



Al-Anon General Services Second International Meeting (Trial)

*Theme: Sharing Experience,
Strength and Hope Worldwide*

*September 20-23, 1982
New York*

Contents

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Welcome and Invocation</i> | 2 | Myrna H. and Hank G. |
| <i>Opening Luncheon</i> | 2 | Lois W. and Henrietta S. |
| <i>A Close Look at WSO</i> | 3 | Staff Presentations |
| <i>Trusted Servants Worldwide</i> | 13 | Delegates' Talks |
| <i>Service Workshop</i> | 18 | Encouraging Members |
| <i>Keeping in Touch</i> | 19 | Communication Between GSOs |
| <i>Literature Workshop</i> | 20 | Sale and Distribution |
| <i>Meeting Again</i> | 21 | Future International GSM |
| <i>Spiritual Sharing</i> | 22 | Personal Stories |
| <i>Motions</i> | 23 | From Second Al-Anon International GSM |
| <i>General Service Offices</i> | 24 | Addresses |

Statement of Purpose

The Purpose of the General Services Meeting is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through their Delegates. It will attempt to encourage the growth of a sound service structure while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of Al-Anon Traditions. It can also represent an expression of a worldwide group conscience.

Ultimately this leads to the primary purpose of Al-Anon as a whole—to seek the best way to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics amidst cultural and language differences.

Welcome

This gathering brings to mind the Biblical quotation, "There is a right time for everything, a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to harvest... a time to be quiet and time to speak up."

This seems to be the appropriate time in the history of Al-Anon for us to gather here from 21 countries. The Higher Power has guided our fellowship up to this point through those willing to be "trusted servants."

When thinking about the work ahead of us at this meeting I am reminded of the story of American tourists travelling in the Orient. During their tour, they visited a local area where rugs were being created. Each carpet was designed by a master designer and the weavers worked all day to create the designs laid out for them. An American tourist asked, "What happens when you make a mistake?" The weavers explained that the master weaver is called in and he changes the design so that the mistake is woven into the fabric.

All of us here are like the weavers, creating the fabric for Al-Anon today. If we should make a mistake in the future, we know our Master Designer will be able to weave it into the fabric, so we don't have to be afraid. We are all in good hands.

Myrna H., General Secretary, WSO

Opening Luncheon

Hank G., Chairman of the Board of Trustees, gave the invocation.

I choose to call my Higher Power, God, and ask those who care to join with me in these thoughts:

God, thank you for having brought all of us together in an effort to further develop a worldwide Al-Anon. Breathe into our fellowship an ever-increasing strength. In all things great and small show us Your guidance and help us through caring to serve in every way the needs of our beloved fellowship.

Give us a renewed sense of dedication as we meet, so that we can carry the word to all of those who need our helping hand.

Lois W.

Addressing the Delegates, Al-Anon's co-founder expressed her tremendous joy at seeing this gathering. "I see Al-Anon well on its way to joining people from all over the world in fellowship. At the beginning this was one of our ultimate goals. Bill never had a small idea for AA and I must have caught that attitude from him for Al-Anon."

Lois explained how the potential for growth of our fellowship is five times that of AA's, since five people are affected by the alcoholism of one person.

In a world that may seem pessimistic, her feelings are of hope. "God has worked through Al-Anon, Alateen and AA. If we stay open to Him we will continue to have reason to be optimistic."

Henrietta S.

Our first General Secretary told the Delegates of her sense of fulfillment at seeing them all together. "From my earliest day working at the office, it was my joy to correspond with members overseas."

In looking back upon the growth of Al-Anon, Henrietta singled out a newspaper article by syndicated columnist, Ann Landers, which brought in 6,500 inquiries in 1962. When it was reprinted in 1972, 10,000 letters "rained on the WSO." All staff members took those letters home so that each one would receive an appropriate response. Back in those early days the office staff was small and "it is still a joy to feel the inspiration we received from working with each other."

"Years ago it took a great deal of courage for me to volunteer at the office" but, she continued, "over these last 30 years I have had the feeling of community and come out of my shell." She encouraged the Delegates not to be afraid and to speak their minds at this meeting and to share their experiences.

A CLOSE LOOK AT WSO Staff Presentations

General Secretary

Myrna H.

The World Service Office is reflective not directive. It reflects what the fellowship wants. It does not pronounce edicts.

We are not a judicial body, but a service office with a serious responsibility to conduct business efficiently, while spiritual principles are used in all our affairs.

We are accountable to Al-Anon through the World Service Conference and Staff members take an active role in the Conference.

The Administrative Staff consists of the General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, the Controller, The FORUM Editor, the Office Supervisor and Staff Secretaries. The term support staff refers to all personnel who carry out the daily functions in group records, filing, shipping, accounting, clerical and the switchboard operator.

All Staff Secretaries are Al-Anon members and in addition to their regular assignment, they answer problem letters which are reviewed at our weekly staff meetings. Our responses are a group conscience on any problem.

Our Board of Trustees oversees the entire operation of the WSO. They also propose policies which affect the fellowship as a whole. They meet quarterly, while the Executive Committee meets monthly and acts as an interim arm of the Board, overseeing daily operations.

In keeping with Al-Anon Traditions, we do not personally do Twelfth-Step work during working days at the WSO, but our job is to make it easier for others to do Twelfth-Step work. For example, we just published a new leaflet "Getting in Touch with Al-Anon." It contains a list of all Information Services worldwide, and can be used when members are trying to introduce professionals in the local community to Al-Anon. We recently produced a film-strip on service, another example of how we reach out to help members help each other.

The system under which our World Service Office operates is based on checks and balances, and we try to act in concert with each other to accomplish the important job of carrying the Al-Anon message to all in need.



Cecelia, Japan

● *The U.S. and Canada is so very well developed, I would like to ask Henrietta, our first General Secretary, about your beginnings and how you set priorities?*

Henrietta, WSO

I can see how some of you may find the experience of the WSO overwhelming. It wasn't always like this. We started from small beginnings. Growth requires that you draw people to you. From our very early days Lois, our co-founder, appointed committee chairmen to assume responsibility. Ann B., co-founder, was the first Institutions Chairman, while other volunteers became Literature Chairman and Public Information Chairman.

Long-range planning was part of Lois's direction to chairmen and their committees back in 1959 and 1960. She asked them to think through plans for at least the next two years.

It would be impossible to go over the past 25 years in a few minutes, but the Japanese situation, in some ways, is similar to the Spanish when Al-Anon was just emerging in Central and South America. There is the same great family loyalty among the Spanish-speaking people. It was considered disloyal for a wife to go to a meeting and reveal the hurt caused by alcoholism. Now, Al-Anon groups are meeting in 21 Spanish-speaking countries. It takes time. If you can just attract a few people to this philosophy, in the end you will be helping thousands.

Judy, U.K. and Eire

Looking through the histories of each Al-Anon structure in the different countries in our brochure, may give those in new structures ideas on where to start.

Leonella, Italy

● *Is the General Secretary chosen from the Areas? How long do members on committees serve?*

Myrna, WSO

The secretary of each Area is separate from the General Secretary. At the WSO, the General Secretary is hired by the Board of Trustees. At the Area level, the secretary is selected from the volunteer GRs.

Sandy, WSO

It is not unusual for members to serve longer than the customary three years until there is a Conference. Other GSOs may be better able to provide an answer to rotation and how service workers are selected.

Gen, Norway

We in Norway are new and have written to Australia and the U.K. and Eire and received a great deal of help. We are using their Handbooks as guides.

Sally, U.K. and Eire

At our Information Service the members serving on the Board are appointed by other members.

Salvador, Mexico

Our General Secretary is a member from the city where the office is. The Board of Trustees are members with at least two years service in Al-Anon. All our office workers live in the city. There are two ways of serving: through the structure GRs and DRs, or by volunteering at the General Service Office.

Beryl, Australia

The General Service Office workers have to be members other than the GRs and DRs. They are not the same people working in the office. At Conference you meet the people who run the office, but you need people in the office who are outside the structure.

Your General Secretary would not be from your District Representatives.

Salvador, Mexico

●How do you find people to serve on the Board of Trustees?

Myrna, WSO

In addition to the Sustaining Trustees, the General Secretary, The FORUM Editor and the Honorary Trustees, Lois and Ann our co-founders, the Board of Trustees is served by In-town and Regional Trustees. In-town Trustees are selected by a nominating committee composed of Board members. Nominees submit a resume of their years in Al-Anon, their service work and any business experience they could bring to the Board. The Nominating Committee brings these names to the Conference and then they are conformed by the Board.

Regional Trustees are members nominated by Areas and the Delegates from the Area vote at the Conference. The United States and Canada is divided into six Regions and at each Conference there is an election for two Regional Trustees. The new Regional Trustees are informed of their election by phone and they are approved at the next Board meeting. This is all spelled out in the Concepts.

Deputy General Secretary

Sandy F.

My first responsibility is to act as a backup for the General Secretary. What I try to do is to be fully aware of everything that's going on in the office so business activities will be carried on if the General Secretary is out of the office. Attending the Executive Committee meetings and the Board keeps me in touch with important activities and decisions. I periodically go through all of the General Secretary's correspondence.

Inside Al-Anon, our bimonthly newsletter, started three years ago and I don't know if any of the other countries reached this point in their development, but I suspect many of you will some day decide to separate your recovery magazine from the service structure aspects of the program. *Inside Al-Anon* has a committee, like every other committee in the office and as Editor I work with them. Five members work on this committee and help write the personnel stories and other articles. We meet before the next issue comes out just to discuss what it will contain and review the contents of the last issue. A question that may come to your mind is what do you bring to the committee and what do you handle alone. I bring any new feature, any new type of article.

The Policy Committee is another committee I should explain. Page 12 of the Policy Digest tells about the composition of the committee. Its Chairman is appointed by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees. The members of the Board, the Chairmen of all the WSO Committees, the Editor of The FORUM, the Archivist, the Al-Anon Staff Secretaries are all on this committee. At present we have 31 people serving. This large body of members discusses whether or not a new policy is needed. When we get a problem letter, we bring it to our Staff meeting, and we try to see if we can refer to the Policy Digest for an answer. Sometimes we must bring the matter to the Policy Committee and write a new policy based on these letters. All policies are approved by the Board of Trustees and finally the World Service Conference.

Some General Service Offices vote at their Conferences on the policies our World Service Conference has adopted. This procedure is something you may want to consider.

Judy, U.K. and Eire

Here is an example of how we adapt World Service Conference Policy. Two years ago when the sponsorship of Alateen was brought up at our Conference, the Conference Members felt they did not want a dual member (one in AA and Al-Anon) sponsoring Alateen. We discussed it and decided to review it in a year. The following year, still of the same mind, the Conference voted not to accept the WSO's policy on this and so it is noted in our Policy Digest that this policy does not apply to groups in the U.K. and Eire.

Beryl, Australia

We decided at the Conference a few years back that we would accept the WSO's policies in their totality. Occasionally a policy comes out that we really don't agree with, but it has been our experience that you, yourselves, with

your tremendous number of groups to act as your group conscience, do correct this. We do not have a sufficient number of groups to do such a thing. When it's policy, I do believe, it needs to apply all over the world and so we do not review WSO policies, we just accept them. Sometimes some of our members will not agree, but it is a bit like the situation in your own Conference when it makes a decision not all groups agree with, it must be worked on. I believe we are very much safeguarded by the large number of groups at the World Service Conference, and we do not have to worry.

The FORUM, Editor

Hildegard M.V.

The FORUM is the voice of the fellowship. Through it Al-Anon and Alateen speak. I love hearing the Statement of Purpose of the International GSM, because it is the same purpose The FORUM has, worldwide unity through sharing. We say that Al-Anon and The FORUM are like a come-as-you-are party. Someone calls you up and invites you to come to a party and you have to come wearing whatever you are wearing when they phoned you. Al-Anon is like that, we don't have to get dressed up, we don't have to put on an act or a false face, we come as we are. In the pages of The FORUM, members speak as they do at a meeting, of their experiences and their strength and their hope. The FORUM is also part of group conscience since it offers the opportunity for individuals and groups to be heard on important issues of policy.

I talked to someone earlier on how you handle new publications in your country. The FORUM also started small. A small mimeographed sheet that Lois wrote was the first to be sent to all the groups. We were very fortunate to have Margaret D. as Editor of The FORUM for 20 years sharing in the magazine. I feel very fortunate to have been chosen in 1978, after Louise M., to be The FORUM Editor.

What is important is not the Editor, but the group conscience. We have a committee, The FORUM Committee, that reviews everything that goes into the magazine. We can't just have one person speaking or deciding. The FORUM Committee reads everything that is going to be printed. This is done regularly. We meet every month and go over the letters and articles that have been mailed in. The basis on which we choose articles is, "Can this article be helpful to someone out there who is reading it?"

The letters received keep The FORUM informed on what's going on in the groups. We are sensitively in tune with current topics. We can hear through the letters what the areas of concern are. When it became more apparent that the parents were concerned about their adolescent, grown-up children, we were able to have more and more articles about that. We are able to deal with children of alcoholics who find that although they might not be living with alcoholism now, they were affected by it while growing up. Letters that are sent to The FORUM as articles can be made into FORUM reprints and developed into a piece of literature. We can move quickly to what are the concerns of the members throughout the country and the world.

Participation and cooperation are essential to produce a publication responsive to the needs of the fellowship.

We are so fortunate that there is acknowledgement and knowledge of our own magazine which we see in the volume of mail received by The FORUM. I'm very fortunate that I have such constructive people to work with on The FORUM Committee and Staff. It is our cooperation that is so important.

No matter how small or inexperienced your publication is, you can look forward to becoming a vital tool in the process of recovery for members. The growth of the fellowship in your country comes with observing the spiritual principles of democratic participation, unity of purpose and acknowledgement of our only authority, a loving God as He expresses Himself in our group conscience.

Controller

Richard Keilly

As Controller, I am a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees, the Executive and Budget Committees. The WSO has by design not vested the financial controls in any one individual. A system of checks and balances has been instituted so all financial plans and results have, at varying times, the approval of Budget and Executive Committees, the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference. In addition, our financial statements are audited annually by independent Certified Public Accountants, and finally, we are subject to government audits.

The first and probably most important part of our financial operations begins with the preparation of an annual budget. To be effective and useful, the budget must be a joint effort of many people. So, all departments must submit to the Budget Committee their plans for the coming year. The Budget Committee, the initial recipient of the financial information reviews, adjusts or supplies costs, if necessary. The Budget Committee consists of the Treasurer, Chairman of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, the General Secretary the Deputy General Secretary and the Controller.

After the cost of each objective or goal is estimated, income is projected. This is critical and great caution must be exercised not to be overly optimistic. A margin for error must be established. We have, therefore, been conservative in projecting income.

The budget must then be approved by the Board and the World Service Conference.

The second function of the budget is to provide a tool to monitor financial activities throughout the year. By comparing year-to-date results to the budget, we are alerted to any serious variations.

A budget is, of course, based on estimates and must not, therefore, be rigid. We adjust our budget at mid-year to reflect actual six-month results and projections for the balance of the year.

In addition to the Budget Committee, the Executive Committee also deals with finances. Meeting monthly and acting on the Board's behalf in the day-to-day operations, this Committee must approve all requests for increases to the existing budget. It also reviews a monthly report of income and our cash and investment positions. The Board of Trustees must review and approve the annual budget. The Board also receives a complete set of financial statements at their quarterly meeting. Major variances from

the budget must be explained in a report on these statements.

Finally, the World Service Conference must approve the annual audited financial statements and the annual budget. From this brief summary of the WSO's financial operations, you can see that a great number of people are involved in financial matters. We think this is vital and necessary for the fellowship in attaining its goals.

Gudrun, Germany

Our ratio of contributions to the sale of literature is not as good as that of the WSO and we think we can do better. We know we charge adequate prices for pamphlets.

Richard, WSO

You will have to analyze the amount of contributions received, divide that by the average number of groups to see what the contribution per group is. Before you draw any conclusions about the ratio of literature to contributions, you should know what the average contribution per group is. The average contribution for contributing groups in the U.S. and Canada is \$41.00 (not all groups contribute). Find out also what the average sale of literature per group is. Ours in the U.S. and Canada is about \$150.00. This may be used as your basis for comparison, however, we have no way of knowing whether or not it is realistic, for instance, our contributions may be less than we should reasonably expect.

Literature

Linda McF., Secretary

It is simple to explain my job as a writer. I write, and I write about the meaning of the Steps and the Traditions and how people use them to recover from the effects of someone else's drinking. I do not write what I think. I write what many people think; I try to put the group conscience on paper. The ideas for new material come from all over the world. Many letters suggest words for us to be saying and thoughts for us to consider.

I work with the Literature Committee, and as a group they help to choose the content of a new or revised work. I, and sometimes other writers, put the collected thoughts and ideas into an organized, clear and simple universal language of the heart, the Al-Anon language. When the material has been reviewed by the General Secretary, it goes back to the Committee for another look. Editing usually is by suggestion and the writer gets another chance to put the suggestions into print. Then the manuscripts go on to the Policy Committee where three members look to see that the Traditions are being followed.

The manuscripts move on to production. We must choose a print face, a format and a color. Everyone usually agrees about the type face and the number of pages. Usually, we disagree about the color. But we compromise.

While the Literature Committee does not decide how we produce a book or pamphlet, they do help establish the need for one. It is their recommendation to the Conference that helps to establish whether or not a new piece or a revision is needed. It is the job of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees to decide whether or not

there is enough money to spend on a new piece. There is never enough money, but sometimes we have to spend it to earn it.

Printing a new book is like having a baby. There is the coming together of males and females, gestation, labor and delivery. Because we recognize that YOU are Al-Anon and Alateen literature—it is your story—and we need your experience, strength and hope to print it—we are only the midwives. You can be the proud mamas and papas. We are trying to be careful with our words so that they will be easier to translate. Please, ask your members to consider sharing their experiences for our two newest pieces—one will be how members have used the Al-Anon program to come through difficulties like abuse and violence. Another will be on the spiritual nature of the program. Go ask members to help us produce these new babies. And please, watch what you say in your language. I do not want you to tell your groups that Linda said to go make babies.

Gudrun, Germany

• *For 15 years we have translated and were content, but we see that we are not selling as much literature as we would like to. We are looking for the reasons. Maybe it is because we are not part of the collective authorship that makes up Conference-Approved Literature. We are having difficulties introducing a Conference in Germany. One of our major problems is financial. Increasing our literature sales would help.*

If we had a part in the creation of the literature, sharing our experience with you would help, but we don't know how to do this. Is there a chance we can become partners in sharing our experiences?

Linda, WSO

What we are saying here today is that we want you as partners. Suffering from the effects of someone else's drinking is universal, a bruise is the same color under any skin.

By channeling your sharing through the WSO, we will be able to maintain unity. Ask your friends and acquaintances in Al-Anon to all share with us.

Carole, WSO

With the new Alateen book that's to be published soon, we've received letters from Alateens all over the world which have been incorporated into the text, but the fact that it is from another country is not mentioned. In our literature the spiritual part of anonymity is maintained by not indicating where material is from. Sharing from members in Germany are included in the book.

Hildegard, WSO

The FORUM works with the Literature Committee when material is being gathered for a new piece of literature. Our feelings and preceptions are the same because Al-Anon is truly the language of the heart, and The FORUM very much welcomes your sharing. By sending your experiences to The FORUM, you would be contributing in two ways: first to the sharing in the magazine and second, your story and ideas may be included in the next piece of literature.

Leonella, Italy

• *How will we send our sharing to you? Will we ask that the material come to our National Center or go directly to WSO?*

Linda, WSO

Since this idea of partnership is new, why don't you gather it at the National Office first and then send it on to us. In this way your General Service Office would have a chance to review it also.

Judy, U.K. and Eire

• *Since translations have to be reviewed and checked, we were wondering if English could be considered a foreign language? Our own Literature Committee reviews all material now after it is printed, but sometimes expressions are very American and have no meaning for us. Could we see drafts and suggest changes?*

Linda, WSO

We have been considering asking GSOs to review new pieces to insure the largest possible universal thinking.

You might consider a Literature Committee willing to review some of our new things and send us your comments. You would be full-fledged partners with responsibility and participation.

Henrietta, WSO

Any country where there is a Literature Committee or a translating team and they find something missing, perhaps they could write to the WSO and suggest additional material.

Archives

Margaret O'B., Secretary

Treasure what you have. Archives usually start out small, sometimes in a longtime member's home and proceeds from there. If any of you have any doubts about preserving the history of the fellowship in your country, I am sure they will soon be dispelled after listening to Lois and Henrietta share about the early days in Al-Anon.

My overall responsibility is gathering, organizing and preserving the documented and oral history of the Al-Anon Family Groups fellowship worldwide. This is separating fact from fiction. I am sure you have come across people or letters claiming to be the "first" of whatever; well we go by what is documented. My duty is maintaining the Archives Service as a presentable and orderly function of the World Service Office. We try to keep it neat, clean and current. Records come to me from within the services, such as previous year's backup on Policy Committee and the reason we came to a policy decision. Establishing the physical and intellectual control over the records in order to answer requests for research throughout the fellowship as well as in-house. Actually, my function is to put it away in an orderly manner and hopefully find it. We have been encouraging and guiding Areas to start their own archives locally because, as you know, we could not possibly have every single document put out by every single structure worldwide, and as was

pointed out here, we share in correspondence. We do not have guidelines as yet because we are reflective and not directive so we are waiting for input from the Areas that have started Archives locally. As Archivist, I have initiated correspondence with longtime members, getting them to put their history in writing or on a cassette tape.

We have a Committee which consists of a Chairman, three honorary members, Lois and Anne B. our co-founders, and Margaret D., first FORUM Editor and two in-town longtime members of Al-Anon.

We are ambitious and have lots of ideas for the future, depending upon priority and budget. We are considering a newsletter sharing with other archivists as they grow up locally. Underground storage, which is duplicating everything we have on microfiche and storing it underground, in case of a calamity at the WSO is also under consideration. I can't say enough about the importance of giving the Al-Anon member a sense of the past and not forgetting from whence we came—our heritage.

Judy, U.K. and Eire

• *Would the WSO Archivist be interested in seeing copies of our guidelines for all Standing Committees?*

Margaret, WSO

We would appreciate this material for our historical records and to pass on to smaller structures just beginning.

Alateen

Carole K., Secretary

A question that often comes to our office is, "What is an Alateen group?" An Alateen group consists of young people who can share their experiences with each other under the guidance of an Al-Anon member who is actively attending an Al-Anon group.

The Al-Anon member does not substitute Alateen for his or her home group. If an Al-Anon member is present with one Alateen person, they can have an Al-Anon meeting. Alateen is the sharing of young people with their peers and Al-Anon is for the sharing of all family members.

Many times when an Alateen group begins, it needs financial support, especially with the rent and the purchasing of literature. We do, however, encourage them to get on their own feet and take their responsibilities, as soon as possible. Moral support is very important. Recently I went to an Al-Anon activity where a year ago the topic for discussion was Al-Anon literature. Four hundred Al-Anon members came to the event. This year the topic was Alateen and only 75 Al-Anon members came. The Alateens ask, "Do Al-Anon members really care?" They do need Al-Anon support for fund-raising events, for workshops and for all the different functions they may hold.

Our priority at the WSO is the individual who writes to us. Barbara, my assistant, and I write personal letters sharing the Al-Anon program. We find the Information Services have the most accurate local information. Often the Alateen contact will go to college and forget to tell us. If there is no Alateen group available, we do direct them to the nearest Al-Anon group; they are eligible for Al-Anon. If there are no Al-Anon or Alateen meetings

available, then we offer the Loners' Service. As Alateen Staff Secretary, I rely heavily on the fellowship to help me. In August and December I write the Alateen Coordinators an informal letter sharing news from other coordinators and questions that I need help answering.

Our service is responsible for the publication *Alateen Talk*. Lately, we have been using worldwide sharings and if you can, encourage your Alateens and Sponsors to write to us, it would help. In one issue we had a sharing from London, England, a cartoon from a Spanish-speaking country, personal sharings from South Africa and Australia. We want Alateens to realize theirs is a worldwide fellowship.

Jean B. Switzerland

● *Al-Anon members do not accept that AAs can be a second sponsor of Alateen groups. What can we say to them?*

Carole, WSO

At one time AA took responsibility for sponsoring Alateen before Al-Anon did. Over the years this brought confusion to Alateens. Alateen is part of Al-Anon.

What we say now is: "Every Alateen group needs an active Al-Anon member as sponsor, an AA member may assist." There are groups that have only Al-Anon members sponsoring and that is up to the autonomy of the group.

Judy, U.K. and Eire

In our country Dual Members (members in both AA and Al-Anon) can co-sponsor but not be the only sponsor. We've found that AA members are more willing to allow their children to attend if there is an AA member assisting.

Conference

Helen G., Secretary

I feel privileged to be the Secretary of the Conference because not only is the assignment interesting and rewarding, but it gives me the opportunity to work with the greatest Committee members, my co-workers. The Conference Committee is composed of a volunteer Chairman, the Policy Committee Chairman, the General Secretary, The FORUM Editor, the Deputy General Secretary, all other Administrative Staff Secretaries and the Supervisor of the Spanish Services.

Three sub-committees function under the Conference Committee: Admissions, Agenda and Handbook, each of which has Delegate members appointed by the Conference Committee. I correspond with these Delegate members during the year on matters pertaining to their specific committee.

The full Conference Committee meets at least four times during the year, with a smaller interim committee meeting monthly when possible. The Conference theme is selected; Staff Secretaries report on the topics of their presentations which their Standing Committees will address at the World Service Conference—this usually ties in with the Conference theme. Other items are considered; and gradually the Conference agenda develops.

My primary responsibility as Conference Secretary is to coordinate the many details required in planning the annual World Service Conference so that it will function

smoothly and be informative and productive. As soon as one Conference ends, we start planning for the following year. The final agenda for the Conference in April needs to be completed in January in order to be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval at its January meeting.

One of the most rewarding duties I have is corresponding with the new Delegates, welcoming them and informing them of their appointments to serve on WSO Standing Committees during their three-year term of office. Each new Conference member is assigned a sponsor. All Conference members are kept informed of Conference activities as plans progress. The list of Conference topics plus background material, hotel reservation forms and other pertinent material is mailed to Conference members. Annual reports of the work accomplished during the year are sent well in advance. Areas are informed of the Equalized Expense contribution to send a World Service Delegate to the Conference. New Areas joining the Conference Structure are offered guidance.

Hotel considerations are also a part of the Conference Secretary's responsibility; this includes inspection of possible Conference sites, arrangements for meeting space, sleeping room reservations, selection of menus and other "behind-the-scene" details.

The Conference Committee has the responsibility, according to the Concepts, to prepare an informative program giving the Delegates an opportunity to present the needs of the groups to the WSO and a chance to reveal the extent of the work of the World Service Office to the groups through their Delegates.

Thelma, New Zealand

Years ago our structure was formed; it began with groups and jumped all the way to a Conference, because one member thought that was the best method to establish a structure, but we did not grow. We restructured according to the Handbook of the U.S. and Canada and Eire and Australia and formed a small committee to adapt a Handbook to the needs of New Zealand. Then we grew.

Institutions

Ann S., Secretary

The word institutions may have a bad connotation in some countries, however, the WSO has received numerous letters expressing the personal rewards members have experienced from involvement in this phase of service. Much of this is expressed through articles printed in the newsletter, *Al-Anon in Institutions*. A great deal of the contents of this tri-annual newsletter is gathered from members bringing Al-Anon to institutions throughout the world. Many of their shared experiences are extremely informative and can be put into use in many facilities by members worldwide. Without the members sharing, there could be no newsletter, so we encourage everyone to write to us. The Institutions Service at the WSO consists of myself and a secretary. Our Standing Committee includes a volunteer Chairman, volunteer in-town members, presently four, nine Area Delegate members, who are assigned by the Conference Secretary. The committee meets monthly and the Delegate members are kept informed through minutes and other correspondence. Communication with Institution Coordinators by phone calls and let-

ters is invaluable. We try to keep Delegates informed when professionals in their area express interest in bringing Al-Anon to their facility. The goal of the committee is to have an Institutions Group meeting wherever possible and necessary.

An Institutions Group is an Al-Anon/Alateen meeting using a simple format. Members usually come to a few meetings held at the institution and then move on to a home group. These meetings carry a message of hope to families of alcoholics and/or those confined to an institution because of someone else's drinking problem. They are held in hospitals, correctional institutions, courts, rehabilitation facilities, mental health services centers, juvenile homes, Veteran Administration Centers, alcoholism detox units, abused families' residences and outpatient clinics and penal institutions.

Closed meetings are for those considering membership. Open meetings are for professionals and others interested in learning about the Al-Anon program. A "Meeting on Wheels" is open to all, giving a brief presentation of an Al-Anon/Alateen meeting. All requests for group registration in an institution come to me. New groups are sent a coded registration form, Institutions Guidelines and other information about getting started. When the registration form is returned, they receive an Institutions Kit containing literature, the four service manuals and a World Directory for their area. They are also placed on the mailing list to receive the newsletter, *Al-Anon in Institutions*, which will be available by subscription in 1983.

In the past I have visited treatment facilities, learning how we can best cooperate in helping families in need of Al-Anon. It would help us to know what you are presently doing for Institution Groups in your country.

Lone Member Service *Ann S., Secretary*

The WSO took on the responsibility for our Lone Member Service about four years ago and at that time it was decided to include members who are homebound. The Alateen Secretary, the International Secretary and I, along with a volunteer Chairman, make up the committee. When people write and there is no group available in their area, they are invited to become a Lone Member. The registered Lone Member receives the *Loners' Letter Box* and other newsletters distributed from the WSO, along with a complimentary FORUM. *Loners' Letter Box* is produced every two months. This service to Loners' include members who do attend meetings regularly and correspond with Lone Members. They are referred to as Loner Sponsors and also register with us by writing and expressing a desire to be a sponsor. We maintain a special confidential mailing list for all Loners and Loner Sponsors. From this list they choose who they want to correspond with. It would help us here at the WSO to know how your structure is servicing the Lone Member.

Thelma, New Zealand

• *When is the Loners' membership terminated?*

Ann, WSO

We continually encourage Lone Members through Loners Letter Box and all publications to find another per-



son who needs the fellowship. Together they can start a group. When members write and tell us this has happened we take them off our Loners' list or when we receive return mail.

Jean, France

• *How are Loner Members registered? In France we have had problems with members visiting a Loner without an invitation.*

Ann, WSO

When we register Loners, we have a form that asks their permission to list them in our World Directory. This form explains that they are the contact for that area. Some longtime Lone Members may have been registered before this process was set up. Certainly if there is a problem, we can work together to rectify it.

Public Information *Susan H., Secretary*

Although I am an Al-Anon member for many years and I have worked for World Services for two years, I feel

most inadequate standing in front of you all. You have all pioneered the Public Information work for a long time and have a lot to tell me and I am here to learn from you. But I will share with you what we do at the WSO in Public Information. I enjoyed Henrietta's talk and I agree with her that Public Information is changing and we should develop new methods—ones that are more sophisticated. Our Public Information work is different than other services in this sense, that it touches on every other service. Basically, Public Information is getting the message of Al-Anon out to the general public. We do this by working with the Public Information Committee and my committee consists of the Chairman and Assistant Chairman, who is also the Chairman of the National Public Information Committee of Canada, plus four in-town members and five Delegate members in different areas in the United States and Canada. Everything my committee does must go through all of these people and at times this is a slow process, but time is important. The Twelve Concepts define our committee work and describes it as a critical assignment, a single large public blunder could cause many much suffering by turning new prospects away. Every real Public Information success attracts the families of alcoholics to Al-Anon. So, it is a very serious job. This year we produced two new 30-second Public Service announcements for television and now we are working on radio. We also produced an audio-visual slide presentation on Al-Anon's Service Structure entitled, "Getting Involved: A Look at Al-Anon Service Structure." It is exciting and challenging work.

Jean, France

- Are the TV spots shown in conjunction with AA?

Susan, WSO

The TV spots are produced solely by and for Al-Anon. We own them. AA does their own.

Alda, Brazil

- How can we use the audio-visual material?

Susan, WSO

Each country is encouraged to do translations of their own. We have a team of translators work on our TV spots which are in French and Spanish. You could possibly work on the audio-visual material in the same way you do a printed piece.

Regional Service Seminars

Susan H., Secretary

Regional Service Seminars (RSS) are a new concept at the WSO. The purposes and goals of the Regional Service is to stimulate interest in service with fellowship and to develop better communications between the World Service Office and the different Regions in the U.S. and Canada. We have had a wonderful response and it is very difficult to measure the far-reaching effect of the Seminars. It is very heartening to have a group of people

at each Seminar who come together to share and exchange information and go back to their Districts and groups and stimulate more interest and enthusiasm. The Seminar reaches into places we could never reach.

This idea of RSS's is still considered on a trial basis and this year at the 1983 World Service Conference we will vote to see if it will become a permanent part of Al-Anon.

Salvadore, Mexico

- Who goes to the Regional Service Seminars (RSS)?

Susan, WSO

All Al-Anon and Alateen members within each Region as well as out are invited and welcomed. We have a wide-range of members attending. Members who have served as Delegates to the World Service Conference, Trustees and Group Representatives come and enjoy this weekend with others who have never served outside of the group level. At our last Seminar in Ottawa, 711 people interested in service attended.

Sally, U.K. and Eire

- How are the Regional Service Seminars (RSS) set up and who finances them?

Susan, WSO

The Regional is a weekend from Friday to Sunday focused on service. When choosing a site, many things are considered. We announce the Region the Seminar will be held in and several areas send in bids. To host the Seminar the RSS Committee takes into consideration the location and its accessibility to all members within the Region as well as the cost to each person attending. The price must be affordable to members.

The WSO pays for the travel of the Trustees and Staff members who attend; individuals pay for themselves. In some areas the Districts pay for their District members or Delegates to attend.

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) *Pat H., Secretary*

The concept of cooperating with the professional community (CPC) is not a new one. This has always been incorporated under the umbrella of Public Information. Any work that comes into WSO related to the professional community would come under the CPC Service. Public Information deals with the general public, media and newspapers while CPC deals with professionals: doctors, lawyers, counselors, policemen, firemen and clergy, etc. The term professional includes all caretakers of the community.

Working with my volunteer committee is the key for effective CPC work. They give of their time, talents and suggestions. They are willing to take projects home to develop. Recently, the committee was updating a piece of literature titled "Working As For Or With Professionals." I

can't tell you what a tremendous feeling it was to get input from them. We may change the name of this pamphlet for clarity, include an index for easy access and add an introduction. Group conscience in action, that's what CPC Committee is. We weigh ideas based on our experience and that's one reason for stressing the importance of writing *your* suggestions and questions. We can't put out what we haven't gotten in. None of the services here at the WSO can. We act as a clearinghouse, sharing what has been passed on to us with you. We are reflective not directive. In CPC we know we need to be flexible and open to suggestions.

It would be easy to sit down and compose guidelines for members working with professionals, but that wouldn't be Al-Anon. So we're taking our time, hopefully by the next World Service Conference we'll have them.

One way we work on input from the fellowship and output to the fellowship is by our mailing list. When a professional writes in for information, their name goes on a mailing list. Once a year they receive *Al-Anon Speaks Out* and any new literature. At the end of each month these professional inquiries are separated by areas. They are then sent to the PI/CPC Coordinator for their follow-up. Ideally, they will write back to us and share what has happened.

CPC is another way of reaching out. We're reaching into the community through professionals. We're informing them about Al-Anon and encouraging them to find out about us by reading our literature, talking to our members and attending open Al-Anon meetings.

The goal of CPC is to reach the still suffering family members. We feel we are doing that today by a new route, through the professional community.

Thelma, New Zealand

- *Why would you talk to firemen?*

Pat, WSO

Reaching out to all professionals who are in contact with the public is the reason we include firemen along with policemen.

Hank, U.S. and Canada

Many fires here in New York have been started by alcoholics who have been put out of a building. It has been helpful to get the information about Al-Anon into the firehouse.

Sally, U.K. and Eire

- *Do you stress open Al-Anon meetings to professionals? In small communities we may have the counselor sitting next to the member they are counseling.*

Pat, WSO

Many of our groups encounter this problem. We encourage the Areas to have more open meetings available and to know where to direct professionals.

Myrna, WSO

This is not just a problem in small communities. This question comes up at every Regional Service Seminar.

Office Supervisor

Joan Hochbaum

My major responsibilities are divided into two areas: Personnel Administration and Office Administration.

Under the area of Personnel, the major responsibilities are hiring of staff, employee policy and procedure manual, salary administration and development and implementation of benefits.

Al-Anon membership is a prerequisite for the following positions: General Secretary, Deputy General Secretary, The FORUM Editor, and Staff Secretaries, but other positions are open to any individual. Positions and salaries are compared with other organizations and from this we determine staff salaries. Yearly merit increases are given to employees. This is based upon a written performance evaluation submitted by the employee's supervisor.

We feel a responsibility to provide for the well-being of our employees. Our benefit program accomplishes this. It includes: health care coverage, sick leave, vacation leave and a pension plan.

Under Office Administration it is my responsibility to insure there is a constant flow of work within the support departments.

In Group Records we are concerned with the following areas: registration of new groups, informational changes to existing records, deletion of inactive groups, group statistics, obtaining mailing labels for group mailings and the production of the World Directory.

Our Filing Department is staffed by three employees with a system arranged alphabetically to coincide with the World Directory.

The FORUM Subscription Department is involved with the processing of all subscriptions to The FORUM. With 48,426 subscriptions our three staff members working here are always busy.

Spanish Services

Teresa M., Supervisor

As the Spanish Services Supervisor at the WSO, I am a liaison member between the 21 Spanish-speaking countries (where the Al-Anon program brings its message of hope) and each English-speaking area of service at the WSO. We have almost 3,000 Al-Anon and Alateen groups registered which we try to serve with love and enthusiasm from our Spanish Department, because it is the way we can express our gratitude to Al-Anon and to each Spanish-speaking member in our fellowship.

When I say areas of service at the WSO, I mean Alateen, Public Information, International Coordination, Institutions, Cooperation with Professionals (CPC), Archives, Literature, Conference, The FORUM, Accounting and Shipping Departments. We try to keep members well informed about what happens at local, national and international levels, through our WSO newsletters: *Inside Al-Anon—Dentro De Al-Anon*, and *Al-Anon/Alateen in Action* with selections from The FORUM—*Al-Anon Y Alateen En Acción Con Selecciones Del FORUM*; and in return, we hope to learn from your experiences in order to grow and share them with others in our worldwide fellowship.

We want to have all the Al-Anon literature translated into Spanish, and some day we will. But we can only accomplish this little by little. We have to choose which piece of literature has to be translated next. I make recommendations on new translations. They are approved by the Executive Committee. Then we begin the production process of one piece in Spanish. This is a very complicated work, but we can count on a very responsible team of employees who work with me, in order to do the translations, revisions, corrections, careful proofreading, etc. Finally, we give this new piece of literature to our Literature Service who handles the production. Giving is how we receive—communication is what we need to keep harmony and unity in our fellowship—by the use of the Al-Anon language—love.

International Coordination

Mary Ann K., Secretary

At the heart of the International Coordination lies the desire to maintain unity worldwide. Al-Anon groups are meeting today in 80 countries and our literature is in 17 languages. To get all these members from so many varied backgrounds and cultures to just agree is a small miracle, but to maintain a willing spirit to stay united is incredible. And yet that is what has been given to us in Al-Anon today by those who came before us. Those of us here today are not the originators of the fellowship, but we are expected to continue what has been started and move in a forward direction to help Al-Anon grow. We sometimes joke at the WSO saying that we have guidelines for everything, but the ultimate guidelines are our Traditions which the International Coordination Committee uses to answer all problem letters. Disunity in a group or service office is usually caused by the lack of knowledge of the Traditions and how they came into being. The Traditions are based on real trial and error experience. Our Concepts, too, guide our services. Today, the words of Concept One written years ago describe very simply the job the International Coordination Committee is trying to do in our complex world.

The dream of the early members has come true in 22 countries. Now 22 service structures are able to reprint literature for their own groups. Every structure wanting to reprint must use our reprint procedure. In our fellowship there is a great deal of trust. We have set up reprinting procedures for a sense of order and to protect our copyright. Let me explain why. When we send you permission to reprint, we send along the most up-to-date revision. Following the procedure set up gives us an opportunity to do an additional review; our office can act as a clearinghouse where a record is kept of all that is being printed in the different countries. In this way we can let the fellowship worldwide know of new publications. Order will be maintained as literature translations expand.

To do our review we have bilingual Al-Anon members all over the world. We have someone working on Polish literature living in Argentina. Another Italian reviewer is from Scotland. You probably have members in your country who speak several languages. Someone living in Finland who speaks Finnish, English and German may want to act as a translation checker for us. If we can

establish contact with members like this, our review process will also be international in nature.

Many of you have worked on Conferences and Conventions so you know the 1001 details that go into a gathering such as this International General Services Meeting. You know, too, the joy I feel being part of this and seeing you here. Without your letters, calls, all your responses to our questionnaires this would not be possible. The International Coordination Committee needs our friends worldwide and we appreciate you.

Cecelia, Japan

● *Could the procedure for reprint permission be reconsidered in a country like Japan that is just developing and the need for literature is so urgent?*

Mary Ann, WSO

In Al-Anon we often look to AA for their experience, since their history is longer than ours. In the beginning they were very free in allowing reprint permission, but they found that in different countries program ideas were changed as they went into translation. They felt AA had grown because of its basic philosophy and so they tightened up the process. Once something is in print, it is often difficult to change. Recently we have encountered problems with translators and translations and in view of that, we hope that the additional review done through the WSO will prevent some of the problems.

Leonella, Italy

● *Could the WSO send us reprint procedure in bulk so we would have them and not have to write each time for them? We have such delay in the mail, how can we correct this?*

Mary Ann, WSO

The reprint permission is a legal document. When a country is about to reprint a piece, they should write for permission to print that particular pamphlet or book. We will send two documents, an original and a carbon to be signed. You return both of them to us with a translation. We will review the translation and send back any suggestions along with the original reprint permission. The WSO keeps the carbon. A country should write for the initial papers when the decision to print is first made, long before the translation is completed. We could exchange papers as the team is working and this would keep some delays caused by the mail to a minimum.

Jean, France

● *If French members had a working knowledge of the Concepts, many questions could be answered through them. So we have translated the Concepts, but in a spirit of unity we are waiting for the Conference-Approved translation in French to be printed by Publications Francaises (PFA).*

Cay, WSO

The translating team at Publications Francaises (PFA) have received several translations of the Concepts which they are working on now. Early next year the Concepts will be available in French.



TRUSTED SERVANTS WORLDWIDE

Delegates Talks

Cay C., Chairman of the International Coordination Committee opened this session with the thought, "The Twelve Steps will point the way to God and his infinite wisdom." No matter where we are from, the Steps, Traditions and Concepts unite us.

The unique nature of each country was reflected in the talk by their Delegates on the theme, "Sharing Experience, Strength and Hope Worldwide."

Australia

Kevin S., Delegate

The General Service Office in Australia is fortunate to have Kevin working as a member of their Board. He draws upon his background as an accountant to help plan the annual budget of the GSO. His many years in Alateen makes his hours of service work most enjoyable. This structure is described in detail because countries with approximately the same number of registered groups as Australia have set up a similar structure.

"Each of the 584 Al-Anon and 84 Alateen groups in Australia has a Group Representative and is part of a District. Districts usually meet monthly and are mainly involved in Public Information work. The Districts are united into Areas and all totaled Australia has nine Areas. Eight of them act as Literature Distribution Centers for the groups and most have an Information Service.

"Each Australian Area Service Committee meets regularly. Lately some Area Committees have traveled to various Districts within the Area. This practice of moving the Service Committee has helped to strengthen the groups within the Districts.

"After the Annual Australian Conference, assemblies meet once and then later in the year. Most assemblies have equalized expenses for the Group Representatives

attending. Some Area assemblies are a one-day affair with a spiritual meeting to follow. Other Areas make their assembly a weekend event with workshops, films and a spiritual meeting. The primary source of income for Area assemblies and offices is group contributions.

"Each year, the Australian Service Conference is attended by the Area Delegates, General Service Board and Executive Committee. The Conference agenda consists of items submitted by the Areas and reports from the Standing Committees—Public Information, Institutions, Alateen, Literature, Budget, *Austra-Link* (Australia's national magazine), and Conference.

The General Service Board is composed of six in-town members including the General Secretary and the *Austra-Link* Editor. It meets quarterly as the Conference's chief service arm, planning and directing the business affairs of the General Service Office.

"The General Service Office is open four days a week with part-time paid workers and a number of volunteers. Volunteers are reimbursed for travel to and from the office. The primary source of all income for the office is literature sales. Currently the General Service Office is reprinting ONE DAY AT A TIME and some pamphlets. The remainder of literature is purchased from World Service with group contributions a minor source of income.

"The opportunities to share experience, strength and hope in service increased with the formation of additional service sub-committees for the Conference with members on Agenda, Admissions and Handbook Committees. Currently under consideration is the possibility of holding the First Australian Al-Anon Convention."

Brazil

Alda C., Delegate

Using a series of maps and charts, Alda gave a moving account of the growth of Al-Anon in Brazil. In 1980 five

states had Delegates and at the last Brazilian Conference in 1982, twelve states were represented. This was a difficult feat to accomplish when the size of Brazil is considered. Remote places such as the Amazon, South Mato, and Panama are now sharing through their Delegate at the Conference. Alda traveled to many of these faraway places herself to encourage members in service. Her enthusiasm for Al-Anon was clear to all who heard her presentation. The importance of building Al-Anon on a sound service structure was evident as Hadiee, the other Delegate from Brazil, displayed 17 beautiful charts depicting the country and the way the states are set up.

"Brazil was present at the 1980 International General Services Meeting (Trial), and the fruits of that meeting have been unbelievable."

Costa Rica

Gabriella Q.

Before Al-Anon, Gabriella felt completely alone and hurting. She had no idea that so many needed the help she was privileged to be part of. Once introduced to Al-Anon, it gave her relief from all the negative feelings of guilt, stubbornness and intolerance. "I felt fulfilled when I conducted workshops." While working on the translations of "Living with Sobriety: Another Beginning," she realized for the first time how service could make her feel useful. She became closer to Al-Anon friends than her relatives. "Service in fellowship gave me satisfaction and I forgot about my problems when trying to help others."

When Gabriella was new, she received all the help she needed from those in service. "I felt thankful and decided to be part of Al-Anon for life."

El Salvador

Angela de L.

Even though Salvadorans are suffering from critical economic and political problems, Angela told how important it was for El Salvador to be present at this meeting to share. Moved by a sense of gratitude for the help Al-Anon had to offer, Angela became a member of the committee that worked to establish the legal incorporation of the General Services. She studied all the Al-Anon literature. This project gave her the opportunity for spiritual growth and an empathy for Al-Anon friends.

Two years ago after much prayer and thought, Angela accepted the job of General Secretary, but the real changes in her life began many years before in her group, when she started serving coffee. Fear and frustration had sent her to several doctors. "From the moment I became a member of Al-Anon, my life completely changed. I began to have hope; love and life made sense. My headaches disappeared." Angela was filled with fervent desire to carry to others the message of Al-Anon responsible for this.

As General Secretary she is working to accomplish this dream. With the cooperation of the media, many institutions and AA, knowledge of Al-Anon is being carried all over the country.

Finland

Marja K.

Al-Anon in Finland will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year. From one group, 115 groups exist today.

Marja explained how the lack of a Handbook hindered the structural growth of the country. Today service-minded members are working to test a change in structure. The new structure is based on the experience of U.S. and Canada and U.K. and Eire.

Like so many changes in our personal lives, these changes in service are viewed by some with skepticism and others with great hope. Marja spoke of this so that others might share with her their experience in setting up a structure.

Some Al-Anon Districts share facilities with AA for answering the phones. These answering services are a major source of new members.

Finland has good reason to be proud of its two publications, one TIETOAVAIN, containing information about meetings, conferences, District news and members' letters. AVAIN, their other magazine, is published four times a year, filled with members' personal sharings. Since great distances between meetings makes visiting difficult, these two magazines are important mediums of sharing.

A longtime member for 14 years, Marja told how her years in Al-Anon changed her life totally. In 1984 she hopes Finland will send two Delegates to the International GSM.

French Belgium

Marie-Jose R.

Disturbed by her husband's alcoholism, Marie-Jose came to Al-Anon and was amazed to find friendship and selflessness in the members there. As she attended meetings regularly, her recovery began. "Someone helps me and I help others."

After two years she accepted the job of Delegate to the Intergruop.

"Our structure took eight years to set up. We tried to respect as much as possible the suggestions and the 'Guide for General Service Structures,' adapting them to our needs.

"In 1980 our Board, which is called 'Association Without Benefit', was finally created, and since then French Belgium has had an Annual Conference. It is remarkable that since we are well-structured our fellowship makes such progress in our country." Over these years, Marie-Jose has served in many capacities and feels the different ways she's served are not as important as her attitude toward them. "A spirit of complete harmony with the Traditions is essential."

During her time as an Alateen Sponsor, Marie-Jose grew to understand that in Al-Anon we have a choice as adults to stay in a situation, but young people often do not have that choice. This experience with Alateens helped her to a better understanding of her own son.

In the beginning service work introduced Marie-Jose to many new friends in Belgium, but now she has friends from around the world.

In the future, French Belgium hopes to join with France, Switzerland and Luxemburg to form the French-speaking European Committee, expanding literature and distributing it more widely throughout Europe.

France

Jean S.

"I was afraid of the responsibility. I wasn't a man of contact and then came a day, and I had to jump to it. I

was very surprised because when helping other people, I helped myself." Jean began his sharing with reflections on his own recovery.

"After, I felt there is no going further and at times I found it boring. But what about the group if I didn't moderate? I was still a sick and lonely man. The medicine came. I became physically ill, so I couldn't attend my home group—and it went on, very well, without me. It was a good lesson.

"One of the hardest problems is to find members who want to work in service. When we look at the listing of Al-Anon members volunteering, it's clear that the list is short. The same names do all the work. There are many who fear service because it may be difficult. Others shirk, 'What's service for?' So our staff tried at the Annual Conference to explain service work so that Delegates can speak of it in their groups and generate more interest."

Jean brought with him a great hope in the Second International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (Trial). "Perhaps the sharing here will give France the push we sometimes need for new ideas."

Germany

Gudrun K.

To begin, Gudrin reported on the structure and growth of Al-Anon in Germany in this way. "Al-Anon began in 1967 and our present structure was settled during the first five years. In 1972, 48 groups existed, scattered all over the country in five different Regions. Al-Anon was incorporated that year and a Board of Trustees was established. Our General Service Office opened in 1980. We started the service magazine *Al-Anon Intern* in 1981, and at the present time Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service are being translated." She expressed with candor and feeling that something is lacking in Germany and between Germany and the WSO in this way: "Germany does not have a Conference yet. While it seemed unnecessary in 1972, it is most needed today. Since the World Service Conference decided in 1972 that the WSO should be the sole publisher of Al-Anon and Alateen literature, we have been using the translations of CAL ever since. The Literature Security at the WSO is getting lots of letters from members from all over the world, but especially from the U.S. and Canada. The model of Conference-Approved Literature is that of a collective authorship which lives by discussion between the groups and the WSO. Our situation is quite different. We are in the position of someone who takes over a prefabricated product, and I think that this is a dangerous situation in the long view. We are offered literature, but do not take an influence on its development."

Germany's dilemma and hope for the future was described by Gudrun: "A service Conference in our country ought to be introduced. How shall we introduce the Conference into our structure without having the needed money? Germany would like to be partners in the development of Conference-Approved Literature. How can we become partners in the development of CAL while we are not voting members of the World Service Conference?" By sharing her problems on this level, it was Gudrun's hope our Higher Power will help find a solution.

Italy

Leonella M.

Al-Anon in Italy was born six years ago and Leonella told the Delegates how they adapted a Charter similar to AA. "We had no knowledge of any service manuals but, today members of the Literature Committee, together with the majority of the Councilors, see the need for a different structure." Leonella explained that her experience was limited to service through printing Al-Anon literature.

In February 1981 Leonella proposed to Al-Anon National Council the formation of a Literature Committee to publish Al-Anon literature on our own. "We were rich only with hope and faith." The next step was to finance the venture. "Then we asked for a loan to the National Center and three of our groups in Rome; they gave what they could, with no deadline for the restitution. So we had the money to reprint four pamphlets. We decided also to print our first book, *THE DILEMMA OF THE ALCOHOLIC MARRIAGE*, but only if it could pay for itself. The first one thousand copies sold out in five months. Because of this experience we have learned we ought to examine our reality and ask ourselves whether what we would like to do is necessary for our groups. Is it in keeping with our Traditions? And, is the time right for us to act? These are the kinds of considerations to be put first, and then, if we ask for wisdom and courage, we can work with serenity. The results are in His hands. We have paid our debts and have enough pamphlets and books, at least for one year to come. This may sound like a very small beginning, but for us it has been great." Now they have a new enterprise in progress, the publication of the Italian *ONE DAY AT A TIME IN AL-ANON*. All workers at the National Center and on the Literature Committee are volunteers, giving their time and help with generosity.

Through experience, service-minded members have learned if the structure does not encourage communication and freedom to work in the observance of our Traditions, it will be impossible to move on. "Difficulties can be overcome, but we need strength from above. I hope I can take home the strength from all of you to share with my Al-Anon friends in Italy—it is a precious gift."

Japan

Cecelia M.

Education about the disease of alcoholism has only just begun in Japan and Cecelia's main concern is to carry the Al-Anon message of help, always staying within the Traditions.

In the Japanese culture, Cecelia explained how the family unit is very strong. The Al-Anon philosophy that one person in the family can recover while others do not get treatment is a very difficult concept for the Japanese people to accept. With the translation of Al-Anon literature Cecelia hopes that the printed word will help educate people to a new way of thinking. A great deal of time and energy has been put into the translation of eleven pieces of Conference-Approved Literature.

Seventeen Al-Anon groups and one Alateen group exist today in Japan. A Service Board has been created with five Al-Anon members and five professionals. Along with the publication of literature, cooperating with the Professional Community has been the main focus of activity for the GSO during its first year.

Cecelia concluded with the thought that the Higher Power and His will is the real leader of Al-Anon in Japan.

Mexico

Salvador V.

Salvador's personal recovery story is closely entwined with his service in Al-Anon. Al-Anon's history in Mexico is reflected in his story.

"My mother was the first woman in Al-Anon in my country and she taught me that service is necessary for recovery. I had been in Al-Anon for five months when she died in my arms. That day I understood the Serenity Prayer. Shortly after I became a GR and I began to learn the Traditions and study the Handbook. In time I was elected to serve in many ways. As Delegate to our National Assembly I began to travel throughout my country to explain the Traditions and the Concepts. After a year as Chairman of the Board of Trustees, I started to work as a paid employee at the General Service Office.

"Our GSO was established in 1973 by the first National Conference. Delegates from eight Areas attended then and next October we will hold our 10th National Conference with 21 Area Delegates attending. Today, in Mexico, we have 1000 groups including 67 Alateen groups and 85 young Al-Anon groups. The General Service Office has four paid members: the General Secretary, Alternate General Secretary, the office secretary and the person in charge of literature deliveries. Our GSO reprints 47 pieces of literature. We have seven permanent committees: Alateen, Literature, Public Information, Institutions, Conference, Budget and Nominations. Our Conference is composed of the members of the Board of Trustees, the Chairmen of the permanent committees, the administrative staff and two Delegates per Area.

"Also we have a national newsletter called *DELTA* and I'm the Editor. It is my hope to start a real communication among GSOs to extend this sharing."

New Zealand

Thelma W.

Thelma, a longtime member, shared part of her personal story and how Al-Anon helped her recover through service. Twenty-five years of increasing misery and growing hopelessness led Thelma to forsake all. "Then I was saturated with sick thoughts, landing myself in negative situations. At that time, I made a drastic move and left the home. My husband found the help of AA and on my return he introduced me to the fellowship of Al-Anon.

"Up until then, I blamed all my unhappiness on my husband and family, and as I look back, I can recognize that my introduction to Al-Anon was really the greatest day of my life. From the first meeting I became aware that I could change my outlook and accept that all of us in the family were affected by this disease called alcoholism. I learned that I could change my attitudes and try to create a better atmosphere for the whole family.

"I know I have made great progress since then and because of travel both in New Zealand and overseas, I've had opportunities to meet and observe the working of Al-Anon elsewhere. I have progressed through the service structure within New Zealand to this meeting, and I am presently Chairman of Conference back home. I lead a

full and interesting life with loving support. I am grateful for the part that Al-Anon has played in it."

Norway

Ase K.

The GSO in Norway is a new one and Ase, the General Secretary, told how looking back this year she could see the guidance of the Higher Power.

"Working in service I have learned a lot, but most importantly it has given me the opportunity to learn how to cooperate with other people. It has taught me to think what is best for our fellowship before I make decisions and try not to judge before I know the whole story.

"When I first became involved in service, I was afraid to say what I thought, it was much more comfortable to agree with others—even if I didn't agree! Now I have the courage to speak up and disagree, I have the courage to say no. I also feel very strong when I think I am part of our worldwide fellowship.

"When we tried to work out the difficulties with the Norwegian ONE DAY AT A TIME IN AL-ANON, I didn't have much hope for Al-Anon in Norway. Everything seemed so hopeless. But today I have new hope. Our Higher Power works His own way, and I see now there was meaning in the difficulties with the printing of the ONE DAY AT A TIME. These difficulties taught me that there is always hope, as long as I am willing to accept the guidance my Higher Power offers me."

South Africa

Kinsa K.

The South African General Service Office presented the World Service Office with a copy of their new 27-minute film entitled "Alcoholism & the Family."* Kinsa describes in her own words the making of this film.

"It was an act of enthusiastic, dedicated service from all the Al-Anon, Alateen and AA members who have taken part in the project. With the moral support and encouragement of Al-Anon, Alateen and AA members most of whom had neither drama or voice training, a film has evolved.

"Each of our Al-Anon Information Offices will have their own copy of the video, and on my return to South Africa it is planned that each District will organize major public information meetings simultaneously, inviting as many individuals from the fields of education, welfare, health and medicine as possible. Hopefully the media will give us their usual influential support. Al-Anon and Alateen literature in English and Afrikaans will be given out by the Districts.

"Our main incentive for producing this video is to encourage more members to do public information work. This film allows members who are not happy about public speaking to do the minimum of an introduction and summing up. Most requests for public information talks are during business and school hours where members are not free to take part. This film could be shown without an ac-

* This film was viewed by all those attending the International GSM on Tuesday evening in the hospitality room. Delegates and members of the Planning Committee were amazed at the professional quality of this film produced with such a low budget. Again Al-Anon volunteers accomplished an unbelievable job.

companying member, although that is not the most desirable way to view it. We are giving a copy of this film to WSO in gratitude and appreciation for all the loving help and support that we, in South Africa, have received from Al-Anon in America.

"We have noticed from American newsletters that service is considered an honor here, and we would welcome suggestions from other Delegates as to how to motivate our members to feel likewise." Kinsa found while a great deal of time and effort is given in service, "it comes back a hundredfold in dividends of shared hope, understanding and growth, enriching us both as a fellowship and as individuals."

Switzerland

Jean B.

Even though the French-speaking Swiss groups have been in existence longer, Jean and Ursula, the two Delegates, represent only the German-speaking Swiss. The French-speaking groups in Switzerland never formed a structure.

Jean explained that while listening to Marja, the Delegate from Finland, about the problems with their structure she had the feeling she was at a regular Al-Anon meeting. The German-speaking Swiss have had such similar problems she could identify.

In 1969, Switzerland began its structure, Jean, the General Secretary, kept in close touch with Henrietta, General Secretary at the WSO, who encouraged the Swiss-German members to start a structure, even if they were small. The important thing she emphasized was to set up the structure in the right way.

Originally Jean is from London and several years ago felt the time had come to turn over the duties of General Secretary to someone who was Swiss. Ursula was the ideal person. Jean will remain on the translating team and correspond with the WSO.

The German-Swiss have a Conference and committees for Public Information, Literature and Finance. All members are volunteers, with no official office, but a national phone number.

Because of the common bond of language with the German groups, the Swiss have stayed close to the Germans. Better communication with the German translating team seems to be a real possibility for the future.

U.K. and Eire

Sally Mc.

Sally spoke of her involvement in service and how important it related to her own recovery.

"I got the message of hope at that first Al-Anon meeting and thought all I had to do was to get my partner to an open AA meeting and he would get the message too. Then family would all live happily ever after. Things did not quite turn out like that, I continued to attend Al-Anon meetings.

"After some months I was asked by the group to take office as chairperson. One of my duties was "to mind" the literature case till next week. We only had a little literature in those days. I read every piece in the case, letters from people in England and New York. It was the first time I heard about World Service; up until then it was

some mysterious place in New York. When I finished my term, I really felt I belonged to a fellowship.

In 1969 Dorothy H., our first representative from U.K. & Eire to visit the World Service Conference came to visit us in Ireland and tell us about the World Service Conference. She suggested we form Districts, and explained about Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives and structures in general. She really inspired me and with some other enthusiastic members, we started the first District in Ireland. By this time, I realized my partner had no intention of stopping his drinking habits, so I threw myself into Al-Anon work. I wrote numerous letters to Dorothy asking how do we do this—where will we find an answer to that.

"I was fascinated at the way Al-Anon worked and realized the more I put into service, the more help I got. It helped me to work Detachment. I would retire to my typewriter and bang out a letter to another member. This helped me collect my thoughts and put them on paper. The bonus was—the day I felt most down, often a letter would arrive from someone in Al-Anon to lift my spirits.

"Service gave me back confidence in myself. I enjoy working as part of a team. I learned detachment by doing something worthwhile. I regained my confidence and I learned a lot about ME."

U.S. and Canada

Joanne B.

The international nature of Al-Anon captured Joanne's imagination from her early days as Delegate to the World Service Conference.

As a new member of the Board of Trustees, Joanne explained how free she feels to be herself. This confidence comes through the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service, which she uses in her personal life.

"I have always been tremendously impressed with the purity of democracy in action, the will of the majority, within Al-Anon. Since my earliest recollections, I have observed members truly attempt to be 'obedient to the unenforceable.' It was probably the single most important evidence to me that Al-Anon was different from other organization and that I really wanted to be part of it. Rotation of leadership ensures that no member can ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority; and each of us, as unique human beings, brings an added dimension to our area of service.

"It seems so difficult for our membership to grasp the fact that there are few definitive answers to any given problem; there are no authorities sitting in an ivory tower making rulings to guide our responses in a given situation. It is difficult for our membership to accept whatever service position one serves... at the Area level, as a Delegate, a Trustee or a Staff member, our only reference sources are the Service Manuals, the same ones available to the membership as a whole. It is sometimes difficult for our membership to accept that each of us individually, has a responsibility to understand how to apply this information to problem solving within the fellowship.

"Throughout my years in Al-Anon, in every instance where I found it prudent or necessary to discuss a matter of concern with the WSO, I received an unqualified hearing and as much helpful information as was available. As a new Delegate to the WSC, ready to 'take on all the ex-

perts,' I found myself completely disarmed because of the intense emotional impact of being treated with such understanding and love... yet my dignity was allowed to remain intact. I discovered it was possible to disagree without being disagreeable, and that once a Conference decision was made, even though I had not supported it, I learned to accept the will of the majority, step out in faith and put the decision into practice.

"Just as the WSC is charged with the responsibility to reach decisions through discussion, vote and whenever possible by substantial unanimity, I have observed the same process of interaction between Board members, volunteers and Staff at the WSO. You see, we do not have thirty odd years of history to draw upon; we have hundreds of years of experience for that purpose... my 19 years, your 21 years, your 10 years and on and on. We have a system that works effectively at all levels of service... one that we must conscientiously strive to preserve for the benefit of members and potential members all over the world."



SERVICE WORKSHOP

The need for Al-Anon worldwide is clear. How can we widen our circle of hope? Who will carry the message? Each one of us. Our fellowship will grow and spread like the evergreens year after year through members who are willing to give their time, energy and talents to others. After seeing the filmstrip from the WSO entitled, "Getting involved: A Look at Al-Anon Service Structure," the Delegates broke up into three small groups to exchange ideas on: **Encouraging Members to Start and Stay in Service** Report back

Person to Person:

- Sponsor someone in service, giving the newcomer to service a feeling of support.
- Understudies in any service job should be considered, at all levels from the Group Representative to the Delegate to the International GSM.
- Two speakers should always attend public engagements, one experienced and the other less so—so that the inexperienced member can learn.

Within the Group:

- Responsibility to Al-Anon should sometimes be discussed in group meetings.

- Some attention could be given to service as part of personal growth in Al-Anon. This could be done when the members are fairly new.
- When a business meeting takes place—encourage new members to take part and ask questions. All Al-Anon experience is based on repetition so we must always be prepared to explain again and again.
- A few minutes could be taken at each meeting to explain how the Al-Anon structure works from GRs to WSO. Well informed members are more inclined to volunteer.
- Paying for all volunteer travel expenses helps insure that qualified members can serve regardless of their own financial status.

At District & Area Level:

- Concentrate on enthusiasm in service and do not preach duty.
- District Meetings could be set up to give service-minded members a chance to share their service experience.
- Hold Service Workshops—on Traditions and Concepts.
- Invite members and if possible transport them to District Meetings.
- Suggest that at District Meetings there be time set aside to study a portion of one of the Service Manuals.
- When Districts are aware of the needs of the fellowship in an Area suggest specific responsibilities to the group in that Area.
- Have District Representatives travel to groups and enthuse them with their own tales of service. A visual aid, or chart showing what groups miss when service people do not represent them can often make the point and motivate members to volunteer.

Serving Nationally:

- Use your Conference to carry ideas. Delegates, in turn, can return and share their enthusiasm.
- Be specific when asking members to take on a service responsibility. Don't be vague. Make new service members feel the job they are doing is important.
- Letters can be sent out informing groups of vacancies at the GSO including job descriptions and qualifications.
- Give clear and careful vision of the GSO members by sharing personal experiences with the groups, to show members how similar we are in Al-Anon, no matter where we serve.
- Articles about service could sometimes be published in the magazines or newsletters of each service structure. It would be effective if these were written in a personal way.

Attitudes that discourage members from service:

1. When personalities become more important than principles and controversy arises, service work suffers.
2. When members now serving act as experts it makes others feel inadequate.
3. When a job in service is turned over, but there is no real letting go.
4. When there is reluctance on the part of service members to talk about their role in service it deprives the newcomer of hearing stories of recovery through service.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Communication Between GSOs

Margaret O'Boyle, Archivist, at the World Service Office opened the session with the thought that the disease of alcoholism had isolated us and part of our recovery now is in communication. We need to improve communications with each in order to be a worldwide fellowship. Margaret reminded the Delegates that this was their meeting and asked for their ideas on how to improve communications between countries.

- Welcoming members from other countries to work in their GSO for a week at a time was a practical suggestion shared by the U.K. and Eire.

Thelma W., Delegate from New Zealand, was fortunate to have done this and it proved to be a valuable working experience. The working part was stressed as she told how very little talking went on between workers.

Judy B., Delegate from U.K. and Eire, explained that notice ahead of time is essential to make this kind of visit productive.

After the 1980 International General Services Meeting, Jean W., Delegate from France, attended the U.K. and Eire's Conference. Shortly after his visit work began on a Handbook for France.

The Delegate from New Zealand attended the Australian Conference and found it helpful to the New Zealand members in setting up Areas and Districts.

- Publishing an Annual Calendar for Conferences and Conventions worldwide was discussed.

While all Conferences have a full agenda and most Conference planners have to work with limited space, there was a wise suggestion that it be stated in the calendar which Conferences are open to invited guests as observers. Conventions may be open to all.

- Exchanging Conference Summaries could give members in other countries a clear picture of how service-minded members are working to carry the message of Al-Anon and strengthen the fellowship.

One possibility to further open communication was to have non-English-speaking countries translate their Conference Summary into English. This would give many countries the possibility of sharing information, regardless of language.

- The World Service Office could be used as a clearinghouse, passing on the ideas shared in cor-

respondence and in Conference Summaries to others around the world.

A network of sharing can be set up on two levels. Ideas, questions and material of general interest to all Al-Anon can be sent through the World Service Office and then on to all General Service Offices. In cases where the problems are very specific and time is of the essence, General Service Offices should contact each other directly.

- An exchange of newsletters could also give countries better worldwide understanding.

The experience of the U.S. and Canada is huge compared to other countries. Small countries have a great deal in common just by virtue of their size. Even if the language differs, the look of a magazine or newsletter will convey ideas in style, design and layout.

- A plea was made from the Delegates from France, Norway and the U.K. and Eire to send correspondence from the WSO through the General Service Office and not directly to groups and Information Services. The WSO will use GSOs as their link to the groups and Information Services.

Correspondence from the World Service Office about the International General Services Meeting will continue to go to the Delegates with a copy to the GSO. When questions are directed from one GSO to another, it is best to send a copy to the Delegate to the International GSM.

- To make the World Service Office more knowledgeable about each structure and their individual needs, it was suggested that the International Secretary visit the GSOs.

Several members of the Planning Committee volunteered to go along to help.

- More open communication could begin with articles in INSIDE AL-ANON from Delegates and later an international bulletin could be developed and published once a year with articles and problems of international interest.

- A service job could be created for a volunteer to assist those in General Service Offices and act as an English-speaking correspondent with the WSO.

LITERATURE WORKSHOP

Our Conference-Approved Literature, just as the person-to-person sharing in the fellowship, carries the message of hope. It plays an important role in our personal growth as well as the growth of Al-Anon worldwide. The sale of CAL is a source of income to each General Service Office, providing revenue to extend services. At this workshop Delegates sought ways to improve: **The Sale and Distribution of Literature**
Report back

To the Groups:

- Display all pieces of literature available in a portable display container—roll-up or fold-up and have the list of literature available.
- Read the Preamble at the meetings from a hard-covered book rather than from typed sheets, so members become aware of our books.
- Set up a library in the group. When lending, charge a small amount for the loan to provide more money to buy literature and books.
- Have a container for coins in view and at the end of a specific time draw the name of a member who will receive a book paid for by the money.
- Use a Conference-Approved hard-covered book as a gift from sponsors.
- Suggest reading Conference-Approved Literature rather than relying completely on personal experience.
- When a group makes a beginners' packet, include a list of other literature available.
- Discourage concentration on ONE DAY AT A TIME at group meetings and have group meetings on specific pamphlets.
- Present public libraries with copies of all Al-Anon books and instruct them on how to purchase others.
- Donate books to school libraries.

To the GSOs:

In General—

- Always take display boards to functions outside the fellowship when Al-Anon is invited.
- Publish articles in magazines or newsletters about slow-moving pieces of literature.
- Encourage Information Services to include a piece of literature and price list along with details of the nearest group when responding to a Twelfth-Step inquiry.

- Interchange literature in different languages for the purpose of making a literature display to graphically show the extent of Al-Anon's reach.

For Reprinting—

- Regularly review the cost of printing locally compared to buying from WSO.
- Review periodically the prices charged in light of cost and inflation.
- Keep the format of a pamphlet or book the same as the original.
- Conference-Approved Literature cannot be reprinted without permission from the owner of the copyright, the WSO. The World Service Handbook can be adapted to the needs of each structure. Guidelines are not Conference-Approved Literature and can be reprinted without permission.
- Several structures asked for clarification by the WSO as to what is required for countries to adapt the World Service Handbook to local needs.

For Distributing

- Whenever there are problems among countries about the sale and distribution of literature, the best way to solve it is through direct contact between the parties involved.
- Although extending credit involves added book-keeping, Conventions can be given a 30-day limit for return of unsold literature to insure they have literature. Most countries do not extend credit, but one GSO sends books against a deposit receipt.
- When countries have difficulties obtaining CAL literature in languages other than their own, write the WSO.
- Charge postage to the total cost of literature ordered rather than by weight.
- Mexico requested permission to distribute literature in Central and South America. (The issue was not resolved.)
- Where there are local Literature Distribution Centers, stress speed and accessibility to the buyer as an advantage of ordering from them.

To the WSO:

- Publish prices with all announcements of new or revised literature in INSIDE AL-ANON.
- There are too many pamphlets. The suggestion was made to incorporate several leaflets into one big book covering the various aspects and relationships.
- Reconsider paperback books. Today's book buyer is accustomed to paperbacks.
- Have a piece of literature geared to siblings and today's generation of youngsters and young Al-Anons.
- There are too many revisions over a short space of time.
- How do GSOs obtain a loan from WSO to publish literature?

This was done once in Norway, but it is the hope of the Board of Trustees that each structure will be able to raise the money themselves for printing. Mexico shared that in order to publish they received contributions from groups while El Salvador takes loans from members who are paid back when the books are sold.

MEETING AGAIN

Future International General Services Meetings

The Delegates were unanimous in their desire to hold another International GSM. Beryl, Delegate from Australia stated, "We cannot underestimate the value of this meeting. The sharing with each other and the WSO is so very important."

The suggestion to include a statement about the International GSM into the Handbook of each country is to be reconsidered at the 1984 meeting. The next item on the agenda was:

Where will the next International GSM be held?

Most Delegates considered New York the best site for the 1984 Meeting. Leonella, Delegate from Italy, felt that visiting the WSO was an emotional lift for countries just beginning to form structures. Discussions with Staff members were important to many Delegates, but there was a strong desire on the part of several Delegates that after the 1984 International General Services Meeting, the site be moved to another country.

The possibility of meeting in less luxurious surroundings was suggested. Other facilities have been looked into, but proximity to the WSO and air conditioning were to be considerations when a site is chosen. The Delegates decided to leave the exact location in New York to the discretion of the Planning Committee. With New York chosen as the meeting site the next decision was:

When in 1984 will we meet again?

The discussion focused on the most convenient time of year. A few Delegates expressed a desire to meet at the same time as the World Service Conference, so they could see the Conference in action. Members of the Planning Committee explained that Conference members now number about 110 and the business of that body dictates

it be held for 5½ days, some of which extend into the night. Time would not allow the one-to-one meetings with the Staff that are necessary for structures just beginning. Due to the size of the World Service Conference and length of the agenda, it would not be feasible to have the two meetings running concurrently.

After a brief discussion it was the unanimous choice of all present and voting to hold the meeting in late September or early October.

Who will be seated as Delegates?

A brief report was given on the internal problems of Flemish Belgium. Two legal non-profit organizations now exist, both calling themselves Al-Anon and claiming support of a majority of the groups in that country. Neither structure was seated at this meeting and reprint permission has been denied until unity is restored. Several pleas for unity and compromise have been sent to both factions, but to date the situation has not been resolved.

The WSO is not an arbitrator or a government in these kind of internal difficulties. We cannot seat a Delegate from a structure so divided. In the past when smaller structures have looked to the WSO to solve internal problems we have encouraged members to work out a solution among themselves. The Delegate from Norway reported when trouble occurred in their country they wanted the WSO to intervene, but looking back they are grateful for the growth they achieved with only encouragement from the WSO, not direct intervention.

In response to the need of the members of Flemish Belgium for reprint permission and for contact with Al-Anon worldwide, the following letter was written by an ad hoc committee. It was translated into Flemish and signed by the Delegates and Planning Committee with hope that steps toward unity will be taken soon.

September 23, 1982

Dear Al-Anon Member,

The Delegates of 21 countries to the 1982 International General Services Meeting (Trial) are very disappointed and sad that Flemish speaking Belgium is not represented. We have been made aware of the problem of two Service Structures in your country and until such time it is solved, you and all other Dutch speaking members around the world are without literature which helps us to understand the Al-Anon program of recovery.

May our Higher Power guide you to the right solution based on Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions.

With love in Al-Anon,

Cay C., Chairman of International
Coordination Committee

The Delegates asked that this letter be sent to both structures plus all Flemish groups registered at the WSO.

How much will the Equalized Expense be?

Henrietta explained the fairest way to divide expenses was that each structure attending pay the same amount, regardless of the distance. She reported that the Board of Trustees has reaffirmed the fact that the WSO will underwrite 75% of the total cost and each country attending will pay 25%.

To estimate the cost now of a meeting in 1984 is difficult. We do not know how many structures will be attending and how many Delegates will come from each structure or where the meeting will be held. If two Delegates from 22 structures attend and the meeting is held in a hotel similar to the Halloran House, the cost per Delegate would be about \$450. In a year we should have a more accurate figure.

How were the Delegates selected?

- Australia* — Has voted to send the General Secretary and one other member.
- Mexico* — Chose their General Secretary to attend.
- U.K. & Eire* — Has no General Secretary, but the Board proposed two names and the Conference confirmed them, giving each one a year to prepare.
- Germany* — Members felt one person attending was adequate, but Gudrun explained that she will suggest that two Delegates attend to strengthen each other.
- Finland* — Two years ago the Conference voted a Delegate to the International General Services Meeting be elected for four years.
- South Africa* — The Board of Trustees appointed the two Delegates.

A discussion followed which focused attention on the requirements for Delegates. The consensus of Delegates was that the best value derived, for both participating countries and the WSO, is that every Delegate from each country be knowledgeable and actively involved, if at all possible, in their respective General Service Structures.

After some discussion about individual Delegates tapping the meeting, a motion was passed to only permit tapping for the official transcript which will go into the Archives. Delegates for 1984 will be advised of this in advance Conference material.

SPIRITUAL SHARING

Personal Stories

My whole being thrills with wonder, gratitude and joy when I stopped to look back at the footsteps that brought me to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting. My journey, once seemed lonely and ugly, but now led by my Higher Power and in His careful plan the journey seems graceful. What a wonder it is that this grace was given through encountering the devastating alcoholism in my loving son.

I can only say that the Higher Power's thought is more lofty than mine. Through the dreadful anguish, he showed me the way to return to sanity which has brought me peace and eventually joy, love and wisdom. Al-Anon's Twelve Steps are the precious treasure that led me to the true goal of my life; freeing the inner me from my ego control and a new life of unlimited potential in Higher Power's will.

I will never forget that grace-filled dramatic moment when I finished my Fifth Step. Full of tears, I experienced the existence of the Higher Power right next to me touching my shivering shoulder. What was destroying me was not accepting His love and care. I had been saying that I can do it myself. Even though I was such a rebel I found that He was always with me and provided the help I needed when doing the Eighth Step. What a shame it had been to think that I had lived my life by my own ability and strength. Here, He showed me the need to be healed. I had a deep scar and wound in my spirit, and I asked for freedom from the hatred I felt toward my own mother. He freed me from the destroying anger and miserable pain in my heart.

I came to see that I am a very precious being in His eyes and He loves me so dearly. This perception came when I did the Eleventh Step during eight days of contemplative meditation. My very intimate relations with the Higher Power have begun since that experience and I am strengthened within His strength. It is a different kind of strength. I used to think it was my own.

A lot of marvels have happened around me. I am getting busier and busier, but in peace. My heart is filled with joy, gratitude and love toward the Higher Power. Then I realized that I am to love others in a way which I had never been able to before. I noticed the hatred toward my mother was gone. How grateful I was! It is nothing but God's grace! I can never stop thanking God for all these changes in me. What did I do for this? I just followed Al-Anon's Twelve Steps. The Higher Power leads me with my Sponsor, step by step.

My rebellious life with madness of my ego has finished. Now my serenity in loving God will not be disturbed as long as I journey the road of Twelve Steps in Al-Anon.

I would like to express my profound thanks to the pioneers of this wonderful community and the WSO Staff now working for all of us and for those who are still looking for the light. Let us be the instruments of love, truth and humility, or our only leader, the Higher Power.

O.O.O. Cecilia M., Japan

Today, I look back to remember what I was like before I came into Al-Anon in 1968—14 years ago. My life has changed—but have I really changed? If I have changed, what influences brought about that change?

Was it Al-Anon? Or was it the opening of my mind through work I had begun for a diploma in sociology? Was it reading Al-Anon literature? Or was it the expansion of my general reading? Was it the shared experiences which I met at my first Al-Anon meeting? Or was it the insight of an experienced psychiatric nurse who sat next to me at one of the sessions for the relatives of alcoholic patients at the unit where he cared for my husband.

Was it those Twelve Steps and the recommendation to turn my will over to the care of a Power greater than

myself? Or was it my mother, a rather inarticulate lady when it comes to speaking of the things of the spirit, who, at a moment of deep distress for me said these words with complete conviction, "God is Love." Everything that happens to me influences my life in some way. What part did Al-Anon play in bringing me to where I am today?

When I first joined Al-Anon, I was 38 years old. I had four sons, between 5 and 13 years old and a husband who carried on him an enormous amount of weight. He was not a pretty sight and I usually preferred not to be seen with him. On the other hand I was very thin, rather brittle and lonely, because I never talked to any of my friends or family about the bitter farce of my married life which was acted out behind a facade of normality. People regarded me as aloof; they weren't allowed too close.

I wore quite a lot of make-up then and as I only cried at home, nobody saw my mascara run. I was a middle-class wife and my field of vision was limited to what I regarded as customary. My studies had begun to open my mind, but I was protected against reality by my own prejudices and immaturity and I resented my husband for the callous way in which he was exposing the prejudices and taking advantage of the immaturity. Above all I hated him because his behavior was, I thought, the source of all the fear I felt. Security was, in my view, a right that I was entitled to and anybody who caused me to forego security was a blackguard. It never occurred to me that security is built from within oneself.

If it had not been for my learning and experience in Al-Anon groups, I might never have had the humility to join that other useful group on human relations and been prepared to let down my defenses sufficiently to learn. Over the years in Al-Anon, I have seen people change—I have seen understanding, tolerance and moderation introduced into their lives and I think they have seen the same qualities introduced into mine. Al-Anon's influence has not been dramatic, but I have had a steady erosion of my false pride and of my prejudices. It is the impact and the truth of the Al-Anon message which hits some of us just at the moment when we are prepared to listen; it's watching people gradually changing their attitudes; it's in an Al-Anon group meeting more than anywhere else, I learn the value of silence and attention in myself.

The purpose of Al-Anon is to welcome and give comfort to families of alcoholics. I hope Al-Anon has made me better able to care about others and give comfort rather than direction.

The purpose of Al-Anon is to give understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic. It was in Al-Anon that I began to want to learn about my husband and to study all the information I could find about alcoholism. I was able to be less subjective and stop relating all his behavior to myself. I was influenced by the way other members could speak of their alcoholic relatives with respect. I know it's in Al-Anon that I've learned about my bad habit of interrupting and that helped me to recognize how often and in which dreadful ways I slapped my husband down.

The purpose of Al-Anon is to grow spiritually through the Twelve Steps. I feel like a hypocrite until I remember I am a servant of Al-Anon. The fact that I am here does not

reflect my achievement in spiritual growth, only that I have fairly good knowledge of how our General Service Structure works, I can express ideas and suggestions and lead the sort of life which allows me to travel. Even after 14 years, I cannot tell you I am entirely ready yet to have God remove all those defects of character I so fearlessly admit; that I don't reserve from among those shortcomings one or two that I'm not sure I want to do without; that I have ever had conscious contact with God. All I have ever achieved in an occasional sense of fitting into the pattern of life when I don't try to force it my way and a transitory sense of unity with my fellow men.

But when I look back I realize that what influences my life more than other any suggestion contained in all the Al-Anon literature is one little card called "Just For Today"—it always brings me up sharp when I take the time to read it slowly. "Just for today I will believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me." I've discovered that in Al-Anon, and just for today I know it.

Judy B., U.K. and Eire

Cay closed the meeting with a reading from the ONE DAY AT A TIME IN AL-ANON. "It is heartening to know that Al-Anon members can be a worldwide inspiration to each other; thoughts and prayers fly across space to sustain and strengthen us all. In the chain that unites us in Al-Anon each of us is a link, neither more or less important than all the rest."

After lunch was served at the WSO many of the Delegates took a bus ride to visit Lois at her home in Bedford Hills. They saw the historic site where so many of the fellowship's ideas were conceived. With a spirit of hospitality that is uniquely Lois', she served coffee and talked to the Delegates. They toured the house and looked at Lois's collection of memorabilia which holds so much of Al-Anon's early days. Everyone visiting was grateful to Lois for all she has done and continues to do to extend the hand of Al-Anon to all those in need.

Motions:

- that the 3rd General Services Meeting (Trial) be held in New York City in 1984. (31 in favor 2 opposed)
- that the 3rd General Services Meeting (Trial) be held in late September or early October 1984. (unanimous)
- that an ad hoc committee be formed from the 2nd General Services Meeting (Trial) Delegates to draft a letter to be sent to Flemish Belgium regarding the two fractions now existing there. (unanimous)
- that no taping of the International General Services Meeting (Trial) be permitted, other than the official transcript and that Delegates be so advised in advanced Conference material. (29 in favor 4 opposed)
- that the best value derived for both the WSO and participating countries is that every Delegate from each country be knowledgeable and actively involved, if at all possible, in their respective General Service Structures. (32 in favor 1 abstention)

General Service Offices

ARGENTINA

Oficina de Servicios
Generales Al-Anon
Casilla de Correo Central No. 3246
Buenos Aires, Argentina S.A.

AUSTRALIA

AFG Australian General Services
GPO BOX 1002H
Melbourne, Victoria
Australia 3001

BELGIUM (FRENCH)

General Service Board for
French-Speaking Al-Anon in Belgium
28 rue Weirtz
1040 Bruxelles, Belgium

BRAZIL

Junta de Servicios Gerais
Al-Anon "Junalanon"
Caixa Postal 2034
CEP 01000
Sao Paulo, Brazil S.A.

COLOMBIA

Oficina de Servicios Generales
Al-Anon de Colombia
Carrera 7a. No. 27-24
3er Piso
Bogotá, Colombia S.A.

COSTA RICA

Junta de Servicios Al-Anon
de Costa Rica
Apartado 6331
San José, Costa Rica C.A.

EL SALVADOR

Asociación de Servicios
Generales Al-Anon
Condominio Comercios
del Centro 1a. Calle Poniente
No. 512
Apartado Postal 1048
San Salvador, El Salvador C.A.

FINLAND

Al-Anon Toimisto
Oikokatu
11130 Riihimäki 13,
Finland

FRANCE

Groupes Familiaux
Al-Anon Gen. Services
24 rue Saint-Roch
Paris, France 75001

GERMANY

Al-Anon Familiengruppen
Zentrales Dienstbuero
Postfach 100 192
D-5000, Köln 1, Germany

GUATEMALA

Oficina de Servicios
Generales Al-Anon
28 Calle 0-47, Zona 8
Guatemala, Guatemala C.A.

ITALY

Al-Anon Centro Nazionale
Villa Bonelli
Via Lupatelli, 62
Palazzina E-Int. 2/4
Roma 00149, Italy

JAPAN

Al-Anon Japan General
Service Office
GPO BOX 1900
Tokyo 100, Japan

MEXICO

Oficina Central Mexicana
de los Grupos Familiares Al-Anon
Avenida Juárez 64-318
Delegación Cuauhtémoc
06050 Mexico D.F., Mexico

NETHERLANDS

Algemeen Drenstsbureau
Al-Anon Nederland
Postbus 10368
100 EJ Amsterdam
Netherlands

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand Al-Anon
General Services
P.O. BOX 40-507
Upper Hutt, New Zealand

NORWAY

Al-Anon General Service
Komite-Norge
Postbok 193, N-4551
Farsund, Norway

SOUTH AFRICA

Al-Anon General
Service Office
P.O. BOX 2077
Johannesburg, Transvaal
2000 South Africa

SPAIN

Oficina Nacional de Servicios
Generales
Apartado 406
Barcelona 3, Espana

SWITZERLAND

Al-Anon Kontaksetelle
der deutschsprachigen
Schweiz Postach 88
4802 Strengelbach
Switzerland

U.K. and EIRE

Al-Anon Family Groups
61 Great Dover Street
London, England SE1 4YF