growth through the Steps. At other times, we may be stalling, or not completing Steps One, Two, or Three, because we are afraid of what comes next—hindering us from moving forward.

How can we carry this message of help and hope to others, and practice the spiritual principle of widening the circle, when we ourselves haven't even made it to Step Twelve? As stated in *Hope for Today* (B-27), "Al-Anon believes that our benefits are measured by our willingness to share them with others" (p. 101). In the end, we can't give away a program, when we have nothing to give.

The last portion of our charge asked us to develop strategies that might be used to help our Areas "Dream Big" and envision the Area's future. So, what is a strategy? A strategy is a plan of action designed to achieve a major or overall aim.

According to our 2018 Membership Survey, the current makeup of Al-Anon members in the WSC Structure is 97% English-speaking, females 61 years of age. They are 92% white, 65% college educated, and attend for an average of 14 years, with 99% attending face-to-face meetings. They attend one or more meetings a week.

Electronic meetings have given us a peek into Al-Anon around the globe and an insight of our need for greater diversity. Subtle, perhaps even unconscious, prejudice and complacent, fearful attitudes can block individual growth, and the growth of the fellowship—especially for the newcomer stepping outside cultural beliefs and seeking relief from the family disease of alcoholism in our meeting rooms.

The disease of alcoholism divides and conquers, creating attitudes among everyone affected. As with any growth process, change can sometimes be painful.

Tradition Five guides us to welcome and give comfort. Anonymity unites our fellowship by removing individual status so we can listen to the *message* rather than the *messenger*.

Lois W. wrote, "I used to believe *thinking* was the highest function of human beings . . . I now realize *loving* is our supreme function. The heart precedes the mind" (*Lois Remembers*, p. 196).

Some strategies to overcome biases and attitudes:

- Use of the bias inventory created by the 2018 WSC Task Force: Celebrating Our Differences and Common Purpose, to address our Area's biases, and challenge us to move out of our comfort zone.
- When conducting business meetings or group conscience meetings, encourage the spiritual principles of participation and minority opinion—Concepts Four and Five.
- Invite diverse members to speak at meetings and Area events.
- Form Tradition study groups and take group inventories.

Having goals and creating a vision for three-to-five years from now is important, so we don't remain in the same place. Let's face it, if you do not know where you are going, you might wind up somewhere else. Do we envision the future and set goals to reach the dream?

Some strategies for setting goals are:

1. Use KBDM and establish thought forces and task forces to develop an envisioned future (10 to 15 years), set Area goals (three to five years), Area objectives (two to three years), and Area strategies (one to two years) to ensure the goals and objectives can be met.
2. Use the 2020 WSC Fear of Change Thought Force (and the skit) to open the discussion on fear; so that Areas can replace the fear of the unknown with our primary spiritual focus.
3. Review and update descriptions of coordinator and officer positions every three years. For example, an Area might need a Website Coordinator, a Technology Coordinator, or a Diversity Coordinator.

Goal setting, the use of technology, and strategic planning will help us to be more inclusive in our Areas. We envision the result to be that more men, members of the LGBTQIA+ community, young people, ethnically diverse members, and people from different cultural, religious, socio-economic, and language-speaking backgrounds, will carry out service.

- Possible strategies to be more inclusive in our Areas might include:
 1. Language interpretation and/or translation for all
 2. Creation of a Diversity Coordinator position
- Service strategies might include holding an Al-Anon Service Day or weekend and considering inviting WSO Staff or Volunteers to attend.
- Technology has become an important tool for keeping members informed and involved, especially since the pandemic. Some strategies for Areas to expand the use of technology include:
 1. Review and update (or create) the role of Area Technology Coordinator or Webmaster.
 2. Incorporate technology into Area and District meetings and establish hybrid and/or virtual Area meetings, so that all members can participate.
 3. Utilize technology to make service beyond the group level easier to perform.
 4. Create technology teams to provide training sessions prior to the meetings and ensure technical help is available during virtual meetings in order to ease the transition.
 5. Develop discussion boards, so that all members of the Area structure can communicate and share information.
 6. Utilize technology to encourage multiple Areas to come together to share experience, strength, and hope.
 7. Create an Area electronic newsletter and make it available to all Area members, at all levels of Area service, to improve communication and involvement of members.
 8. Utilize technology to collect and distribute the Seventh Tradition.

Lois was "Dreaming Big" in 1951 when she and Anne ordered and mailed 1000 copies of *Purpose and Suggestions for Al-Anon Family Groups* (P-13) to groups.

When we do public outreach in our Areas, how can we dream big instead of just offering solutions?

- Network with other organizations in your Area who are seeking diversity through dialogue, leadership, and action. Consider creating cultural mentors in public outreach and consider electronic outreach to teens at middle and high school levels.
- Support the *Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App*.
- Use WSO digital media at health fairs and community events and/or to send electronic messages to professionals.

Following the presentation, the Thought Force posed the following questions to consider:

- How will your Area look in five, ten, 20, or 30 years?
- What strategies will you use to overcome the barriers to change, so you can achieve your Area's envisioned future?

The response to the presentation was very positive. Members shared: that some Areas now have a Diversity Coordinator; the presentation will be great to use in the Areas, either in person or

virtually; it was excellent to include CAL quotes; the presentation was very thought-provoking; it's important to encourage our members to take the Membership Survey.

Following the discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked the Conference for their ideas on the next steps for this presentation. Some comments included: Turn it into a service tool or a podcast, with guidance on how to do strategic planning; use as a workshop with instructions and a skit; goals are not a one-time activity, do it every few years.

The Board Chairperson thanked Conference members for their input, saying that the next steps would be discussed at the July Board meeting.

TIME TO TALK

In November 2020, when the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) invited Conference members to submit Chosen Agenda Items, the CLT included the results of the Chosen Agenda Items (CAI) survey that Conference members took in August 2020, as well as some of the recurring themes that were reflected in Conference members' comments.

One suggestion was to hold a "Time to Talk" session.

In keeping with the 2021 World Service Conference theme, "Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance"—the CLT held "Time to Talk" breakout sessions during Conference. Prior to Conference, the CLT selected 13 discussion topics initiated by Delegates from the WSC Members community on AFG Connects, and during Conference, members discussed the three topics that received the most votes.

Topic:

Returning to face-to-face meetings—looking for experience, strength, and hope

Some comments included:

- AFG Connects has some great discussion threads on certain communities with members detailing what they have done in preparation to resuming face-to-face meetings and in creating hybrid meetings, Assemblies, and conventions.
- Many groups want to go back to face-to-face, but their location facilities aren't yet open so are still meeting electronically.
- Some groups did not choose to go electronic and just shut down.
- Hybrid meetings have had some technology logistics to be worked out, but once worked out they have been successful.
- Higher vaccination rates, depending on location, are driving people to want to return to face-to-face.
- Some meetings are planning on staying electronic until all feel safe. There is concern over young new members that have joined electronically and the group wanting to stay hybrid to accommodate new electronic members.
- Zoom meetings are the new normal. Members are comfortable now and some may not want to go back to face-to-face. In some home groups, there isn't much talk about going back to face-to-face.
- There are a lot of people who work and can't leave home who are comfortable with Zoom—saves time. Hybrid may be a long-term solution for some groups.
- Electronic meetings are on the upswing and perhaps face-to-face meetings may not be the main way to meet now.

- Some members are really enjoying re-connecting with meetings that they haven't been able to physically attend, so groups have decided to stay hybrid to keep these members. Some groups going back that aren't doing a hybrid component have lost some members, and it's important for groups to consider options for all members.
- There is hope among members that as vaccinations continue restrictions will be lifted and comfort levels will increase to facilitate more meetings returning to face-to-face.

Topic:

Group inventories in a virtual world

Some comments included:

- Loss of anonymity because members now share their written answers with the Group Secretary who then reads the responses. When we met in person, members could write, then place their shares in a basket so when they were read, they were anonymous.
- PTSD from group inventories in the past. Now in a virtual format, the inventories have more mutual respect.
- We leave room each week for members to speak up about concerns.
- We have not done group inventories since the virtual format began. We do a monthly group conscience to address group concerns.
- Group inventories can feel like a report card. There is no written process on how to do a virtual group inventory.
- We have not done any virtual group inventories, but we have done group conscience virtually.
- I'm concerned that members at the group level will not feel safe to share their concerns. We need a format for members to express their concerns anonymously.
- There was a hybrid meeting doing a group inventory. The discussion was about using the Lord's Prayer. The face-to-face meeting and virtual component could not agree.
- There were many references to AI-Anon guidelines G-8a and G-8b for use in a group inventory or group conscience. Several participants felt these guidelines will work for hybrid/virtual meetings as well as face-to-face meetings.

Topic:

Share your hybrid Assembly, hybrid District meeting, and/or hybrid AI-Anon Family Group meeting experiences.

Some comments included:

- Technology is an issue for some.
- Some groups maintain the virtual setting while others in the group meet outdoors, which causes a split.
- Groups trying hybrid complain/comment people in room get more attention and people on Zoom get left out. It's also hard to see.
- Our tech team had a session before the Assembly to get others prepared—not many people took advantage of that.
- Set expectations low; it takes time to work out the kinks.
- Before the pandemic, we did hybrid and got a ton of pushback initially. People get stuck in their own ways. I don't know if the Area will go back to face-to-face Assemblies. Our members like the convenience of being virtual.

- Technology becomes a barrier to having a good meeting.
- Trying to be all things to all people is not effective.
- My home group that has been meeting virtually now has two regular attendees from other areas who feel like they're a part of us and they don't want to stop coming. We will need to go hybrid if we want to continue having them.
- Young adults have been instrumental in getting everybody trained. We have a service role for tech support.
- If you have a roomful of people with laptops, they need to silence their laptops and listen only to the one laptop that we have for the Chairperson at the podium with a microphone on the camera unit.



SHARING OURSELVES

BEING OF SERVICE TO AFG, INC.

What Surprised Me Most as a Board Member

Thérèse S., Trustee

In 2015, I arrived in Virginia Beach as a new Trustee with my Al-Anon and my professional experience. My maternal language is French, but I worked for seven years in an English-speaking environment, convinced that I was perfectly bilingual, but without an opportunity to practice on a daily basis for about 30 years. So, my first surprise was to realize that the words did not come! Al-Anon has taught me that for every problem there is a solution. So, I took an advanced English conversation class at University. The words slowly came back.

Another surprise came from the Mentor who was assigned to me. She was more than I had ever wished for, the perfect person I needed, with whom I shared a room. She believed in me and helped me become successful. From that very special mentorship, a profound friendship emerged.

Becoming a Trustee gave me the opportunity to integrate more profoundly, the spiritual principles through the Traditions and Concepts. I met some amazing members for whom *in growth, there is no standing still*. It gave me the opportunity to participate in the creation of beautiful projects, to continue the work of our pioneers, and to ensure that Al-Anon will always be there for the generations to come.

In 2016, I was chosen as a Canadian Trustee to go to Rome, Italy for the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). When I arrived at the meeting in Rome, I met some Al-Anon members from countries around the world. It was a very emotional moment because 20 years prior to this IAGSM meeting, I attended the first Open House for the World Service Office (WSO) in Virginia Beach. After I had visited the Associate Director—International's office where I saw a world map that included 33 pins with colored heads that indicated countries that had a national service structure, I shared with my friend that I would be coming back to serve at WSO one day. Here I was in Rome, sharing with members from all over the world. The map I had seen 20 years earlier had become a reality. It was a spiritual moment that I will never forget!

Doing service at this level helped me move from *I* to *us* while at the same time learning to take care of myself and respect my limits, with the help of my Higher Power.

What still surprises me today, is how a Work Group can start a project with a plan, have no idea at the beginning what the final product will look like, and finally create something that is a beautiful masterpiece.

The Board of Trustees Acts as the Chief Service Arm of the Conference

Norm W., Trustee

Paragraph 10(b) of the “Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter” states, in part, “The Board is the chief service arm of the Conference, which is guardian of Al-Anon’s Twelve Traditions... the Board has responsibility to determine policy and manage the business affairs of the WSO.”

Concept Nine tells us in part, “In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.” The descriptive text to Concept Seven explains that the Conference has the “great

responsibility for and authority over all aspects of Al-Anon’s program and policies.”

The descriptive text of Concept Seven focuses on the balance between the powers of the Conference and the Board of Trustees and our ability and the necessity of our working together. Both the Conference and the Board are vested with great powers. Seldom should these ever be fully exercised. How do we balance these seemingly contradictory rights and powers?

In both my time in service, and in my personal recovery, I have learned that my Higher Power’s will is best served when the pendulum is in balance, rather than at one extreme or the other. My experience is that this balance is best arrived at through communication and in the spiritual listening—inherent in Concept Five. The Board, as the Conference’s chief service arm, must create an atmosphere where communication is encouraged and respected.

We work together in harmony and trust, presuming goodwill, to seek the greatest good for the greatest number. In service, I have been repeatedly faced with my need to be right and my desire to control. Instead, I must seek Higher Power’s will and set aside my ego. In my time as a Trustee, I have learned a great deal about the spiritual nature of being a trusted servant. I have grown so much closer to the God of my understanding, my Gentle Spirit. In all matters, I must pray to do Spirit’s will.

As the first Conference Goal tells us, “The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of Al-Anon’s core principles in action.” By focusing on trust, unity, listening, respect, and kindness, rather than on personalities, we heal together. By offering the opportunity to be heard and understood, we can walk together, grow, and carry out our mutual obligations to advance the program we all love so dearly.

How Do Trustees Become Board Officers?

Gail G., Trustee

When I was encouraged to submit a résumé as a Regional Trustee, my first reaction was typical with, *oh no, I couldn’t do that*. But I woke up one morning with a feeling that I needed to apply. I have a *spiritual longing* to be “part of.” I decided to just see what God, as I understand Him, wanted. I knew at that time that I could truly be grateful for the experience of just applying, even if I wasn’t accepted.

Well, I was accepted onto the Board of Trustees for a first three-year term and as I started on this journey a whole new learning experience unfolded. I really had no idea how it all worked when I first applied. I learned that the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a self-electing working Board with three Officer positions: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Treasurer. These positions are also Board-elected, and each Trustee has the opportunity to apply. Every year following the October Board meeting, all Trustees are asked to submit a résumé for the position they feel they could serve in. These résumés are then vetted by the Nominating Committee and candidates’ names are presented to the entire Board for discussion and voting. If no résumés are forthcoming, there is an alternate process used to find a candidate. Once the Board has voted, the slate of Board Officers is then presented to the WSC for affirmation. Following that, Board Officers are then officially elected at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees and they begin serving their one-year term immediately.

In April 2020, I was elected as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. This was both an exciting, humbling, and daunting situation for me. I had only served on the Board for one year, and I would have felt much more comfortable with a lengthier “internship.” Serving as a Board Officer propels you into another whole level of service. As Chairperson, this meant more travel, more time commitment, more responsibility, and a huge learning curve. I am forever grateful to all the people who were there with their knowledge, support, and wisdom which was so graciously shared with me. I definitely was “part of,” and I believe that my Higher Power leads me where I need to be. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to have served as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

Future Trustees! Have You Thought about Serving?

Nancy S., Trustee

One of the first Al-Anon tools I picked up was the *Service Manual* (P-24/27). I read it because I thought that knowing how the organization worked would help my recovery. And it did. One of my favorite sections is the Twelve Concepts of Service; and now that I’ve served a year on the Board of Trustees, I have a much deeper appreciation for, and understanding of how the Trustees serve Al-Anon—both the Corporation and the Fellowship.

From my study of the Concepts, I knew there were Trustees, but I didn’t fully understand who they were or how they served until becoming one. I didn’t even apply until my Sponsor suggested it for the second time. Sometimes it takes me a while before an idea sinks in.

My Sponsor said that applying wasn’t a guarantee that I would be elected, and to trust the outcome to my Higher Power. So, I applied online, and promptly forgot about my application until I received a phone call that I was being considered! The interview was virtual, our meetings for the last year have been virtual, but the service is real.

The Board meets quarterly with a packed agenda for Board Week. In between Board Weeks, members of the Board serve on Task and Thought Forces, Committees, Project Teams, and Work Groups in order to fulfill our responsibilities. Sometimes the workload seems like a lot—because it is—but it’s always been manageable. This service work is perfect for me because I like knowing how all the moving parts fit together. And, as you can imagine, there are a lot of moving parts in Al-Anon!

As I study the Concepts today, I am reminded that when the Trustees are mentioned, that means me and the rest of the Board! As my Sponsor reminds me, I’m not in this alone. The Alateen slogan reminds me that “Together We Can Make It.” I also have a Board Mentor—another Trustee to whom I can ask all my questions, and who shares her experience, strength, and hope with me.

It is a big commitment and the most intense service work I’ve performed as a member of Al-Anon. I am filled with gratitude to have this opportunity to better understand what it takes to keep Al-Anon operational. After each Board Week, I am exhausted and refreshed at the same time. I hope you’ll consider applying to join the Board!

ECRPM—Oversight and Management of Real Property Owned by AFG, Inc.

Kay R., Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson

New to service in 1997, I attended a Northwest Regional Delegate’s meeting where I heard about the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) for the first time. I knew it was related to the move from our New York office to our new building in Virginia Beach. I was intrigued and wanted to know more. After

reading *Conference Summaries*, it became clearer—the ECRPM was in effect, the landlord for the World Service Office. The book *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) was published later and provides the historical narrative about finding a place to call our own.

Concept Eight allows the Board to delegate full authority to its executive committees, including the ECRPM. Notice on the website that the résumé to volunteer for this Committee is located under the Board of Trustees. ECRPM was established by the 1995 World Service Conference (WSC) and consists of the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, the Director of Finance & Operations, and three Al-Anon members who are not Trustees. Its purpose is to keep management of our Headquarters separate from the spiritual program of Al-Anon. Consequently, the Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board are not ex officio members and may not attend meetings unless invited to do so.

Having been Delegate in 2011 when the WSC voted to end the trial and authorize property ownership, and when I was present for the subsequent mortgage burning, I was eager to submit my résumé when a vacancy opened on the Committee. I attended my first biannual meeting in June 2018.

That first meeting de-mystified things for me. We made a complete tour of the building—including the parking lot, loading dock, and landscaping, noting our observations. I could immediately see why it is preferable to attend the meetings in person, whenever possible. Watching videos during COVID has certainly reinforced this belief for me.

We moved inside for the meeting. Our agenda was set beforehand by the ECRPM Chairperson and the Director of Finance & Operations. We reviewed interim updates on maintenance and repairs to the building, discussed our notes, and evaluated the budget for the building to ensure upcoming needs would be met. It was quite the eye-opener!

Since that first meeting, I have learned so much. I now know what EIFS (Exterior Insulation and Finish System) supports are and the damage woodpeckers can do to them! Working together virtually as a team when emergencies have cropped up has been another valuable experience. For me, it’s been a delight to serve the spiritual home of Al-Anon.

Executive Committee—Oversight of the WSO

Karen W.-P., Executive Committee, At-Large Member

It is my pleasure to share with you my insights on the work of the Executive Committee. First of all, the Committee is a committee of the Board of Trustees. The partnership between the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees is a beautiful thing that I found requires a lot of trust. Before I came to Al-Anon, and even in the beginning of coming to Al-Anon, trust was a huge issue for me. To be able to share with you the level of trust practiced between these entities is why I say it is a beautiful arrangement. A past Chairperson of the Executive Committee would always say, “We serve at the pleasure of the Board.” It would make us laugh when she said this, but it did remind us that we were trusted servants carrying out the work of the Board of Trustees.

The Executive Committee is made up of the Executive Director; one voting member of the WSO administrative Staff; three qualified Al-Anon members; the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees; and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, who serves as an ex officio member. In the *Service Manual* under Concept Four (p. 184), it says that it is the duty of the Executive Committee “to see that all projects are carefully carried out.” This does not mean

that we get to tell people what to do! We get to ask clarifying questions, make suggestions, and give approval.

I love the Executive Committee meetings. I prefer meeting face-to-face, but because of the COVID restrictions this past year, we met by web conferencing. Because of meeting this way, I have learned that I really need to be with people. I missed the hugs. I missed sharing the little moments that would happen when we were together, but the work never stops, so I adjusted.

The work of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee are very different to me. The thing I loved about the Executive Committee was the time spent with Staff. The WSO Staff is the best. Ask them anything about the work they do and you will see how excited they are about their work. The thing I loved most about being on the Board of Trustees was the membership. I loved the events where we were all together. In general, I hope you can see that I just love Al-Anon service work.

DELEGATES (Panel 59)

Mary Jo Y., Alabama/Northwest Florida

How did I get here? My Higher Power helped. I was naive, immature, and had low self-esteem. I attended my first Al-Anon meeting, and I wanted to run. The entrance door was blocked. I looked at the door thinking of a way out. My Higher Power kept me there. I went to daily meetings.

My Al-Anon journey then began. I asked, “What is a business meeting?” I stayed. I chose a Sponsor. I wanted her recovery. I could see and feel peace around me if only for an hour. Our Group Representative (GR) and members were going to Area Assembly. I began my service journey. I began enjoying life. I was encouraged to serve as GR. Al-Anon gave me love and support. I served the District. Did I do a wonderful job? Absolutely not! I served the Area. Every service position I held I said, “I’m not doing it.” Again, my Higher Power intervened. I stood for Alternate Delegate. I learned to never take your Sponsor to elections. She told me “You could do it,” and I said “No, I couldn’t.” I do not say *No* to her. I loved that service position.

My last year as Alternate Delegate our Area Delegate could not attend her last WSC. Guess who went? Me. Fear overwhelmed me. I was out of my comfort zone. Delegates and Conference grabbed me. I enjoyed it. There were long days, much absorbed information, but I learned. I stood for Delegate in 2019. What can I say? I love Al-Anon.

I learned to *let go* of the alcoholic. I let him live his life as he chooses. I work my program today as hard as I did when I first came to Al-Anon. I learned to *let go* of a beautiful granddaughter who chose to end her life. Without this program, I would not have survived the loss of that precious young woman. Her daddy still walks his journey of grief, pain, and a possible drinking problem. I focus on my responsibilities which keep me from dropping to the depths of despair. I stay in service, use the tools of the program, and stay in *today*. I learned to trust my Higher Power. I continually make spiritual deposits so I will have enough Al-Anon withdrawals when life gets too hard and wants to pull me down. Al-Anon moved me forward with courage to live life and perseverance to remain steadfast.

Sharon F., Alberta/Northwest Territories

Not knowing what to expect, I was extremely nervous about attending my first World Service Conference in 2019. I had a Mentor assigned to me, and it was a relief to know that someone would be

looking for me in Virginia Beach. I felt very welcomed and some of the nervousness subsided. This was also the first opportunity I had to meet my fellow Canadian Delegates. We had a chance to connect and discuss what was happening in our Areas.

I took the opportunity to visit the World Service Office (WSO) with one of the Canadian Delegates. We were given a personal tour and I now have a much better understanding of the scope of what WSO does for our fellowship. It is so peaceful and serene there. I wonder what Lois and Anne would think—seeing how Al-Anon has grown.

I have heard from past Delegates of the “firsts” that they encountered during their terms, and this Conference was no exception. What an honor—to be part of the first trilingual World Service Conference with interpreters there to translate for French- and Spanish-speaking attendees. I was very moved to hear a story from the Representative from the GSO in Mexico, and having her talk interpreted for us. One of the interpreters suggested we use all three languages in the tag line for Panel 59. We came up with “Yes, Oui, Si, Concept 9.”

At the Conference, the topic of a Hybrid Conference was presented. I remember thinking, *yes it can be done, but is it the right thing to do?* and I did not believe it was. At the time, no one knew that this would be the only opportunity for my Panel to go to Virginia Beach. The decision of a virtual/electronic Conference in 2020 would be made for us by circumstances. Another first for Al-Anon! I have been challenged by technology, but faced with a virtual Conference, I had to become more comfortable.

I never thought I would ever say, “I’m grateful for technology,” but have had to embrace it in order to stay in touch and fulfill my duties as Delegate. The Virtual/Electronic Conferences have been a challenge, but I have been able to stay in my own time zone and sleep in my own bed—a definite bonus. It has been an honor and a privilege to attend the last three World Service Conferences, representing my Area.

Claudia M., Arizona

In my first months in Al-Anon, you’d find me in the corner with my arms crossed, daring anyone in the room to even look at me. I was broken and alone and took absolutely no responsibility for anything. I had an eight-year-old son whom I loved with all my heart, and he didn’t know it. I was angry at everyone (including myself) for not being who I needed them to be. That’s how I came to you. I arrived late and left early to avoid any preventable interaction. I was hopeless and battered by the family disease of alcoholism. If it hadn’t been for my son, I don’t think I would have lived through the next year.

Before Al-Anon, I had never told the truth about me to anyone else. I couldn’t trust you with that, and I didn’t know who I was anyway. But I watched you from the corner, and I paid attention. I saw how you shared yourselves and got rewarded with nods, smiles, hugs, and love. I was afraid, but I started very slowly to tell you who I was. That was courage.

Somebody was kind to me (though I sat in the corner and glared at her). I hadn’t known the comfort of compassion before. Maybe those gentle words brought me back. You told me to come back until I wanted to. I am going to call that perseverance. I still fall in love with every newcomer I meet. You all remind me who I was and who I don’t have to be anymore. And I see you as you are but also as you will be soon. I learned that we were in this together.

I didn’t have anyone in my life except my son when I came to you and there was no unity in our home. That’s what service did for me. The theme of an early workshop was “Step into the Circle.” I had no

idea what that meant. You told me that it was about “being a part of.” At that workshop, I complained to my Sponsor that no one was talking to me and I wanted to go home. She looked at me kindly, and asked, “Whose angel were you?” That day, I learned to heal by serving. I “became a part of.” I found out I wasn’t alone. Together, we moved forward.

Lynn B., British Columbia/Yukon

I am an adult child of an alcoholic; and when I stepped into my first Al-Anon meeting over 40 years ago, I had no idea that would be the first step in a long journey. At that time, I wasn’t living in an alcoholic home, and I didn’t stick around the program for long, but I did learn a few things about myself and some basic recovery principles that would prove to be lifesaving many years later.

Fast forward to 15 years ago when I discovered that my husband was drinking alcoholically and had been doing so secretly for many years. I clearly remember that “day of discovery” when I came face-to-face with evidence that I was dealing with a problem beyond my ability to solve. I was overwhelmed with feeling stupid—how could I not have known because I grew up with alcoholic behaviour? I also felt afraid, betrayed, disappointed, and ashamed; but I knew there was somewhere I could turn to for help and support.

It was desperation rather than courage that motivated me to turn to Al-Anon. However, it took courage to keep coming back to meetings and to overcome the embarrassment of seeing people there who knew me but who nevertheless loved me, accepted me, and assured me I was in the right place. They didn’t offer any advice other than to “Keep Coming Back,” pick up the phone, and attend at least six meetings. I attended every meeting I could find for several weeks until I settled in a home group and found myself a Sponsor. The alcoholic situation at home continued to deteriorate, but I started applying the Al-Anon tools of detachment and setting boundaries while looking after myself.

My home group became a welcome retreat every week, and I started slowly involving myself in small measures of service. After about a year, our Group Representative’s term was up, and several members approached me about considering the position. I had limited understanding of what a Group Rep was and expressed reluctance; however, they reassured me, and I will never forget their words, “You will learn as you go along!” Well, that was true because becoming Group Rep was the beginning of my “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance.” The unity of fellow Al-Anon members continues to provide me with the courage and perseverance to move forward in Al-Anon service.

Rick G., Colorado

God, help us to honestly share the best of ourselves so that we can become united into something much greater! Help us to recognize the things we cannot change, to give us our serenity. Help us to change those things we can, to give us courage. And help us to find and accept the love we need, giving us the wisdom and perseverance, ensuring our work continues to provide solutions for those still suffering from the family disease of alcoholism. And God, may you help us to love you, ourselves, and each other, without conditions, whenever and wherever, it is needed and “Let It Begin with Me.”

Why do I love living the principles of Al-Anon in all my affairs, and being of service to others? Because that has reliably improved my life and the lives of the people around me. When I give unconditional love to myself and to others, help them to do what they cannot, and share my experience, strength, and hope, I have learned it will return to me, transformed, in the most unexpected, beautiful,

and wonderful ways. It is no longer a theory; it is simply the best way of living my life. I know this to be true. Does it take work to do this? Yes, it does! However, I have found not living this way, takes much more work. And my reward was loneliness, fear, exhaustion, powerlessness, anger, increased suffering, and a feeling of never-ending despair. I know that to be true. So, I have chosen to live in the Al-Anon way of life.

My Al-Anon service positions had their challenges, learnings, and gifts. Being Group Representative taught me how to cooperate and work with others, and that I was not responsible for the group. My gifts were becoming part of something greater and meeting all my new District and Area friends. I discovered I loved doing District and Area outreach so much that it stopped being work.

As Colorado’s Delegate, I experienced the Concepts, the *Service Manual* (P-24/27), and the World Service Conference (WSC) in action. In studying the *Conference Summaries* and *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), I learned Al-Anon’s history. While attending Conference, I experienced the WSC as not what the Concepts and *Service Manual* suggest, and discovered the great importance of putting principles before personalities, as an organization and as a business. My gifts were greater patience, deeper spirituality, deeper humility, and meeting all my wonderful new friends! May God bless us all.

Barbara T., Georgia

Courage and perseverance never seemed to be a problem for me growing up with a father who had an alcoholic parent. I grew up to be controlling and manipulative through dominance or passive-aggressive comments and sarcasm that I learned from my father. I never lacked for perseverance to try to control someone else’s behavior. Unity though was not in my personality deck of cards, and my ability to move forward to become a mature adult was hindered by thoughts like, “They won’t do that right, I’ll just go ahead and do it myself,” or “It’s easier to get forgiveness than permission.” I didn’t begin to understand the joy and fulfilment of unity until I began service in Al-Anon.

Our wonderful guidelines, Legacies, and Conference Approved Literature helped me to understand that my roles as Group Representative and District Representative did not include controlling and directing others to carry out my will. I learned to chair meetings and open discussions without dominating and to let go of my expectations that things must go my way. The love and fellowship I experienced through unity inspired me to continue service at the Area officer level.

I didn’t realize how important the physical connection to my fellowship was though until COVID hit in 2020. Six months into COVID restrictions, I realized I was feeling angry, irritable, and depressed—similar to when I isolated myself when living with active alcoholism. Once I had this awareness, I was then able to accept the reality of current living circumstances and used the tools this program offers to take what action I could.

I realized my virtual home group and Area meetings weren’t enough contact to keep me from feeling isolated. I began meeting my Sponsor, or fellow Al-Anon members, outdoors for a walk or a meal. I was sad to learn that we would not be able to meet in person for the 2021 World Service Conference (WSC) but was happy to see the great virtual/electronic agenda planned. I realized I had felt very isolated during the 2020 WSC last April because I didn’t ask Georgians to send cards of support to my home. This year, I have asked for their support, and I know that together all of us will move forward and accomplish a successful WSC. I am honored to be part of these historic events.

Wally C., Maritime Provinces

It seems only yesterday that we were at Conference in Virginia Beach. Reflecting on the first Conference of my term, I have my Conference Mentor to thank for making it memorable, fun, and fulfilling. I was thankful he was beside me to give guidance when needed. He made sure I was fed and watered all week—what a grand start to my journey as Delegate.

Our Conference Chairperson said that it was wonderful to see so many Panel 59 Delegates at the mic. That was “Action Is Attraction—There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone” at work. Little did we know that a pandemic was around the corner, and that our lives and the business of the Al-Anon organization would change for the World Service Office, and for each member as well.

Last year, we discussed electronic meetings and how to connect to our rural groups. March 2020 rolled in with a vengeance called COVID-19, and Al-Anon stopped for a two-week period in my Area. Thankfully, I have a powerhouse of officers whom I have to work with. Telephone conferences and Zoom meetings were set up. Not all the hurdles have been accomplished, but those wishing to attend a meeting can if they choose.

Meeting by conference call is not like face-to-face but Zoom and WebEx are close. I wish that the members who fear the unknown of electronic meetings would give it a try, for when you hear the voices of the members, it feels like you’ve come home. When you see those faces on a computer screen for the first time, well, it’s tears and tissues, “Dreaming Big with 20/20 Vision.”

As an organization we have accomplished the unsurmountable, our financial concerns are in check, and we are holding our Areas together by electronic meetings. A Delegate in this room today said we’d meet the challenge, and we have. We must continue to move forward with the unity of the membership, the courage of those who came before us, and the perseverance of our Three Legacies as our guiding light for the continuance of this wonderful program called Al-Anon/Alateen. It is an honor to represent my Area as a Delegate in Panel 59 and in such beautiful company as all of you.

Irene T., Massachusetts

Alcoholism is a “stuck” disease—before the program, the effects of alcoholism on my life were existing with loneliness, constant fear, and daily struggle for survival. Being stuck, my personal slogan was “It doesn’t matter, just get through.” In Al-Anon I found the keys to opening doors that led to a better way of living and I could indeed find happiness and fulfillment no matter what those around me were doing. Over time, I learned what real gratitude is and I wanted to give back. This was a debt of my own making because the gifts of the program are free. The greatest gift was my daughter visiting my home group and sharing, “Al-Anon gave me a mom.” Service has been my way of giving back and like most things in Al-Anon, you get far more than you give.

I was elected Massachusetts Alternate Delegate for Panel 59. In reading the “job description,” I felt assured that, I could spend three years learning more about Area-level service. Like a first runner-up in a beauty pageant, or being Vice-President, I felt “guaranteed” this opportunity; especially because we had a Delegate and they never seemed to have to step down. They say, “if you want to make God laugh—have a plan,” and in May 2019, God must have been in hysterics! I began living Step Eleven! You see, I had missed the annual Conference and my first task was to give the Delegate’s report from Conference with five days’ notice! Needless to say, me and the Higher Power had a serious talk! I had no clue what I was doing! I delivered the report with the support and encouragement of *everyone* in the

Area and, I am told, it went very well. From then on, I have been living our declaration, because the hands have always been there to help me whenever I’ve asked—something I could never do pre-program.

As the first *virtual* Delegates, we are real pioneers, making our way through the unknown, and often scary, new reality. I remain amazed at the magic of this program and its ability to make sure we can fulfill our primary focus—letting the world know we’re still here to help. I find myself reciting our meeting closing as my personal slogan, especially the ending, “...let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.” Thank you all for the “keys” to move forward with unity, courage, and perseverance, for it has sustained and motivated me. Blessings and love on you all.

Fred H., Minnesota North

I came to the doors of Al-Anon knowing that I needed to make changes in my life. My wife (with her permission) had gone through treatment, was very active in A.A., making new friends, and changing for the better every day. The buttons I used to push to get a certain reaction, or to gain control, didn’t seem to work any longer. I could see her getting stronger and growing as a person, not reacting the way she used to. I wanted some of that.

I looked for an Al-Anon meeting where I could feel comfortable (courage). I found a small group and started attending each week. I can’t really explain it, but I felt better about myself, my marriage, and life in general after each meeting. If I was struggling with something, I signed up to lead the meeting and discussed what was bothering me. Doing this allowed me to hear others experience regarding the issue and what they did to address it (unity). Sometimes, I felt as if I wasn’t growing fast enough, but I had a very wise Sponsor who told me, “Be happy where you’re at while trying to get better” (perseverance).

It took me almost 20 years and several miracles to fully believe in all the Steps and turn my life over to a Higher Power. I can’t begin to describe what all the benefits of this surrender were and are. It has brought so much serenity into my life by making me a much more accepting individual. To add to my growth, my Higher Power steered me into service work at the group, District, and eventually the Area level. What a gift! I learned so much more about the Traditions and Concepts, the service structure, and Al-Anon as a worldwide fellowship. I will never be able to repay Al-Anon for all the gifts I have received from the program.

My marriage is stronger than ever (we will be celebrating 52 years in May, 41 years in recovery), my belief in a Higher Power is stronger than ever, my love for the Al-Anon program is stronger than ever. When asked why I keep coming back after so many years in the program, I respond, “Because I want to continue to move forward and help ensure the sustainability of the program. I want Al-Anon to be here for my great-grandchildren, and theirs, if needed.”

Jennifer M., Mississippi

More cunning than 9/11, more baffling than the oil recession, and more powerful than Hurricane Katrina. Prior to Al-Anon, I owned a business and experienced several monumental tests of my physical, mental, and spiritual resources. None however, compared to the challenge of living with active alcoholism and the abuse it engendered. Every day I felt as if I were at the bottom of a miry pit, trying to climb up for air. In Al-Anon, I discovered I was a volunteer not a victim and had a choice whether to remain in a toxic environment.

Through my home groups, I also eventually found my voice, my self-confidence, self-love, joy, self-esteem, sanity, and my brain! While everyone’s “sharings” were different, I felt the unity of their

purpose—to help me recover if I was willing. One woman encouraged me with her constant reminder, “It’s just baby steps—put one foot in front of the other and move forward.” The primary way I kept moving forward was service. It took courage to say “yes,” especially the first time.

I remember our Treasurer holding up a little three by four-inch notebook and asking if anyone would take it and note how much money was donated each week and pay the rent monthly from the collections. I had once managed a multi-million-dollar budget, but during my first year of recovery this tiny notebook and the corresponding tasks seemed daunting. I moved from Treasurer to Group Representative to District Representative to Delegate over the first six years of recovery.

If I could do it again, I would move more slowly, but each time there was unity of encouragement from the groups. “You don’t have to do it perfectly,” they would say. I have been incredibly humbled, particularly as Delegate, so I know better than anyone how imperfect my service has been—this is the painful part for me—wishing I could have a “do over.” But each step of the way, I received encouragement from my Area, the World Service Office Staff, Board members, and fellow Delegates. Along my journey, I learned that perseverance is one of my character assets, found courage to keep taking baby steps, and grew through the unity of purpose that is evident at every level of this amazing fellowship. Although I’m still not where I want to be, I continue to move forward every day—“One Day at a Time”!

Carol S., Montana

One of the most unifying aspects of the Al-Anon program is when I attend a meeting and hear the opening and closing words. It speaks right to my heart every time. It fills me with compassion and empathy toward those who live with the problems of alcoholism. Phrases like “we have been privileged to enjoy” and “helped many of us find solutions that lead to serenity” all tell me I am part of something bigger than myself.

About six months after I attended my first Al-Anon meeting, I was curious about service, so I attended my first District meeting. I walked in only to find two people, the District Representative and Secretary, seated in a huge, cold empty room. I received a warm welcome and minutes after I sat down, was promptly elected District Treasurer. It was then, that I fell into service and never looked back. I moved forward willingly in Al-Anon because there was only misery and agony without it.

It took a lot of courage to find the humility to see into the precious teachings of this program. I never lost the courage to change and found such peace in its simplicity. I found the courage to see others on equal grounds and, if I wanted to be understood, I would also have to find the willingness to understand others. This was a tall order to fill but I had the help of others along with my Higher Power. I found resolve in asking for support no matter how big or small the challenge might be. Asking for guidance steered me into understanding the spiritual aspects of true leadership.

Honestly, I had to look up the definition of perseverance to speak about it. It is described as “achieving something despite the difficulties or failures.” My perseverance was tested to the utmost in 2020. I found authenticity in opening up to perspective and what it meant to truly accept the things I could not change. I never thought I would be granted a shot at wisdom in my lifetime, but I did, in the most sacred way, by saying, “This too shall pass no matter what blocks my path.” Thank you, Al-Anon community, you have been essential to my journey and commitment to service. I will cherish it forever.

Donna S., New Jersey

When I walked into the rooms of Al-Anon, I never dreamed that I would be standing here today to share my story of “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance.” I often wonder how I got here. Why did my Higher Power see fit to give me this wonderful gift? I came into the rooms when my life was unmanageable. I was moving in circles. There was no unity in my home life. I was in a constant state of fear with no drive or determination to do anything other than to get the alcoholic in my life to stop drinking. In short, my life was the complete opposite of our 2021 World Service Conference theme.

Shortly after coming to Al-Anon, my spouse of 25 years suddenly passed away. The support from my Al-Anon family and my home group gave me the courage to keep coming back. How easy it would have been to stop attending meetings. After all, I was no longer living in an alcoholic home. I knew, however, that I needed this program and all that it had to offer. My service journey began at the group level when I volunteered to set up the meeting room. This simple act made me feel part of the group. It opened the door to other service positions and before long, I was serving my group as the Literature Coordinator, Secretary, and Group Representative; serving the District as Secretary and District Representative; serving the local Al-Anon Information Service as Treasurer; and serving the Area as Alternate Delegate and Delegate.

I accepted each invitation to serve, sure that I would fail. My Al-Anon family disagreed and gave me the support and courage to try. Through my service journey, I learned to rely on my Higher Power to guide me, to share my thoughts and opinions without fear of judgement, to accept when things do not turn out my way, to give others the dignity to do their jobs, to speak up when necessary, and to listen more.

As I reflect on my time in Al-Anon and in the service positions I have held, I am so grateful for what I have learned and how much I have grown. By applying the tools and practicing the principles of this program, I have been “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance.” With the help of my Al-Anon family and my Higher Power, I will continue to do so.

Anu B., North Carolina/Bermuda

My husband had never hidden the fact that he was an alcoholic. In fact, he told me he had been in A.A. for five years and then not in A.A. for five years. And I assumed A.A. had fixed him.

I couldn’t understand why he started drinking too much. When I hit my bottom, I asked him to please go to his friends in A.A., because they were the only ones who could likely help him. Going to A.A. didn’t help him or our family become less crazy. That’s what brought me to Al-Anon.

At first, I was going to stay long enough to get the right pointers and slogans to use to help my family be less crazy—you know, graduate Al-Anon with honors! I was told that I needed to get a Sponsor in order to work the Steps, so I did. My Sponsor took me to a new meeting (now my home group), she raised her hand to serve as a Group Representative (GR), and volunteered me to become the Alternate GR. Over the next two years, she gradually stopped attending District meetings and Area Assemblies. As the “responsible one,” I went in her place.

The insanity of growing up in alcoholism had taught me that I was separate from everyone. In Al-Anon, I started feeling that I belonged. At an Assembly, the Delegate facilitated an activity on ways to increase diversity in Al-Anon. I loved it! This was not a boring business meeting, it was an opportunity to help shape Al-Anon for

my future grandchildren! I wanted to grow enough to be worthy of serving my Area as a Delegate.

My journey in service and recovery has been that of perseverance. I've learned that when circumstances in my life get tough, it's yet another growth opportunity. When I broke my arm three weeks before my first Conference, I had to exercise courage to show up, and I was bear-hugged with love and showered with compassion. I was able to experience the unity of Al-Anon. We unite first through the shared experiences of dealing with alcoholism, and then we unite as human beings on a spiritual journey to become the people our Higher Power intended. It takes courage and perseverance to practice the Twelve Steps ourselves, to understand and encourage the alcoholic, and to give comfort to the families of alcoholics—to all of us.

Sheri S., North Dakota

I'm a grateful member of Al-Anon. Before the alcoholic in my life, my husband, went to treatment, I hadn't heard of Al-Anon. He asked me to go, so I went. My first Al-Anon meeting was August 12, 2008; my 25th wedding anniversary. It wasn't long before I was involved in service. I was elected Alternate Group Representative (GR) a few months after my first meeting and was soon elected GR when our current GR moved out of town. I quickly became a service junkie, taking positions at my group, District, and then at the Area level.

Along the way, I met so many people I now call friends. They supported, inspired, and encouraged me. They gave me a sense of belonging, a sense of accomplishment, and confidence. When I went to the 2018 Fall Assembly, I had no intention of standing for Delegate. I had a demanding job and felt it just wasn't the right time in my life. But something had happened. We'd invited a Trustee to our Assembly, and I had picked her up at the airport. I had a spiritual awakening. When no one stepped up to serve as Delegate, I was asked, and somehow I found myself say I was willing.

My first regional meeting as Delegate had me flying all the way to Alaska! The other new Delegates and I began bonding that weekend and couldn't wait to see each other at Conference. I describe Conference as walking into a warm hug from people who loved me whom I didn't even know yet. My Mentor sat by me and encouraged me to go to the mic. There were so many moving moments. It was the first trilingual Conference with interpreters for those who didn't speak English. Panel 59 acknowledged this amazing effort in our tag line "Yes, Oui, Si!" We discussed the idea of virtual or hybrid Conferences, having no idea our next two Conferences would be virtual. Like many of you, I was disappointed we couldn't meet face-to-face in 2020. Still, I'm grateful and amazed that WSO was able to facilitate a virtual Conference in such a short time. It was so successful, and we learned more about becoming the global, international organization we strive to be. So here we are in 2021, meeting virtually again, and "Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance."

Samantha M., Oklahoma

"Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance." I spent most of my life prior to recovery trying to move forward while staring backwards with fear. Manipulation, control, and perseverance were my only tools. Perseverance I had down pat. As a child of parents unknowingly battling alcoholism, the "try harder" plan was the norm. If something we tried seemed to work, we would just try harder and harder assuming it would work better.

Recovery, especially through service, has taught me these three new attributes in amazing balance. My journey to Delegate has required all three. I had stood for Delegate several times. *Unity* has

allowed me to be delighted for and support whoever was chosen, while still acknowledging my disappointment. *Courage* allowed me to continue to be willing to stand each time and to be willing to serve in other capacities that were new and sometimes scary to me, such as Area Treasurer. I finally found balance for the "try harder" attitude of *perseverance* that was so misdirected growing up. I can see now that my Higher Power knew exactly the right timing for me to be Delegate.

Today, I have a level of trust in my Higher Power and humility that has developed because of the circumstances I have found myself in over that last few years. And that humility and trust allows me to be the kind of Delegate I always wanted to grow up to be. In March of 2018, I was let go from my comfortable, longtime job with no warning. That began a whole new journey into trusting my Higher Power and brought a much deeper understanding of humility that I did not even know I needed. I debated about standing for Delegate in September that year, because I didn't know what my job situation would be for the next three years. Like any of us really knows what the next three years will bring (like I said, *much* needed humility). During a very close election, my name was drawn from the hat. Even though I am saddened to not get to visit Stepping Stones or the World Service Office in person, I am so proud to have been part of some big firsts. The first trilingual Conference and the first Virtual/Electronic Conference. I am humbled to have been part of this 61-year long conversation focused on moving Al-Anon forward with unity, courage, and perseverance.

Katie W., Oregon

Not long ago, someone asked me about my life before Al-Anon. As I pondered those post-adolescent scenes that were sprinkled with chaotic relationships and all-too-frequent emotional turmoil, I remembered earnestly seeking to find an answer to my alcoholic dilemma. I had no idea what Al-Anon would come to mean in my life, or how participation with others under a banner of unity would change my view of the world in general. For most of my life I thought of the journey toward growth and wholeness as an "I" endeavor. I joined in Al-Anon service with the same mindset, not realizing my individuality would be challenged by the "we" perspective that exists in this fellowship. It was refreshing to experience a collective belief in progress for the greatest number instead of every man for himself.

Little did I know it would take more courage, and the willingness to surrender on my part, to think as a *unified* body rather than an isolated "me." More recently, I have experienced division creeping into Area meetings, and the question of diversity has been on everyone's mind. I have asked hard questions of myself, and I've posed similar questions to my Area. We've even had elephants saunter through our Assemblies, and one time, we even had a stampede.

I won't lie, it was scary for all involved, and no one quite knew what to do. But the gracious nature of this program suggested that there was a way through, with help from our collective Higher Power. So, with bravery and a willingness to be wrong, many of us entered into honest discussion about things we've done well, and areas where we've failed ourselves and each other. That dialogue is ongoing. Al-Anon service has taught me that there is no end to the ways in which we can grow together.

There has been tremendous change in the outside world all along, and the inner world is not so different. I have felt the pace of change mirror a series of class five rapids over the past year, and I know my little boat hasn't seen the peak of the action yet. But you know something? I'm not worried. For 70 years, Al-Anon has proven to be a constant amidst all of the passing trends and movements. So, while

the world may be “zooming” by at breakneck speed, I know Al-Anon is dynamically moving forward right along with it.

Johanne S., Quebec East

When I accepted the Alternate Delegate position in 2019, I didn't think I would become a Delegate so quickly. Indeed, the Delegate at that time resigned. When I stepped in, I was scheduled to attend the World Service Conference in April 2020 with my Conference Mentor. This made me feel better because I don't speak a lot of English and I had never been on an airplane before. But thanks to her, I was ready for all these challenges. However, my Higher Power decided otherwise because everything changed quickly with the pandemic.

I had to turn around very quickly. With the help and collaboration of the members of the World Service Office, I took the training I needed to participate and represent Quebec East at the Virtual/Electronic Conference. Then, thanks to the involvement of the members in my Area, we held two Area World Service Committee meetings and an Area Assembly—where I was able to transmit my report and allow the Group Representatives to vote.

As a team, we met great challenges, and I am very proud of the results we achieved. Since then, we have had several virtual business meetings. This year, I am completing the Panel 59 term, and I have the opportunity to run for the position of Delegate again. I would love to take on this position and physically attend the 2022 Conference, take on the challenge of traveling to another country, and see Al-Anon at work internationally. This would allow me to fulfill a dream and go further. What I take away from my tenure is, that despite my fears, there is always someone that my Higher Power puts in my path to help me face them, and that I am not alone. It has also taught me all the potential that lies dormant deep inside of me and is just waiting to develop. It has made me realize that I am much stronger than I think I am, and that this strength manifests itself when I put myself into action. Thank you all for your friendship and support.

Joanne P., Vermont

Al-Anon teaches me unity through Tradition One. Unity is about our common welfare. Personal progress for the greatest number depends on it. It's not just about what I want. It's about us—unity among people in my Al-Anon family and in my life.

At an Area World Service Committee meeting someone asked, “Did we let WSO know?” The question concerned a Policy statement in the *Service Manual* that we were discussing. I responded that the Policies in the *Manual* are not the decisions of the WSO, but of the World Service Conference (WSC) and that the Conference includes 67 Areas from all over the US (including Puerto Rico), Bermuda, and Canada, as well as the WSO Volunteers (members of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee) and the WSO Administrative Staff who are voting members of the Conference. The WSC is the unity of a group conscience of the many voices of Al-Anon members, through their Delegates, and the WSO Volunteers and Staff.

When I was elected Delegate, the decision was unanimous. While it was unanimous, I was the only one standing for it. Lucky me. It took courage to step-up. I felt a silent tug to go for it. After talking with trusted Al-Anon friends, I did. I'm so grateful. I persevere. I keep going. I do the footwork. I remember the balance referred to on page 255 in *Hope for Today* (B-27). My Higher Power is on top. The Al-Anon tools are next. Then me, then all else. Even if I put service at the top and forget about a Higher Power, I'm still off-balance. Now I'm in pain, because I forgot.

I experienced that at the 2020 Virtual/Electronic WSC. There

was a break. We were asked to use the time to introduce ourselves. I blurted out a question not related to introductions. The Chair gently guided me back on track—more than once because I persisted with “yeah but.” My ego was offended. I sulked for a moment. The voice of my Higher Power kicked in. I spoke to myself silently, “Joanne, don't sulk, otherwise you will miss this opportunity right now to be present and experience the Conference.” I told myself, “This opportunity won't come again.” That was a prayer. It worked. I snapped out of it. I enjoyed the Conference. I grew spiritually. I love this Step Eleven passage in *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) on page 116, “How do we know what is God's will? That's easy—just get up every day, keep moving, and when you hit a wall, turn left!”

Terry W., Virginia

This is my 12th year of service in our fellowship. Looking back to my first Assembly, I still feel the sense of awe I felt in that auditorium filled with people from all over my Area. That day, I realized I truly did belong to something bigger than myself. As I moved forward through a variety of service positions, I eagerly anticipated what the next service position had in store for me. What would I learn? What challenges awaited me? What would I have to offer?

My understanding and appreciation for our fellowship and our organization have deepened my program of recovery. Working within our service structure, I have come to see the value and wisdom imbedded in the Concepts of Service. Our Concepts address the balance between authority and responsibility, and how our unity depends on each of us operating in that balance between the two. Service has taught me what leadership is and what it is not. Service has also taught me the value of courage. When I have a minority view, I have had to call on my courage to stand with my understanding of “principles above personalities.” It is so much easier to go along with the prevailing opinion than to take an unpopular position. But working my program has shown me that my integrity calls for me to rise above what feels comfortable and stand with what I believe to be our spiritual principles.

The impact of COVID-19 on our meetings, has taught me a lot about perseverance. Not only did we all have to adapt quickly to hold the 2020 World Service Conference, we also had to adapt at the Area level. As I worked with others in my Area to help our groups find alternative meeting formats, we encountered a lot of obstacles—from both technology and from members' resistance to change. It has been encouraging to see how so many managed to not only adapt, but to thrive with new conditions.

And now, here I am, in the last year of my term, wondering how I move forward now. It is time for me to rotate out of service—in the sense of holding elected offices—but I know I will never be truly out of service. There is always more to do. I am looking forward to new service work that is less formally structured, and I am looking forward to becoming an “esteemed past Delegate.”

Kathy D., Washington

To my Panel 59 brothers and sisters, it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve with you, as it is truly an honor to be here today. I am amazed at how far we have come in this virtual world, and at the same time, I am deeply saddened by our collective losses. How do we deal with this? I believe we have no choice other than to move forward with unity, courage, and perseverance as we dream big with 20|20 vision, knowing full well there is no growth in the comfort zone and that action is, indeed, attraction!

I'd like to thank all of our trusted servants at WSO, with or without

a title, salaried or not—you have been most helpful to this Delegate with your words of encouragement, patience, strength, faith, and can-do attitude that made it easy to embrace my role as Delegate and move forward in my journey with courage and perseverance. Being a part of the 59th World Service Conference was a magical experience for me. I was fortunate to be connected with so many awesome folks—from my pals in the Northwest Region to the chance meetings and connections made with others at breaks or mealtimes, and the love gifts exchanged in the Hospitality Room. The WSC taught me—a natural loner and skeptic—that I was fully and completely accepted into the fold whether I wanted to be or not!

This acceptance and love I felt as a member of the World Service Conference I will carry with me the rest of my life. The lessons I've learned and the experiences I've had while serving this fellowship have enriched my life in every way imaginable. They have strengthened and empowered me, encouraged, and supported me, and have been imprinted on my soul.

How fortunate we 59-ers are to have been part of a couple of historic World Service Conference firsts! I am so proud to have been a part of these events that will impact the future of our worldwide fellowship. Little did we know then, how embracing perseverance would have such an effect on our lives and the lives of those who will follow us. I could never have imagined the incredible amount of laughter and love that was offered by so many I did not know, and yet I bonded so completely with those members. Must be that unity thing. I thank you all so very much!

Melissa F., West Virginia

What an apt theme for this year's World Service Conference. Not just for our fellowship, but for my personal journey as Delegate for West Virginia. I must admit, when I agreed to complete the term for Delegate that was left vacant at the end of 2019, I was just as excited about the *travel* involved as I was about the serving. For someone who loves to see new places, I felt that my Higher Power had placed me in just the right place at the right time—to both serve my Area and fulfill my passion for travel. Alas, that was not the case. However, little did I know that my Higher Power had better gifts waiting for me in the form of determination and tenacity.

To be honest, the disappointment of everything being cancelled, learning the ropes, and the flood of emails to my inbox was overwhelming at first. Still, I logged in and learned! I was able to do the job my Area asked me to do, and I have met so many wonderful and helpful members along the way. By sticking with it, I have gained so much knowledge about our great fellowship and how it works and met so many encouraging individuals from all over the United States and other countries. It has been an honor to work with all of you in varying degrees to advance our program so that it helps many more in the future. Even though the journey did not turn out to be the way I expected it to be, I am forever grateful to have been given this opportunity to learn and serve. Thank you!

Susan B., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan

I came to Al-Anon not because I wanted to change my life, but because I saw someone else's life teetering on the edge. I came to learn how to live without my loved one. I was certain that they were going to die—either in a terrible accident, or a fight, or by their own hand. I came to Al-Anon believing I was alone in fearing for someone else's life. I believed that if you really knew me, you'd all run screaming from the room. It only took a few meetings for me to find my voice and once I did, I learned that you, too, had experienced some of the

same fear, loneliness, and isolation that I knew while growing up in the disease of alcoholism.

I found relief in the early days of my program. For one hour each week, I felt some semblance of sanity. After a while, I felt led to attend my first District meeting. There, I saw the woman who was to become my first real Sponsor behaving graciously with a group of challenging people. Together we studied our Three Legacies in depth, and I learned how to apply to my life the spiritual principles they embody. I learned that I could behave differently than I had in the past, even while I felt uncomfortable feelings.

Between my study of our program and being of service to my fellows, I had little time to interfere in the lives of the people around me. I let go of my fear, climbed off my loved ones' backs, and let their Higher Power care for them in the way in which I had never been able. I found connection with like-minded people in pursuit of real recovery, not just the simple relief I felt in my early meetings.

It has been an honor and a privilege to represent the Al-Anon members in Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan at the World Service Conference. I will always cherish the opportunities I have been given to grow in our program, connect with members of our fellowship, and learn that I am not alone. Today, I am grateful for the experience, strength, and hope I have found in Al-Anon and for each day that I get to live the life that is mine when I keep "Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance."

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Silvia P., Argentina

This is my first year in service as an Alternate International Delegate. I enjoy it very much. It is a pleasure to meet and share with the worldwide Al-Anon and Alateen structures.

It is my fifth year in Al-Anon, and since I learned about this Twelve Step program, my life has radically changed.

Before, I did not know what serenity, tolerance, and humility were. Through the recovery in the groups and the service to the fellowship carried out conscientiously and respecting the Traditions and Concepts, my life has improved.

I am happy to be able to participate in this World Service Conference. I will listen and learn.

I wish all participants an excellent World Service Conference and may the Higher Power guide us in our decisions.

Helen G., Australia

My parents drank heavily and every day. They didn't fit the stereotypical idea of a "drunk." They were good people and were considered pillars in our local community, and helped others less fortunate than themselves, even when they didn't have a lot to share. Although I never felt as though I "went without," it was the inconsistent behavior and my parents' inability to be physically and emotionally present for me that had the biggest impact on my developing years. Being the youngest, and "a mistake," I believed that I was somehow responsible for their drinking. Desperately seeking their unconditional love and approval, most of my decisions were made based on what I thought would make them proud of me. In the process, I lost Helen.

Thankfully, I opened up and spoke about my parents to a friend—a sober member of A.A. She took me to my first Al-Anon meeting. I was extremely uncomfortable, but I knew that the people there had something I wanted. They talked about their feelings and no one told them to stop; they laughed and cried, and it was okay for them to express their emotions. I had finally found a place where it

was comfortable to talk about my life and discover who I really was. Although my parents continued to drink, I am so grateful that I had been in Al-Anon for five years before they both died as a result of their alcoholism.

In Al-Anon, I was prepared to do whatever it took to gain the serenity and peace that longtime members had and “doing service” seemed a common theme in those members I admired and aspired to be like. After just two years in recovery, a very special member asked me to join the Australian Alateen Committee. I had no idea what it was, but I immediately said yes. That began my journey of doing service and giving back to this amazing fellowship.

Al-Anon Australia registered in 1951 with the World Service Office (WSO) and then with the Australian General Service Office (AGSO) in 1977. Central Service Offices in each state provided services and a communication link for groups through the 1960’s.

After several trial conferences, the state-based structure evolved into a National Structure in the 1970s creating an effective voice of the group conscience, linking all Al-Anon members Australia-wide. A member attending the 1975 World Service Conference visited the WSO and the UK and Eire structure and relayed the formation experience of these structures, further assisting us in the formation of a new and current working structure (similar to that described in the “World Service Handbook” today). The first printing of the Australian Service Handbook for Al-Anon and Alateen groups was presented at the Australian Service Conference in 1980 and is updated every five years in accordance with WSO and AGSO updates and changes.

The General Service Board and Executive Committee were formed in 1978, and Al-Anon was incorporated in 1980 as a non-profit organization under the name Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty. Ltd., generally known as AGSO (Australian General Service Office).

Our annual Australian Service Conference is held in Melbourne in May and attended by the nine Area Australian Service Delegates, members of the General Service Board (including Out-of-Town Trustees as of 2008), the Executive Committee (including Chairpersons of all Selected Committees), and Australian General Service Office Administrative Staff.

Each of the nine Areas consists of Districts and groups with large variations in size and geographic areas. The use of technology is continuing to provide better access for our very remote members, made more pertinent during the recent pandemic.

Australia first participated in an International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in 1980 in New Orleans and has been a regular participant ever since. Although a long commute for us, we believe the opportunity to share our experience, strength, and hope with other structures is invaluable. Two Delegates represent Australia at every IAGSM. I was fortunate enough to participate in 2006 and 2008 and can attest to the wealth of knowledge I was able to share on my return.

We have been reprinting the majority of Conference Approved Literature in Australia since 1977 which is distributed from the Australian GSO. We have also developed our own literature including a Public Information (PI) calendar, used in groups to coordinate with monthly PI focus; *Families Facing Alcoholism* a PI magazine for distribution to professionals; and *Sharing from the Heart*—a compilation of editorials from a long-serving editor of our monthly magazine *Austra-Link*.

Al-Anon has been participating with Alcoholics Anonymous at National Conventions since 1963. In 2017, our Australian GSO participated with A.A.’s Central Service Office in a Public Information project in Fiji as part of an international convention to carry hope to families of alcoholics.

The Australian GSO is located in Melbourne, Victoria and is staffed by six part-time paid members and many volunteers. We are currently serving approximately 370 Al-Anon Family Groups including ten Alateen groups Australia-wide. AGSO serves 57 Lone Members (those unable to attend meetings because of distance or ill-health)—some in the Asia Pacific region where there is no local GSO to serve them.

Like many other structures, registered Alateen groups in Australia have decreased significantly. However, during the recent pandemic, temporary electronic Alateen meetings were established with strict security protocols. We currently have several meetings a week. The utilisation of technology has been a game-changer for this vulnerable group of our younger members.

I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to participate electronically in the 2021 World Service Conference and know the experience will be a valuable one for me and the Al-Anon fellowship Australia-wide.

Mariana C., Ecuador

I am an adult daughter of an alcoholic person. While growing up in my family, I was affected since childhood by the disease of alcoholism. I was raised with many emotional voids. I adopted distorted ideas of reality, and I formed harmful misdemeanors which affected all aspects of my life.

I got married as a teenager, and during the marriage years I lived through: a lack of truthfulness, emotional dependency, and an empty sensation. The emotional illness was also characterized by blame, the absence of merit, scarcity of importance, and isolation; after which I developed two chronic diseases. As expected, my behavior habits also negatively influenced a new generation. My son suffered a lot of isolation, had a hard time socializing, and had a very critical inner voice.

The arrival of Al-Anon after my divorce allowed me to open my consciousness, from there, I found order and sense to a chaotic life which was in ruins. The application of the program principles gave me a new opportunity to overcome depression, improve my attitude towards life, and become worthy of my own development. Since then, the closeness of my Higher Power gives me the security to make healthy decisions and to continue my path with faith.

The experience of serving in the group gave me the truthfulness to express my ideas and to accept the rest of the peoples’ ideas. At the same time, it gave me the freedom to act, due to the warmth, acceptance, and welcome transmitted by the members. In the group and among similar people, I found the help and comprehension I was looking for reaffirming and discovering the real me. I had found the germ of my problems and Al-Anon’s family provided me the spirit solidity to build a new life.

Thanks to the participation in different services, first as a Secretary and Group Coordinator, then as a president of the GSO Committee; later on as the Trustee, in this latter, I worked as a Secretary, Vice-president, and nowadays as the Chairperson of the Board. With predisposition and humility, I took responsibilities. I got used to collaborating, listening, decision-making, making proposals, and getting into action—experiences where each day I learn about myself and about acting in a positive manner with others. I try to apply the principles, Traditions, and Concepts in each one of the services that I am being assigned because these mark a clear way in search of solutions to the affairs needing attention.

The application of the program helps me to develop my spirituality and to be guided by valuable principles to reaffirm my morals and enhance my skills which have been the keys to open unexpected

doors that have improved my quality of life. For all this, I will be always grateful to the God of my understanding, who I gave my life and willingness in the Third Step. He has given me the best growth experiences that have led me to the ideal human being He wants me to be.

Before the program, I had not left the country due to fear, dependency, and the thought of not deserving such a thing. By practicing the principles that I have learned, I have overcome those defects. I took the chance to know other countries to which I have traveled alone. I have accomplished many advances since I have improved in being self-sufficient emotionally, financially, and mentally.

The program returned to me my self-esteem, it made it possible for me to reach the necessary maturity to face life, and continue as an adult person, autonomous, able to take challenges and to cover responsibly my own needs.

The effect of the program on me had consequences in my son's story as well, I gave him the dignity of opting and being. Since Al-Anon, we have both grown a lot personally and professionally.

I constantly apply emotional detachment because my only son lives in another country. He learned to socialize and was able to overcome shyness. He proved to himself that he is capable, and he has traveled to many countries in three continents to present his papers with other young people who are studying their PhDs in universities all around the world. He is happy because of the inner strength that he now possesses. Now my compromise in with the valuable life my Higher Power granted me.

Ecuador's GSO started as an intergroup, about 50 years ago. The legal registration in the country was in 2010. During these years, many achievements have been obtained, such as: getting CAL reprinting permissions, having members to serve on the different GSO committees, the existence of a warehouse and office for CAL. From the central office, the Executive Director, who is staff with no wage, gives information to the groups who want and require literature.

Public sharing is committed to the making of commercial spots, and it is active in distinct communicative spaces.

The majority of groups are in the structure, there are few which have not decided to be part of the organization yet. Because of the pandemic, many of them disbanded, however, the majority are connected via Zoom or Skype.

Among Al-Anon's problems in Ecuador are not having all the CAL titles to offer who need those—reprinting means a high cost, according to the corporation incomes; added to this is the electronic literature movement and the conflicts among the different levels of structure.

The contributions have diminished, as well as the incomes for the CAL sales, the decrease is estimated around 50 percent of the usual.

The number of the registered groups in the country until the last year was about 85, with 57 corresponding to Al-Anon, 17 to adult children, and 11 to Alateen. To date, it is estimated to have decreased to a fourth of the total.

In conclusion, big efforts in the country are being made to keep the links strengthening, keep the office open, join the fellowship, and overall, to carry Al-Anon's message to more people. We rely on being able to get ahead thanks to the guide of our Higher Power, living through the spiritual principles, and the application of the program's tools.

Guy D., France

"Hello friends, I am Guy. I'm well and happy to be with you." This is how I have announced myself in my Al-Anon group for 23 years.

To be honest, I didn't always say "I'm well." When I discovered a hidden bottle of alcohol at home, and when I realized that my wife had an alcohol problem, I was devastated. Alcohol at home meant all the misfortunes in the world. I saw a very dark future. I was confused. That wasn't the reality, but it was what I felt.

At the same time, a phrase that I had heard on the radio more than 20 years before, came back to me, "When you are close to an alcoholic, even with the best intentions in the world, you may not behave well." I wanted to prevent my wife from drinking, it was just a question of working at it. So, I called Alcoholics Anonymous right away. They would know what to do. The A.A. member who answered the phone told me to contact Al-Anon, and he put me in touch with his wife, who was a member.

That very evening, I attended a very bizarre meeting. People took turns speaking on an unbelievable subject—serenity. But what did that have to do with my wife's alcoholism?

I was afraid it was a sect, but at the same time, I felt enormous human warmth and great compassion. I shortly found a group closer to home and attended, despite my worries. In this group, there was much human warmth too. I was encouraged to "Keep Coming Back," read the literature, and make phone calls if I felt bad. All of this helped me a lot when, in the months and years that followed, the situation at home significantly deteriorated.

I even found help in the Serenity Prayer. I, who refused any notion of God, ended up accepting the possible existence of a "power greater than myself," which could help me.

A few weeks after my arrival, there were elections where, despite my reticence, I was appointed Group Treasurer. That evening, I left with the group's cash. I was dumbfounded by the confidence the group had in me. I thought, "If the group trusts me so much, it is up to me to deserve it."

Every year, I took service, first in the group; then the region, the organization of our Convention; and now, finally, at the national level, on the Board. Al-Anon has given me so many benefits, that I want to help make them available to all those who suffer from the alcoholism of a loved one.

Al-Anon France was created in 1962. In 2005, there were 215 groups. Today there are 140 groups, for a population of 67 million. If we had the same proportion as America, we would be 20 times larger. Our structure is fragile because of its small size, the many small groups, and the proportion of elderly members.

Two years ago, due to financial limitations, we had to change premises and terminate the contract of our only paid employee. The Board created new committees to cover the work of the employee, sought Al-Anon members to take up service, and sought ways to simplify administrative tasks. Today, this system is operational. We are aware that it is fragile because it is based on members' enthusiasm and the need for service rotation.

Each year, our Conference has about 40 members—Delegates from 15 Regions, committee Chairs, and the Board. Working on the planning for the fellowship with the other delegates is a powerful experience for each participant. The last Conference decided to create electronic meetings (by video or by phone). Several video meetings are now operational weekly, with around 15 members including some newcomers.

This year, the Conference will work on a new organization of our Areas. Half of them are in a critical state—not enough groups and

not enough service rotation. This new organization is necessary to give a boost to Al-Anon/Alateen France. It is also the opportunity to create an electronic Area which could develop the electronic meetings.

The Conference and the Board of Directors take care to respect the Traditions and Concepts, and to apply the processes set out in the *Service Manual*.

I bring you the warmest regards of the fellowship in France, which is enormously grateful for the help and encouragement that we receive from the World Service Conference, your Board, and the World Service Office.

Britt M., Germany

I am very thankful to have the opportunity to attend the 2021 World Service Conference and learn more about the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

Since April 2020, I am the only employee in the German General Service Office. I am the successor of someone who was Head of Service Office for 16 years. Prior to this employment, I was a self-employed lawyer.

The General Service Office is located in Hamburg. Hamburg is the second largest city in Germany after Berlin, with a population of more than 1.84 million.

We have on average 130 rainy days per year, and it is always windy. Nevertheless, the citizens regard Hamburg as the “most beautiful city in the world.” Also, there is a saying that there is no bad weather, but only inappropriate clothing.

We have 483 Al-Anon meetings and six Alateen meetings.

During the pandemic, 83 meetings are able to meet face-to-face and 65 meetings found a way to temporarily meet electronically.

Two new permanent electronic meetings were established in 2020.

Mario B., Italy

I am 71 years old. I have been a marketing consultant; and I have attended Al-Anon for 19 years. Al-Anon has changed my life and made me a calm, positive, reliable person with healthy feelings. My days have become simpler, and my character has improved a lot. I finally appreciate life and even small things bring me joy. I learned the importance of silence, listening, and synthesis—I was verbose, bordering on being long-winded, and now I speak very little and only if I have something that I consider appropriate to say.

Al-Anon not only helped me to live with alcoholism, but also to face very difficult and painful trials, unfortunately on many occasions. Although my family member passed some years ago, I continue to attend because I know my stability depends on Al-Anon. From the beginning, I have served, and this has helped me to open my mind and to collaborate with others with pleasure. Among the many services, I have been Group Representative, Area Delegate, member and coordinator of General Services Committees, member and coordinator of numerous study groups, and contact person for the toll-free number. I have had many experiences in external relations and have participated in 11 National Service Conferences. For two years I have been an International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Delegate of the Italian Al-Anon Family Groups Association. This service interests me very much, especially for the possibility of sharing with Al-Anon members from other countries who have very different experiences. Unfortunately, the pandemic emergency forces us to communicate only online, and this in my opinion, empties the service of important content and personal contacts.

The history of Al-Anon in Italy began in 1976 when the first group opened in Rome. The Association was legally founded in 1980 and was officially welcomed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and in the worldwide fellowship. The General Service Office is based in Milan and has eight committees to manage the Association. Currently in Italy, there are 338 Al-Anon groups, 17 Alateen groups, and four online groups registered with the WSO. There are 16 Areas. For 27 years in April a National Service Conference has been organized, and for 22 years in September a National Meeting, which is always very crowded.

The pandemic emergency has long since changed habits because meetings are held online, and many groups have suspended their activities. At this moment, the mission that the Association has given itself is to support the unity and spiritual energy of the Al-Anon program and to be ready for the new beginning.

Elvira M., Paraguay

I have been an active member of Al-Anon Family Groups since 1996. My previous services within the General Service Office include:

- Coordinator of the Literature Committee
- Coordinator of the Public Information Committee
- Group Visiting Committee
- Secretary of the Board of Trustees
- President of the Board of Trustees

Information about the General Service Office of Al-Anon Family Groups of Paraguay

Story

The program arrived in Paraguay, along with the Alcoholics Anonymous program, in 1974 from the hands of an Argentine religious leader.

Our first offices were in church halls or Catholic buildings. The office worked with trusted servants who did the secretarial service, for which they took turns and covered schedules three times a week.

In 2008, we were able to form the structure of the fellowship in Paraguay at the country level, and we registered as an NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] in the Tax Department of Taxpayers of Paraguay.

From 2010 to the present, we have had a Board of Trustees made up of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and an International Delegate. There are also working committees for: Literature and Public Information. This structure rotates its members in service every two years at our conferences.

A couple of years ago, we changed offices achieving greater autonomy; we managed to rent an office in a building in the capital of the country.

In 2020, before the quarantine began, we were able to celebrate our 44th anniversary in March with an open informational meeting. A few years ago, we changed our anniversary month, it was originally January, but we chose March to honor Lois. This year, if we celebrate our 45th birthday virtually with an informational meeting for all audiences, we will have the presence of other GSOs, such as Argentina and Uruguay, among others.

Structure

The current Board of Trustees was formed at the 8th Conference held in March 2019. Through the vote of the Group Representatives (GRs), the full members for each service position were elected, as well as the alternate members for each position; with the intention that they can assume membership in the conferences to follow. We

had our 9th General Service Conference in March 2021 for the first time in virtual format. At our conferences, we report on the services performed at the end of each term and new members in service are elected for the next term, which lasts two years.

We are currently working on updating our bylaws, for which a working committee was initially formed. During the last conference, we read the proposed changes, which were unanimously approved by the Group Representatives present. Now, we are in the legal processes with the clerk's office.

Our goal is to open Alateen groups in at least one school, but due to the pandemic, this goal was postponed for now. We are looking for new strategies, while we accommodate interested teens to participate in Al-Anon meetings as suggested by the *Service Manual*.

Groups

We have 17 active groups, the majority in Asunción and Gran Asunción (neighboring cities to the capital) plus other groups in other regions of the country. Unfortunately, we currently do not have Alateen groups, as they have closed due to lack of participation. We encourage teen members seeking help to attend Al-Anon meetings.

Literature

Our current reality does not allow us to reprint our own literature. On average, we make an annual purchase to supply the active groups with books and brochures. We have a Literature Committee led by a coordinator; usually each group has a literature manager with a small stock available. Committee sales are submitted by the coordinator to the Treasurer of the Board.

National and International Meetings with Al-Anon Paraguay Participation

- *RIASA (Reunión Iberoamericana de Servicio de Al-Anon), Argentina—2009*
- *1st Conference of Women of Alcoholics Anonymous with the participation of Al-Anon—Paraguay—2010*
- *RIASA Uruguay—2013*
- *RIASA Paraguay—2015: On November 14 and 15, 2015 we held the 5th RIASA in Asunción, Paraguay with the participation of Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and the presence of the WSO.*
- *Risga [International Al-Anon General Services Meeting] Roma—2016*
- *XIX National A.A. Convention in the city of Maceió, Brazil—2016*
- *50th Anniversary of Argentina—2016*
- *RIASA Ecuador—2017*
- *1st Three Frontiers Meeting, Foz do Iguaçu —Brazil—2017*
- *2nd Three Borders Meeting, Ciudad del Este—Paraguay—2018: Event held between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay taking advantage of the borders that unite these three countries. The main event organizes A.A., but a couple of years ago, it had the participation of Al-Anon and Alateen. Although it is between these three countries, the meeting is still open to any member of the fellowship regardless of the country. When it was in Paraguay, we also had the participation of Peru and Bolivia.*
- *3rd Meeting of Three Borders, Wanda—Argentina—2019*
- *First South American Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous with the participation of Al-Anon and Alateen—Paraguay 2019. We hosted together with fellow A.A. members in a three-day event, where each fellowship held its meetings in separate rooms. As*

Al-Anon, we had the international participation of Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Argentina.

- *Risga IAGSM 2020—Virtual.* We participated through the International Delegate service of this international meeting through the AFG Connects platform. It was quite enriching even though we couldn't keep up with the posts.
- *61st WSC 2021.* Also through the International Delegate service, it was the first time we had the opportunity to participate thanks to the pandemic. It was an honor to be part of it, despite having a Spanish translator. It was a bit difficult to understand some things because our translator in Paraguay was not very fluent.
- *10th RIASA—Peru 2021.* We are participating in pre-RIASA work meetings with the virtual modality since 2020, and we are already registered to be connected in October. It is an extraordinary experience to be a part of the meeting with the highest number of participants thanks to the pandemic.

Debora MacD., Peru

The Al-Anon and Alateen Family Groups in Peru were founded in 1965, and our General Service Office (GSO) opened 21 years ago.

The GSO has rented an office for many years that is open three times a week, for four hours a day for the delivery of literature (due to COVID-19). Before the pandemic, it was open eight hours a day Monday to Friday and was used as an information center where literature was sold, and as a location to hold meetings for the Board of Trustees and committees, among others.

We have two paid Staff for our GSO. The Secretary-Receptionist who works only part-time (some days in office and others from home due to the pandemic) and an Accountant who does the accounting for us once a month and the balance sheet once a year.

The GSO has five Trustees At-Large who perform the following services:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary of the Board
- Finance Chairperson
- International Delegate

We do not have Regional Trustees, but the Nominating Committee submitted a motion to the 2020 National Conference to incorporate Regional Trustees starting in 2021 and has proposed a regional member.

We do not have an Executive Committee, which is difficult, especially for the Finance Committee, which consists of four members of the Board of Directors.

We have eight active committees:

- Policy
- Alateen Advisory
- Public Outreach
- Literature
- Conference
- Finance
- International Coordination
- Nominating

Our structure is distributed in eight Areas: five are in Lima—the capital, and three are in other regions of the country. Only one

Area in Lima is divided into Districts, the rest are only composed of Group Representatives and Delegates. We also have several groups in regions that do not have zones; they assist the National Service Conference (NSC) with a voice, but without a vote.

In the last few years, we have had approximately 80 Al-Anon groups and three to five Alateen groups that met mostly in churches, because they don't charge rent.

Today, during the pandemic, we have 70 groups meeting virtually and they all meet through different platforms. These groups are not registered as virtual groups, but they do send us their data to include in a virtual provisional directory.

In terms of finances, we have faced difficulties. We have run out of our prudent reserve and live day-to-day. Contributions have decreased due to the pandemic, and the sale of literature has also decreased greatly. We have managed to reprint two books per year, but only 300 copies of each. The pandemic has not only affected us in terms of costs, but also in terms of distribution because there are many restrictions imposed by the government.

The NSC took place virtually in 2020, but with a delay of several months. We didn't know how to proceed with the pandemic; everything was different and difficult to face. We made many mistakes, but we are already organizing the 2021 NSC that will be held in April and we do hope to do much better. The sponsorship with other IberoAmerican structures and with the WSO is helping us a lot.

We have greatly improved the topic of Public Outreach, especially the virtual way, through the Digital Ecosystem Subcommittee which is part of the Public Outreach committee. They are responsible for giving information to the newcomers or members who want to know about virtual groups through Facebook and other social networks. Our website is out of date and therefore we have proposed to update it this year.

Nowadays, the International Committee has been doing more active work, however we are still unable to obtain the budget to attend international meetings. In 2019, the GSO did not manage to assume the entire cost to attend RIASA 2019 (Reunión Iberoamericana de Servicio de Al-Anon), the IberoAmerican Service Meeting of Al-Anon in Mexico. The International Delegate had the possibility to assume her own cost of airfare and accommodation, and our GSO assumed only the cost of registration.

This year Peru is hosting RIASA 2021 to be held in October; but due to the pandemic, this meeting will be held virtually and therefore there is no cost at all. Although we will not have the pleasure of being together face-to-face, we believe that thanks to technology, the participation of IberoAmerican countries will be very high. We have already had several service meetings to prepare this event, and we trust that about 18 countries will attend and that is almost all the countries of IberoAmerica.

We are in a crisis that affects everyone worldwide, however in Peru we are evaluating possibilities and proposing strategies to recover from this pandemic. We are sure that participation is the key to harmony and applying our principles in all our actions we will achieve this all together.

Mário C., Portugal

With gratitude and enthusiasm, I participated in the 61st World Service Conference, which took place April 12 to 16, 2021.

I have been a member of Al-Anon since 2012. I served in my home group "Life and Hope" where I make my recovery. It is located in the city of Amora, Almada Municipality and Setúbal District. I was a Group Representative from 2016 to 2019, when I was nominated by the groups of the Area to serve, as the Southern Regional Trustee. I was unanimously approved as Southern Regional Trustee

at the 12th General Service Conference of Portugal 2019, also being part of the Board of Trustees. As I live in the Municipality where our General Service Office is based, and according to our National Service Manual, I am part of the Executive Committee.

In 2021, the Board of Trustees appointed me an International Delegate, awaiting approval at the XIII Conference of National Services of Portugal to be held on May 23, 2021.

Al-Anon arrived in Portugal in 1984 through a doctor who met the Al-Anon groups in the United States of America. He understood its importance for family members of alcoholics and streamlined the opening of the first Al-Anon group in Lisbon, our capital.

In April 1986, the group was registered at the World Service Office (WSO).

In 2001, the non-profit association of the Al-Anon Family Groups of Portugal was created. As a community, we celebrate November 12 as the National Day of Al-Anon Family Groups in Portugal, as it was the day on which, in 1984, the first self-help meeting was held.

Structure

- Three regions: North, Center, and South.
- Two Areas: Center and South (North Region has no Area because there is only one group) 17 Al-Anon Groups

General Service Office

- General secretary
- Custodian (Trustee) of the host city—Teseu
- Regional Custodian (Trustee) of the region where the GSO is located Volunteer members of the GSO:
 - Site administrator
 - Helpline phone

We have no paid employees.

We maintain privileged contact with the structure of Spain that supports us through proximity and with the structure of Brazil that supports us through the common language.

Standing Committees

- Guide Committee—Standards/Guidelines
- Publications Committee and Bulletin (our "Just for Today" Bulletin is published every six months and the Health Professionals Bulletin is published every two years)

Customs Board

- It consists of seven members
- Four Custodians (Trustees) of the host city without geographical limit (At-Large), three Regional Custodians (Trustees)

Madelein O'B., South Africa

Warm greetings from Somerset West, Western Cape, South Africa. My recovery home group is Hottentots Holland, currently meeting virtually via Zoom. My recovery journey started in Seaview (known as the love group), in Kwa-Zulu Natal, in 1989. I came to find sobriety for the love of my life and found that I was affected by problem drinkers and my life was unmanageable.

Currently, I serve on the General Service Committee (GSC) as Chair of Al-Anon Family Groups South Africa. Service started early in my recovery in my home group, evolving until serving as a Delegate in both Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal and later in Cape Town. Two years ago, while happily serving as Cape Area Service Board member, the service compass changed direction as I was elected as

the GSC Chair. Last year, I had the privilege of journeying, with other International delegates on AFG Connects, to the 20th International Al-Anon General Services Meeting in October 2020.

Al-Anon South Africa (AFG SA) is alive and thriving, sometimes quickly and sometimes slowly. The pandemic is teaching us that we become adaptable and accept that we are connected even though we are apart.

AFG SA service structures are working hard to adapt to continual changes. AFG SA has a functioning GSO in Cape Town, including three Area Service Offices in Cape Town, Gauteng & Districts, and Kwa-Zulu Natal. The General Service Board (GSB) last met virtually on Saturday, 6th March. The GSC last met virtually on Saturday 13th March, with full participation.

Saturday 27th March, the annual Imbizo (Policy & Planning) meeting which was carried over from last year, will be held with the focus on the Delegates' roles responsibilities, and empowerment. All Conference members are invited to participate—the Delegates, the GSB, and the GSC; and as observers, all Area service members.

2021 A.A. National Convention in cooperation with Al-Anon will be hosted virtually by Gauteng & District (via Zoom) on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd April. Two full days of planned Al-Anon meetings, as well as joining A.A. for the opening meeting and the spiritual meeting, with Al-Anon, Alateen, and Al-Anon adult children participation.

AFG SA celebrates 70 years in May. We will have a combined National birthday celebration on Saturday, 15th May. Planning is underway and the committee is made up of both the General Service Committee and Area Service members.

2022 National Conference planning is underway and will held on Friday 4th and Saturday 5th June. The theme is “Unity—Moving Forward with Courage, Participation, and Perseverance.”

The AFG SA website is currently under redesign and discussions have started regarding the value of adding an e-commerce site to enable nationwide Conference Approved Literature distribution. The GSO is monitoring the Helpline as it seems most newcomers are entering though the website rather than calling the national Helpline. We are planning to implement more structured IT for AFG SA.

Public Outreach is focusing on producing an Alateen PSA that will be broadly aired on local television channels—as we have experienced a large influx of newcomers after the Al-Anon PSAs were broadly aired on local television channels in early 2020. The pandemic has made it convenient to enter Al-Anon's doors virtually, and all three Areas currently host a newcomers meeting. The website includes a newcomers section, including a Welcome letter and Introduction to newcomers meetings.

We are practicing financial prudence due to the effects of the pandemic. We currently do not plan to print local literature. Reminders are sent electronically and via the meeting platform. Although members have been generous during their personal struggles (loss of income) due to the pandemic, having a prudent reserve has allowed the service structures to convey the financial appeals in a loving, kind way and not from a place of fear (not enough).

While Zoom is the most popular virtual meeting, not everyone can make use of this platform for various reasons. Currently there are discussions identifying alternative means for recovery and service meetings. Delegates and ASBMs will report back to Conference for discussion.

Although the virtual meetings in South Africa are listed on the website, access to them is limited to invitation by the members, and via a local electronic notification group. Access to the meeting is also controlled by the local appointed host.

The General Service Committee provided a suggested Al-Anon virtual meeting format with guidelines which include the protection of the attendees' anonymity, i.e., use headset, have a personal space, sign in with first name only, no recording of recovery meetings. The statement on anonymity forms part of the guidelines.

The AFG SA Alateen Safety and Behavioural Policy ensures a safe space for our teens. Several Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) are also present and host, in order to keep our Alateens safe. The AMIAS process is a stringent one and is done in accordance with the laws of the Country and in line with the Alateen Safety and Behavioural Policy requirements. Virtual meetings have been a blessing for Alateen, and the number of members, as well as the number of groups, have increased. The policy is also currently being updated to include virtual meeting guidelines.

In all service structures, members in service are constantly working on trust by remaining transparent and accessible. The rewriting of the South African Service Handbook, with the vision of creating a safe environment for members in service, is under way. A task team has been formed and milestones will be set after the National Conference in June.

Although these are uncertain times, they are also exciting times for our fellowship, we are filled with hope, passion, and a sustained perseverance to ensure that all people affected by someone else's drinking will find help and recovery in every community.

Miriam L., Spain

Like many other grateful Al-Anon members, my life can be divided into two distinct portions, before Al-Anon and after being hooked on Al-Anon. Actually, there is another two-portion division which also exists on account of my “potential Al-Anon member characteristics,” which is before deciding to leave the UK where I was born, brought up, educated, and had started working with a very promising future in a large pharmaceutical company to marry a Spaniard I had met on holiday some years earlier and was very much in love with. I left behind my family and friends, gave up my job, and went to live in Spain where I settled, had three children, and an alcoholic husband. I had had no previous knowledge of what it meant to live with alcoholism and nobody to confide in; and I kept the misery I was living in all to myself. But the God of my understanding was watching over me, and He placed in my path a sister-in-law who, unknown to me, was already in Al-Anon and a family situation where she had had to travel to the city I live in and she was given the opportunity to ask me, very tactfully, if I thought my husband had a drinking problem. “Alcoholism” was never mentioned, and my immediate reaction was denial. “He just drinks like everybody else.” To this day, I don't know how it happened, but between ten and 15 minutes later, I was asking her to show me where to go to those groups she was attending. Our joint experience was rather frustrating because the only group in my city at that time had stopped meeting on the day we went, but she just continued telling me how her group was helping her. I was hooked before even having entered into my first meeting, which I sought out by myself since, meanwhile, she had had to return home. That was it! I had isolated myself so much that I just couldn't believe I was receiving so much love and understanding from complete strangers. Everything they said was a description of what I was going through, thinking, feeling, and suffering; and they were offering me a way out. I grabbed the program with heart and soul and have never had to face anything without support again. My husband sadly never found sobriety and died ten years ago this month, but I had found Al-Anon and learned that I could accept that too as God's will and ask His help to carry on with

my life, hard as it was. All during this time and ever since then, my recovery was and has been sustained by my doing service. I rotated through almost all of the group service positions, and I was present at the last Group Representative Assembly before Al-Anon in Spain had grown sufficiently to approve the formation of Areas and thus required to have Delegates.

The history of Al-Anon in Spain began some time before I found my place there in 1982. In 1963, the first Al-Anon group was founded in the Canary Islands and from then until 1978, groups were started all over Spain. That year, some members from Barcelona contacted the World Service Office asking for help in setting up a service structure in the country. After some contacts with all the groups, our structure was formed in 1979. In 1980, the First National Assembly with Alateen presence was held, a temporary Board of Trustees was elected, a Delegate attended the first International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in New Orleans, and the first Newsletter “Serenidad” was compiled. A free copy distributed to all groups. From 1980 to 1984, Assemblies and Interim Board of Trustees Meetings were held to be able to set up the Al-Anon General Service Office (GSO) in Spain. In 1984, the By-laws which legalized the Spanish Al-Anon Family Group GSO were approved by the Ministerio del Interior (Home Office), and in 1986, the Interim Board of Trustees resigned. To avoid the periodic election of all Trustees at the same time, two local and two Regional Trustees from the Interim Board continued serving. Then in 1988, the first National Service Conference was held in Barcelona where the GSO had opened in 1980. There were nine Areas and nine Delegates. There were 140 Al-Anon groups, 24 Alateen groups, one young Al-Anon group, one Lone Member, and nine Information Offices (Intergroups). One Delegate attended the IAGSM in England. I had the privilege of attending this Conference and the following three as a Delegate and in the last one as the Coordinator of one Area as there was no Delegate that year. In 1993, the first National Service Seminar was held. In 1999 we attended the first IberoAmerican Services Meeting (RIASA) in Argentina. In the year 2000, the XIII Conference passed the motion that the Spanish service structure would not have Districts and Areas, but only Areas, and two years later in 2002 the XV Conference passed the first National Service Manual. In the XXVI Conference in 2013, an alternate to the Executive Director was presented. In the month of June, the previous Executive Director died. Her alternate took on the position. An informative meeting and a roundtable with professionals for professionals was held to celebrate 50 years of Al-Anon in Spain. In 2014, the Spanish GSO moved to a new address, and I had the wonderful privilege of being voted in as a Regional Trustee after seven years dedicated to Public Information in my Area. Basically, because nobody else in the GSO spoke good English, I was requested to also take on the role as International Delegate to the IAGSM and European Zonal Meeting, which I gratefully did. The experience has been wonderful, and I have learned so much. I have even been to the World Service Office in Virginia during the 2018 IAGSM. Is there a single Al-Anon member anywhere who doesn’t dream of that? At the 2020 virtual IAGSM, I had already rotated off the Board of Trustees, but the Board has continued to confide in me as there is still no English speaker available for the task. 2020 was also the 40th birthday of the GSO and the newsletter, “Serenidad,” and we celebrated with virtual PO meetings as well as we could. When the WSO offered the GSO, and them to me, the possibility of “sending” someone to the virtual WSC 2021, it was a unique opportunity to learn so much that it was impossible to turn down. I will be eternally grateful for this.

Trish B., UK & Eire

I am the General Secretary for the UK & Eire Structure. It is a privilege to be part of the virtual 2021 World Service Conference.

I came to Al-Anon in 2002. I grew up in London, England, in what looked from the outside like a typical 1970s family. The reality was quite different. My mother was an alcoholic and my father was her enabler. My mum was a nasty drunk who would scream and throw me out on a regular basis. I would wait until early evening when I knew she would be unconscious on the sofa to return. This carried on until one day, when I was 17 years old, I decided not to return home. I rushed into a relationship, and we married and had two children. Once again, it looked from the outside like a normal family. The truth was, I had married an alcoholic. Fifteen years later, with two children and a failed marriage, my doctor suggested that I go to Al-Anon for support. My life was unmanageable, and I was desperate to feel better, so I went to a meeting. After a couple of months, I asked someone who was active in service to become my Sponsor. She agreed and told me about the Legacies—Recovery through the Steps, Unity through the Traditions, and Service through the Concepts. I was no longer alone. I was encouraged to take on service roles, which made me feel involved and included. I was active in my home group, District, and Area. In 2009, I attended my first UK & Eire Service Conference and have attended each year since. In 2018, after many years of volunteering at the General Service Office, I became a Staff member and when my predecessor retired in October 2019, to my astonishment, I had the fortune to be accepted into the role of General Secretary.

In 1951, a group in Belfast was the first in the UK & Eire to register with the World Service Office and from 1960 to 1969, services for Al-Anon were conducted from members’ homes. In 1970, Al-Anon Family Groups UK & Eire rented an office, held their first Conference, and registered as a non-profit making company called Family Groups Ltd. In 1973, charitable status was obtained. In 2017, it was brought to the General Service Board’s attention that a separate company was required to be established in Eire. Al-Anon Family Groups CLG [Company Limited by Guarantee; similar to “Inc.”] in Eire was incorporated in 2019. As a result, we now have two companies within the UK & Eire Structure.

In 2013, premises were purchased in London for the General Service Office. There are three full-time and four part-time employed Staff members who are assisted by four regular administration volunteers. A telephone and email helpline service are provided. The helpline service has a rota of approximately 100 volunteers and is redirected and answered by one or two volunteers per shift, in their own homes. There are approximately 730 Al-Anon groups, 16 Alateen groups, 30 Areas (with Districts within most of the Areas), and six Regions. Each Area sends a Delegate to Conference and they serve a three-year term.

Alateen membership continues to decline, but the paperwork increases with the continuing responsibility for our duty of care to Alateen members. We also have to deal with four different legislative bodies: England and Wales, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and the Republic of Ireland (Eire).

The General Service Board (GSB) is made up of 13 Trustees, the Chairman, the Vice Chairman (who is also the Executive Committee Chairman), the Treasurer, the General Secretary, the Public Information Committee Chairman, the Editorial Committee Chairman, the Conference Committee Chairman, and six Regional Trustees. The General Service Board meets three times a year. Two of the Trustees of the GSB serve as International Al-Anon General Services Meeting Delegates. The Executive Committee comprises

of the Chairman, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, the General Secretary, and past Trustees and has responsibility for the routine administration of Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK and Eire. Al-Anon Family Groups CLG have three Directors: the General Secretary, the Regional Trustee for Eire, and a past Regional Trustee. All administration for Al-Anon Family Groups CLG is provided by GSO under the management of the General Secretary.

Our General Service Office (GSO) is the hub of all activity in our Structure. However, due to the pandemic, the office has been closed since March 2020. The regular GSO administration volunteers who are a valuable part of the GSO team have been unable to assist Staff who have continued to work remotely from home. One member of Staff has been working in the office one day per week dispatching literature orders.

So, what of the future? We do not have an opinion on outside issues, but we need to acknowledge what is happening globally. Financial turmoil will hit our members, and in turn, our structure. We anticipate a downturn in donations, but we also anticipate an increased need for the help that we offer to the families and friends of alcoholics. Commencing January this year, we aim to put the name of Al-Anon into the public consciousness with a two-year-long Public Information campaign with mini campaigns to run alongside this. Our members have clearly demonstrated that, given support and encouragement, they will carry the message to every corner of the structure.

I am now in my second year as General Secretary. The first year was not as planned and we faced many unexpected challenges. I have felt a huge sense of responsibility to the fellowship during a year of adversity and have had to adjust our strategy accordingly. Following this Conference, I hope to bring our members the same message of encouragement, enthusiasm, and the need to grow by making positive changes, as my predecessor did when she attended the World Service Conference in 2009.

OPENING SPEAKER

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

“I can remember feeling ambitious, waking up excited about my day, having loads of energy. I don’t know when all that slipped away. Now it’s all I can do to pull myself out of bed. I barely keep myself or my children washed and fed, and then only out of a sense of guilt or embarrassment. I didn’t see it coming. I just slowly lost touch with the part of me that was able to care, and I don’t have a clue how to find it again...” *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32) p. 3

That is the first paragraph of the first chapter of our book *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics*. I did not write the words, but I have lived them. I have felt the guilt and embarrassment of not being able to pull myself out of bed, not caring how I looked, feeling numb, drifting in and out of a fog. Functioning just enough to keep a job, pay the bills, appear as if everything was as it had always been. I became paralyzed with fear; fear that someone might find out the secret. Slowly, and unknowingly, I became willing to hide the truth at any cost. I gave away every sense of dignity I had known. I lived with shame and anger, then rage and paralyzing fear. I became irritable and unreasonable—first without knowing, and then without caring.

The family disease of alcoholism entered gradually and overtook every aspect of my being. I wasn’t sure when or how things had changed. I knew I was responsible. Nothing up to this point could

have prepared me for the changes and events that would unfold.

I grew up in a loving and giving family, the oldest of four children. There was no active alcoholism in our home. In later years, my mother shared about her father’s drinking, but I don’t remember it. I adored my grandfather. He was full of laughter, and there was something about him that I found mesmerizing. He was carefree, he bent the rules, he made me feel special, and I would do whatever I could to make him happy.

I was taught life’s rules and I followed them—be nice, loving, tell the truth, always do your best and the best will come to you. I studied hard, had a few friends but never moved outside the box in which I had placed myself. I never dated—I’d never met anyone that seemed to have that special something, the thing that drew me in and swept me off my feet, someone exciting, a prince charming.

I went to college; found a job immediately after graduation, became self-sufficient. Nothing exciting, until January 2, 1981. I remember the date because I wrote the following in my diary, “Today I found the man for me.”

He was sitting alone drawing at a corner table. I saw the potential. He said he was an artist. What he really said was, “I am a tattoo artist.” I brushed away the very thought of even talking to someone with tattoos. I decided right there and then that he needed a respectable job, and I needed a man I could bring home; so I decided he would become an architect. Our first conversation was the beginning of three years of him saying one thing, my hearing what I wanted, and putting a plan in place that would make him into something I could be proud of. I have no idea where those thoughts came from, but they were immediate, and I was up to the challenge.

He said he was a recovering alcoholic, he attended Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). He said I could help him if I understood him more. Attending meetings would help me, help him. I went, I listened carefully, took notes, and tapped him with my elbow whenever someone shared something I considered inspiring. I read to him from A.A. literature, mostly while he slept. I became obsessed in ensuring he would become the person I needed him to be. I started lying to the people I loved. I closed myself off from everyone, except those in A.A. I knew I needed them; they would make him do the right thing. I called his Sponsor every day and at all hours. Who else would file a daily report regarding his actions? At first, the Sponsor patiently listened; he told me about Al-Anon, I told him I had seen those women, they wouldn’t like me, and I didn’t like them. His answer was short and to the point, he didn’t care. I told him that if he continued to speak to me in that manner, I would never call him again. He hung up.

I attended my first Al-Anon meeting on July 4, 1982 I was neither grateful nor willing. A “Sponsor” took me. We had nothing in common, you were old, I was young; you had been married for years, I wasn’t; you wouldn’t understand; you wouldn’t like me because I was young and knew how to fix my own problems; you had been in Al-Anon forever and proudly said so, I was staying for *this meeting only*.

In truth, my perception that day was that you looked old to me. All I saw were our differences. What could we possibly have in common? I would be staying for a short period, long enough to satisfy the Sponsor, and then move on. You said, “Keep Coming Back,” you gave me your phone numbers, you gave me *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* [ODAT (B-14)]. You asked me to come back. You offered to take me to other meetings, you said you understood, and somewhere between the opening and the closing, something deep within me moved from *never* to maybe.

I continued attending meetings but not participating. I found you smiled and laughed at the strangest things. You shared ideas I hadn't thought of—such as standing in front of the window and waiting. I hadn't thought of waiting at home; I'd spent a great deal of time driving around trying to find him, standing was a much more economical way to wait.

I was afraid to share what was happening at home, that I had lost control and I didn't know how to get it back. I didn't understand alcoholism was a progressive disease. I just wanted him to behave. I needed out but didn't know how. He continued to drink. Shame and guilt became my comfort, and I became willing to go to any extreme to keep the secret hidden. While deep down I wanted him to leave, deeper still, was the feeling of—if he didn't want me, who would?

In an attempt to control him and to keep my family and friends during their visits, I began hiding him in my bedroom closet. It seemed a rational and sound solution at the time. He would sit for hours at a time while I visited with friends and family. I rationalized my behavior by putting a milk crate with a cushion in the closet and arranged the clothes in a manner that he could sit and read with a flashlight.

The disease progressed. My thinking and behavior became more distorted. I pleaded with him to leave, he refused. I was afraid to ask for help. I couldn't tell you; I would be a liar; I'd said everything was wonderful.

What started as discussions grew into loud arguments. Grabbing my arm graduated to being held in corners. Ripping phones out of walls became punching holes in walls and then...me. I lost all desire to live the life I had planned. My body, mind, and my spirit were broken. At night, I would lay and shake uncontrollably, fearful of what would happen next, wishing he would never come back, wishing he would kill me so it would end. Something deep within me knew that nothing would change unless I changed. But my pride and ego wouldn't allow me to call for help, so instead, one night I pushed him. I knew how far I could push before each of us would be out of control. I remember feeling like I had been backed into a corner and the only way out was to fight. Today, I accept that I backed *myself* into that corner, the rage I felt was towards *myself*. To this day, I don't remember the details of what happened. What I do remember, is an overwhelming feeling of wanting to ask for help, honestly asking for help. I believe that attending meetings, however unwilling I was, provided the actions I needed that night. I became willing to do what was asked. I came to believe that I never wanted to live, or feel, that way again, and that someone or something other than myself would, and could help if only I asked. All the slogans, the words of experience, your strength, and your hope, the words I had doubted and scoffed at became real. I took my first constructive action, I got down on my knees and simply asked for help. The shaking and uncontrolled rage immediately stopped and has never returned.

I have wanted to be with you since that night. I am a better person when surrounded by you. The invitation to participate, to be a part of, was and continues to be, a life-changing experience. Through personal and service sponsorship, our Legacies have become my life. Through a searching and fearless moral inventory, I have gained an even deeper belief in the God of my understanding. I am right where I am supposed to be today. There are no coincidences. Amends through direct contact and changes in my actions have given me relationships with family and friends I had previously been incapable of. No person owns a piece of my mind. I can look others directly in the eye, I am free. Through daily review I attempt to make right what is wrong and carry no baggage into my night. I invite my God into my mornings and thank Him each night. I ask only for guidance in being the best person I can be, to show me through you how He would want me to be. I try to be of service, to pass on what has been freely given to me.

I became involved in service by accident—through an invitation to a District potluck. The invitation was a ruse. The current District Representative (DR), and women from my home group, decided I needed to become involved. It just so happened that the District needed a Treasurer. Somehow, I was elected the District Treasurer. However, there was one problem. I have a learning disability, and numbers are a big problem for me. I wanted desperately to be part of something but did not want to let anyone down. I took my first step in trust in service, I shared with the DR my problem with numbers and that I didn't even balance my own checkbook. She asked how I knew how much money I had in the bank, and I shared that if the numbers on the bank statement were within \$25, I was good to go. She simply smiled, gave me a hug, and said, if I was willing to learn she would teach me, and she did.

This year's Conference theme brings me back to my early days in Al-Anon where members invited me to get in the car. Those women were visionaries and through their encouragement, and unconditional love, I and countless others have stepped forward, trusted in our collective Higher Power, and through our collective actions we found unity, courage, and persevered. I served as Group Representative (GR) of my home group which has a long legacy of trusted servants serving above the group level. Without knowing it, I was standing on the shoulders of giants—learning through their example how to serve. I had no idea that a simple invitation would lead to my being attracted to something called service, and through that attraction, a level of growth. I could have never imagined an ability to dream big, to trust, believe in you, and because of my belief and trust in you, I learned to believe in myself.

I attended my first Conference in 1999 as a Panel 39 Iowa Delegate. I arrived with my personal Sponsor who was serving as a Conference member in the role of Executive Committee Chair. Conference was held in Connecticut that year, and we traveled from Iowa together. We took the van from the airport to the hotel with other Delegates, some returning, some new, all of us smiling, laughing, and talking at the same time. I remember feeling excited, unsure of myself, overwhelmed and certain my Area had made a huge mistake, those feelings came and went, like a roller coaster of emotions throughout the week.

Once checked in at the hotel, we rode the elevator up to our rooms—she exiting first. As she stepped out, I asked, “what time should we meet for dinner?” She turned and said, “we will not meet for dinner, your role is to be a Delegate, I will see you tomorrow,” and the elevator doors slowly closed. I remember just standing there, frozen in place, feeling totally alone and the voices of doubt playing out in my head—I don't know what being a Delegate means, feelings of inadequacy and fear crept in, but then, the voice in my heart—which I've come to believe is the voice of the God of my understanding—said, “You are right where you're supposed to be today.”

My memories of the 2000 Conference are motions, specifically motions regarding *One Day at A Time in Al-Anon*. In 1999, the manuscript for the ODAT was re-typed and re-designed for technology conversion. It was during this conversion that Staff discovered errors within the text of two pages. Questions of correcting the errors was discussed with the Literature Committee during which time the 1978 WSC motion that “No change may be made to our book, *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*, without majority approval of the full Conference in session,” was shared. The *2000 World Service Conference Summary* states the following:

“The Committee, mindful of its responsibility to produce literature of high quality and wishing to remain obedient to the WSC group conscience, therefore brought this issue to the 2000 WSC for guidance and clarification on how best to proceed. Therefore, the Committee submitted a motion regarding these “housekeeping changes,” and the matter was discussed in detail.”

From our work on the ODAT I learned a great deal about motions, stacking motions, quotes, punctuation, grammar, tolerance, patience, listening, and working late into the night. What I took away from that experience was the absolute belief that Conference decisions live on. The decisions of our largest group conscience are taken seriously and live on well past the closing of Conference. I learned that listening with an open mind and heart are imperative to the decisions we make here. That our discussions matter, the right of decision does make effective leadership possible, and that the ultimate authority is our collective Higher Power.

As a result of our work during the 2000 WSC, the World Service Conference authorized the Executive Committee to approve housekeeping changes to *One Day at A Time in Al-Anon* from 1979 forward. Housekeeping changes are defined as updating addresses, phone numbers, statistics, correcting misattributions, and incorrectly stated quotes.

I returned to Conference in 2012 as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). I had three roles, voice limited to ECRPM business, ringing the 2-minute warning bell for breaks, and keeping track of two minutes at the microphone. My plan was to sit quietly, listen, and be unnoticed. I am a service junkie, which means I had read every *Conference Summary*—since my last Conference as Delegate in 2001—every “Inside Al-Anon,” and new *Service Manual* front to back. I had heard about Knowledge-Based Decision-Making, Thought and Task Forces but had not observed it first-hand. Sitting quietly in the back of the room, listening to discussions, being a part of conversations during meals, participating in the breakout sessions, and observing the changes at Conference, moved me more than I can express. In retrospect, the 2012 WSC was life-changing. I had been encouraged over the years to submit my name for Trustee but my life at the time was focused on my career, and I knew I could not give the time I believed was necessary to serve. However, the God of my understanding had other plans. My work made changes that allowed me to retire five years earlier than I planned. The door was open, I trusted in my Higher Power and did what was in front of me, knowing that I only need to take the action and let go of the result. In April 2013 the Board of Trustees elected me as the US North Central Regional Trustee which I had the privilege to serve as from April 2013 through April 2019.

The 61st WSC will be my 12th Conference. In reflection, I would like to share a few more of my personal highlights. In 2016 our theme was “Realizing our Spiritual Potential.” The Board announced the hiring of an Interim Executive Director for a period of time that would ensure that changes within the WSO were implemented and functioning well. Our 2016 Conference was filled with excitement for our future and ready to move forward.

In 2017, our theme was “Our Members: Our Hope for the Future.” Our new Director of Finance & Operations was introduced. The Board announced with great enthusiasm and hope for our future, that we were ready to begin the search for our next Executive Director. Approval of revisions to the “World Service Handbook” section of the 2014-2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, as well as the “Financial Matters” and “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions” sections of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” in the *Manual*. The Conference Leadership Team (CLT), following discussion from the 2016 WSC, began making changes that included involving Delegate members of the Conference in more presentations, as well as having direct input to suggest theme ideas for the 2017 WSC.

In 2018 our theme was “Al-Anon there is No Standing Still.” It was clear from the Annual Report and Staff updates that our WSO was moving forward, and this theme carried through when the Board of Trustees introduced our new Executive Director. The Conference app was introduced and Conference members, some slowly, some quickly, realized the app held more than our Conference Agenda, seating chart, and Conference Roster. The Board took a bold step with the introduction of the Mega Issue. The Board entrusted me in my role as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, our Executive Director, and our Chairperson of the Executive Committee with the privilege of leading the first Mega Issue discussion. It was a risk and one that was enthusiastically accepted by the WSC. During our Mega Issue discussion, Conference members were invited into a conversation regarding translation issues across our fellowship.

Our 2019 Conference theme was “Action Is Attraction—There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone.” Our theme truly fit the overall tone of the 2019 Conference. The Conference app returned with added features and increased enthusiasm. Honest discussion regarding our Affirmation process has assisted the Board, the Nominating Committee, the Conference Committee on Trustees, and the Regional Trustee Plan Work Group to rethink how we communicate and present our affirmation process. The work of our Staff was honored through the addition of the Annual Report Update. Conference members were given an overview of the new Strategic Plan. The new Strategic Plan was received with such enthusiasm that the Board made the decision to provide Conference Members with table tent cards outlining the Core Purpose, Mission Statement, Core Values, Envisioned Future, and the Members, Public, and Organizational Goals. A Mega Issue topic returned—this time led by a Task Force composed of four Trustees. The topic was “Hybrid Conference.” Following the 2019 Conference, the Board and Conference Leadership Team, considered the discussions and as a result of the Mega Issue discussion, began implementing changes to the Conference Agenda all the while not knowing how the 2019 Mega Issue discussion would reach a reality sooner than any of us ever expected. And finally, in keeping with the 2018 motion of the Board of Trustees, a three-year trial to provide when required, simultaneous translation was provided for the first time for Spanish- and French- speaking Delegates.

While our 2020 Conference was not what any of us expected. Our Conference Leadership Team and WSO Staff were able to quickly find a way for us to move forward the business that was required and begin plans for what we all hoped would be an in-person 2021 WSC. A 2021 in-person Conference was not to be, and while I know many of us are disappointed, I believe our collective Higher Power has been at work in providing the opportunities for us to become comfortable within ourselves in a virtual world, and opportunities in keeping with our 2021 Conference theme, “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance.”

Al-Anon’s vision for the future can be found in the faces and voices of our Conference. I was overwhelmed by them during my first Conference, when I returned in 2012, and each year since. The voice of our Conference is a collection of bold leaders, voices of trust, confidence, and reason. I have found all within Conference through the realization that our members do not change Al-Anon’s principles. Our members are changed by Al-Anon’s principles. A Power greater than ourselves is *truly* in charge.

Thank you all for your willingness to be part of our largest group conscience. May we move forward this week with unity, courage, and perseverance for those yet to come.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Mary V., Panel 60, Puerto Rico

My name is Mary, and I am a grateful member of the Al-Anon Family Groups. I am serving today as the Panel 60 Delegate from my little island in the Caribbean, Puerto Rico—"La Isla del Encanto."

My heartfelt thanks to this World Service Conference, to the Board of Trustees, to you my fellow members of "Panel 60 Delegates Making History!"—as we like to call ourselves—and to all of you at the WSO for this invitation, and the privilege of sharing my story and experience with you.

When I got married 45 years ago, my Prince Charming was just that—charming; but soon, alcoholism became part of our lives and it turned him into a very Ugly Toad. Because I was so in love, I closed my eyes to reality. With two girls now and a business that we owned and worked at together, days passed by, situations got complicated, and my life was not so happy anymore.

I remember once, going on a vacation cruise with so many illusions that everything would be fine. On our first stop, (we had already arranged for a tour), he wanted to visit every liquor store on that Island. Boxes of liquor were bought and once again promises were broken. Just for the sake of avoiding situations that are more difficult, I had to unpack all my clothes in order to make space in our luggage for the bottles. I had to buy boxes, bags, you name it, just to pack my clothes! Isn't that crazy? I also remember as years passed by, the unhappiness, and my wrong decisions. Just imagine making an appointment with a lawyer, asking for a divorce, crying a lot, finally paying for the visit, and then being dismissed with a, "Sorry lady, come back when your decision is made. I think you still love your husband." True story! I desperately needed help.

I found the program thanks to A.A. My life was so unhappy. As I entered the Al-Anon meeting room for the first time, I wanted to run, to get away—I was so afraid. During those first meetings all I did was cry. I did not understand why I had to be there. I didn't do anything wrong, why was I here? It never crossed my mind that my life had been affected by someone else's alcoholism. Thanks to the Serenity Prayer, I finally understood. I had to stop and think very deeply. I was able to identify that I could not change everyone and everything. I only had the power to change myself and seek my Higher Power's help to know the difference. Up until now, my focus had been on my husband, Al-Anon showed me how to place the focus on myself. So, I kept coming to the meetings. Sometime later, out of curiosity, he accompanied me and found A.A. by himself. I can still remember those first meetings and the loving words, "Keep Coming Back," "This Too Shall Pass," and "One Day at a Time,"—so much wisdom. I finally made my home group in Bayamón, Puerto Rico.

Some time passed by, and I got involved in service. My spiritual and Service Sponsor, a longtime dedicated Al-Anon member—who had also served as Panel 18 Delegate—introduced me to service. First with some group responsibilities, later on as Group Representative, then District, then Area, and here I am now, trying to apply, with humbleness and with gratitude, all the richness that this program has given to me. In Puerto Rico, we have a special way of saying this, "the small worm of service," once you experience it, you have to pass it on. So, I did and still try, by letting others who need help know that this program works, and by sponsoring newcomers, etc.

As I meditate on this year's World Service Conference theme, "Moving forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance," I realize that it has a lot of meaning.

"Unity," "Courage," and "Perseverance," qualities that can be achieved through my own efforts.

Unity

The First Tradition establishes how our common welfare depends on that union. Practicing the First Tradition helps me understand the unity so necessary in our program to keep ongoing, regardless of situations like the pandemic now. We have shown that we are united, but we have to work on that alliance *now* more than ever and demonstrate that consensus at all levels—from the groups to the Conference—so that Al-Anon as a whole continues to help the thousands who are still suffering.

Courage

Courage to be me in front of all my fellow members today. I am not afraid, and I have regained the courage to make changes in my life. Courage to speak my truth, much more and to say out loud, "Thanks, God, for being there for me, if I did it, anyone can do it too!"

Perseverance

Another great principle! Perseverance is the virtue by which all other virtues bear fruit.

Receiving and giving hope to all those that still need a program like ours. Perseverance to go through many times difficult situations, many times not directly related to the problem of alcoholism in our homes.

We all, through the links of service, from the groups to the Conference, have shown great perseverance through the practice of this wonderful program by keeping the groups, the Districts, the Areas, the WSO, and the Conference in general open.

As a fellowship, we reinvent ourselves and become virtual through the use of technology and continue to search for ways despite the wind and tides that may arise, to continue to carry the name of Al-Anon Family Groups very high and continue to carry the message of help to the families and friends of alcoholics who still suffer.

Therefore, I urge us this year to move forward using those principles. We have, and continue to, moved forward after this past year of trial. We have shown that through the use of those principles we have managed to move forward.

I truly believe, we are all brave, no one can stop us, we will keep on with faith, strength, and hope carrying the message to those who still suffer from the problem of alcoholism in a dear one. Together we can make Lois W.'s dreams come true, today, tomorrow, and forever.

Anu B., North Carolina/Bermuda

I was born in India, an only child of a brilliant father and mother. I grew up in the midst of the effects of alcoholism. My dad was an alcoholic and a rager, Mom had brothers and uncles who were alcoholic, and it was an accepted practice to gossip, tell white lies, and take responsibility for the alcoholics who couldn't seem to manage their lives. Because I was growing up as a girl in a male-dominated society, my dad urged me to be better than the girls *and* the boys. Unfortunately, I interpreted that to mean I wasn't good enough no matter how hard I tried.

When I was 17, my mother decided to renounce everything and join a religious order. I felt completely abandoned. She had been my rock and my support as I was dealing with my father's rage. I was heartbroken and very mad at God. I decided to take my future in my own hands rather than trust this untrustworthy God.

I went to the best engineering college in India, fell in love, and prepared to move to the US, because that's what *he* wanted to do. When he didn't pass the Graduate Record Examinations, I did, and paved the way for him to get to the country *he* wanted to live in.

Looking back, I am grateful that the marriage didn't work out. I moved out of state, got divorced, and started my self-transformation

journey—through a different program than Al-Anon (I knew nothing about Al-Anon at that time). Along the way, I fell in love with my current husband. I am grateful not only because he was the alcoholic who brought me to Al-Anon ten years later, but because he had been in A.A. for five years (and not been in A.A. for five years) before we met. It made it easier for me to listen to a sober friend tell me about a program of recovery for families and friends of alcoholics and made it easier for me to see that I didn't *cause* his alcoholism. I still thought I could *control* and *cure* his alcoholism though.

Within the first year of our relationship, we had a beautiful child who was generous, loving, affectionate, and sweet. She wanted nothing but love and she was brilliant. I got to see the effects of my upbringing as I became like my raging father towards her. I was judgmental, cruel, and unforgiving. We hit a downward spiral of my rage, my husband's drinking, and our daughter's misery. When I was raging, her big brown eyes would fill up with tears; I would feel enormous guilt and created rationalizations of why it was okay to lose my temper yet again.

By the grace of God, we moved to Charlotte, North Carolina where the recovery community is awesome. We each hit our bottom—he went to A.A. in January 2008, I came into Al-Anon on February 4, 2008, and our daughter went to Alateen the same month. In hindsight, I am so glad I asked her to “get in the car!”

Even though at the time I thought I was going to do one Al-Anon Step a week, and graduate with honors in 12 weeks from Al-Anon, I kept coming back to meetings because I felt better when I attended meetings. Working the Al-Anon Steps helped me become honest with myself and my Sponsor. Here, I found a God of my understanding, and slowly began to let go of my death-grip of control. I'm so grateful that Al-Anon gave me the opportunity to define a God that never lets me down. I started seeing my part in the destruction of my relationships and began to take responsibility for my actions and words. I started seeing that the reason I used to get angry at my daughter was because I had tied my effectiveness as a good parent, to her never making a single mistake. When I stopped taking her mistakes personally, the frequencies of my angry outbursts reduced a lot. I started learning how to detach from her with love, and yet be the loving, supportive, and compassionate parent who would help her learn from those mistakes.

Alateen was so helpful for my daughter—there she met adults (AMIAS and Alateen Group Sponsors) who were safe and didn't get angry. She learned how to distinguish and label feelings that I had minimized at home. She learned to identify how she felt and how to speak up for herself. We both started to thaw from the frozen people we had been due to the disease of alcoholism. It was good that we were walking the road to each of our recovery journeys together. On the car ride back home from each Al-Anon and Alateen meeting we went to, we started discussing what we had learned from our meetings.

My introduction to service in Al-Anon came in May 2008, when my Sponsor volunteered to be the Group Representative (GR) and *volun-told* me to be the Alternate GR. I was struck by the way Al-Anon meetings functioned even though there was no person in charge. I was involved in discussions at District and Area level that involved contentious topics such as Alateen safety and behavioral requirements. I was taken aback when members, who had been passionately on the opposing sides, held hands and said the Serenity Prayer at the end of the meetings. I had never seen that happen outside of the program—it definitely didn't happen in my family!

Practicing Al-Anon Traditions in my relationships slowly helped me transform how I acted towards the members of my family whom

I loved, but struggled to show it to them. I started learning about *unity* and a primary purpose for my family. I started thinking about what it meant to be a trusted servant and treat my husband as a fellow trusted servant. I started practicing treating my husband and child as fellow Al-Anon members—treating them with the same kindness and respect that I extended to fellow Al-Anon members in meetings. Tradition Ten encouraged me to identify what the “outside issues” were in my family, and how to not have opinions on those outside issues. Just like it says in *Hope for Today* (B-27) in the equation $a + b = c$, “c” (which was the total of our relationship in the home environment) started changing because “a” (which was me) was changing.

Around the time I had completed studying the Al-Anon Traditions as they applied in my family relationships, a fellow member described how she practiced the Al-Anon Concepts of Service in her home and as a parent. I had felt inadequately prepared to be a parent because I didn't have good role models and my child didn't come with an operating manual. I clung on to the Concepts as my parental operating guide. Concept Five encouraged me to allow my child to exercise her minority voice. Concept Seven helped me transition from the hard stance legal role to a traditional softer role as a parent, as my child became a teenager. The Warranties challenged me to look at my conduct and see if I was being autocratic or democratic in thought and action, whether I was operating from abundance or scarcity, and whether I was being punitive in my family relationships.

I am grateful for Al-Anon Legacies for teaching me how to look at myself as a child of God, relate to other children of God, and how to act as the best example of the person God intended for me to be. Al-Anon service has challenged me to continue bringing the gifts and talents God gave me, honoring the gifts and talents in fellow trusted servants, and working towards the common goal of service to the newcomer struggling with the family disease of alcoholism.

When my daughter was a junior in high school, she came out as transgender and wanted to be referred to with male pronouns and begin hormone treatment. It was the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Al-Anon that helped me treat her with respect, dignity, and compassion. It took *courage* to look to Al-Anon Legacies for guidance, rather than focus on my expectations. Her gender identity was an outside issue, and I needed to have no opinions on it. Her struggle was not something I could understand, but just like Tradition Five urges, I need to give comfort to her as the family of an alcoholic. Ultimately Step Three urged me to “Let Go and Let God.”

My son is a very well-adjusted 22-year-old. He's an amazing young man, with the same generosity, affection, love, and sweetness of the baby I had so many years ago. He is a mature, responsible adult with a great capacity for joy and wonder. We laugh together, he's my recovery buddy, and we're best friends. Our story has turned out dramatically different from how it could have turned out without Al-Anon recovery. I shudder when I hear about the high suicide rates among transgender youth, and the lack of family support for many facing these challenges.

Life has had many twists and turns, but through *perseverance* in facing them squarely, with the God of my understanding, my Sponsor, and the Al-Anon Legacies, I have come through them *mostly* unscathed.

A few years ago, when my husband told me about the large amount of credit card debt he had accumulated without my knowledge, I had a choice. I could fly into one of the rages, like I used to before the program, or do what Tradition Five urges me to do—work the Twelve Steps myself, as well as encourage and understand the alcoholic relative. I chose to work the Steps with my Sponsor. I identified my part in the situation, determined what steps needed to be taken

to take care of our family, and how to extend encouragement, understanding, compassion, courtesy, and kindness to him. This was not an easy journey. But I am glad to tell you that I acted as God designed me to act. I practice courtesy, compassion, and kindness towards him. I have drawn a boundary to ensure our household is protected from his debt. He is working on paying off his debts and is dealing with the consequences of his actions. If it wasn't for learning about "detachment with love" in the Al-Anon program, I would have taken his actions personally and ended up divorced for the second time.

My mom started having health issues in India and had moved to the U.S. to live with us back in 2007. After she moved here, I realized that I still held onto my resentment and hurt at being abandoned by her. Initially, that showed up in acting like my raging father towards her. Slowly, as I started practicing the Al-Anon principles with her, it changed to treating her with dignity and respect, and seeking her counsel on dilemmas I faced. I was able to let go of my resentment towards her and realize that she had done the best she could at the time, with the tools she had. Tradition Eleven encouraged me to be the attraction, rather than promotion for the Al-Anon principles. It was gratifying to see her reduce and slowly stop gossiping and criticizing others and focusing more time on her own conduct. I was grateful she could live with me for the rest of her life.

When she was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2019, I was devastated; but seeing her handle her disease and her life with grace was a positive example for me. My son graduated from college during the summer of 2020—in the middle of the pandemic—and chose to come home to take care of his grandma. He and I used the Al-Anon Traditions and Concepts (specifically Concepts Ten and Eleven) to work together, divide up the chores and tasks of taking care of Mom and the household, so that we were being supportive and avoiding double-headed management. I am grateful that I was holding my mother's hand as she passed away peacefully. That is exactly how the God of my understanding would have wanted me to behave towards my mom, who did her best despite being affected by the family disease of alcoholism and not having a program of recovery. She gave me all the love she had to give—in her own way—and I am grateful that today I can see that as the wonderful gift it is, without having expectations of the wrapping paper it should have been wrapped in.

As the pandemic raged and face-to-face meetings shut down, I was grateful that Al-Anon was present on web platforms. Calls with my Sponsor and Sponsees didn't stop, and conventions and weekend programs were held virtually. Al-Anon was showing me an example of how to move forward with unity, courage, and perseverance. The pandemic and virtual meetings gave some of my close recovery friends, including my son, the opportunity to hold a weekly meeting to delve deeper into the Al-Anon Legacies and how they apply to personal relationships. Being a part of the World Service Conference Task Force: Using the Concepts in Personal Recovery was exactly what I needed to help me continue to progress in my recovery from the insidious disease of alcoholism.

I call my defects of character my "factory settings" that came from growing up with the effects of alcoholism. And I know that my character defects—judgmental, critical, perfectionist, and greedy (I used to call that ambition)—have only been removed a little distance away; and like an old, torn, but comfortable blanket, I could reach over and grab them any time. However, I know that those factory settings led my life to be chaotic and unhappy; and operating based on the Al-Anon Steps, Traditions, and Concepts helps me become a person I like to know and be around. It helps me have love and compassion in my relationships, and it allows me to see God in others

and give them the respect and dignity they deserve as fellow human beings. I am grateful for the complete transformation Al-Anon has brought about in me, my perspective, my relationships, and my life. I am forever grateful to the God of my understanding, who goes a few steps ahead of me and smooths out the path, so I can walk on this path called life.

IN CLOSING WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY . . .

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE TAKEAWAYS

Prior to the closing of Conference, Conference members were invited to post what they were “taking away” from the 2021 WSC, including the topics they would be covering in their reports. Some of the takeaways included:

- My Area will be very interested to hear of the approval to develop an Alateen “Just for Tonight” bookmark and the revised Alateen Preamble text. The information from the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG) will be very interesting. I will talk about the great task and thought force presentations and share all the handouts and information. It will be so exciting to start discussions about groups that meet electronically!
- I feel that this WSC took a huge step to move Al-Anon towards the envisioned future and goals:
 - This WSC was a global and technology-based service event
 - We practiced delivery of on-demand barrier-free access to our discussions (think language barrier—and simultaneous interpretation)
 - We approved a Longitudinal Study, so it can report on research-validated effectiveness
 - We recognized electronic meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups—so that families and friends of alcoholics benefit from greater connectedness to support, no matter their location! And they can participate in service.
 - With the release of eK-10, we have started the journey towards electronic tools for recovery

And this is just the beginning!

- My top five takeaways, in no particular order:
 - Continued simultaneous translation
 - International representatives present at Conference
 - The numerous “Thank-yous” from WSO to the groups and members for their contributions in 2020 (this means a lot)
 - Continued support from the groups/Districts/Area/AISs is needed to sustain WSO until groups open and literature starts to sell again
 - Electronic meetings are now part of Al-Anon Family Groups

Other items I will use at Assemblies and AWSC meetings are the presentations on “Using the Concepts in Personal Recovery” and the “Conflict Resolution Workshop.” These were excellent.

- I take away:
 - The dedication of the WSO Staff, the Trustees, the Board of Trustees, the Tech Team, and our Chairperson to the success of the 2021 WSC. You know people are good when they make it look easy.
 - We are a Conference with three languages, two of which are interpreted, and attendance from all over the world!
 - The Trustees’ eagerness to help members understand they *can*, as regular people, share their skills as a Trustee.

- A non-geographic Area by which groups that meet electronically can become a part of the WSC Structure.
- Genuine interest in Alateen membership and participation—*Just for Tonight* Bookmark and modifications to the Alateen Preamble.
- Electronic Newcomer Kit
- The Conflict Resolution presentation
- General information from the CAI breakouts

Thank you all for such an inspiring WSC.

- The big realization for me at my first World Service Conference was to truly understand, as Concept One states, that “The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.” I was struck by the humble dedication with which the World Service Office and the Board of Trustees serve Al-Anon groups and members from around the world. What an inspiration it was to see trusted servants at all service levels placing principles above personalities.
- I will share on the following at our Spring Assembly:
 - 15 motions presented, and 15 motions carried
 - The 2023 International Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico
 - The trial to present the COB Letter to Delegates in a one-hour virtual format
 - Affirmation of new Trustees and Board Officers and qualifications needed to serve on the Board
 - Task Force update on TEAM replacement
 - A record 12 international representatives at the WSC due to a virtual format
 - The WSO Staff reports with special attention and time for Q&A given to the Finance Report, EMWG, Website updates, *Welcome Newcomer!* electronic packet (eK-10), new PSAs, and the Longitudinal Study

I will share how the WSC is the safest I’ve felt in an Al-Anon business meeting because the use of the Traditions and Concepts of Service created a safe container. Things didn’t always go my way, but I could trust a Higher Power had spoken through the group conscience. Lastly, I will share one of my favorite quotes from the WSC, “These are exciting times at the World Service Office!”

- Thank you one and all for your substantial dedication, preparation, and participation. Al-Anon in my country is richer for this shared experience. An overwhelming menu supports takeaways of extraordinary people:
 - Staying relevant without losing the Legacies
 - Bridging differences with patience and compassion
 - Resolving conflict through our higher selves (group conscience)
 - Expressing unity with love and wisdom
 - Worldwide connectivity and recovery

Ubuntu. (“I am, because you are.”)

- My hope is to bring to my Area all of the enthusiasm, joy, camaraderie, experience and understanding that being a part of the World Service Conference kindles in me. I so enJOYed each moment! My mind is full. My heart is full. Thank you WSO Staff, Trustees, Executive Committee, Delegates, and International Representatives for co-creating this incredible Conference.

- I continually marvel at how there can be controversy and disagreement, but in Al-Anon we can work through the issues and utilize the spiritual principles. I heard someone say (a while back) that conflict doesn't necessarily equal controversy. At least we can reason things out before it becomes controversy and I appreciate that. I appreciate that whenever I've interacted with WSO Staff, it's been kind, thoughtful, courteous, and many other adjectives for which I am grateful. There are so many moving parts to this organization, and I know it takes a lot of effort to make it seem seamless on the outside.

What a delight to see 100+ faces on my computer screen each day. I appreciate the dedication and thoughtful preparation everyone put into their role at Conference. The presentations and skits and slideshows were so impressive, and I loved them all! Although virtual, I could feel the energy, love, and commitment of all to assuring that Al-Anon and Alateen groups will continue to be present for those searching for hope and help due to the affect alcohol is having on a loved one. I am especially grateful that the content of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) and *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) will be preserved, and the concerns related to the text will be addressed with prefaces placing them in historical perspective. My heart and mind are full of thoughts I wish to turn into a fun, interesting Delegate report!

- My main personal takeaway is the joy of service that was so evident during the Conference. I hope I can convey that to my Area. I will always remember the Stepping Stones presentation and the presentation by the World Service Office Staff. You all are amazing! The international aspect of this Conference was awe-inspiring. The Mega Issue discussions and getting to meet the Trustees (and everybody else) was huge. And so was the timeliness of the Electronic Meeting Work Group update and the motions we took to carry it through. Our concern for diversity in the fellowship was expressed with candidness, courtesy, and respect.
- I will take away a sense of accomplishment for myself and the 2021 Conference. I felt so much was accomplished this year—from big decisions to small details that will all work together to move the fellowship forward. I take away once again great respect and awe for the Staff, Executive Committee, and Trustees. Your professionalism and dedication to putting together and running an intense schedule of meetings, your flexibility to adapt throughout the week, and your commitment to maintaining the spiritual aspect of the Conference, even in a virtual format, was amazing, and I hope to find the words to convey this to my Area. I take away a sense of history that I was privileged to be a part of as we voted to bring electronic meetings into the WSC Structure. And finally, I take away a greater appreciation for the worldwide nature of our fellowship with the increased participation of our International Representatives. I will always be grateful for the incredible opportunity to serve as Delegate.

- My takeaways:
 - Gratitude for my participation in this WSC
 - A heart full of love for Al-Anon around the globe
 - Confirmation that everyone, from the newcomer to the Board member, is equally important
 - Pride in being a part of adding 700 Al-Anon Family Groups to our Service Structure
 - Joy in the attendance of our international friends and the continuation of translation
 - Conflict Resolution, Concepts, and Big Dreaming tools
 - Dates, time frames, and details of the Longitudinal Study, Membership Survey, and 70th Anniversary celebration
 - The reports and praise of our trusted servants
 - Our Mega Issue and diversity discussions
- The 1966 WSC Statement on Public Relations, page 118 of our current *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) reads: "It is the consensus of the sixth World Service Conference that if Al-Anon is to continue to exist, it must continue to grow. There is no standing still without retrogression." All of the 2021 WSC initiatives—providing interpretation, updating Alateen resources, having discussions on diversity, bringing electronic meetings into our service structure, and including 12 international guests—carry the promise of expanding our fellowship so we can carry the important message of recovery into the next century. I'll end with the rest of the quote: "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."
- What an honor and privilege to have been a part of something so precious and timeless. What I felt was the spirit all around us, encouraging us to have difficult conversations and being okay with the conversation. What I saw was love in action, among very dedicated people who love the program like I do. I saw a group of over 100 people reason things out. Everyone was heard, and still unanimity was reached with acceptance. I will bring back to my Area as much as the spirit will allow—which in my book means everything. I've learned to listen until I understand, and am open to hear what is best for all concerned. I watched growth in Al-Anon, knowing more growth is coming. I look forward to more interesting conversations, listening, and being a part of something bigger.

CLOSING SESSION

Lynette K., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board
Rosie M., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

The 2021 World Service Conference Theme, “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance,” provided a goal for the Conference Week. The Chairperson of the Board opened the session as follows:

“As I said in my opening remarks, I was expecting this week would not be dull and I have not been disappointed. What a difference a year makes. Last year at the first virtual WSC, many Conference members were not comfortable with meeting in a virtual format and the agenda consisted of a few necessary items. This year, meeting virtually seemed second nature to most Conference members, and the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) gave us an agenda that allowed us to experience many things we would have experienced if we had been meeting face-to-face.

“This year, we had the opportunity to hear the three-minute sharings of our outgoing Panel 59 Delegates. We got to welcome our Panel 61 Delegates with the presentation of their 2021 Conference pins and the Panel 60 Delegates with their 2020 Conference pins. We had the honor of welcoming 12 International guests, some of whom would not have been able to attend had we been meeting in a face-to-face format. We received updates about the awesome things our amazing and talented Staff at WSO is doing to help existing and potential members.

“Although I had been looking forward to finally getting to tour Stepping Stones myself after years of listening to Delegates in my Area reporting on their Stepping Stones experiences, the virtual tour of Stepping Stones brought tears to my eyes, gave me an overwhelming sense of gratitude, and reminded me that I am a tiny part of this worldwide organization.

“Of course, this week was not without its challenges and controversies. Meeting virtually presents its own set of challenges. Some of the challenges led to opportunities, such as sharing our favorite Conference Approved Literature (CAL) quote while waiting for votes to be tabulated. With the guidance of our collective Higher Power, the controversies gave us opportunities to talk to each other and reason things out. One of the biggest challenges for me is not being able to have personal interactions with all of you. I look forward to the time when we can once again be together.

“I feel honored to be part of the Conference that made the historic decision to recognize permanent electronic meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups and to create a non-paneled Area which will support them. Wow! Things have come a long way from that one room office at Stepping Stones that was opened by Anne B. and Lois W. as a Clearing House in May 1951.

“My hope is that this 2021 WSC has inspired you to go back to your Areas, enthusiastically share the information you received here, and help the members in your Area move forward with unity, courage, and perseverance.”

The Conference Chairperson continued with her reflections on the week: “We have reached our last day of Conference. We witnessed how we all collectively contributed to and applied our 2021 World Service Conference Theme: ‘Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance.’

“It was wonderful how each Conference member chose a Board Goal and relayed their thoughts and witnessed how they unfolded as they were practiced. Our spiritual principles transcended into our Conference through our collective service roles which aided us in being productive. Throughout our daily interactions, with

the presence of our Higher Power, we felt the spiritual tone of our Conference as we openly discussed our challenges, possibilities, and opportunities for displaying our unity in our continual perseverance to move forward with courage.

“We had the opportunity to review documents in advance of Conference to assist us to be prepared for the ensuing discussions. These electronic reports were innovative, creative, and provided further clarity for our proceedings.

“Challenging times are nothing new, but neither is our resiliency. Since this was our second virtual/electronic Conference, we had more time to prepare with experiences attained; and as a result, we were able to hold a full Conference with an agenda that included Policy discussions, Chosen Agenda Items, Literature items, Mega Issue sessions, outgoing Panel 59 three-minute talks, welcoming new Conference members, opening and spiritual speakers, and so much more. Our virtual Stepping Stones visit was touching, informative, enlightening, and a spiritual experience. We witnessed our initial home and the groundwork which Lois and Anne created for our fellowship. Our Cofounders’ love was conveyed to us with Stepping Stones’ meticulous care in preserving our history. It was magical to see how we were able to move into the virtual breakout sessions, and it was seamless as we returned into the virtual general sessions. We appreciate and thank each Conference member for remaining engaged as you exhibited your tenacity throughout this week’s proceedings. You should be proud of the accomplishments gained through your valued participation in our conversations and collective voices relayed with enthusiasm, harmony, and responsiveness.

“‘From the beginning, Al-Anon’s leadership wanted to include as many voices as possible. The founders made a practice of sharing leadership and seeking as wide a range of member participation as possible.’ (*Many Voices, One Journey* [B-31], p. 5). One of the opportunities of having a virtual/electronic Conference was that, for the first time in the 61 years of Conference, we are able to have 12 International Structures participate. It was wonderful to welcome them all, and we are so grateful for our worldwide fellowship as displayed through our shared vision and experiences.

“Although nothing will ever replace our face-to-face World Service Conference, I know we all appreciate our resourcefulness and the ability to hold our virtual/electronic Conference. While doing so, we can ensure that Al-Anon world services remain available to the Al-Anon membership through our actions taken this week. As we peered at each other in our virtual connection, I’m sure I was not alone in feeling the warmth for each other. Our mutual respect and resolve was evident. The loving interchange amongst each other in this format was admirable and inspiring. We used our “spirit hands” throughout the sessions which was another way of showing our appreciation to each Conference member for their hard work and job well done.

“We convey our sincerest and heartfelt gratitude for your presence and participation in the group conscience decisions that were made through our collaborative efforts. Our interactions and decisions demonstrated the spirit of our World Service Conference and made it successful. It is the beginning of continuing conversations with the members in your respective Areas, and we wish you all the best as you share the message from this year’s Conference throughout our fellowship. Vaya con Dios!”

With the tap of her gavel, the Chairperson declared the 2021 World Service Conference to be closed.

Though all Conference business was completed, there were a few more activities for Conference members:

All Conference members were invited to share suggestions for the 2022 World Service Conference Theme on AFG Connects. They were asked to view a narrated PowerPoint presentation before submitting their suggestions.

And, after a dinner break, the Spiritual Speakers (chosen by the previous year's Conference), Mary V., Panel 60, Puerto Rico, and Anu B., Panel 59, North Carolina/Bermuda, shared their stories (see pages 70-72).

In lieu of presenting certificates of appreciation for their service to Al-Anon Family Groups in person to each outgoing Conference member, Panel 59 Delegates, members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECPRM) received an electronic certificate in addition to the printed copy that was mailed to them prior to Conference.

2021 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

MOTION #1 – (82 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 8 void) – CARRIED

That the following persons be seated at the 2021 World Service Conference:

With voice, but not vote:

Niketa Williams

Director of Finance & Operations, Non-Al-Anon Member

Scot P.

Associate Director—Digital Strategy, Al-Anon Member

Silvia P.

International Representative—Argentina, Al-Anon Member

Helen G.

International Representative—Australia, Al-Anon Member

Mariana C.

International Representative—Ecuador, Al-Anon Member

Guy D.

International Representative—France, Al-Anon Member

Britt M.

International Representative—Germany, Al-Anon Member

Mario B.

International Representative—Italy, Al-Anon Member

Elvira M.

International Representative—Paraguay, Al-Anon Member

Debora MacD.

International Representative—Peru, Al-Anon Member

Mário C.

International Representative—Portugal, Al-Anon Member

Madelein O'B.

International Representative—South Africa, Al-Anon Member

Miriam L.

International Representative—Spain, Al-Anon Member

Trish B.

International Representative—UK & Eire, Al-Anon Member

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

Kay R.

Chairperson, ECRPM, Al-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office Staff member be seated to observe at the 2021 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Suzette McKinney

Publications Manager, Non-Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2 – (87 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 3 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2020 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #3 – (90 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

To amend the text of the “Bequests” portion of the “Policy Digest,” which appears on pages 104-105 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2), by moving the second paragraph of the “Bequests” portion at the top of page 105 (beginning, “In maintaining . . .”) to page 103 directly after the heading “Contributions to WSO.”

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; double strikethrough indicates text was moved; underlined indicates new text; double underlined indicates new location of moved text.)

Contributions to WSO

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.

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.

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 deductions from their bank accounts. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Birthday Plan. In honor of their Al-Anon/Alateen birthday, members may express their gratitude by contributing an amount for each year's membership.

Memorial Contributions. Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased (contact the WSO for details).

The World Service Office accepts contributions in memory of deceased Al-Anon members from “family” who are not Al-Anon members. The Fellowship recognizes that accepting such contributions can give comfort to families as described in Tradition Five.

The World Service Conference defines “family” as anyone who has a close relationship of loving care and concern for another. The individual donor defines his or her relationship to the deceased Al-Anon member.

This one time gift of gratitude is limited to an amount no greater than \$500. Memorial contributions by non members are not solicited.

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 meetings 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. 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. 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 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 so it is clear the money is coming from a member. (Contact the WSO for details).

MOTION #4 – (86 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 2 void) – CARRIED

That the 2021 WSC give conceptual approval to develop an Alateen "Just for Tonight" Bookmark

MOTION #5 – (78 yes, 10 no, 0 abstentions, 2 void) – CARRIED

To approve the revised Alateen Preamble, which will be updated in all Conference Approved Literature in accordance with reprint publication, as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; double strikethrough indicates text was moved; underlined indicates new text; double underlined indicates new location of moved text.)

Suggested Alateen Preamble to the Twelve Steps

Alateen, part of the Al-Anon Family Groups, is a ~~fellowship of~~ for young people ~~who whose lives~~ have been affected by alcoholism in a family member or ~~close~~ friend. We help each other by sharing our experience, strength, and hope.

We believe alcoholism is a family disease ~~because it affects~~ affecting all the members ~~everyone~~ emotionally and sometimes physically. Although we cannot change or control ~~our parents~~ the alcoholics in our lives, we can detach from their problems while continuing to love them.

In Alateen we focus on our own program rather than outside issues such as ~~We do not discuss religion, politics, social media, or other Twelve Step programs or become involved with any outside organizations. There are no dues for membership. Alateen is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions. Our sole topic is the solution of our problems. Alateen has one purpose: to help young people affected by someone else's drinking.~~ We are always careful to protect each other's anonymity as well as that of all Al-Anon and A.A. members.

By applying the Twelve Steps to ourselves, we begin to grow recover from the effects of the family disease of alcoholism mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. We will always be grateful to Alateen for giving us a wonderful, healthy program to live by and enjoy. This allows us to encourage our alcoholic relatives and friends, and to give hope to other teens.

MOTION #6 – (87 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) – CARRIED

To amend the text throughout the "World Service Handbook" section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) version two (2) as identified in the track changes document provided. (See Appendix II on pages 88-108 for text as approved.)

MOTION #7 – (88 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 2 void) – CARRIED

To amend pages 88-89 of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) version two (2) to remove the portion titled "Electronic Meetings," including its text entirely.

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; double strikethrough indicates text was moved; underlined indicates new text; double underlined indicates new location of moved text.)

Electronic Meetings

~~The internet and other electronic telecommunication media are tools for carrying and sharing the Al-Anon program of hope and recovery around the world. These electronic meetings occur globally as well as locally without geographic restrictions. Consequently, electronic meetings do not have a Group Representative and are not part of any structure. They do, however, have a meeting contact.~~

~~When electronic meetings form, they register with the World Service Office (WSO) in order to use the Al-Anon name. Upon registration, they receive support from and have their voices heard and represented through the WSO. Registered meetings may request a license from the WSO to use in text format the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, Suggested Welcome, Suggested Closing and excerpts from Conference Approved Literature (CAL).~~

MOTION #8 – (86 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 2 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2021 Finance Committee Report

MOTION #9 – (87 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2020 Annual Report

MOTION #10 – (85 yes, 2 no, 2 abstentions, 1 void) – CARRIED

To approve including interpretation services as part of the WSC budget presented to the Board of Trustees for approval annually and allocating the cost of those services as part of the full cost and equalized expense amounts for Delegates

MOTION #11 – (83 yes, 3 no, 0 abstentions, 4 void) – CARRIED

To allow the WSO Staff to make housekeeping changes to the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies."

MOTION #12 – (86 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions, 2 void) – CARRIED

That the 2021 WSC give conceptual approval to add a new introduction to *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4) that places the book in historical perspective, and to develop a booklet of gems from this book, possibly including some new material.

MOTION #13 – (83 yes, 3 no, 1 abstention, 3 void) – CARRIED

To approve the implementation of a Longitudinal Study starting in 2021 to consist of annual surveys of those Al-Anon members who expressly opt-in to the Study.

MOTION #14 – (89 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) – CARRIED

To allow the election of the RCT Chairperson, Alternate Chairperson and the names drawn for Out-of-Region Delegates (including alternates) to occur outside the general session and prior to the WSC.

MOTION #15 – (87 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 3 void) – CARRIED

That the 2021 WSC give conceptual approval to add a new introduction to *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6), B-14) that places the book in historical perspective.

2020 WORLD SERVICE OFFICE ANNUAL REPORT



Al-Anon Family Groups
Help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics

Greetings & Thanks

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)

Vali F., Executive Director

.....

In welcoming our Al-Anon membership and trusted servants to the 2020 Annual Report, it seems only appropriate to begin by offering a huge, shared exhalation of breath in hopes that the new year will bring a vanquishing of the pandemic and a return to the hugs and connection experienced in face-to-face meetings.

In 2020, as our membership was challenged to adapt to the “new reality” of lockdowns which closed most face-to-face meetings, the 42 World Service Office (WSO) Staff members, 15 Trustees of the Board, and three At-Large members of the Executive Committee scrambled as well. WSO Staff were furloughed and laid off. Out of health and financial necessity, the Board suspended travel starting March 2020 and Staff wage increases. By necessity, Staff and WSO Volunteers shifted quickly—in only four short weeks—to transform the World Service Conference (WSC) from its traditional face-to-face to a virtual format. Even though WSO was operating with reduced staffing, the WSO Staff continued offering support to members who called and emailed seeking support and guidance on forming temporary electronic meetings, hosting service events virtually, and collecting the Seventh Tradition.

Despite the constrained conditions, WSO Staff, with support from the Board, delivered both our initial and upgraded releases of the first Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app. WSO Staff and Volunteers successfully streamlined Board of Trustee meetings, shifting the focus from the operational to strategic needs of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) and decreasing meeting duration. And, most importantly, throughout it all, our dedicated trusted servants and Staff members worked alongside each other in an atmosphere of compassion, goodwill, and faith.

As lockdowns spread across the globe, it was not only Al-Anon Family Groups face-to-face meetings which were impacted. Literature Distribution Centers ceased operating across the WSC Structure, bringing with it a dramatic decrease in WSO literature sales revenue. In May 2020, considering a projected \$1.6 million dollar deficit, the Board of Trustees authorized a Reserve Fund transfer, and the Treasurer of the Board wrote a Special Appeal to the fellowship describing the WSO circumstances.

As the Chairperson of the Board, Chairperson of the Executive Committee, and the Executive Director, we stand in awe of our membership’s response. In the first month, members, groups, and service arms contributed a record \$509,058 in Seventh Tradition giving. And the contributions continued. Month after month, contributions broke records. This incredible response was considered in the Revised 2020 Budget recommended by the Finance Committee in July. The Revised Budget included reduced literature sales and expenses and increased contribution goals.

By year end contributions broke more records: exceeding \$3 million dollars and, for the first time since 1954, exceeding literature sales in WSO revenue. Al-Anon Family Groups and member contributions, along with rigorous expense management, allowed the WSO to end the year with a surplus. There are simply no words to adequately express our gratitude for your commitment to ensuring the Al-Anon message continues to be available when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help.

Who we are: Mission, Envisioned Future, and Goals

MISSION STATEMENT

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences.



ENVISIONED FUTURE (2024-2029)

- AFG, Inc. is a global organization with technology-based operations that support the delivery of on-demand, barrier-free access to the program, information, meetings, and Sponsors.
- The research-validated effectiveness of the Al-Anon/Alateen program in addressing the family disease of alcoholism is recognized by professionals, schools, and religious leaders. Their recommendations to this program increase membership and expand its outreach.
- Society as a whole benefits from reduced health care costs, lower levels of incarceration, and increased graduation rates.
- Families and friends of alcoholics benefit from greater connectedness to support, no matter their location or language.



GOALS (2022-2024)

• Goal: Members

AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.

• Goal: Public

Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.

• Goal: Organization

AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.



Our Impact



Fellowship Visits within the WSC Structure

After recovering from the initial COVID-19 lockdown, and —as groups stabilized through the temporary use of electronic platforms —Areas, General Service Offices, and the WSO turned their attention to hosting vital Al-Anon service events, such as Area World Service Committee meetings, Assemblies, and Conventions. When the WSO updated the form for requesting Staff and Volunteers attendance at events to include a virtual option, requests for personal sharings and workshops exploded. Staff and Volunteers made visits to WSC Structure events and were even given the opportunity to participate in the Australian A.A. National Convention with Al-Anon Participation. All enjoyed the opportunity to connect!

2020 Global Al-Anon Family Groups' Statistics



PHONE MEETINGS



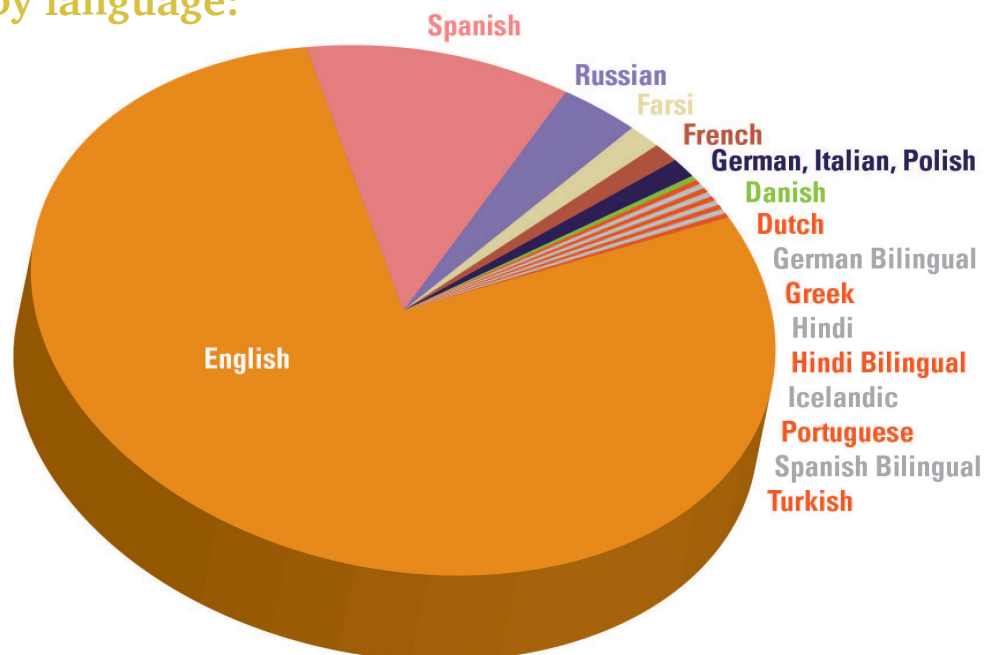
ONLINE MEETINGS

The effects of the pandemic in 2020 prevented many Al-Anon and Alateen groups from meeting face-to-face. This, in turn, impacted the accuracy of group records for the WSO and many service arms around the world. For example, the WSO did not request groups complete the Annual Update in 2020. Many service arm offices were closed for some part of the year and experienced interruptions in record keeping services. Therefore, the WSO has determined it is preferable to not report these figures for 2020 rather than report them with a high degree of doubt as to their accuracy. Electronic Meeting statistics will be reported because these records are updated through electronic methods that were not impacted in the same way.

Total electronic meetings: 409

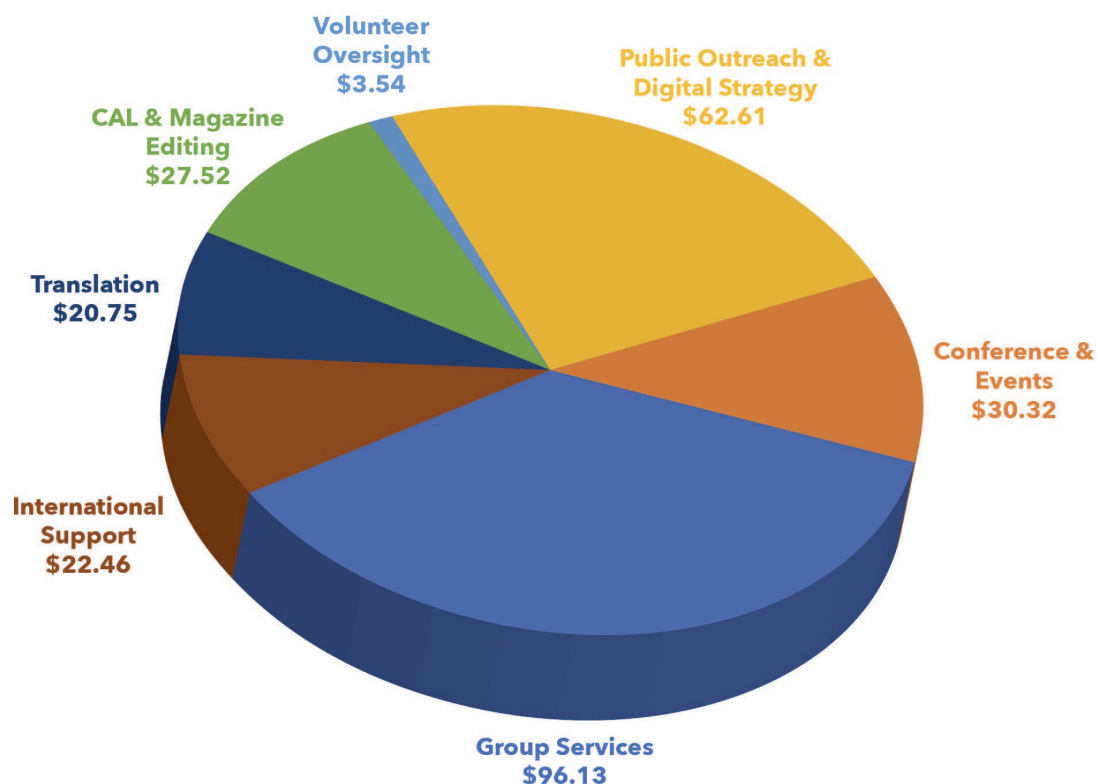
169 phone meetings • 233 online Al-Anon • 7 online Alateen

Breakdown by language:



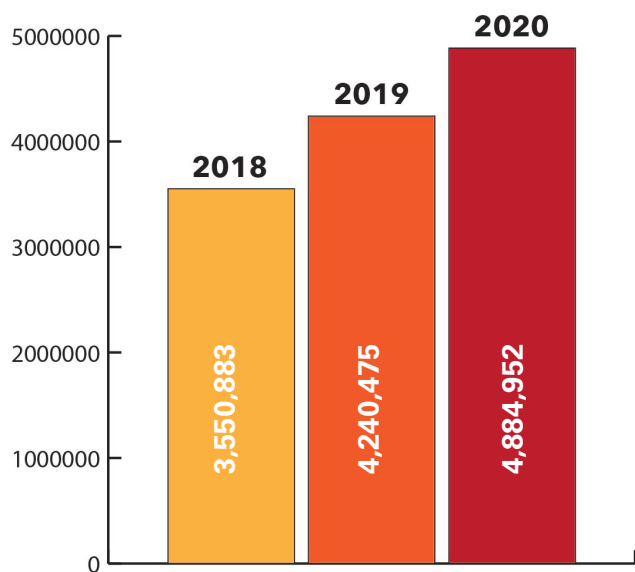
Cost of WSO Services Allocated across WSC Registered Groups

Cost of Services Per Group \$263.33



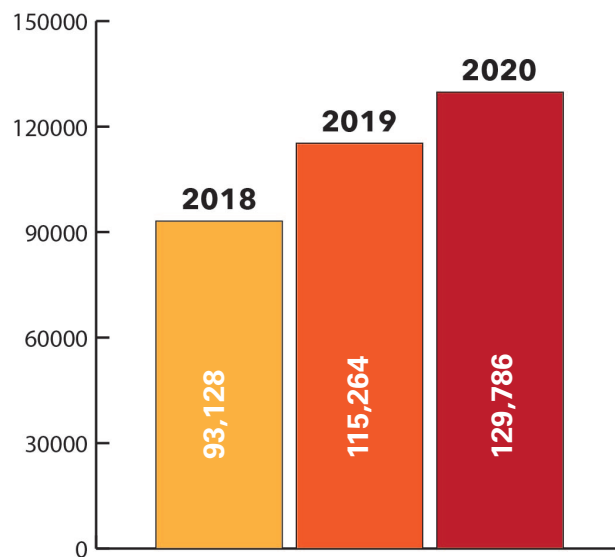
Digital Strategy Connections

These are measurements of key WSO digital efforts in 2020 compared to the previous two years (where data is available):



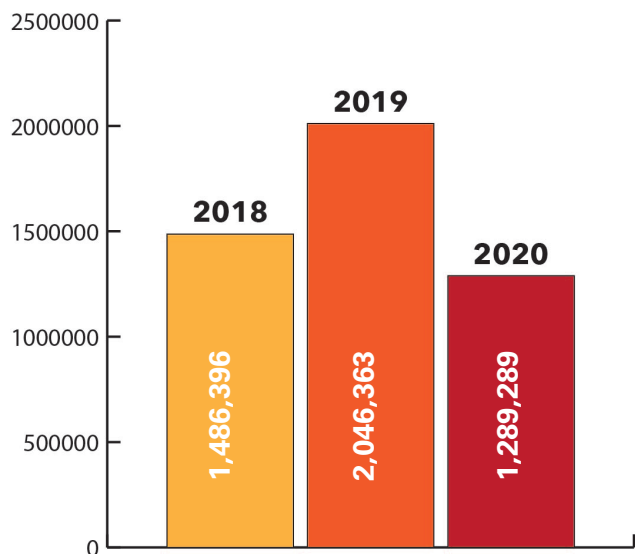
Website Sessions

Website Sessions is the total number of unique sessions on al-anon.org.



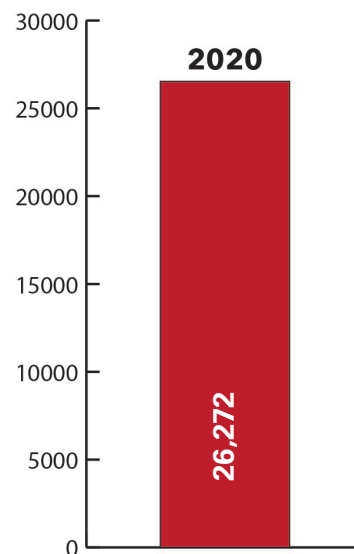
Followers

Followers is a total count of people who have followed the WSO social media account across all social platforms: four each (English, Spanish, French, Alateen) for Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages; one YouTube; and one LinkedIn.



Meeting Searches

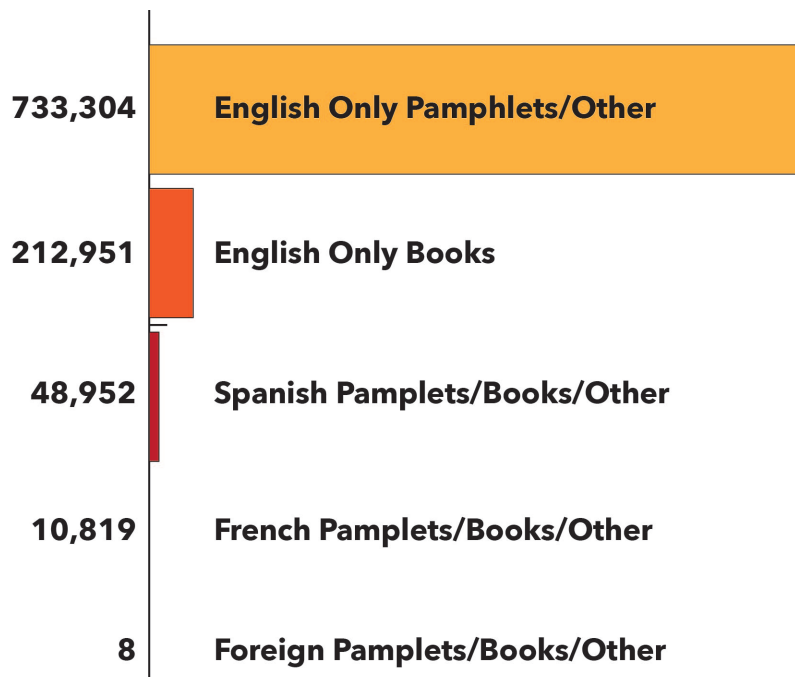
Meetings searches is the total number of searches conducted on all meeting search pages in all languages.



Mobile App Installs

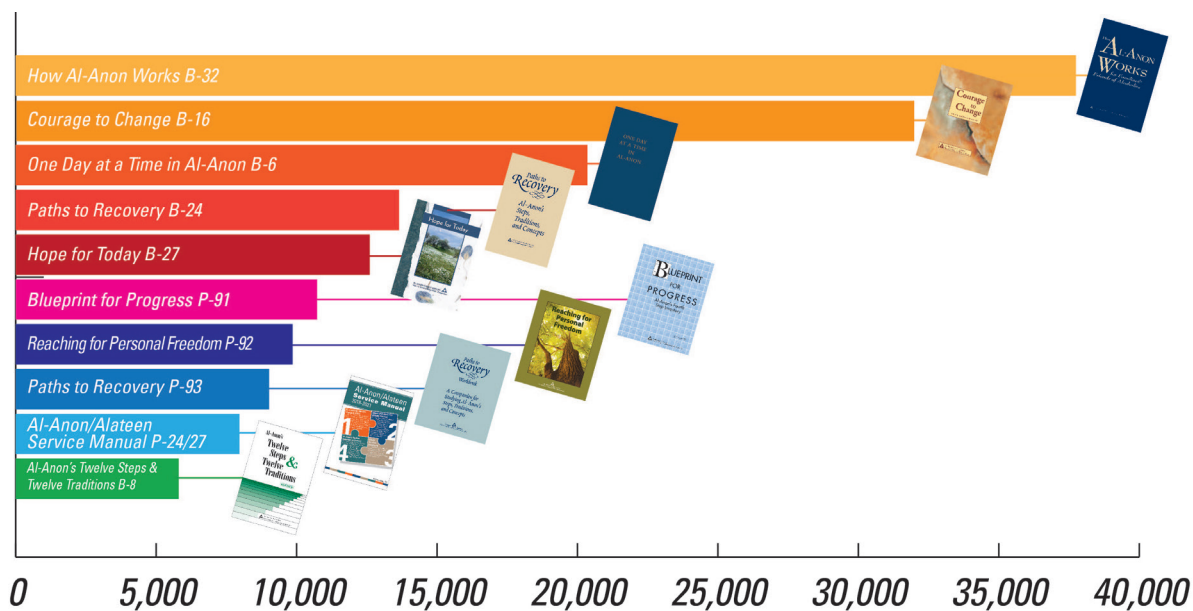
Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app installs is the total number of app installations.

Conference Approved Literature Volume

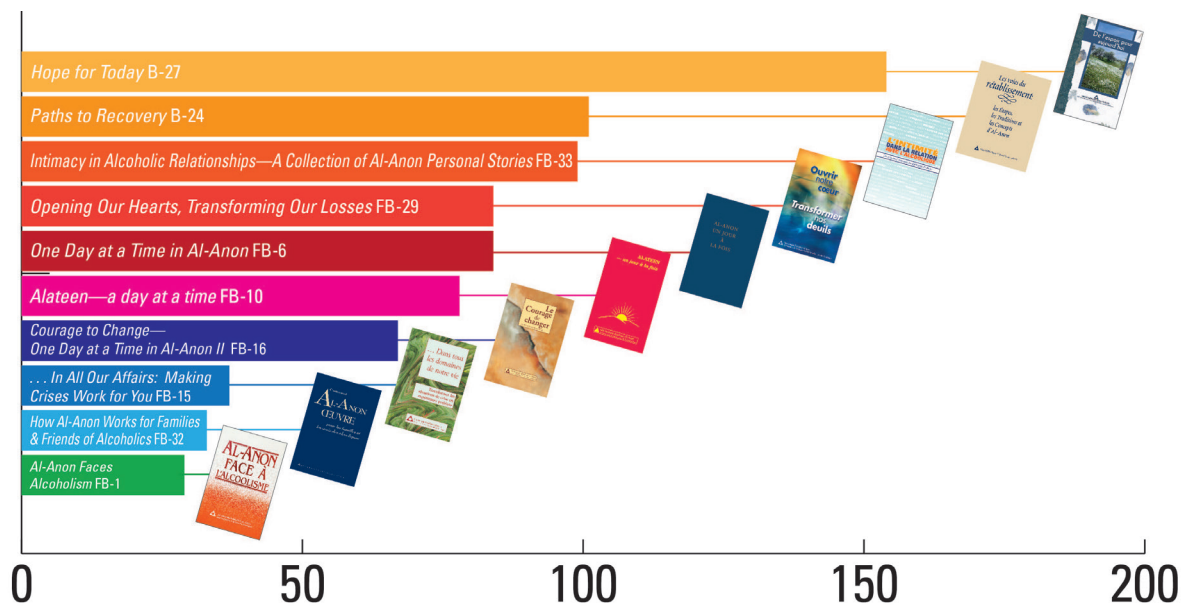


2020 Sales

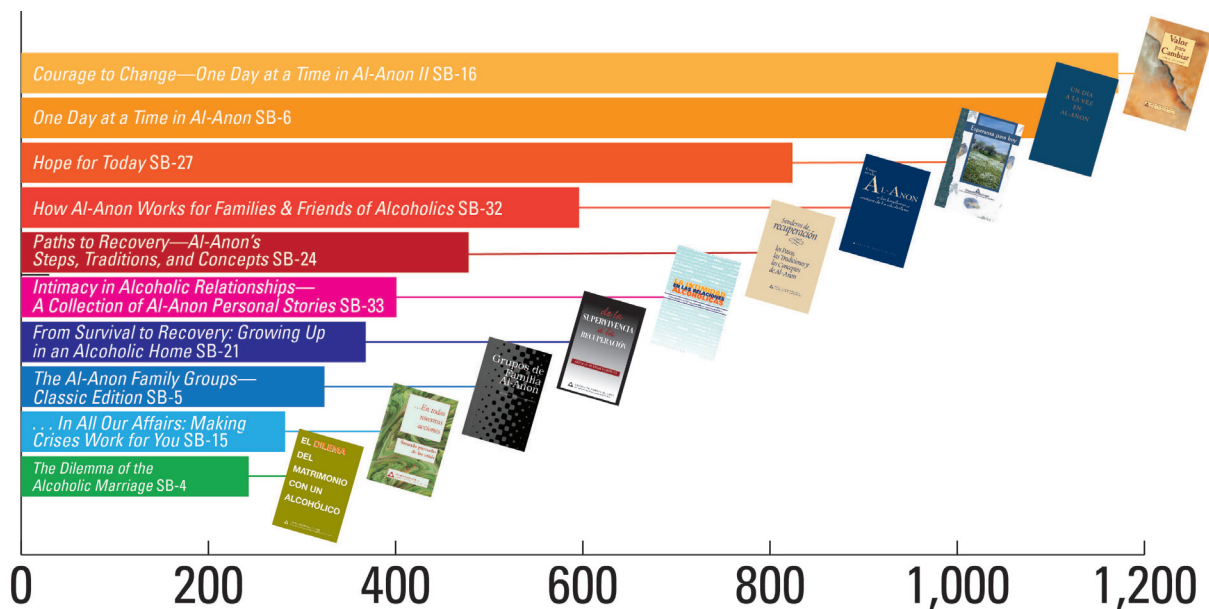
Top 10 Best Selling Book/Booklets of 2020 - English



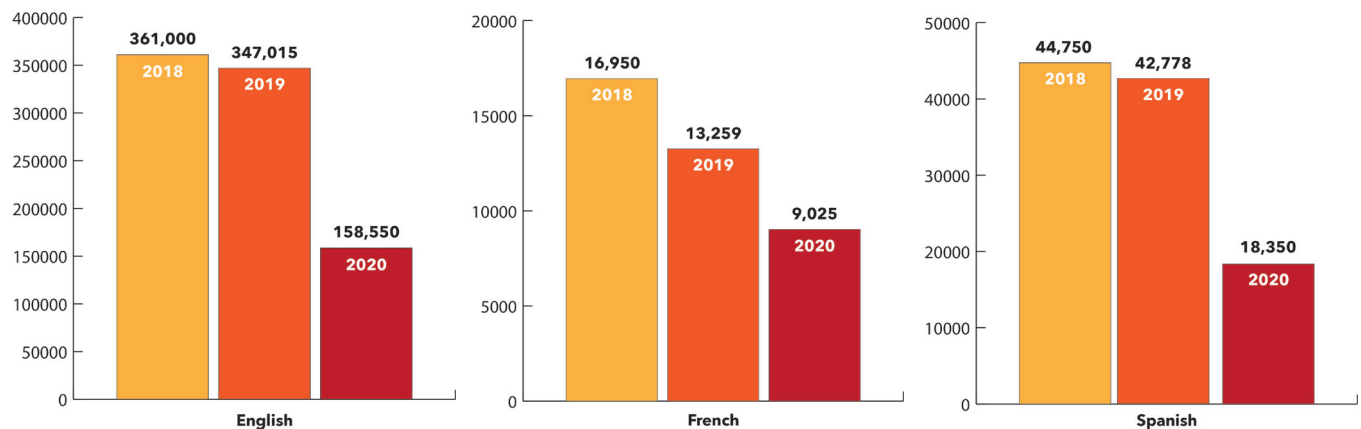
Top 10 Best Selling Book/Booklets of 2020 - French



Top 10 Best Selling Book/Booklets of 2020 - Spanish

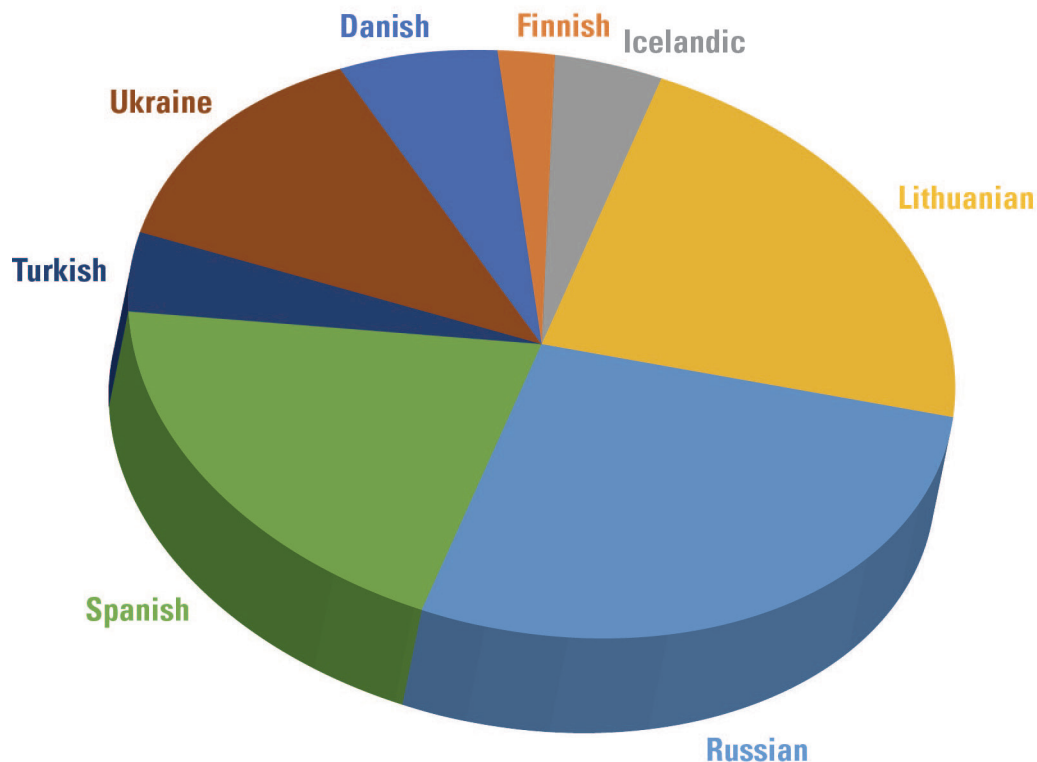


Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism



Translation & Reprint Requests for Al-Anon Internationally

In 2020, the WSO processed a total of 39 reprint permissions from national structures.



Translation Stats

Publications and Board letters:

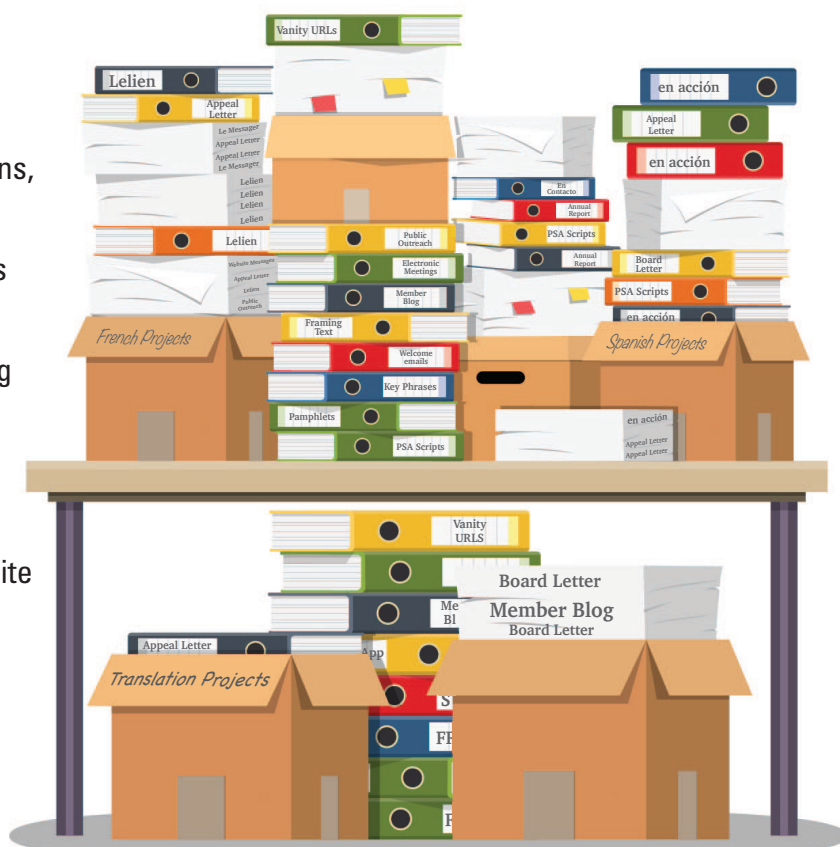
- *Le lien*, a French-language magazine compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues with an average of 7500 translated words per issue)
- *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, a Spanish-language magazine compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues with an average of 7500 translated words per issue)
- Appeal letter to members (quarterly)
- Chairperson of the Board letter and Policy, Finance and CLT Committee updates (quarterly)
- *Le Messenger* and *En Contacto* (monthly)

Special projects

- Mobile App framing text, commands, key phrases, messages, FAQs, host instructions, and website pages
- Mobile App premium content subscriptions (353 articles translated)
- French and Spanish Member Blog framing text and discussion themes
- Welcome email for new face-to-face AI-Anon groups
- Temporary electronic messages for website
- Electronic meetings newcomer e-packet sign up page for website
- Vanity URLs for various website pages
- New Public Outreach posters
- Order forms for Gratitude Bundle

Other items

- 2019 Annual Report
(over 20000 translated words)
- 2020 CAL Catalog
- 2021 PSA scripts - Interpretation and recreation of scripts in French and Spanish as translation cannot adequately capture the intention in the PSA time limits
- Update of several pamphlets featured in the Al-Anon and Alateen Newcomer packets



Our Work

Goal: Members

AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.

From its origin in 1951, the purpose of the Clearing House has been to achieve greater unity across the growing and evolving fellowship, which often involves talking to each other and reasoning things out together through inevitable disagreements. 2020 saw the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Staff continue this tradition of communicating with members as together they strove to provide universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism despite the challenges created by the global pandemic.

Serve Members, Meetings and Groups

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

Christa A., Senior Group Services Specialist

Valerie Stump, AFG Records Coordinator (Non-member)

Bob H., Webmaster

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Al-Anon Members and Group Communication

The primary responsibility of Group Services is to be able to respond to members, and potential members, when questions arise in groups. 2020 was a year of many questions posed that were starkly unique as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing responses to those questions was challenging at times as none of us were prepared to immediately navigate through the changes initially encountered.

Despite the uncertainties, members and groups demonstrated they understood the need to continue to meet in order to be available for newcomers to Al-Anon and Alateen and long-term members alike. This facilitated a WSO-wide team collaboration to provide support and direction. As a result, members and groups were able to follow a newly created process to temporarily meet on various electronic platforms and share that information at the local level.

Some challenges that Al-Anon groups temporarily meeting on electronic platforms encountered:

- How to welcome newcomers with no newcomer CAL to provide
- How to collect Tradition Seven contributions
- How to share the meeting readings so that everyone feels part of the meeting
- How to have a cohesive group

In parts of the WSC structure, some meetings could continue to meet in a face-to-face format. This prompted new challenges for those groups. Some members were very concerned about attending these face-to-face meetings for personal health reasons. This prompted the idea of creating a hybrid Al-Anon meeting: a meeting where members would be in the physical location and would use technology to patch in members that were not able to attend in person. Some localities placed a limit on crowd gathering. This posed a challenge for Al-Anon groups that would have to consider that families and friends of alcoholics could be turned away from a face-to-face meeting. Offering support to groups in these situations required us to focus on our Traditions and the principles of unity, membership, autonomy, and our primary purpose. This created an opportunity for each group to firmly link to its District and Area to talk to each other and reason things out on how to best meet the needs of each group. Lastly, all groups and members were reminded that there is no time limit for a group to temporarily meet online. It is important to consider the safety of all members.

The information that evolved because of the pandemic prompted Group Services and AFG Records to review disparities in various internal processes that support the display of registered Al-Anon face-to-face groups and electronic meetings. It has prompted us to look at creating a standardized process to display the WSO meeting ID and to access a “report a problem” feature for all meetings. In collaboration with the Webmaster, Digital Strategy, and the Software Engineer, we developed the plan to implement this process.

In addition to supporting members and groups via telephone and email correspondence, there were times when Group Services Staff were asked to participate in virtual Area Service Meetings and Events. In 2020, Group Services participated in the following:

- **Florida North Area World Service Committee Meeting:** participation included an opportunity to meet with the Area Alateen Coordinator and AAPP to discuss issues surrounding Alateen Conferences and fundraising ideas, an Ask-it-basket session, a personal sharing to the AWSC, and viewing the online AMIAS training created by the Area.
- **Ohio Assembly:** asked to share as a spiritual speaker in their virtual Assembly.
- **Iowa Assembly:** participation included a personal share and ask-it-basket session.
- **Puerto Rico Convención #45 “Visión de vida para toda mi vida”:** participation in the 45th annual Area Convention with a personal sharing focused on service as a recovery tool as a part of the topic of a panel session.

Mobile App

In August 2020, Al-Anon launched its very first recovery mobile app. The Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app (Mobile App) was designed to be a safe community for people affected by someone else’s alcoholism, where they can connect with one another to find support in a social environment without concern about breaking their anonymity. There were 10 Al-Anon groups registered hosting 21 meetings each week, including at least 1 meeting every day of the week. The WSO hosted a couple meetings a week to get things started, and the first registered electronic meeting occurred in the app on August 31, 2020 at 8:30pm EDT.

In December 2020, the Mobile App was updated to provide safety for our teen members and the first Alateen meeting occurred in the Mobile App, in place of Alateen Chat, on December 6, 2020 at 9pm EST.

Once the Mobile App was officially launched, Group Services Staff facilitated two temporary meetings to help members get acquainted with its meeting functionality. The temporary meetings took place until the end of October when at least one Al-Anon meeting was registered for every day of the week. The very first meeting to register was “Senderos de Amor” a Spanish-speaking meeting!

Alateen Members, Groups, and Trusted Servants

Area Alateen Coordinators

The Alateen Service e-Manual required a language change to reflect the updated Alateen policy approved by the 2019 WSC. In addition, it was noted that some of the images found therein needed to be updated. In the review process some of the content was revised to incorporate live links to resource materials on al-anon.org to assist Al-Anon members considering serving Alateen. Group Services was able to update the service tool and post on al-anon.org as well as in the Area Alateen Coordinators Community.

The following Areas submitted changes to their Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements that were found to be in substantial compliance with the 2003 Motion from the Board of Trustees and approved by the WSO:

- California North
- California South
- Florida North
- New York North
- Oklahoma

Please remember that any changes made to current Area Alateen Safety and Behavior Requirements need to be reviewed by WSO prior to presenting to the Area Assembly for vote of approval.

In the same manner that Al-Anon groups were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, so, too were Alateen meetings. The challenge to move Alateen meetings to a temporary online platform was an impact experienced throughout our structure. Finding information about Alateen groups temporarily meeting online at the local level, while keeping in mind the safety of the meeting, became a concern. Maintaining member anonymity at the public level also was a challenge as to how to safely display contact information for Alateen meetings. It was determined by the WSO that temporary online Alateen meetings could only be conducted based on their Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

For that reason, Alateens could not participate in temporary online Alateen meetings outside of their Area.

Area Alateen Coordinators, AMIAS, and other trusted servants shared in their respective AFG Connects communities regarding safety for Alateen meetings. When Alateens wanted to attend a temporary Alateen meeting outside of their Area, it needed to be coordinated through the links of service as an AMIAS needed to escort the Alateen to the out-of-Area meeting and remain at the meeting. This supported the understanding of a need for a communication plan between the Areas and the importance of the trusted servants involved, verifying current AMIAS certification to ensure the safety of the teens.

Area Alateen Recertification

Group Services, in collaboration with AFG Records, reviews the process in place after each recertification cycle is completed. There is always room for improvement when sharing the message that the Area Alateen Recertification process involves both recertification of certified AMIAS and verification that Alateen groups list certified AMIAS as Alateen Group Sponsors, CMA, and Phone Contacts for the Public.

Since the Recertification window is now open earlier in the year (January) we felt it best to create some “on-demand” videos to assist the incoming panel of AAPPs with their transition into this service role. The “Welcome Presentation for the incoming AAPP Panel” was completed with vital feedback from WSO Staff on the content. The presentation was well received by the AAPPs when presented for initial training session.

As a result of the pandemic, the Board of Trustees extended the deadline for the Annual Alateen Recertification to August 31. All 67 Areas completed the recertification by the August 31 deadline. Moving forward, we will go back to the June 15 deadline where AFG Records and Group Services will continue to collaborate to create a communication plan that reinforces the importance of adhering to the deadline. New on-demand video training is in progress to assist in this endeavor.

New WSO Staff and Volunteers Alateen Certification Process

At the January Board of Trustees Meeting, the Board decided to approve the Staff development of a certification program for those serving Alateen on behalf of the World Service Office, which complies with the 2003 Alateen Motion. The certification program currently consists of the following elements:

- National background checks identifying any felony convictions, charges of child abuse, or any other inappropriate sexual behavior.
- Government training on Virginia laws regarding working with minors.
- WSO Alateen overview training provided by the Associate Director—Group Services.
- Third-party professional training that includes best-practices for working with teenagers. The training and professional facilitator may vary but the training will minimally include techniques for resolving conflicts with teenagers.
- Attorney-led or government information session on specific laws for working with minors in the state or province in which an Al-Anon or A.A. with Al-Anon participation International Convention will be held.

If WSO Staff or Volunteers wish to serve Alateen in the Area in which they reside, they must participate in the certification process of the respective Area.

Alateen Chat meetings

Since 2013, the WSO has offered Alateen Chat meetings that take place in an online text-based platform. The meetings over the years have been supported by Areas where the AMIAS volunteer to serve in the chat meeting. The WSO was made aware that the software that supported these meetings would become obsolete at the end of 2020. Over the course of the year, there were numerous times when the chat meetings were not able to be held due to software problems. Finally, it was determined these meetings would be relocated to the Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app (Mobile App).

WSO contacted all the AMIAS connected to each of the seven meetings (six from the WSC structure and one from Poland) and invited them to a web conference training session. The meetings were launched in the Mobile App December 6. We are excited to discover whether the trial period for these meetings in the Mobile App may allow the WSO to consider registering other permanent electronic Alateen meetings.

Al-Anon Information Services

The AIS Update for 2020 was suspended due to the pandemic, since many service centers remained closed, operated with limited hours, or worked from remote locations. The AIS Community on AFG Connects was moderately used for sharing experience, strength, and hope regarding Seventh Tradition contributions over electronic platforms. The Literature Distribution Center (LDC) Community was used a little more, as members were seeking which best practices have evolved in providing literature safely to members.

Inmate Correspondence Service

Due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICS program continues to be upside down with more members interested in being an Inmate Contact but little to no interest from Inmates. Local Public Outreach into prisons will be encouraged when it is safe to do so, as we would like to be able to continue supporting inmates affected by the family disease of alcoholism. The role of the WSO is to protect anonymity by acting as the postal service between Contacts and Inmates. We continue to need support from the Areas to create those connections.

Electronic Meetings

Permanent electronic meetings (Electronic Meetings) continue to grow on phone and online platforms, with over 200 new registered meetings added in 2020. To date, a total of 386 Electronic Meetings (223 online and 163 on the phone) have registered. They host 558 meetings in total, as many gather on multiple days. The online meetings continue to be held in many languages. 2020 saw the first French-speaking phone meeting register with the WSO!

A total of six web conference calls for the online Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs) and five web conference calls for the phone CMAs were conducted in 2020. All Electronic Meetings were impacted by increasing numbers of members joining their meetings because of the pandemic. Business meeting discussions centered around how Electronic Meetings adjusted to the influx of new members to their meetings.

With this influx, the need to create and share a “meeting script” arose. CMAs shared experience, strength, and hope on their Electronic Meetings AFG Connects community, giving examples of different types of web-based technology that allowed them to post scripts without creating searchable websites. The importance of protecting Al-Anon’s trademark name and copyright continues to be a guiding principle in the endeavors of the permanent electronic meetings.

CMAs for electronic meetings have long identified the need to provide newcomers a welcome kit of information similar to what many provide in face-to-face meetings. In March 2020, the WSO responded by creating a “Welcome Newcomer” email. The one-time available at al-anon.org/welcome provide valuable links to basic newcomer information found on al-anon.org. While this email was intended for newcomers of permanent electronic meetings, Staff realized that due to the pandemic, it was useful to also provide it to members participating in temporary Al-Anon meetings. The links of service and fellowship were informed of availability starting in May. An average of 775 email sign-ups are being requested each month and close to 8,000 emails were generated from March to December 2020.

Group Services collaborated with AFG Records and Legal to resolve the backlog of requests for licenses to quote Conference Approved Literature (CAL) online in Electronic Meetings and developed a system for alerting them when renewal is due. The al-anon.org display of online meetings was completely revised to include updated language regarding meeting attendees, license to display CAL, language spoken in the meeting, and the Electronic Meeting WSO ID number. Filters were also added to allow members to search for Electronic Meetings by language, platform, and day of week. Electronic Meeting members have appreciated the changes.

AFG Records and Group Services collaborated and revised the Electronic Meeting Registration and Electronic Meeting Change forms and instructions, including adding Mobile App specific responsibilities. This year, CMA letters to Electronic Meetings were sent in English, Spanish, and French, based on the language spoken in the meeting.

Prior to launching the Mobile App, Group Services clarified for the Phone and Online CMAs the Mobile App was not intended to replace their meetings but rather to provide another platform for Al-Anon meetings to take place. Everyone was encouraged to share this information in their meetings as the Mobile App is a major milestone for Al-Anon Family Groups.

Impression – Electronic Meetings as Al-Anon Family Groups

JP M., Chairperson of the EMWG (Trustee)

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In the last 4 years, I have been privileged to participate in the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG), including being the Chairperson of the Work Group this year. Our work this year was very exciting to me, as I hope it is to you. Due to the pandemic, many of us in the fellowship have had an opportunity to participate in electronic meetings this year, which has allowed us to have a better appreciation for them.

I am excited that EMWG may be able to bring forward the following to the 2021 Conference for consideration:

- Permanent Electronic Meetings are Al-Anon Family Groups and should elect a Group Representative like any Al-Anon group.

- AI-Anon Family Groups that meet only electronically have elected representation within the AI-Anon service structure. This could include such groups choosing to be a part of a geographic component of the structure—such as an Area, a General Service Office, or an Emerging Structure—or part of an Area serving groups meeting electronically which could be formed within the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. Each group would receive support, do service, and use the service manual and language(s) supported by the component of the AI-Anon structure through which it registers.
- AI-Anon Family Groups which meet face-to-face could have an electronic component, if that is the wish of the group conscience, and would remain a part of the service structure in which the group is registered.

I am excited to learn the will of the WSC Conference regarding these ideas which, I believe, unify all components of the fellowship, and provide a path forward without harm to what already exists.

Facilitate Conference, Convention, and Fellowship Visits

Marsha W., Director of Programs

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

Chris Baker, Meeting & Travel Planner (Non-member)

Yadi McCoy, Training & Project Specialist (Non-member)

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

Rosie M., Chairperson of the Conference Leadership Team (Trustee)

Jean L., Chairperson of Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect (Trustee)

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The World Service Conference

The 2020 World Service Conference (WSC) was unlike any other as expressed in the *Impression – Virtual/Electronic Conference* immediately following this report.

Several WSC agenda items were discussed on AFG Connects, a communication platform, where Conference members posted their comments over five 24-hour periods; agenda items relating to legal Board matters were held via web conferencing during two half-day sessions; and other agenda items were postponed.

A French-speaking Conference member benefitted from the simultaneous interpretation of the virtual sessions into French. This resource was approved as a three-year trial in July 2019 by the Board of Trustees in support of providing barrier-free access to information. Spanish translation was not requested for the 2020 WSC.

Although this was not the Conference experience the 92 voting members had anticipated, the pandemic offered a growth opportunity for the Conference to actively engage in its 2020 theme, “Dreaming Big with 20|20 Vision,” by holding the 60th WSC in an electronic format.

Following Conference, members were invited to share “what you are ‘taking away’ from Conference?” A Delegate shared, “I am humbled and grateful to be a part of AI-Anon history. I cannot imagine the tremendous work that went into pulling this off! I couldn’t help but think back to the ‘pioneer days.’ I appreciate all the knowledge that was shared in the discussions on AFG Connects, but I did miss the in-person feel of Conference. We are all in this together and we hold AI-Anon’s best interest at heart.”

In addition to the virtual/electronic Conference in April, members of the 2020 WSC celebrated the service of outgoing Delegates, WSO Volunteers, and one retired Staff member in November as they listened to the Panel 58 Delegates share their Three-Minute Talks and the Spiritual Speakers share their stories. Members also witnessed outgoing 2020 WSC members “receive” certificates of appreciation in recognition of their dedication and contribution of service to the worldwide fellowship of AI-Anon. The celebration included time for fellowship and a video tour of the WSO in support of AFG, Inc.’s Mission Statement, in part: “. . . a

spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through . . . shared experiences.” (To read these talks, see page 49-60 of the *2020 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46), <https://al-anon.org/pdf/P46-2020-web.pdf>)

While the 2020 WSC was a successful event, put together in a short period of time, going forward, the 2021 WSC will see the 2021 Conference Theme, “Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance,” come to fruition. The 2021 WSC will build on the 2020 experience, as the Board, in October, approved *not* holding the 2021 WSC in New York in favor of a virtual Conference. This is due to the continuing travel and meeting restrictions related to the pandemic. With this advance notice, WSO Staff, along with the Conference Leadership Team (CLT), have begun planning for a *full* Conference agenda in 2021—thereby increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program. The 2021 WSC will be held virtually, including general sessions, breakout sessions, and electronic AFG Connects discussions for some reports and sessions. In the spirit of Tradition One—our common welfare and unity—CLT reached out to gain a sense of the will of the Conference members regarding the virtual 2021 Conference agenda.

Impression – Virtual/Electronic Conference

Gail G., Member of the Board of Trustees

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Each year, planning for the next WSC begins shortly after the closing of the *current* Conference. This was the case for the 2020 WSC—and then “it” happened!

By mid-March 2020, health and government authorities had issued restrictions to limit gatherings to less than 50 people. On March 20, 2020, the Board of Trustees convened a Special Board Meeting to discuss the options available for holding the WSC. We were four weeks away from the start of Conference and all options appeared quite daunting. This was the first time, in the history of the WSC Structure, that we were not able to meet face-to-face! So, after much prayerful deliberation, the decision was made to hold two, abbreviated half-day virtual meetings with an electronic component on AFG Connects.

To say the next few weeks were somewhat frantic would be an understatement. Meetings, technical training, decisions, more meetings, pre-Conference voting training, communicating—everyone worked tirelessly to overcome barriers and challenges. Conference members soon found themselves attending training sessions and for some, new skills were quickly developed. And when it was time, we came together in our new format. We fulfilled the traditional obligations required to support the Board of Trustees in executing its legal requirements at the Annual Meetings. We listened, we participated in written discussions, we voted, and we made history. The Board of Trustees, members of the Executive Committee, the WSO Staff, and the Delegates all displayed courage, goodwill, patience, and their ability to adapt to new and innovative ideas. It was exciting and a privilege to feel the love and dedication which was abundant at our first ever virtual/hybrid World Service Conference. I will never forget it!!

Impression – Fulfilling WSC Responsibilities to Guard Al-Anon’s World Services through Policy Discussions and Decisions

Terry F., Chairperson of the Policy Committee (Trustee)

Marianne B., Chairperson of the Policy Committee (Trustee)

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The Policy Committee is committed to ensuring that Al-Anon policies are in line with Al-Anon’s Traditions and spiritual principles. This is a large Committee comprised of all members of the Board, At-Large members of the Executive Committee, and the voting members of the WSO Staff. There can be up to 30 Policy Committee members at the Policy Committee meeting! Regardless of its size, the Policy Committee always relies on a Higher Power to guide them in discussions that are considerate, thoughtful, and loving. It is always cognizant of its responsibility to the WSC and the fellowship, focused on decisions that are founded on “our common welfare.”

This year, adapting to meeting virtually for all Policy Committee meetings has been both exciting and challenging, but the Committee continues to *move forward with unity, courage, and perseverance*. There were many Policy Committee, Task, and Thought Force recommendations that were approved for presentation at the 2020 WSC, but due to the virtualization, will now be presented at the 2021 WSC. In addition, new Task and Thought Forces have been working hard to bring their discussions to the Policy Committee in the hopes of presenting their work at the 2021 WSC too! We are so excited to be presenting many Policy items for discussion, decision, and vote at the next WSC!

Supporting the WSC Structure and Trusted Servants

In providing “universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism” as stated in our Strategic Plan Goal: Members, the April 2020 Chairperson of the Board Letter and accompanying three updates from the Finance Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Conference Leadership Team, was released simultaneously in English, French, and Spanish for the first time. This demonstrated the Board of Trustees’ continued commitment to enhancing trilingual communication. Members continue to receive this valuable quarterly resource simultaneously in all three languages.

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) Subcommittee held its debut “Session with the Delegates.” This was an idea shared with WSO Staff by a current Delegate, discussed by the CLT, and implemented prior to the close of the year. This first session reviewed the relationship and differences between Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship, and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the organization. The session included a Q&A segment for Delegates to ask questions about the material presented. In support of the Strategic Plan Goal: Organization, current Conference members have access to this session (and future sessions) as it was recorded *for use within the WSC Members AFG Connects community* thereby “increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.”

Also in support of the Strategic Plan Goal: Organization, members of our communication platform communities on AFG Connects received notice of an update to the AFG Connects’ Code of Conduct (formerly named) document that provides an Al-Anon principle-based Usage Policy (newly named) that is clearer and more user-friendly. Key changes include highlighting how to ask questions of the WSO (via email or the “Contact Us” link), listing supporting Traditions for each “AFG Connects Etiquette” and “Discussion Group Etiquette” bullet point, and stating the importance of maintaining confidentiality within the community.

2020 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon Participation

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, our friends at A.A. made the difficult, unprecedented decision in late March to cancel their in-person gathering—originally estimated to attract 50,000 plus members—of A.A., Al-Anon, and guests planning to travel to Detroit, Michigan on July 2-5 of 2020 to celebrate A.A.’s 85th Anniversary during their 2020 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon participation. The WSO Convention Planning Team’s preparations had been in the works for a couple of years designing a program for Al-Anon’s participation; and while we were disappointed that we would not be participating with A.A. at their International Convention, we appreciated A.A.’s thoughtful foresight in cancelling when they did.

In addition to the WSO Convention Planning Team’s work, the Michigan Al-Anon Welcome Committee—made up entirely of volunteers—was well underway with its plans to welcome Al-Anon members from all parts of the world to Detroit. The WSO expresses its deep gratitude to the core Welcome Committee and all its members for their generous service to Al-Anon Family Groups.

Fellowship Visits within the WSC Structure

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

We were disappointed, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, to have to cancel Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect 2020, set to take place in Cleveland, Ohio in October. Nonetheless, the Board of Trustees are grateful to the Ohio Area for their willingness to agree to host the event in October 2021 instead; and an agreement was reached with the hotel to reschedule.

Participating in Area Events

WSO Staff and Volunteers were also disappointed to be unable, due to the pandemic, to physically attend events in the Areas planned earlier during the year. However, once adjustments were made to the situation, Areas contacted and requested WSO participation for Assemblies and Conventions using virtual platforms. Staff and Volunteers were appreciative for these opportunities and impressed with the resiliency and enthusiasm displayed by the members in attendance. Everyone looks forward to 2021 creative possibilities.

Impression – Sharing at Area Events in a Virtual Format

Teri M., Member of the Board of Trustees

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One of the privileges Trustees have throughout their service in Al-Anon, is visiting different Areas—as assigned by the Chairperson of the Board (COB). Normally, we fly to the respective city, spend a day or so, and are surrounded by fellowship. We attend Assemblies and share our Al-Anon personal/service story and whatever else the Area needs us to share. 2020 changed all of that. The pandemic halted us in our tracks in regard to travel. The resiliency of the fellowship, and our need to connect and still do our Al-Anon business, quickly turned towards a rapid learning trend on virtual events.

Virtually flying into Minnesota North October 3 of this year was a pleasure. The members were engaged in their first virtual Assembly and used electronic software voting for the first time. As Trustees, we provide reports to the Board on the places we visit; and virtual meetings have allowed us to visit many places in last year. Assemblies, in their autonomy, are having robust conversations with respect and principles, and are modeling what is best for Al-Anon during a very strange time. There seems to be a common thread—while we deeply miss the personal connections, the willingness to engage and participate is heartfelt. Many of us are getting out of our comfort zones. Visits to Areas, whether in person or virtual, keep the connection going, keep all of us better informed, and keep reminding me that I am not alone on this journey of recovery

Produce and Distribute Literature

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Marsha W., Director of Programs

Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals (Retired)

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

Suzette McKinney, Publications Manager (Non-member)

Colette Norman, Translation Manager (Non-member)

Hannah Brown, Copy Editor (Non-member)

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Conference Approved Literature

As 2020 began, the writer/editor chosen to work on the NEW DAILY READER (working title) was hard at work selecting and editing sharings for the book from among the 1,587 member sharings that had been submitted up to that time. The Associate Director—Literature, as liaison to the 14 members of the Literature

Committee, provided an initial review of each sharing before forwarding batches of them to the Committee each month. This intense work continued until the end of December, by which time the first draft of an entire year's worth of daily readings had been evaluated, and hundreds of opinions had been sent back to the writer/editor for consideration in creating the next draft.

Our literature provides recovery not only to those who read it, but also to those members who write sharings for consideration as part of their service. During the year, the fellowship received a final request for additional sharings for the daily reader on topics that had not yet been addressed. Over 300 more additional writings were submitted and gratefully received by the WSO.

Developing new material is only one way in which Al-Anon literature helps families and friends of alcoholics. Drawing attention to the incredible resource in recovery that is already available in existing literature is also essential. In addition to the monthly "CAL Corner" department in *The Forum*, a variety of notices and articles put the focus on topics and materials that members might otherwise not know. These included an "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" article about literature that focuses on using the Traditions and Concepts of Service in one's personal life, and a series of announcements on where to read more about topics like gratitude, sponsorship, and growing up with alcoholism.

For members' convenience, the WSO once again provided 20 quotations for use in fundraising calendars by service arms without seeking written permission. This service has reduced work for trusted servants as well as WSO Staff.

Impression – Creating New Conference Approved Literature

Mary W., Chairperson of Literature Committee (At-Large Member)

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I am very grateful to serve this year as the Chairperson for the Literature Committee. This wonderful group of Al-Anon members loves our Conference Approved Literature (CAL), practices the Al-Anon principles, and serves to help fulfill our core purpose—to help families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.

In 2014, the WSC approved development of a new daily reader that reflects the diversity of the Al-Anon fellowship. Since May, the Literature Committee members, in following the CAL process, have been reading 50 new sharings for this project each month and grading them using the CAL criteria. The Committee also meets virtually every quarter to discuss our experiences with the assignment and review any new literature suggestions from the worldwide fellowship. I find it invaluable to receive many opinions on every sharing, knowing that this feedback will be carefully considered by the writer/editor of the book (who is also an Al-Anon member).

Just like in my personal Al-Anon journey, I have had a lot to learn and unlearn in this service role. The Al-Anon tools help build a foundation of trust that allows participation and expression of diverse reactions to the sharings. The Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process has helped facilitate discussion, and ultimately helps attain unanimity with our decisions.

I have enjoyed working with the Area Delegates, At-Large members, and WSO Staff on this Committee. This is my favorite service that I have done in Al-Anon so far.

Recovery Magazines—The Forum, Le lien, Al-Anon y Alateen en acción

The Forum continues to provide help to the families and friends of alcoholics as the monthly magazine of Al-Anon Family Groups. *Le lien* and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* magazines are the bimonthly French and Spanish versions, using translated excerpts from *The Forum*. The magazines include sharings from members in a variety of relationships with alcoholics and are designed to provide recovery in meetings and in-between meetings. Fifty of these sharings are evaluated by At Large members of the *Forum* Editorial

Advisory Committee (FEAC) each month. The Committee also meets quarterly via web conferencing call to discuss the status of the magazine and any concerns that readers may have.

Over the past year, the Board of Trustees and Staff have been looking at ways to better serve our members who require translation in French and Spanish. They have reduced the turnaround time in which subscribers to *Le lien* and *en acción* are getting the magazines, enhanced their design, included more timely content, and, most recently, added a color front and back cover and the “One ‘Quote’ at a Time” department. Contrary to the old “newsletter” design they once had, these publications now sport the modern, friendly look one would expect from the French and Spanish equivalents of *The Forum* magazine.

In recent issues, Staff has begun addressing the timeliness of the Legacies sharings in *Le lien* and *En acción*. By next year, the sharings will more accurately correspond to when the magazine is received, so that those who wish to can use them to study the Legacies of the month.

For each issue of *Le lien* and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, the Translation Team translated the French and Spanish articles. Some articles were adapted to ensure the referenced literature, material, and URLs were specific to each language. Some selected internet articles from each issue were also published in *Le Messenger* and *En Contacto*, the French and Spanish editions of *In The Loop*.

The Production Team designs *The Forum* from the manuscript they receive each month. The Designer uses stock photography, as well as incorporating member photos throughout. The content drives the design, with the cover story often setting the theme.

Impression – From Newsletters to Magazines

Rosie M., Vice-Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

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In support of our Mission Statement, “Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences,” the WSO collaborated and completed a transformation of the *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* from a newsletter to a magazine. It’s exciting to see the new magazine format align with the content and information in *The Forum*. I can’t imagine a better way to connect with members of our Spanish-speaking community. The information and shared experiences are relayed in their language, and provide content that can be understood, discussed, and shared. All of this can enhance members’ spiritual connection and growth.

This publication is the “voice of the fellowship” in Spanish and extends an open invitation for individual members and groups to share. The content ranges from the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service to updates and news from our WSO and personal Al-Anon and Alateen sharings on a variety of topics.

The *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* magazine is a handy, readily available resource. We’ve had meetings in our Spanish group using topics from this magazine that led to great discussions and much recovery. We share this magazine within our group so that everyone has an opportunity to read it. We also encourage subscriptions so we can all be connected and enriched each time we receive it. Thank you to the WSO Staff for providing this wonderful recovery tool in Spanish in a magazine format.

Thérèse S., Member of the Board of Trustees

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Looking at how *Le lien* has evolved through the years has helped me realize how much this precious magazine means to me. Its new presentation makes the content so much more attractive. The idea of presenting Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in advance is an amazing improvement as it allows members to use *Le lien* for monthly workshops on the Legacies.

When I arrived in Al-Anon, I was told that *Le lien* was “a meeting in my pocket.” I agreed with this statement, and it helped support me throughout the day. I always had an issue in my purse and I still use it whenever I am chairing a meeting. *Le lien* is a very valuable recovery tool. I always have an issue at my bedside. It calms me down and helps me end the day with great peace.

Alateen Talk

As a result of Group Services staffing limitations and the COVID-19 pandemic, *Alateen Talk* is behind in production as only one issue was mailed in 2020. Group Services Staff are committed to creating all newsletters for our paid subscribers and Alateen groups.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism – AFG’s Year-Round Public Outreach Magazine

In 2020 the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* magazine completed its transition from a bi-annual special pre-order to an item available for purchase throughout the year. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the overall sales of *AFA* magazines, so we were unable to experience the full benefit of its continual availability. In September, the Public Outreach Committee recommended, and the Executive Committee approved, the removal of the year from the cover, while leaving the copyright date on the inside cover. This approach expands *AFA*’s timelessness and eliminates service arms’ need to figure out what to do with excess inventory of the previous year’s magazine. The new *AFA* magazine, which is being printed for 2021, will be the first to exclude the year from its cover.

Goal: Public

Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.

In 2020, the WSO sought to honor the intent of the 1966 Policy statement which encouraged a proactive approach to public outreach: “Al-Anon is cooperating when it works with others, rather than alone.” The Board of Trustees encouraged WSO Staff to “consult widely” to understand how other recovery organizations were attracting diverse members to their programs. The Board, Executive Committee members, and WSO Staff reviewed the results of this consultation together before prioritizing AFG, Inc. “plans and policies for the improvement of our fellowship” in 2021. Through these efforts, AFG, Inc. continues to expand recognition of Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected by the family disease of alcoholism.

Attract New Members

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals (Retired)

Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies

Mona Dougherty, Senior Communications Specialist (Non-member)

Beth Rodriguez, Senior Social Media Specialist (Non-member)

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Public Outreach

Public Service Announcements

In 2019, WSO Staff were contacted by another Public Service Announcement (PSA) distribution vendor with a proposal to distribute our PSAs to the US and Canada in 2020. Their proposal included digital advertising which would be aired in grocery stores, medical waiting rooms, and across CBS online properties to expand awareness of hope through Al-Anon recovery. So, Staff decided to test out these new delivery methods to determine if this approach would increase awareness.

The PSA campaign, which featured our 2019 Questions campaign alongside our 2017 Samantha (Alateen) campaign, were distributed in August 2020. Through the first 96 days, the 2020 PSA campaign was played over 24,600 times which is greater than the first 96 day of the 2018 and 2019 PSA campaigns combined. In addition to the sheer volume of airplays, our PSAs also reached a much broader audience as they were played in more top cities than ever before, including 77% of the 100 most populous cities in the US and Canada, and all the top 10 most populous cities.

Given the success, and considering feedback from our new vendor, the Public Outreach Committee recommended a change to how the Al-Anon fellowship participates in the annual PSA campaign. Historically, PSA distribution has been limited—due to the costs of producing DVDs which had to be mailed to a select number of stations. The new approach is 100% digital and allows the Al-Anon PSAs to reach all Nielsen tracked stations (three times as many as before). Since the distribution gap has been eliminated, there is no longer a need for members to contact stations which protects Al-Anon from a Concept Ten duplication of effort issue with our vendor.

The Public Outreach Committee is excited to be able to consider new opportunities for members to serve in Public Outreach campaigns.

Public Outreach Service Tools

In 2020, a small team of WSO Staff worked together to develop new poster templates for public outreach. There has been a lot of demand for the “trapped in the bottle” poster which has been shared among Areas. The WSO has purchased extended license images which allow for use and distribution by WSC Structure service arms. The team developed several versions using the tagline “Not everyone trapped by alcohol is an alcoholic” depicting people trapped in bottles. Some new Alateen posters focusing on the statement, “1 in every 4 children is effected by someone else’s drinking” were also produced. These posters, with a placeholder for local contact information, will be added to the al-anon.org Public Outreach page from where they can be downloaded for free. To reduce impact on Staff resources, service arms are able to update these posters with contact information without WSO approval.

Competitive Analysis Project

In late spring, WSO Staff, at the direction of the Board of Trustees, distributed a Request for Proposal (RFP) to complete a Competitive Analysis across numerous digital channels (LinkedIn, AFG Connects, *In The Loop*, and al-anon.org). The goal of the Competitive Analysis was to learn from other recovery programs how they are attracting a younger, more diverse audience so that the Board and Staff might consider these ideas for attracting members to the Al-Anon program.

Having screened eleven (11) firms, the Staff Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) selected the final vendor and work on the project commenced in early July. A Staff Steering Committee was formed to guide the consultant’s work, answer questions, and offer suggestions. The resulting analysis yielded a comparison of direct competition—recovery programs most like Al-Anon which incorporate peer support—and indirect competition—organizations that post digital content such as podcasts on websites, or social media channels, as a means of offering relief.

The consultant presented their findings to the Board of Trustees in October 2020. Following the presentation, Trustees were invited to suggest ideas on how the themes and trends shared by the consultant could be incorporated into the 2021 Strategic Plan initiatives. These ideas were handed off to SLT for consideration and, ultimately, prioritization in the context of resource constraints and other project work to be performed in 2021.

Public Outreach to Professionals

Increasing Professional Awareness of Al-Anon Family Groups

In 2020, a small team of WSO Staff, including the Associate Director—Public Outreach to Professionals (now retired) and members of Digital Strategy, developed a content strategy to be deployed through LinkedIn to

reach addiction and mental health professionals. The content included key statistics from the Membership Survey, links to view the professional panel videos from the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention, and the *Fact Sheet for Professionals* free download. The intention was to provide the professionals with more information about Al-Anon to increase the professional referral rate. Due to the pandemic, funding for this program was reallocated to critical programs and services.

Networking with Professionals

There were limited opportunities to network with professionals in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. WSO Staff continue to attend public meetings with the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) via web conferencing. Additionally, Staff continue to participate remotely with other Recovery Month stakeholders as this group continues to work together to celebrate with the entire recovery community.

Protect Al-Anon's Name

Vali F., Executive Director

Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

Kia Cabbler, Legal Assistant (Non-member)

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Trademark and Copyright Protection on the Internet

The advent of the pandemic brought increased trademark and copyright infringement activity across all electronic platforms as members sought to adapt to their new circumstances. Initial WSO infringement efforts typically focus on informing groups and individuals—most of whom are unaware of the permissions required to use the Al-Anon name or distribute Al-Anon material—about the need to protect Al-Anon's copyright and trademark. Many members respond positively and quickly once informed. Occasionally, the situation warrants a more immediate response.

This was the case with an electronic event identifying itself as an international Al-Anon event. The event was using the Al-Anon name without permission and, the WSO learned, planned to play a copyrighted Al-Anon video to an audience of potentially thousands of members. These actions both substantially risked Al-Anon's ability to protect its trademark and copyright. Given the event was not linked to a WSC service arm, in June 2020 the Board of Trustees directed WSO Staff to inform the organizers of the need to cease its violation of Al-Anon trademark and copyright. Several conversations occurred between WSO Staff and the organizers following that action. These conversations focused on the principles of Warranty Four outlined by our cofounder Lois W. and approved by the World Service Conference and the current Al-Anon Policy regarding the WSO's responsibility for Public Outreach at the National and International level as described in the *Service Manual*.

This and other situations improved WSO Staff understanding of current and ongoing copyright and trademark responsibilities. The new Legal Assistant, in partnership with outside counsel and the Executive Director, educated Staff and WSO Volunteers on identifying trademark and copyright infringements, empowering them to raise appropriate concerns to the WSO. This expanded the WSO Staff's ability to respond quickly to issues.

In total, Staff has catalogued and researched 26 separate intellectual property violations across electronic platforms—including eight websites, four electronic meeting platforms, three mobile apps, and an assortment of social media platforms. Nearly all of these (21) constituted copyright violations, whereas three were trademark infringements and two represented both. Staff have so far been successful in gaining compliance from eight parties. The infringement work continues.

In addition to infringement activities, Staff also focused on encouraging service arms to renew their limited licenses which permit them to post brief extracts of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) electronically. The online CAL permission request process for new and established meetings was simplified, enhancing WSO recordkeeping capability. Staff also recognized and shared with the Board of Trustees the need to formally document the limited licenses which have been historically understood to have been granted to registered Al-Anon Family Groups meeting face-to-face. This process will be implemented in 2021.

Impression – Our Responsibility for Protecting Al-Anon’s Name

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee (At-Large Member)

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One of the primary responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee, in its role of oversight, is addressed on page 169 of the 2018-2021 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2) (P-24/27), “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 or and dilution.”

In the years following the publication of our first book in 1955, *The Al-Anon Family Groups: A Guide for the Families and Problem Drinkers*, the need for diligence in protecting not only our intellectual properties, but the Al-Anon name itself, has grown. With the growing presence of social media platforms, and our growth as a fellowship within these platforms, the Board, Executive Committee, and our WSO Staff have sought out ways to educate ourselves regarding what constitutes copyright and trademark violations, as well as develop means of reaching out to those who, in most cases, breached copyright and trademark laws without knowing it. In those instances, we have sought ways to communicate, that are in keeping with the presumption of goodwill and the practice of not becoming a source of controversy. In other words, we talk with each other and reason things out.

The Executive Committee, in its role of delegated authority through the Board of Trustees, receives weekly Director Reports which include information regarding work being done by Staff related to copyright and trademark violations. In this way, we are all working from the same information in our efforts to protect our name and copyright. It is in keeping with this work that we continue to keep in the forefront Al-Anon’s willingness to share all but our name.

International Copyright Protection and Accessibility

Since the late 1960s, AFG, Inc. has granted permission for Al-Anon structures outside of the WSC Structure to reprint and translate CAL. This process is administered by the WSO. For many years, the WSO has enforced a policy that prohibits any given country from selling copyrighted CAL outside its national borders. This policy exists for all countries with reprint or translation permission and it helps to protect AFG, Inc.’s copyrights on CAL, a significant source of revenue for many international service arms and the WSO.

In 2020, the WSO continued talking with the global Al-Anon community to understand the needs and wants of the fellowship and international service arms regarding global availability of CAL. Staff also continued to consult professionals in the fields of copyright and publishing. As a result, the WSO’s understanding of the law has evolved and, with that, new strategies have become possible. New ideas were provided by many countries represented at the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in October 2020. These ideas will be pursued as part of a 2021 Strategic Plan Strategy.

Also, in 2020, in recognition of the growing number of copyright violations occurring each year and the need for more focused and consistent attention on recordkeeping, the WSO transferred responsibility for international copyright permissions from the Associate Director—International to the Legal Assistant. Requests for licenses to reprint and translate CAL are now reviewed and maintained by the Legal Assistant with programmatic and policy oversight provided by the Associate Director.

International Trademarks

Beginning in 2016, the WSO initiated a project using outside counsel to restore ownership of the Al-Anon name and logo trademarks to AFG, Inc., as many trademarks were erroneously registered to national structures. The project also included completing trademark registrations in countries where national or evolving structures had formed, and registrations were not completed. In 2020, all remaining registrations, apart from Iran, were received. Counsel informed us the Iran registrations may be delayed for many years due to issues within the country. The Legal Assistant and outside counsel will continue to track Iranian progress as well as the renewals which will begin to occur in 2026. This milestone of the Trademark and Copyright Strategy is now concluded.

Certificates are pending for three trademarks the WSO renewed in Brazil in 2020. AFG, Inc. recently applied to renew the Al-Anon mark in Uruguay; and an assignment of rights was provided to AFG, Inc.'s Uruguayan affiliate allowing it to use Al-Anon marks locally. Upon recommendation of counsel, AFG, Inc. granted consent to an Australian company—which offers services entirely unrelated to recovery—that requested permission to use the initials 'AFG' to obtain its own trademark and conduct its business affairs. Counsel acting on our behalf completed the correction to the AFG, Inc. name as registered on the United States trademark.

Goal: Organization

AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.

The goal of increasing global access to knowledge, resources, and the program was challenged in 2020 by travel limitations and local lockdowns resulting from the pandemic. The Board of Trustees, Executive Committee Volunteers, and WSO Staff strove to creatively overcome these challenges, achieving some unexpected successes. The 2020 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) met electronically and enjoyed the largest attendance from General Service Offices (GSOs) in many years. The concept of temporary electronic meetings was created to support face-to-face groups which transitioned to virtual formats, rekindling and creating fellowship recovery across global and local boundaries.

Impression – Evolving Board Responsibilities to Attract New Volunteers

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (Trustee)

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After a Board development session in January 2020, Board members realized we had to change how we thought about, and how we accomplished our work. One of the things we looked at changing was shortening the Board Week. Some Board members, depending on what committee they served on, and the work the committee was doing, could be away from home for seven or more days during Board Week.

Board members brainstormed ideas, and a plan was formulated that would allow committees—which typically meet face-to-face during Board Week, to meet virtually prior to Board Week. Even though Trustees liked the plan, we were a little hesitant to give up face-to-face committee meetings. We decided to do it on a trial basis. That Board meeting in January was our last face-to-face meeting in 2020. All the Board meetings and committee meetings since January have been held virtually.

Even though I, and other Board members, are missing the face-to-face contact, we have realized that we can meet virtually and still accomplish our work. When we get back to meeting face-to-face, a shorter Board Week means less time away from home for Trustees. My hope is that a shorter Board Week will encourage more members to apply to be a Trustee!

Increase Global Availability

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

Lynette K., IAGSM Delegate (Chairperson of the Board of Trustees)

Gail G., IAGSM Delegate (Trustee)

Jean L., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (Trustee)

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Global Fellowship Support

The AI-Anon World Service Conference (WSC) Charter states that the purpose of the Conference is “to be the guardian of both AI-Anon’s world services and its Twelve Traditions” and that it is the “senior” of all the Conferences worldwide. The WSO is the chief service arm of the Conference. From this delegated authority arises the responsibility of the WSO to provide support to the global fellowship. This work is accomplished by the WSO International Team and the International Coordination Committee of the Board of Trustees working directly and indirectly with AI-Anon members and service arms around the world.

In 2020, the International Team provided routine support in much the same way it has for many years. These responsibilities included processing requests for licenses to translate and print Conference Approved Literature, assisting evolving structures with the registration process, and sharing information with AI-Anon offices around the world about available resources such as the Mobile App, the online meeting search, social media platforms, and public outreach tools. Staff shared resources to assist other Structures with information about Board composition, nomination, and affirmation, application/interpretation of the Traditions, how members can correspond with the WSO, and whether individual groups (from outside the WSC Structure) can make contributions to the WSO.

Some routine tasks were disrupted by the global COVID-19 pandemic and some new priorities arose. For example, the normal distribution of service materials, particularly the French and Spanish translations of the 2018-2021 *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2) (P-24/27) and the *2020 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46), were impacted by postal system and General Service Office (GSO) closures around the world. So many *Service Manuals* could not be delivered to GSOs that the decision was made to forgo trying to mail the *Summary* in 2020.

New priorities included assisting structures around the world with applying the Traditions in electronic meetings, many of which were brand new, temporary, and not something most Structures had experience with. In some cases, it only took a minor adjustment in thinking to understand that the Traditions can be applied to the problems of electronic meetings—protecting anonymity, dealing with disruptive members, members’ unwillingness to be welcoming to all—as effectively as they can be when meeting face-to-face.

While face-to-face meetings continued to meet “temporarily” online, the International Team addressed many questions related to the policies on electronic meetings and events. Many GSOs wanted to know how to register electronic meetings and were surprised to learn that under the current policy all electronic meetings (including phone meetings and online meetings on all platforms) are registered with the WSO. This is due to the lack of geographical location associated with most electronic meetings and, therefore, the inability to determine what Structure or Area in which an electronic meeting should register. The policy stayed a priority throughout the year and was a topic for discussion at the International AI-Anon General Services Meeting as well as several Policy Committee meetings.

With so many AI-Anon groups meeting electronically, questions besides just registration came to the forefront. The WSO addressed, and shared with the global AI-Anon community, information about how to welcome newcomers, how to obtain literature, how to collect and distribute voluntary contributions under Tradition Seven, and how to establish or maintain Alateen meetings. Staff also shared widely the experience of the WSO in hosting its first hybrid World Service Conference.

International Structure Events

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees. It plans and coordinates the program for the biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). In 2018, the UK & Éire Structure submitted a bid to host the IAGSM in London, England on October 7-10, 2020.

In March 2020, planning for the event was temporarily halted. By June it became clear that a decision would be needed about how to prepare for the IAGSM. During several meetings in June, the ICC reviewed information about the status of program planning, global GSO operations, travel and venue restrictions, financial obligations and projections, and potential impacts to the agenda. Members brainstormed and evaluated several options before consulting with the GSOs. With their strong support, the ICC recommended to the Board of Trustees in July, that the 2020 IAGSM be held virtually, using the AFG Connects platform to host online discussions, over a period of time sufficient to allow Delegates to participate across all time zones. The Board unanimously approved the motion.

Around the same time, the General Service Board for the UK & Éire Structure affirmed its interest in hosting the IAGSM in 2022, the IAGSM Delegates voiced their traditional approval of this, the Board approved the decision, and the WSO was able to revise the terms of its contract with the venue at no additional cost. Therefore, the next IAGSM will be held in London, England from October 12-15, 2022.

Participating in the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting

Holding the 2020 IAGSM in an electronic format with Delegates from around the world, posed new challenges and opened new opportunities. With the financial burden of travel removed due to the IAGSM being held via AFG Connects, some Delegates, who might not have been able to attend, had the opportunity to participate. Forty Delegates registered this year, including two new GSOs—Nicaragua and Slovenia.

Training on the use of AFG Connects was carried out by WSO Staff ahead of time for any Delegate who wanted it. The hope moving forward is that Delegates may now feel more comfortable communicating with each other using AFG Connects. As with all electronic meetings, internet connections can be frustrating at times; however, the four IAGSM General Sessions were enthusiastically participated in and much information was shared.

As the 2020 IAGSM was almost entirely in written format, this necessitated a lot of reading and we were reminded that clarity in the use of words is very important, as English is not the first language of many Delegates. The IAGSM Delegates resided in twelve different time zones which posed another challenge, and possibly more time between sessions could have been allowed. Once a session opened, it had to remain open long enough to allow all the Delegates time to be able to read and respond to the material. How to conduct the business (group conscience) meeting certainly presented the biggest hurdle, particularly finding a way to handle motions and conducting voting without running the meeting into an indefinite number of days.

Although Delegates were not able to meet face-to-face, several things were done to enhance the electronic IAGSM. Delegates were able to post a profile picture on AFG Connects and recordings of the Keynote and Spiritual Speakers were posted as well as audio recordings of Delegates saying the Serenity Prayer. These all made a difference in setting the spiritual tone of the meeting with love and unity.

Impression – More Firsts—Our Electronic IAGSM

Jean L., Chairperson of the ICC (Trustee)

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One of my duties as the Chairperson of the ICC, is to serve as the Chair of the IAGSM. It was an honor, privilege, and challenge to serve at this historic IAGSM—the theme of which was “Practicing Universal Principles with 20|20 Vision.” From the time the decision was made to hold this event electronically, we worked hard, overcame many obstacles, and succeeded in holding an event that was spiritual, insightful, educational, and fun.

One of the first things I noticed as the IAGSM week began—due to the electronic format we decided to extend the event—was that the Delegates were excited to participate in this format. Some of my concerns about whether they would be able to participate vanished as I soon saw Delegates from all over the world using AFG Connects to make connections. It filled my heart to read their sharings and picture them “talk[ing] to each other, reason[ing] things out with someone else” even though they may have been across the globe from each other.

One of the highlights for me was the recordings of the Keynote and Spiritual Speakers. They reminded me that no matter where we serve, we all have the common bond of being affected by someone’s drinking. I also learned so much about how AI-Anon is practiced in other parts of the world, although the principles are the same. As the event closed, I looked forward to continuing these conversations.

I am forever grateful for this opportunity to experience first-hand, this worldwide fellowship.

Impression – An International Structure Addresses COVID-19

General Service Office—Spain

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The global pandemic has unexpectedly shaken us and has made the Board of Trustees work hard on on-line groups. In Spain, electronic groups did not exist or, if there were any, they were few. To deal with this, the WSO provided us with the Electronic AI-Anon Meeting Guidelines. We also contacted structures in other countries to share experiences about how to address Traditions being broken. Both literature sales and contributions (Seventh Tradition) have dropped considerably as the groups were closed and the Area Assemblies were canceled.

This has been a frustrating year because all scheduled activities had to be suspended: The Board of Trustees, Conference, Service Seminar, and the 57-year celebration of AI-Anon in Spain. The doors of Spain’s GSO were closed for 70 days. Although both the Director and the administrative staff worked from their homes to answer telephone calls and emails, no literature could be provided. We’ve had to recognize that, thanks to new technology, we’ve been able to hold online meetings which allowed us to have meetings between Delegates and Trustees. At the same time, this tested our ability to adapt to changes and new technologies. Our International Delegate represented us virtually at the IAGSM. Likewise, our Director is in contact with the South American GSOs at the RIASA 2021 planning meetings. We’re very grateful to the WSO for the support they’ve offered us, as we’ve had to do “an accelerated course of adaptation to the situation” and their experience, in many fields, has been of great help to us.

Due to the government’s security measures, our XXXIII Conference could not be held in-person. This was very disappointing, particularly because this year we were celebrating 40 years (1980-2020) as a GSO. Due to these restrictions, the Board of Trustees decided to hold a hybrid meeting for two and a half days. The Board, which was present in person, met virtually with the Delegates to provide the 2020 financial report and the 2020 proposed budget. The outgoing Trustees retired and the résumés of the possible new members of the Board were read for later voting. Delegates who were finishing their service had the opportunity to say goodbye.

During this time we haven’t been able to carry out face-to-face public outreach events, but we continue to pass on our message to professionals, who are experts in addiction, nursing, social work, etc. through our newsletter. Every year two professionals give their opinions about how AI-Anon can help families and friends living with the disease of alcoholism. We’ve also been able to conduct interviews with local radio stations, over the phone, as well as with the print media. For those people who cannot find a group near them, live in isolation, or physically cannot attend a face-to-face group, we have created an online group that is part of the GSO.

This has been a year of overcoming critical situations, putting the Al-Anon program into practice at all times—especially by practicing the slogan “Just for Today”—to continue transmitting the hope that everything, sooner or later, will return to life. Normality and groups will open and welcome those who need to recover from the effects of a loved one’s alcoholism, and when that day comes, we must be ready to pass on Al-Anon’s message of experience, strength, and hope so it continues to reach the many people who need us and who do not yet know us.

Each of us, because we practice the principles of the program in all our affairs, has been personally affected in some way by our situation. As we have said, many groups have had to close their face-to-face meetings and hold them online. This, at an economic level, also affects the GSO since we do not know if the Seventh Tradition is being put into practice. We trust that when this ends (“This Too Shall Pass”) all groups will resume their activities and life will normalize. In the meantime, we entrust ourselves to the Higher Power to help us have serenity, strength, and hope to accept what is happening to us; to have the courage and wisdom to begin to repair the consequences; and to “Let Go and Let God” with trust and thanks for the gifts we’ve received, and the new opportunities for growth, as members, as servants, and as a service structure.

We are grateful to the World Service Office for entrusting us with the development of this very special topic, in this very special year, which tests our serenity, recovery, and ability to overcome a crisis of this magnitude.

Facilitate Access to Our History

Marsha W., Director of Programs

Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals (Retired)

Joe T., Archivist

Yadi McCoy, Training & Project Specialist (Non-member)

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To increase the efficacy of the cloud-based archival software, the Training & Project Specialist focused on reconfiguration of the Archives folder structure. This is an ongoing process. Organizations such as A.A. were consulted to ensure the most comprehensive and user-friendly categorization and retrieval of Al-Anon documents for years to come.

Recruit, Grow, and Retain Staff

Vali F., Executive Director

Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies

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In 2020, WSO Staff turnover was 18%¹. Significant reductions in the overall WSO revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic meant delays in filling open positions. Additionally, annual merit or cost of living increases could not be awarded. A smaller revised budget, combined with reduced literature sales and call volumes during the peak of the lockdowns, led to employee furloughs and layoffs. Remaining Staff responded with enormous generosity, filling the gaps left as the WSO operated at 80% Staff capacity for most of the year.

At the mid-year, we bade farewell to the Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals, the last employee who worked at the WSO with our cofounder Lois W., who left the WSO after 33 years to enjoy retirement. In the latter part of the year, four new Staff were hired to fill critical roles, including the Human Resources vacancy. Positions also evolved throughout the year to reflect the changing needs of the WSO, including the creation of a new Training and Project Specialist position to replace the Administrative Assistant (Spanish). This new position was created in response to an increasing and ongoing need for technical training of our Staff and Volunteers. Another new position, Associate Director—Administration and Strategies was created to consolidate Administration Team (Human Resources, Legal, Events and Special Projects) management responsibilities into one role. This position, which also has ownership of the annual Strategic Plan Strategy development process, was filled early in the year.

Necessity being the mother of invention—or desperation being the key to recovery—resource constraints and turnover in the Receptionist role led to a re-examination of needs in that area. Evaluating the data on call transfers, Staff realized 65% of calls answered by reception were transferred to one of three teams—Customer Service, Group Services, and AFG Records—and member experience could be enhanced through automated call processing. Automation, in turn, would free up Staff time to focus on other critical responsibilities, such as answering the toll-free meeting line. Staff researched technology that would provide cost-efficient alternatives while maintaining WSO standards of service to the fellowship. A simply configured, automated reception phone system was implemented to achieve WSO goals. Members calling the WSO can now reach the Team they need directly, or if they prefer, can speak to a live person.

Thus, the new Office Assistant (Spanish) position was created. WSO Meeting Line Operators participated in a series of focus groups and their feedback led the Staff Management Team (SMT) to support increased coverage during the busiest hours (12:00-2:00PM) on a consistent basis.

A Task Force was charged with updating the content of the WSO Employee Manual. The new version, which underwent a thorough legal review, was approved at the October Board meeting before being distributed to Staff. The new Manual includes a gender-neutral Dress Code—which was defined by another Staff Task Force, a more generous Leave of Absence Policy, a pet policy for visitors and Staff, and a revised Time Off policy.

At the close of the 2020 Performance Year, the Directors' Team resolved to overhaul the WSO performance evaluation process in time for the 2021 mid-year reviews. Definition of the revised process was still underway at year end; however, two components were completed. The Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) developed an updated set of WSO organizational values, and all Staff were trained on setting goals that are business relevant and achievable.

¹ Note: The turnover percentage for 2020 is not comparable to previous years' calculations as the WSO Human Resources Staff members applied an industry-standard calculation method beginning this year.

Manage Operations

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Karen Wolff, Software Engineer (Non-member)

Michael Rodriguez, Building and Office Manager (Non-member)

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Improved Effectiveness with Technology

WSO Online Store Upgrade

This year we continued to leverage investment approved by the Board of Trustees as part of 2019 Strategic Plan initiatives to license the WSO database (iMIS) automation module:

- Automated email confirmations for contributions, *The Forum* subscriptions, and literature orders sent to the WSO whenever an email address is on file. This process provides more immediate feedback to the fellowship when these transactions are recorded.
- Automated follow-up with groups which members have reported as not meeting via the al-anon.org meeting search. This process improves the accuracy of the meeting information provided to those seeking help on our al-anon.org website.

In preparation for completing the WSO Online Store Upgrade Strategy, Staff created a Request for Proposal (RFP) to select a vendor. Staff evaluated RFP responses from vendors, including the iMIS reseller which had been supporting the WSO for many years. Staff selected a new vendor, positioning the WSO to better meet the expanding needs of the fellowship, and upgraded to the latest iMIS software version. This effort provides the best possible platform upon which to build the redesigned trilingual online store as part of the carryover Strategy in the upcoming year.

WSO Staff Well-Being and Safety

During the past year expanded operational measures were implemented to increase the safety and well-being of the Staff and visitors to the WSO. To minimize the possibility of exposure to COVID-19, the WSO was closed to non-employees in March and WSO tours were suspended until further notice. Only essential contractors and employee candidates have been allowed access to the premises since that time. Signage has been posted at all entrances directing deliveries to our Shipping and Receiving Team. Staff and visitors continue to adhere to a strict surface and area sanitizing schedule as well as a hazard assessment of all work areas.

Our Financials

Manage Our Budget & Financials

Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

Mary Davis, Accounting Manager (Non-member)

Cindy K., Treasurer of AFG, Inc. (Trustee)

Cathy T., Treasurer of AFG, Inc. (Trustee)

Cindy M., Treasurer of AFG, Inc. (Trustee)

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During the pandemic, the WSO saw a dramatic decrease of literature sales primarily due to the Literature Distribution Centers being closed. Literature sales historically make up 59% of our total revenue but were only 31% in 2020. With sales falling well below 50% of traditional levels, a Special Appeal went out to the fellowship. Through their overwhelming response, member contributions totaled \$3,295,721 which accounted for 56% of WSO revenue for 2020. This amount exceeded totals received in any previous year and exceeded literature sales for the first time since 1954.

As a result of the enormous member support, the WSO was able to continue to provide essential services, complete the launch of the Mobile App, and begin the online store upgrade during the pandemic. The Board of Trustees was able to approve refunding to Areas a total of \$96,023 in WSC equalized expense payments, after deducting the Delegates' portion of those minimal expenses involved in hosting the 2020 virtual/hybrid WSC. Consistent with our principle of self-support, the WSO cut expenses by \$635,000 based on the original Budget. Salary expense—through furloughs, layoffs, and a wage freeze; Board and Executive Committee travel; and Staff training were all reduced or eliminated to meet the challenge created by the pandemic.

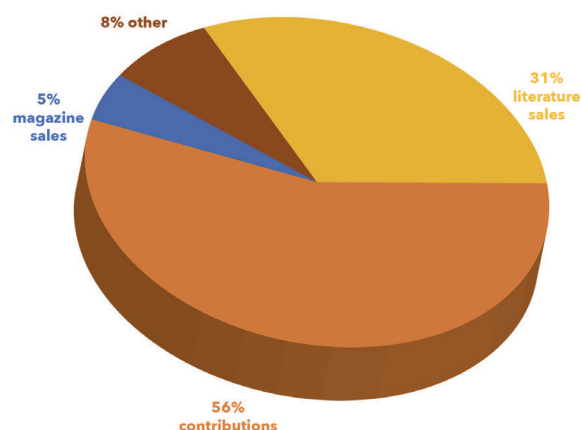
Through the members' strong support and careful fiscal management overseen by the Finance Committee, the WSO was able to close the year with a surplus rather than the significant deficit projected during the initial lockdowns.

Al-Anon's operating funds come from three main funding sources: revenues from literature sales, contributions, and other revenue. WSO expenses totaled \$4,920,000 in 2020. More than 68% went directly towards achieving the Mission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The supporting services included in general and administrative expenses provided customer service, shipping, and financial support to maintain operations.

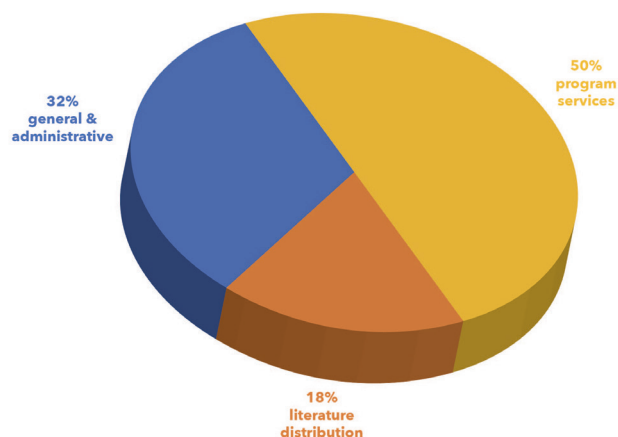
Note: The complete audited financial statements of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters Inc. for fiscal year 2020 may be obtained online at www.al-anon.org.

Statements of Financial Position	2020	2019	2018
Total Assets (in thousands)	\$11,833	\$11,060	\$9,833
Liabilities and Net Assets			
Total liabilities	\$1,333	\$1,531	\$1,387
Net Assets without donor restrictions	\$10,500	\$9,529	\$8,446
Total liabilities and net assets	\$11,833	\$11,060	\$9,833
Operating revenue (in thousands)	2020	2019	2018
Literature sales, net	\$1,847	\$2,914	\$3,194
Contributions	3,295	2,187	1,953
Magazine sales	292	275	258
Other income, net	458	1,247	(211)
Total operating revenue	\$5,892	\$6,623	\$5,194
Operating expenses (in thousands)	2020	2019	2018
Program services	\$2,484	\$2,865	\$2,731
Literature distribution	866	839	860
General & administrative	1,571	1,837	1,804
Total operating expenses	\$4,921	\$5,541	\$5,395

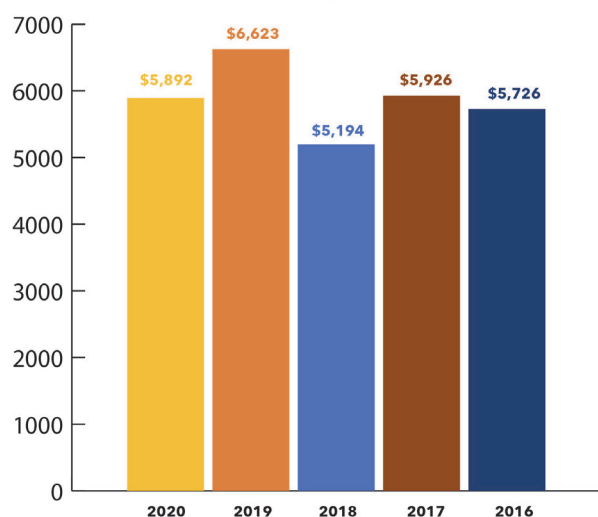
Operating revenue



Functional Expenses



Five Year Revenue (in the thousands)



Our Progress & Plans

Strategic Plan

2020 Strategies Update

Staff Strategic Leadership Team

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A new Strategic Plan for AFG, Inc. was developed in 2018. WSO Volunteers and Staff committed to ensuring the Strategic Plan was more than a list of activities to complete, becoming instead the means to achieve the envisioned future of AFG, Inc. With it, the WSO would establish a long-term vision that could be realized over time by executing a series of relatively short-term actions. Strategic planning in 2018 led to Strategic Plan initiatives (Strategies) in 2019 and 2020.

In October 2019, the Board of Trustees approved the Staff Leadership Team (SLT) recommended Strategies for 2020—subject to Preliminary Budget approval. The 2020 Strategies, which included some carryover Strategies from 2019, were:

Goal: Members

- Expanding accessibility and content availability through development, implementation, and support of the Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app (see *Impression – Making History with the Mobile App*)
- Upgrading the WSO online store technology to improve member usability and provide trilingual access to literature (see WSO Online Store Upgrade)
- Enhancing trilingual communication by expanding access to Spanish and French language content—including Mobile App premium content member sharings, contracting with freelance translators to increase capacity, and estimating the translation backlog for completion in future years
- Increasing the number of international groups registered with the WSO and listed on the al-anon.org meeting search
- Strengthening understanding of membership eligibility to help ensure Al-Anon groups remain welcoming to all

Goal: Public

- Understanding and increasing knowledge of AFG, Inc. responsibilities for addressing trademark and copyright infringements and addressing violations (see Copyright and Trademark Protection on the Internet)
- Increasing WSO Staff and Volunteers knowledge of how other recovery organizations successfully attract and retain a more diverse membership (see Competitive Analysis Project)

Goal: Organization

- Engaging in conversations with the Policy Committee and Board of Trustees as to how electronic meetings might be incorporated into the World Service Conference and international service structures (see Electronic Meetings)
- Evaluating options for improving membership access to other language CAL across the globe

As described throughout the Annual Report, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Staff focus and capacity in 2020. Despite its constraints, Staff and Volunteers together were able to achieve progress on all committed Strategies. Some Strategies started later than initially planned—such as the online store upgrade which was deferred until after the initial Mobile App release. Other Strategies were refined mid-year—such as enhanced translation plans which shifted from the backlog to Mobile App premium content. SLT met with the Executive Committee in its Board delegated role of Strategic Plan execution oversight to review and gain approval for changes to the Strategies. SLT provided Strategic updates to the Board at its quarterly meetings.

Despite the pandemic and its impacts, WSO Volunteers and Staff are grateful to report the efforts made in 2020 continue to progress the goals they set together in 2018 to ensure the vibrancy of the Strategic Plan.

Impression – Making History with the Mobile App

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

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When the joint Board of Trustee, Executive Committee, and WSO Staff Leadership Team brainstormed the idea of developing a mobile app to move Al-Anon towards providing universal access to our program, I was both excited and terrified. Terrified because introducing a mobile app is a big deal—not only have members have been asking for a mobile app, but we also wanted to attract younger members to our program. There is a lot riding on the success of a mobile app. Excited because developing an app offers many possibilities to help people around the world find recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.

As we published our apps in the app stores on August 12, 2020, I held my breath. Was it going to work, would it be well received, or was it going to be a flop? Only time would tell, and I had to reassure myself that whatever was going to happen would happen and we would take it “One Day At A Time.” We learned a lot those first few weeks about technical issues that need to be resolved. But above all, we learned that the mobile app *was* fulfilling a need, as early meetings reported a high number of newcomers and emails from members in countries where recovery programs are considered illegal. Now, they were able to find recovery without the fear of persecution.

We are truly a global organization and the historic launch of the Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app just months before we celebrate our 70th anniversary brings us closer together. It prepares us to be accessible to anyone, anywhere. Now anytime someone reaches out for help and downloads the mobile app, they are given a great, big, digital Al-Anon hug.

2021 Plans for the AFG, Inc. Envisioned Future

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

Norm W., Chairperson of the Envisioned Future Work Group

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To understand Al-Anon’s plans for 2021 and beyond, it is necessary to briefly review AFG, Inc’s Strategic Plan. The foundation of the Strategic Plan is Al-Anon’s Core Purpose, its Mission Statement, and Core Values. In Al-Anon’s Envisioned Future, the Strategic Plan anticipates where AFG, Inc can be in 15 years. To plan for this, Goals and Objectives are created. In 2018, the Board revised and fine-tuned the Mission Statement, Core Purpose, Envisioned Future, and Goals and Objectives. The Board and WSO Staff play different roles in the Strategic Plan. The Board is responsible for the “what,”—the Strategic direction of the organization, and the Staff is responsible for the “how,”—the Strategies and action plans to accomplish the Goals and Objectives that make our Envisioned Future a reality. Goals carry a projected timeframe of 3-5 years, Objectives 2-3 years, and Strategies 1-2 years.

At the January 2020 Board Meeting, the Board selected Objectives, and the Staff began creating Strategies to effectuate, in 2021. At the April 2020 Board meeting the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) presented Board members with 12 Strategies. Conceptual approval was given to four of the Strategies. At the October 2020 Board Meeting, the Staff advised the Board that it would not be able to accomplish all selected Objectives, due to the need to perform normal ongoing critical programs and services, ongoing 2021 Operations (e.g., member survey and development of the 2022-2025 *Service Manual*), and work carried over from the 2020 Strategies—including the Al-Anon Family Groups mobile app. The Board then prioritized the Objectives they wanted Staff to concentrate on, based on the Staff's recommendations and available resources. The 2021 Strategies, created by Staff, and approved by the Board, are designed to:

- Increase the number of professionals referring clients to Al-Anon.
- Use information gained in the recently completed Competitive Analysis regarding how other similar organizations reduce the effects of bias, to develop our own Strategies to assist AFG, Inc. in addressing similar issues.
- Evaluate what the barriers are to international structures attending the World Service Conference.

As part of the Board's responsibility for the Strategic direction of Al-Anon Family Groups, at the October 2020 Board Meeting, the Board also began prioritizing the Strategic Plan Objectives for 2022. This timeline allows Staff sufficient time to create Strategies and gain Board approval on priorities before establishing budget implications of the proposed Strategies for the following year.

Among the factors discussed by the Board in prioritizing strategic Objectives were shifting demographics, evolving technology, multiple cultures and generations, transformations in how members and the public receive information, and new digital competencies. The Board considered developing trends (e.g., reduction in face-to-face meetings, growth in international meetings, the increase of participation from Spanish- and French-speaking members in electronic meetings, continued development of the Al-Anon mobile app, AFG, Inc's continuing financial dependence on sale of literature, the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, and many others).

Incorporating the Strategic Planning process initiated in 2018, the Board also considered for each Objective:

- "Impact"—the breadth of importance, how essential it is
- "Consequence"
- "Depth of importance"—how directly linked it is to Al-Anon's Mission and Core Purpose
- "Immediacy"—how important it is to accomplish now
- Return on financial and Staff time investment—which offers the greatest return

In 2020, the Board of Trustees continued its commitment to being more of a thinking, and less of a doing, Board, striving to focus 80% of our work on forward-thinking and planning for the future. In essence, the Trustees are working to become a more visionary, non-decisional Board. In 2019, the Envisioned Future Work Group (EFWG) came into being. Its purpose is:

The Envisioned Future Work Group of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a visionary Work Group that supports the Board of Trustees in its role of world service leadership. With a focus on foresight, the Work Group stimulates future-minded, strategic thinking and is committed to advancing Al-Anon's Mission.

In order to effectuate its purpose, the EFWG's duties include:

Future Trends: Provides Trustees with information about future trends as they relate to the Board's role of governance and the future viability of AFG, Inc.

Environmental Scanning: Helps the Board understand the fluctuating environment in which Al-Anon is operating by bringing future-focused information for discussion about social and cultural issues that may affect not-for-profit organizations

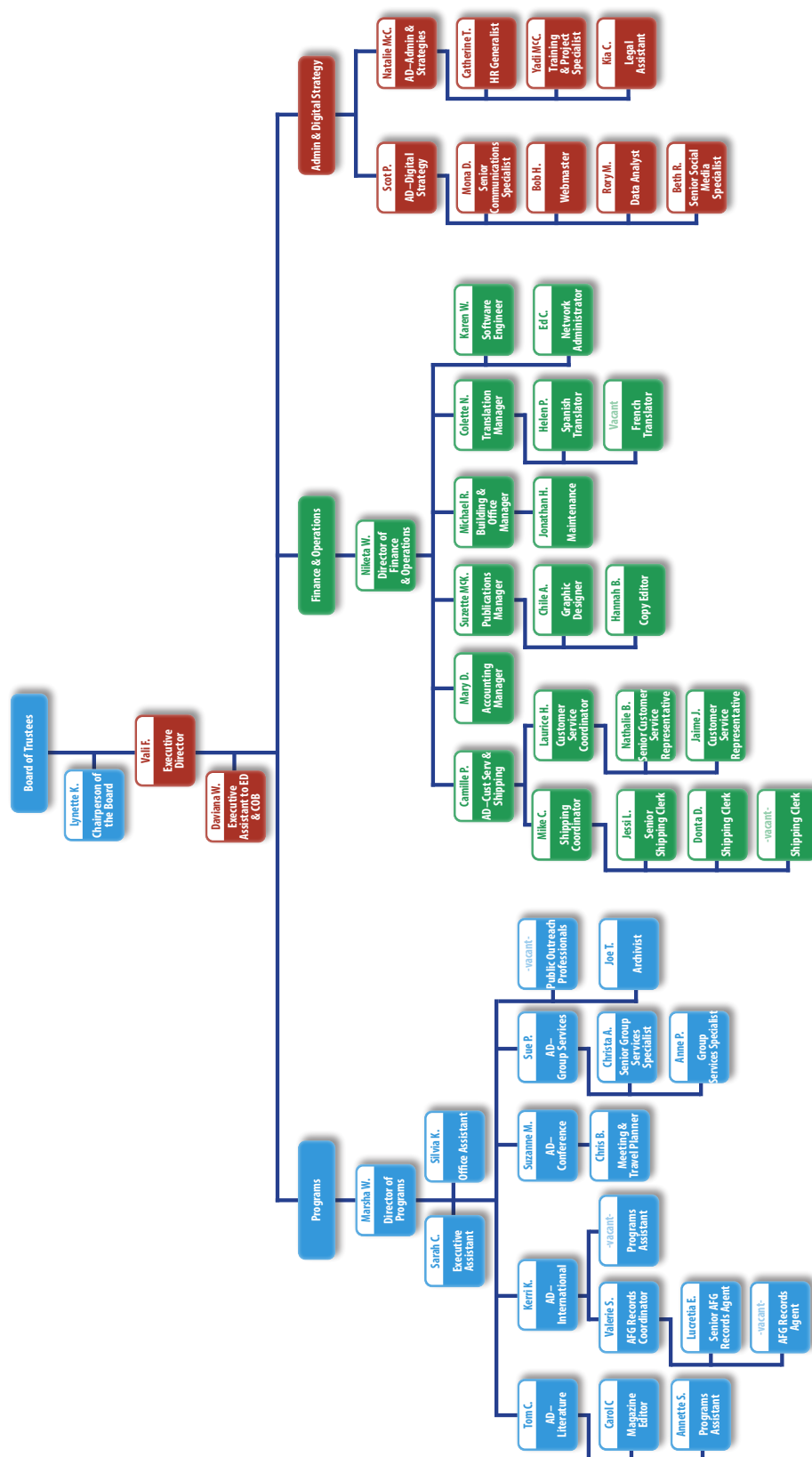
Generative Discussions: Leads the Board of Trustees in open-ended, non-directed discussions, focusing on issues related to AFG, Inc.'s Mission Statement and spiritual principles.

Visionary Discussions: Guides the Board in focusing on the future by planning discussions/presentations that engage Board members in visionary discussions.

Consistent with its goal to lead the Board in having visionary discussions on future oriented topics, in 2020, the EFWG prepared topics for Board discussion:

- How do we as a Board exercise vision to meet our Concept Nine obligation to assume primary leadership for worldwide Al-Anon, into the future?
- The Board's Duty of Foresight, Bill Wilson's essay "Leadership" which appears in the descriptive text of Concept Nine, 2018-2021 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* version two (2) (P-24/27).
- How to develop specific plans for navigating Al-Anon through the current crisis?
- The changes the Board envisions in Al-Anon following the pandemic.
- How we can guide and support our fellowship through those changes into the future?
- What changes would improve us as an organization in the future?
- What are the future trends and outcomes affecting our decisions today and in the future?

Organization Chart



Confidential - Property of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Board of Trustees Motions

Gail G., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

Lynette K., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees

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The Board, in its legal, financial or oversight capacities, acted:

- to approve the 2020 Preliminary Budget as presented.
- to approve the 2020 Strategic Initiatives be funded as special projects from the Reserve Fund in the amount \$68,160.
- to approve the 2020 World Service Conference Agenda Topics as presented.
- to approve the wording of the proposed motion to the World Service Conference (WSC): *Starting in 2021, the annual selection of Regional Committee on Trustee (RCT) Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson for each Region participating in the Regional Trustee process will be completed by web conferencing format prior to the World Service Conference.*
- to authorize the World Service Office (WSO) to establish an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service recertification and training program (“WSO AMIAS Program”) for all World Service Office (WSO) Staff members who may be required to work with teenagers in a capacity representing Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.), including voting members of the World Service Conference (WSC), Administrative Staff and WSO Staff whose roles involve guiding Areas within the WSC Structure as relates to Alateen
The WSO AMIAS Program shall minimally comply with the Minimum Safety and Behavior Requirements stipulated in the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees.
- to discontinue the position of Trustee Board Liaison to the *Forum* Advisory Editorial Committee (FEAC) effective after the Annual Board Meeting in 2020
- to discontinue the position of Trustee Board Liaison to the Public Outreach Committee effective after the Annual Board Meeting in 2020.
- to discontinue the position of Trustee Board Liaison to the Literature Committee effective after the Annual Board Meeting in 2020.
- to eliminate the Delegate questions in the Chairperson of the Board (COB) Letter.
- to implement the following format for the 2020 World Service Conference:
Conduct an abbreviated virtual conference—pertaining to only critical Board matters—the week of April 20, 2020 prior to the Annual Board meeting and conduct the majority of agenda items via AFG Connects or postpone them to the 2021 WSC.
- to approve in the case of cancellation or virtualization of the 2020 World Service Conference that equalized expenses be refunded only if the current net Conference expense for the WSC can be maintained. Any refund to be allocated on the basis of the amount contributed.
- to approve postponing the deadline for Areas to complete and submit all updates related to their Area Alateen Recertification process from June 15, 2020 to August 15, 2020.
- to recommend to the World Service Conference the creation of an annual longitudinal study.
- to approve the Revised 2020 Budget as presented.

- to hold the 2020 IAGSM virtually, using the AFG Connects platform to host online discussions, over a period of time sufficient to allow Delegates to participate across all time zones.
- to modify the Article VI (6) – Officers of the Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to include a new paragraph:
6. A Trustee cannot serve more than three one-year terms in a particular Board Officer position.
- to change the Nominating process for all eligible Trustees to submit a general Board Officer résumé even if not standing for a particular Board position.
- To require the Board of Trustees and At-Large Executive Committee members to participate in WSO AMIAS Program training starting the 2021 recertification year.
- to approve the 2021 World Service Conference theme: Moving Forward with Unity, Courage, and Perseverance.
- to accept the Audit Committee's recommendation to accept the 2020 Engagement letter, from Dixon Hughes Goodman, LLP, to conduct an audit of the financial position of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc as of December 31, 2020.
- to cancel the (2021 WSC) New York hotel contract as soon as is advisable under the basis of the Impossibility clause or, if not possible, to postpone the New York contract including full celebration to 2022.
- to approve changes to the Conference Procedures on pages three, nine, and pages 12-13 as presented.
- to adopt and implement the Board Officer Skills and Résumé Form, with the three skills-based questions and one additional question as to why the Trustee had chosen not to apply, for eligible Trustees not standing for Board Officer.
- to adopt and implement the Trustee and At-Large Executive Committee résumé forms with the new requirements regarding WSO AMIAS Program starting with the 2021-2022 service term.
- to remove the floor nomination process from the selection process of Board Officers, At-Large members of the Executive Committee, and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee Motions

Debbie G., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

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The following actions were approved by the Executive Committee, presented to, and approved by the Board of Trustees:

- to approve At-Large members for the Audit Committee, *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee, Literature Committee, and Public Outreach Committee
- to implement that LDCs may return any item currently in print that has not since been revised which was ordered from the WSO between October 2019 and March 2020 provided that the return is in its original, unopened shipping container and does not exceed whichever is the lesser amount of \$3,500 or 5% of the total inventory ordered by that LDC within that timeframe.
The WSO will not accept returns for any inventory purchased by LDCs before October 2019 or starting April 2020 until such time as the policy for LDC returns can be reevaluated.
- to approve the shift in (Strategic Plan Strategy) Members M01-2 Enhance Trilingual Communication Strategy 2020 resource plans from reducing the backlog of untranslated Spanish and French Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to translation of content necessary to support Mobile App premium content.
- to approve the AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Employee Manual as amended.
- to confirm the WSO Staff AMIAS Certification Program meets the Board of Trustees' requirement to comply with the minimum safety and behavior requirements stipulated in the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees.
- to accept revised Guidelines for the Conference Leadership Team, Compensation Committee, Electronic Meeting Work Group, Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, Pension Committee, and Policy Committee.
- to approve that the 2022 IAGSM be held in London, UK with the goal of arranging a similar event for a similar timeframe and a similar cost as that agreed to for 2020.
- to approve the updates recommended by SPIRiT to the AFG Connects Usage Policy (formerly Code of Conduct).
- to accept the recommendation from SPIRiT that WSO Staff update the format of the *AI-Anon Newcomers Packet* (K-10) to reflect the content selected for development of a "Newcomers Brochure" by the 1997 Literature Committee, with necessary revisions to reflect current versions of the component pieces of CAL.

APPENDIX I

BYLAWS

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. (referred to herein as the "Corporation" or "World Service Office").

1. As used in these BYLAWS:

- a) Al-Anon group means a group of relatives and friends of alcoholics formed 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 formed and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
- c) World Service Conference means the body described in Article XI of these BYLAWS.
- d) Trustee means a person who is or becomes a Trustee pursuant to these BYLAWS.

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;
 - d) Provide information about the locations of Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - e) Assist in the formation of new Al-Anon and Alateen groups
 - f) Publish literature of interest to Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - g) Bring Al-Anon and Alateen to the attention of the public;
 - h) Provide information and other assistance to persons for whom regular attendance at meetings of Al-Anon or Alateen groups is difficult or impractical;
 - i) Establish and maintain national and international public outreach; and
 - j) Establish and maintain policies for the work of the World Service Office.

ARTICLE III ~ MEMBERS

1. The Corporation shall have no members.

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 BYLAWS, 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 with the following classifications: Trustees at Large, Regional Trustees, Lifetime Trustees, and a Sustaining Trustee, as those terms are described in these BYLAWS. The actual number of Trustees and the composition of the Board among the classifications described herein shall be as established by the Board from time to time with guidance from 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. 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. 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. The Areas within the Regions participate in recommending Trustee candidates through the Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) to the Nominating Committee.
5. The Nominating Committee is charged with submitting nominations for Trustees to replace those whose terms will expire. The Nominating Committee shall provide written notice of such nominations to the Board of Trustees no later than thirty days prior to the annual meeting at which the vote is to be taken on such nominees. In the event a nominee for Trustee 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 Al-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 Al-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 at a meeting of

the Board of Trustees by a majority vote. Any such person appointed by the Board of Trustees to fill such vacancy shall serve 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. However, a Trustee who has served two terms but has not served a full six years may be eligible for appointment by the Board in accordance with Article IV, Paragraph 9.
11. Any member of the Board of Trustees may be removed for just cause by a vote of at least two-thirds of the Board of Trustees at a regular or special meeting. Just cause may be found to exist by the Board of Trustees based on: i) the member's absence from two or more meetings during any twelve-month period without the Board of Trustees' prior approval; ii) a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment violation involving the member; or iii) the member's failure to adhere to any written policies and procedures of the Board of Trustees.

Upon a finding of just cause by the Board of Trustees, the Secretary of the Corporation shall send written notice of the proposed removal to such member at his or her last recorded address on file with the Corporation at least fifteen (15) days before final action is taken on such removal. At any time after such finding by the Board of Trustees, the President or Secretary, or both, may meet with the member to discuss the Board of Trustees' finding concerning such member.

The member may submit a written statement to the Board of Trustees regarding the proposed removal not less than five (5) days before any final action on the proposed removal. Prior to any final action, the Board of Trustees shall review any such statement submitted and determine the mitigating factors, if any, contained therein on the proposed removal before the final vote by the Board of Trustees to remove such member. Upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the Board of Trustees to take final action on such removal at a regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees, the removal will become effective as of the date of the meeting, or at such later date as may be determined by the Board of Trustees at such meeting, and the member shall be notified in writing by the Board of Trustees of its decision.

12. Trustees shall serve without remuneration, but they shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.

ARTICLE V ~ POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees shall control and manage the affairs of the Corporation.
2. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, 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 BYLAWS;
 - g) To appoint and remove an Executive Director and a Director of Finance and Operations 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 of Trustees. 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 the Board of Trustees from among the Trustees for a term of one year each.
3. The President shall also serve as the Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Chairperson), and the Vice President shall also serve as the Vice Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Vice Chairperson).
4. Any Officer vacancy may be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.
5. Any Officer may be removed from office by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Board of Trustees.
6. A Trustee cannot serve more than three one-year terms in a particular Board Officer position.

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 the 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 Corporation and shall serve in an ex officio capacity on all committees, except the Audit Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property Management, and in that capacity may participate in committee discussions but not vote on any committee matters.
2. **THE VICE PRESIDENT.** The Vice President shall assist the President, as assigned or requested, in the performance of the President's duties and/or the exercise of his/her powers. In event of the President's absence or disability, the Vice President shall promptly call a special meeting of the Board of Trustees for the purpose of determining whether the President's absence or disability prevents the President from serving in that office. The Board of Trustees shall make such determination in its sole discretion. In the event the Board of Trustees determines that the President is unable to serve because of such absence or disability, the office shall be deemed vacant and the Board of Trustees shall elect a successor. Until such time as a successor is elected, the Vice President shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President.
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 subject to such directions as may be given by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer may be an authorized signatory for the 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 serve in an ex officio capacity on all committees, except the Audit Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property Management, and in that capacity may participate in committee discussions but not vote on any committee matters.
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 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 within twenty-four hours of the closing of 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 in January, April, July and October at a time and place designated by the Chairperson.
3. 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.
4. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Chairperson at any time. In addition, the Chairperson shall call a special meeting as soon as reasonably practical 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. The written application hereunder may be made by electronic means.
5. Notice of each meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be given to the Trustees at least fourteen days before such meeting if given to the Trustees by postal mail or forty-eight hours if given by electronic means. Notice shall be deemed given when sent, and if by mail, when deposited in the United States mail with postage prepaid thereon. Trustees may waive notice of meetings by executing appropriate waivers.
6. A majority of the Trustees present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at such meeting. Each Trustee 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.

7. Interim actions of the Board of Trustees may be taken without a meeting with the unanimous consent of the Trustees. Such consent may be written or electronic. Interim actions shall be formally approved at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.
8. 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 or more meetings per year for reasons deemed inadequate by the Board shall be subject to dismissal by the Board as described in Article IV.11. For the purposes of this paragraph, the Board of Trustees' meetings during the World Service Conference shall be deemed to be one meeting.
9. 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 a 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.

ARTICLE XI ~ WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

1. The World Service Conference consists of the following persons:
 - a) State, provincial and territorial Delegates from the United States, Canada, and Bermuda.;
 - b) Trustees of the Corporation;
 - c) AI-Anon members who serve as Directors and Associate Directors of the World Service Office;
 - d) The persons comprising the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees; and
 - e) 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 AI-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 the nomination of a new slate of Trustees. In this regard the annual election of Trustees shall be subject to the understanding of each Trustee, that his resignation may be requested by the Conference, subject to the further understanding that prior to any such resignation becoming effective each Trustee shall be requested 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 Executive Committee is comprised of eight members. The Board of Trustees shall elect four members at each annual meeting. The elected members of the Executive Committee shall include three AI-Anon members, preferably not Trustees (“At-Large Members of the Executive Committee”), and an AI-Anon member of the administrative staff of the World Service Office. In addition, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee, and the Executive Director of the World Service Office serve as members and the President as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee by virtue of their positions. The Executive Committee shall meet at such times as the Board of Trustees may direct and shall have the power to manage the affairs of the World Service Office 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 Chairperson of the Executive Committee serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees and in that capacity may participate in Board discussions but may not vote on any Board matters.

The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee in that person's absence.

Any At-Large Member of the Executive Committee unable to attend any meeting of the Executive Committee shall give advance notice of the absence to the Chairperson or Secretary of the Corporation and indicate the reason for the absence. Any At-Large Member of the Executive Committee who fails to attend two or more meetings per year for reasons deemed inadequate by the Executive Committee shall be subject to dismissal. In the event the Executive Committee determines that dismissal of an At-Large Member is appropriate for this reason, it shall recommend to the Board of Trustees such At-Large Member's dismissal. The Board of Trustees may then take action to dismiss such At-Large Member and appoint a new At-Large Member to serve until the next annual meeting.

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 Director of Finance and Operations, the Chairperson of the Finance

Committee, and three AI-Anon members who are not Trustees nor At-Large Members of the Executive Committee. 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 AI-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 AI-Anon members, who are not Trustees nor At-Large Members of the Executive Committee, 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 nor At-Large Members of the Executive Committee, 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.

Any vacancy in the office of an At-Large Member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management which occurs in any year between the annual meeting and the next World Service Conference may be filled until the next annual meeting by another AI-Anon member appointed to that position by the Board of Trustees.

3. **FINANCE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Finance Committee consisting of the following members: The Treasurer of the Corporation, the President of the Corporation, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, one other Trustee designated by the President, and the Executive Director. The Director of Finance and Operations shall serve in an ex officio capacity, and in that capacity may participate in committee discussions but not vote on any committee matters. 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, At-Large Members of the Executive Committee, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff. The Chairperson of the Policy Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The Policy Committee shall consider AI-Anon policies particularly in relation to AI-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 current Trustees to serve as the members of the Nominating Committee. Whenever possible, at least one of the members must be from Canada.

6. The Board of Trustees may form and 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 BYLAWS in whole or in part by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

Amended: April 9, 2021

To Be Presented to the 2021 World Service Conference

APPENDIX II

World Service Handbook

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 varied experience with the procedures that many groups and individuals shared with those entrusted with this revision.

Suggested Procedures

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 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 Service

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 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, or non-geographically based grouping 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 “Composition of the Conference” section.)

Assembly Center The city location where the Assembly meets.

Caucus A meeting of GRs from a given District convened at the Assembly for the purpose of electing a District Representative, if none has been elected in his home District prior to the Assembly.

Director of Finance & Operations 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 operations.

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 Al-Anon members responsible for Al-Anon service-related activities in their respective structure.

Group Representative (GR) A member, preferably with a basic understanding of the Al-Anon program, who is elected, subject to the policy on Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous, in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *Service Manual*, for a three-year term by his group (Al-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 Assembly.

Liaison Member A member appointed or elected by the local Al-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

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 Al-Anon members with a broad understanding of our program who concentrate on one of the elements of our fellowship, such as Alateen or literature. (See “How WSO Is Structured” and “Concept Eleven.”)

World Services Services rendered to groups all over the world by our World Service Office (WSO), also known as Al-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 Al-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. Directors and Associate Directors who fill certain Staff roles are voting members of the World Service Conference and therefore must be Al-Anon members.

World Service Conference (WSC) Al-Anon’s annual business meeting, which is attended by all Delegates from the World Service Conference Structure, representatives from other countries, members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, voting members of the World Service Office (WSO) administrative Staff, and other WSO personnel. The Conference provides guidance to the WSO on service matters that are brought to its attention

World Service Conference Structure A service structure composed of state, provincial, and territorial areas of the United States, ~~and~~ Canada, ~~and~~ Bermuda; and non-geographically based groupings with a Board of Trustees and other elected Al-Anon members responsible for Al-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 Al-Anon worldwide. He brings the views and the spirit of worldwide Al-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.

Links of Service

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, 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. Al-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 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

Group Representative (GR)

A GR is a vital link in the continuing function, growth, and unity of world Al-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 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* ("World Service Handbook," "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work," "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service," and the "Digest of Al-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 Al-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:

- **The GR and the Group** The GR should be allowed regular time at group meetings to convey information concerning Al-Anon in his District, Area, and world service affairs. The GR has the responsibility of seeing that correspondence from the World Service Office is reaching his group. If 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 phone listing, emails, 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 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 Al-Anon picture.

- **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 Al-Anon world service and the purpose and work of the Conference. This will enable him to explain these to the group.
- **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 Al-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 to 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 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.*¹
- **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.
- **The GR and Appeal Letters to individual members** The GR should be mindful of Al-Anon and Alateen's principle of self- support. 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 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.

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.

¹ * When the World Service Office structure changed in 2002, some Areas chose a combination of these Coordinators and named them Public Outreach.

- 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 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 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 on activities within his District.
- To notify the Area Group Records Coordinator of group changes, new groups, or disbanded groups.
- To communicate with the local Al-Anon Information Service (AIS/Intergroup/LDC).
- To help groups understand Al-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 at al-anon.org including the Service Manual 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-location](#) 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 elements of good chairmanship.

Duties of the Chairman are:

- To conduct all Assemblies and Area World Service Committee meetings during his three-year term of office.
- To ask the Secretary to send out notices of all meetings to the Delegate, the Alternate, Area officers, and all voting members.
- 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.
- 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.
- To call meetings of the Area World Service Committee, preferably at regular intervals, to discuss Area matters.
- To call 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:

- 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.
- To send out all notices of Assembly and Area World Service Committee meetings.
- To attend to all regular secretarial work and take minutes of all meetings.

- 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.
- To call the roll of all voting members at Assemblies.
- 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 WSO.

Treasurer

Duties of the Treasurer are:

- To handle all Assembly collections and funds.
- To prepare 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 Delegates' Equalized Expense.
- To forward to the WSO, before January 1, the Delegate's Equalized Expense amount.
- To issue receipts for any contributions received.
- To pay all bills for approved expenditures. It is a sound business practice to have four members authorized to sign checks; of these, two signatures should be required on every check.
- To make 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 Al-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.

The duties of the World Service Delegate are:

In general

- To bring the Area's viewpoint on matters affecting the entire fellowship to the Conference and to return with a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide.
- To be the bridge of understanding that links the groups in the Area with world Al-Anon to help them continue to function in unity.
- To be the servant of Al-Anon as a whole.

At the World Service Conference

- To attend all sessions of the Conference in order to consider the issues brought up, to cast an informed vote, and thus help to guide the Board of Trustees in making decisions.
- To acquire a clear and comprehensive picture of our world-wide fellowship to bring back to the groups in the Area.
- 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.
- To bring issues of concern to him and the Area to the attention of the Conference either through the Conference Leadership Team or directly from the floor in an open Conference session.
- To learn facts and figures; and, even more importantly, to gain a vision of this great movement in action.
- To learn what our World Service Office has meant to Al-Anon in the past and what it, with the guidance of the Conference, will mean to the future welfare of the fellowship.

In the Area

- To give 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.
- To meet 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 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. Thus, through the guidance of the Delegates, it becomes possible for the WSO to take any necessary action during the year.
- To serve as a contact for public inquires within his Area if the Coordinator is unavailable.
- To send items to be considered for the Conference agenda to the WSO.
- To submit to the WSO no later than August 15 of the regional election year, either the Regional Trustee (RT) resume 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
- Assistant 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

Election of a Group Representative (GR) and an Alternate

The GR is elected by his group 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.

An AI-Anon or Alateen member who is also a member of A.A. is not eligible to serve as Alternate GR.

In a city where there is an AI-Anon Information Service (Intergroup), 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/location](#) of the next Assembly. In a new Area, the GR informs the temporary Chairman.

He becomes 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 WSC, 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 or~~ 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 AI-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 as follows:

- GRs follow their Area's registration process.
- A map [or definition](#) of the Area, with District boundaries indicated, is provided.
- Preparations are made and necessary [supplies-tools](#) are available for [closed-confidential](#) balloting.
- A means of tallying and displaying the voting results is available.
- All GRs have this “World Service Handbook” to guide them in the election procedure.
- AI-Anon members who are not GRs may be invited to assist in the election process.

Election Assembly Procedure

If and when the Area Assembly agrees 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 “At the District Level.”)

The Chairman:

- Points out ~~on using~~ the Area map or definition 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-confidential 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^{2*}

The Chairman asks the voting GRs 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 “Assembly Structure, Elections, Etc.” section.) Each group has one vote.

1. The Chairman asks each DR and others eligible, 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.
3. Names of all candidates for the position of Delegate are displayed.
4. Votes are cast. Candidates leave the room or meeting while votes are tallied and displayed.
5. In the spirit of substantial unanimity, the first candidate to receive a two-thirds vote is elected.
6. If no one has the required two-thirds vote after several ballots have been taken, the Chairman may suggest that the candidates with the largest percentage of votes remain on the ballot and the others withdraw.
7. Whether or not any names are withdrawn, another ballot is taken.
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. The first one ~~drawn-selected~~ becomes the Delegate. Alternatively, some Assemblies prefer to have a final ballot taken, in which case the candidate with the most votes becomes the Delegate.

^{2*} At the 1977 World Service Conference, it was voted that our Policy is clearly defined, that Al-Anon 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 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 the worldwide General Service Offices or evolving structures that look to the WSC for guidance.

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 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.

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.

Some Areas may elect the outgoing Delegate as Chairman of the Assembly. Other Areas use the Past Delegates' Conference experience by electing or appointing them to Area Coordinator or other Area service positions.

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.

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 WSO with a duplicate to the newly elected Secretary, giving contact information of the Delegate, the Alternate, officers, DRs and Area Coordinators.

District Meetings

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, sharing sessions for discussion of group and District matters, or program related social events. At regular intervals, meetings scheduled and chaired by the DR are held for such matters as:

- Discussing 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. (Refer to the respective Guidelines available on the Members' menu at al-anon.org.)
- Familiarizing groups, Information Services, and ~~local~~ service committees in the District with the wide variety of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) available for friends and families of alcoholics.
- Sharing with the fellowship worldwide by submitting articles or photographs to *The Forum*.
- Communicating the value of "Inside Al-Anon" found in *The Forum* as a sharing vehicle from the WSO to the groups.
- Raising money to support an ~~telephone~~ answering service, hosting platform fees, website or other means of outreach to members and potential members or to expand existing services.
- Ensuring that all groups are aware of how to make contributions to the District, AIS, Area, and WSO.
- Encouraging 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.)
- 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 topics of interest to the groups.

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, The Forum, or Newsletter) and liaison members from any Information Services (Intergroups). The chairman of Al-Anon activities at an A.A. area convention or chairman of Area Al-Anon and Alateen conventions should also participate in 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 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 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. He is responsible to the Area and submits reports to the Area Chairman.

All Al-Anon members, except those who are also members of A.A., are eligible to serve as an Area Coordinator. (Guidelines for Area Coordinators are available under the Members' menu at al-anon.org.)

Assemblies

The purpose of the 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 and group discussions
- Panel or open mic discussions
- Videos (for a list of current available 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

(Refer to other sections of the Handbook for more complete descriptions of Job Duties, Responsibilities, etc.)

Assembly Structure, Elections, Etc.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 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.
- After the Delegate's third Conference, an Assembly is called to elect a Delegate and officers whose terms begin the following January 1.
- The Chairman, elected for a three-year term, calls and conducts all subsequent Assemblies and Area committee meetings.
- In Areas that have not as yet formed Districts, the Delegate and officers are elected from among the GRs.
- The Area World Service Committee meets whenever need arises to develop the Assembly agenda and to discuss Area affairs.
- A member may not hold an Area Assembly officer position in multiple Areas at the same time

Communications

- Upon receiving the results of an election, the World Service Office sends a letter of welcome to each new Delegate, with the date of the next 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.

- 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.
- 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

- 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

At the Group Level

In gratitude and recognition of the principle of self-support, Al-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, and registration fees.
- Each group supports the District activities.
- 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

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, and registration fees. (When the DR is also a GR, the Assembly expenses may be fully or partially paid by the group he represents.)

Each District 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

Funds for the budget may be raised by contributions from groups in the District or special events such as District workshops and potlucks.

At the Area Level

Areas plan for their financial responsibilities with an understanding and appreciation of the principle of self-support.

The Chairman 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 and vote on the Area budget.

The Area Treasurer collects group, District, and individual contributions and issues receipts in return. The Area Treasurer disburses the collected funds as the budgeted financial plan and Area policy allows.

A typical Area budget might include:

- Rent or fees for the Area service meetings ~~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

A check to cover the Delegate's Equalized Expenses is sent by the Area Treasurer to the WSO before January 1.

By March 15, the WSO sends each Delegate a check for transportation and incidental expenses. This amount may be more or less than the Equalized Expense payment sent by the Area Treasurer. (See also "Treasurer.")

World Service Conference

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 "The A.A. 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 AI-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 AI-Anon and Alateen GRs) at all world service levels: District Representative, Assembly officer, and Delegate.

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, 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 Elected Delegates 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.

How It Works

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 the Conference, all Delegates are invited to serve on a thought force, task force, or one of the 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.

The following are typical Conference activities in addition to those outlined in Article 11 of the AI-Anon World Service Conference Charter:

- Conference members—Delegates, WSO Staff, Board of Trustees, and Executive Committee members—interact and discuss matters affecting AI-Anon as a whole.
- Conference members of thought forces, task forces, and work groups make relevant presentations.
- Delegates have an opportunity to discuss successes and concerns with each other.

Conference Agenda

The Conference agenda is derived from input through the Delegates, Conference Leadership Team (CLT), and the Board of Trustees. In addition, suggestions made to the CLT by any Conference member and the membership-at-large are carefully considered.

A typical agenda includes:

- 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 Area 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 Al-Anon as a whole, to be presented for Conference discussion and deliberation.
- Workshops and meetings on service functions; how returning Delegates can best serve their Areas.
- Matters concerning Conference procedure, structure, and function.

How the Conference Is Financed

General Conference Expenses The cost of the Conference 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 Al-Anon.

The general Conference expenses include the salary of Staff to handle the daily affairs of the Conference while in session; the cost of holding the Conference sessions; the cost of WSO members' (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 are different for each Delegate, a formula was developed to provide a fair equalization of expenses: The Delegate's Equalized Expense 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 Conference supplies. This Full Amount is reported to the Board of Trustees. A substantial portion of 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 is paid out of AFG Inc.'s General Fund. The Conference Leadership Team informs each Area that this Equalized Expense is to be sent to the WSO by the Area Treasurer before January 1. The Delegates' travel and incidental expenses are defrayed by these funds, regardless of distance traveled.

In gratitude, many Areas choose to contribute additional funds up to or more than the Full Amount.

Conference Procedures

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 a registered group in this Assembly be invited to elect a temporary, 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 "Temporary Chairman") The temporary Chairman notifies our WSO of his election.

The WSO sends each registered group in the Area the name and address-contact information of the temporary Chairman and a copy of or link to 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-location 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-location 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.

A state, province, or-territory, or non-geographically based grouping 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 Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter). A state, province, or-territory, or non-geographically based grouping may divide only once, as reaffirmed at the 1982 World Service Conference.

World Service Office

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 WSO Does

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 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 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 material worldwide, past and present.
- Maintains the al-anon.org website.
- Maintains and protects copyrights and trademarks.

How WSO Is Structured

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 committees³ are Literature, Admissions/ Handbook⁴, 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

³ *Committees having permanent status, sometimes referred to as standing committees.

⁴ **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.

committees, which list committee composition and responsibilities, are available under the Members' menu at al-anon.org.

Ad hoc committees may be established for specific purposes when the need arises.

The WSO Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all the members of the Board of Trustees, the members of the Executive Committee, and the voting 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 meets monthly and is the administrator of the World Service Office. The Board of Trustees has granted it legal authority to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the World Service Office. Its eight members, one of whom serves as Chairperson, are appointed by the Trustees. They include the Executive Director; one voting member of the administrative Staff; the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees; three Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees, elected by the Board of Trustees who contribute experience in specific fields and situations; and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, who serves as an ex-officio member.

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 in 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 résumés are submitted directly to the WSO. 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 résumés are presented to their respective Areas and the qualifying chosen résumé is submitted to the WSO by the Area Delegate. Members of each WSC Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) 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 nominees to be presented to the Conference for an expression of traditional approval. These nominees may then be elected by the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting.

The Trustees, along with the members of the Executive Committee, direct the business operations of the World Service Office, observing the Bylaws 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:

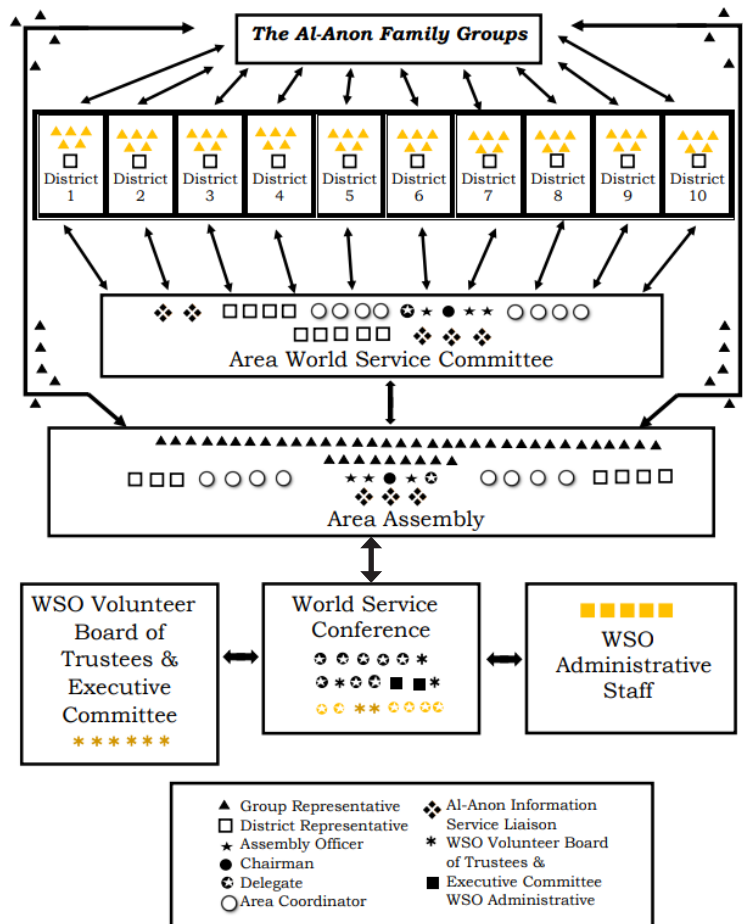
- Establish and maintain the policies of the World Service Office.
- Control its property and finances.
- Make long-range plans.
- Authorize expenditures.
- Appoint the Executive Committee and other committees.
- Appoint an Executive Director and Director of Finance & Operations for the World Service 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.)

Chart: World Service Conference Structure



The Area World Service Committee may also include Coordinators of special services such as Alateen, Archives, Public Outreach (PI, CPC, and Institutions), Newsletter Editors, *The Forum*, etc., and liaison members (from local Information Service centers or Intergroups).

2021 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Jeri W.
Lynette K.
Nancy S.
Norm W.
Rosie M.
Teri M.

Regional Trustees

Cindy M., US Southwest
Diane B., US South Central
Gail G., Canada West
Jean L., US North Central
J.P. M., US Southeast
Mary W., US Northwest
Marianne B., US Northeast
Thérèse S., Canada East

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Debbie G., Chairperson
Vali F., Executive Director
Lynette K., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)
Cindy M., Treasurer
Marianne B., Policy Chairperson
Karen W-P., Member at Large
Terry F., Member at Large
Natalie McC., Staff member

NON-TRUSTEE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON

Kay R., Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson**

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Vali F., Executive Director
Niketa Williams, Director of Finance & Operations*
Marsha W., Director of Programs
Kerri K., Associate Director—International
Natalie McC., Associate Director—Administration & Strategies
Scot P., Associate Director—Brand Communications**
Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services
Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference
Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Britt M., Germany**
Debora MacD., Peru**
Elvira M., Paraguay**
Guy D., France**
Helen G., Australia**
Madelein O'B., South Africa**
Mario B., Italy**
Mário C., Portugal**
Mariana C., Ecuador**

Miriam L., Spain**
Silvia P., Argentina**
Trish B., UK & Eire**

*Non-member, non-voting

**Non-voting

AREA DELEGATES

Mary Jo Y., Alabama/Northwest Florida
Linette L., Alaska
Sharon F., Alberta/Northwest Territories
Claudia M., Arizona
DeLynn H., Arkansas
Lynn B., British Columbia/Yukon
John M., California North
Tim P., California South
Rick G., Colorado
Marcia M., Connecticut
Matt W., Delaware
Evelyn T., Florida North
Diane B., Florida South
Barbara T., Georgia
Penni S., Hawaii
Nancy Jo W., Idaho
Gregg R., Illinois North
Joellyn P., Illinois South
Maureen H., Indiana
Katy P., Iowa
Terry R., Kansas
Linda C., Kentucky
Tammy M., Louisiana
Rae L., Maine
Brenda L., Manitoba/Northwest Ontario
Wally C., Maritime Provinces
Phil B., Maryland/District of Columbia
Irene T., Massachusetts
Kristine G., Michigan
Fred H., Minnesota North
Kit S., Minnesota South
Jennifer M., Mississippi
Lori H., Missouri
Carol S., Montana
Margaret R., Nebraska
Robin P., Nevada
Noah P., New Hampshire
Donna S., New Jersey
Clara C., New Mexico/El Paso
Emily K., New York North
Emily D-C., New York South
Maxine D., Newfoundland/Labrador Alternate Delegate
Anu B., North Carolina/Bermuda
Sheri S., North Dakota
Ann F., Ohio Alternate Delegate
Samantha M., Oklahoma
Bill H., Ontario North
Gwen D., Ontario South

Katie W., Oregon
Lori F., Pennsylvania
Maria V., Puerto Rico
Johanne S., Quebec East
Hélène A., Quebec West
Barbara H., Rhode Island Past Delegate
Joy F., Saskatchewan
Bob C., South Carolina
Sue R., South Dakota
Karla K., Tennessee
Mattie T., Texas East
Peggy D., Texas West
Heather M., Utah
Joanne P., Vermont
Terry W., Virginia
Kathy D., Washington
Melissa F., West Virginia
Susan B., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Sharon B., Wyoming



AI-Anon International

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