

EIGHTH
INTERNATIONAL
AL-ANON
GENERAL SERVICES
MEETING

*Gratitude—Motivation and
Responsibility*

August 19-23, 1994
Holiday Inn City Center Hotel
Brussels, Belgium

Contents

The Twelve Concepts of Service.....	2
The General Warranties.....	2
Statement of Purpose.....	3
Attendance.....	4
Opening Session	
Spiritual Sharing.....	5
Roll Call and Flag Ceremony.....	5
Keynote Speaker.....	5
General Sessions	
Voting Procedures.....	7
Admissions Committee Reportback.....	7
Rescheduling IAGSM.....	9
Adult Children and How They Fit in Our Structure.....	9
Warranty Four: Keeping the Al-Anon Doors Open.....	11
How the WSO Works Within.....	13
Sponsorship: The Strength and Heart.....	16
Al-Anon in Poland.....	17
Autonomous-Yet Unified.....	19
GSOs Creating Original Recovery Material.....	21
Anonymity.....	23
Fiscal Responsibility and Gratitude.....	25
Overcoming Al-Anon Weariness (or Burnout).....	27
Delegates' Choice.....	28
The AA International Convention with Al-Anon Participation.....	29
Al-Anon's Third International Convention with AA Participation.....	29
International Spirituality Book.....	30
Unfinished Business.....	30
Workshop Reportbacks	
Communicating-Carrying the Message.....	31
Alateen.....	31
PI-Attraction and Promotion.....	32
Round Table Discussions	
Leadership.....	33
Adult Children of Alcoholics.....	34
Increasing Contributions and Sales.....	34
Problems Other Than Alcohol at Meetings.....	34
Motions.....	35
Spiritual Meeting.....	36
Summary of Al-Anon's History.....	38
General Service Offices.....	39

The Twelve Concepts of Service

1. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.
2. The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.
3. The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.
4. Participation is the key to harmony.
5. The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and assure that they be heard.
6. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.
7. The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.
8. The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of the Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.
9. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.
10. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.
11. The World Service Office is composed of standing committees, executives and staff members.
12. The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world services is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

General Warranties

In order that the Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power, the General Warranties of the Conference read: "In all proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions":

1. that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
 2. that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;
 3. that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by unanimity;
 4. that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
 5. that though the Conference serves Al-Anon, it shall never perform any act of government, and that, like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.
-

Attendance

The following structures were represented at the 1994 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting:

Argentina	Alberto S. Marita P.	Netherlands	Clemens H. Frank K.
Australia	Joy R. Mary O'K.	New Zealand	Alice G. Joan W.
Belgium (Flemish)	Hubert V. Marleen W.	Norway	Siri A. Eli O.
Belgium (French)	Helene D. Raphaëlle H.	Poland	Olga (Anna) F.
Brazil	Ana Flora R. Eraides R.	South Africa	Ros A. Irene W.
Finland	Pirjo S. Liisa L.	Spain	Maria Carmen C. Conchi N.
France	Leo B.	Sweden	Vivan A. Pia N.
Germany	Petra K.	Switzerland (German)	Rita P. Monica S.
Iceland	Anna N. Gunnhildur O.	U.K. & Eire	Deirdre M. Jo P.
Italy	Jo B. Elena M.	U.S. & Canada	Richard B. Patricia L.
International Coordination Committee:		Maxine K. Louise B. Myrna H. Robert V. Mary Ann K.	

The following structures were not able to send representation:

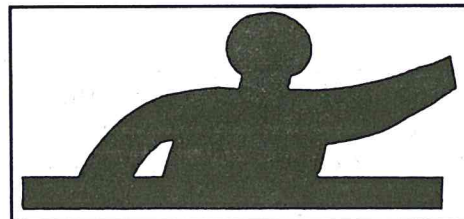
Colombia	El Salvador	Korea	Switzerland (French)
Costa Rica	Guatemala	Mexico	Uruguay
Denmark	Japan	Paraguay	Venezuela

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through its 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.

OPENING SESSION



The Eighth International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) brought together 37 delegates from 21 countries and five members of the International Coordination Committee (ICC).

An atmosphere of universality was created by closing each session with the Serenity Prayer spoken by one of the delegates in his or her own language.

Spiritual Sharing

Louise B., ICC

"Our search should not be so much for a solution to a problem, or a way out of our difficulty, no matter how pressing. The search must be for inspiration, for insight, and one cannot know what he will do with an insight until he gets one. Part of the necessary condition is to set aside one's own problems and needs, even the urgent and painful ones, and be prepared to receive and act upon the new insight. It may seem to have little relevance to our problem or need, but it may, indeed, point to the new way in which our effort must be directed while we continue to bear our old burdens."

The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage, p. 97

Roll Call and Flag Ceremony

Maxine K., ICC

Illustrating the worldwide yet unified scope of Al-Anon Family Groups, the delegates of each country placed the flag of their country on the chairperson's table and marked their GSO's location on the world map.

Keynote Speaker

Eraides R., Brazil

Dear Al-Anon friends, I am Eraides, coming from Brazil for my second IAGSM. I am pleased and grateful to be here with you. We come from every part of the world to speak one language—from the plural diversity of idioms to the singular uniqueness of gratitude.

I am here not to speak of myself but to set forth our common feelings on this beautiful morning of our first session. Being here, we are under the mysterious spell of unity. I have no doubt that anyone of you could share the same things I am trying to say, for we are one in the unity of the fellowship. I want to be the spokesman for our overflowing gratitude.

The day we locked our suitcases full of clothes and papers to come to Brussels, I'm sure that every one of us heard in our hearts a voice that cried: "Be grateful! You have been chosen."

Sitting around this large family table, we are opening our Eighth IAGSM, and because this meeting is a marvelous family meeting, we feel an overflow of gratitude.

Because our Al-Anon family has granted us a recovery program that is enlightening and comforting, that has surely changed our lives, once so poor and so mean, into lives of love and understanding, we can only feel enormous gratitude.

Because, before Al-Anon, we used to go through life with closed, blind eyes but now we are able to see and enjoy the bright,

warm sun, as well as the clear moon and the stars, and we're able to get the fragrance and color of the flowers that embellish nature, we are inundated with gratitude.

Because our Al-Anon program has granted us the knowledge and acceptance of a Higher Power who, out of love for us, cares about everything and everyone, and because, believing this, we are able to let go and let God, we are immensely grateful.

Because this miraculous program has helped us to approach our innermost self, to look at its true image, to be able to forgive its shortcomings, to love it as it is and turn it into a good friend, we're truly grateful.

Because this remarkable program has shown us how to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, and then to have a spiritual awakening, we are also particularly grateful.

Because, through this program, we are learning every day the serenity to accept those things we cannot change, the courage to change things that ought to be changed, and the wisdom to know the difference, we have to be very grateful.

Because the Al-Anon program enables us to enlarge our heart to the size of the world, to live in friendship and unity, and to put our welfare above personal interest, we grow in gratitude every day.

Because we have the wealth of Al-Anon literature always within reach of our hands, we must have a singular gratitude.

Last but not least, we are especially grateful for the beloved alcoholic in our life. No alcoholic, no Al-Anon; no Al-Anon, no IAGSM—and no friends in all parts of the world!

What I have been trying to state are the motivations for my gratitude, but that is not all: *Motivation* is an incentive for action. My gratitude requires action; my gratitude is for me a *responsibility*. That is why I now ask myself, "What am I responsible for in Al-Anon?"

Just for today I am responsible for this moment in which I speak to you, attempting to interpret our common feelings and emotions.

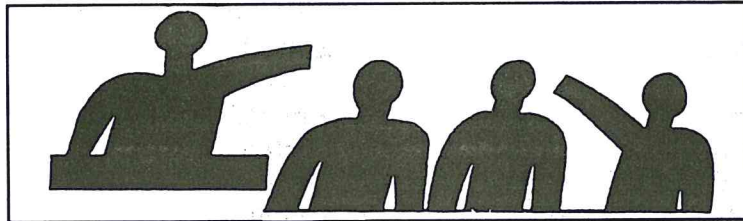
One day at a time I am responsible for our fellowship, for the integrity of its Traditions and Concepts; for as our cherished Lois used to say: "Anyone can start something, but it takes many people to keep it going." So I feel responsible for helping to support our fellowship. Though a delegate to this international meeting, I am still a member of that small group in my hometown. It is up to me to help keep its doors open, for if that group closes, Al-Anon as a whole is diminished. In my home group I feel responsible for welcoming the newcomers and sharing with them our hope, our experience, and our strength. At group level, I'm also responsible, no matter what little service I can do (all of those simple and small things that contribute to our common welfare); for as the Fourth Concept states: "Participation is the key to harmony." I am responsible for helping to keep it simple in my home group as well as in my structure, but above all in my own personal life.

I am responsible for our Conference-Approved Literature. In order to be able to show its value and its beauty, I must also have personal knowledge of it. Someone in my country once said: "A nation is made of men and books." I think we could say that Al-Anon is made of its members and its literature. Our literature is there to be read and incorporated into our life and to keep Al-Anon's spirit safe and strong. Our literature maintains our common language, without which our unity would be impossible.

I am responsible for acquiring the true understanding of anonymity as the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, because I have to pass along understanding even inside the fellowship.

Finally, I am responsible for keeping my gratitude alive, otherwise all the rest will be forgotten.

GENERAL SESSIONS



Voting Procedures

The IAGSM was chaired by Maxine K., who with a natural humor skillfully guided the participants through the agenda. She kept everyone focused while creating a friendly atmosphere that was enthusiastically supported by all.

Topics for discussion were submitted by the delegates. Following the presentations, each member was invited to share his or her experience, strength, and hope during an open discussion.

Maxine K., the IAGSM Chairperson, explained the voting procedures.

The IAGSM members agreed to use a closed ballot, with a two-thirds majority needed to establish substantial unanimity. The chairperson explained that abstentions would be deducted from the total number of votes before establishing a majority; if this were not done, abstentions would actually be counted as "no" or "not in favor of" votes. One delegate expressed an objection to this method. However, delegates may ask to have a motion postponed if there is a large number of abstentions.

Motions will be presented in a written format, read by the chairperson, and the floor will be open for discussion. Following

discussion, the motion will be reread by the motion recorder, and voting members will vote on a written ballot.

Admissions Committee Reportback

Petra K., Germany

The Admissions Committee meeting was held at Brussels on August 19, 1994 with the following participants:

Petra K., Germany, Chairperson; Clemens H., Netherlands; Maria Carmen C., Spain; Siri A., Norway; Alice G., New Zealand; Myrna H., ICC; Louise B., ICC.

The committee determined that the decision whether a delegate meets the qualifications to participate in the IAGSM is within the autonomy of the structure. The Admissions Committee recommends acceptance of the Polish structure as a part of the IAGSM and recommends seating the Delegate from Poland.

The setting up of the zones was approved at the 1988 IAGSM to ensure that all structures will have the opportunity to participate in the Admissions Committee at some point. The Admissions Committee recommends the transferring of the South African structure to Zone 5 and placing Poland in Zone 4.

Zone 1

France
 Netherlands
 U.K. & Eire
 Belgium (French)
 Belgium (Flemish)

Zone 2

Argentina
 Costa Rica
 Spain
 Brazil
 Mexico

Zone 3

Iceland
 Norway
 Denmark
 Finland
 Sweden

Zone 4

Switzerland (German)
 Germany
 Italy
 Poland

Zone 5

Australia
 New Zealand
 U.S. & Canada
 Japan
 South Africa

The service term for each structure begins after the conclusion of one IAGSM and ends after two consecutive IAGSMs. The structure for the IAGSM Admissions Committee from 1997 to 2002 is:

<u>Zone</u>	<u>1997 Structure</u>	<u>Term Begins/Ends</u>
1	Netherlands	1997-2000
2	Brazil	1997-2002
3	Finland	1997-2002
4	Italy	1997-2002
5	New Zealand	1997-2000

<u>Zone</u>	<u>2000 Structure</u>	<u>Term Begins/Ends</u>
1	U.K. & Eire	2000-2004
2	Brazil	2000-2002
3	Finland	2000-2002
4	Italy	2000-2002
5	Japan	2000-2004

<u>Zone</u>	<u>2002 Structure</u>	<u>Term Begins/Ends</u>
1	U.K. & Eire	2002-2004
2	Mexico	2002-2006
3	Sweden	2002-2006
4	Poland	2002-2006
5	Japan	2002-2004

The New Zealand Delegate will chair the next Admissions Committee meeting.

Further, in discussing what they could do to encourage other structures to participate in IAGSMs, the participants came up with several ideas. For example, neighboring countries might invite members of other structures to their National Service Conference. Projects could also be shared, such as the printing of new posters for public information.

Rescheduling the IAGSM

The WSO presented Motion #3:

Schedule the 1996 IAGSM in 1997 and hold it in the U.S. Schedule the 2000 IAGSM outside the U.S., and after that meeting return to the two-year cycle, with alternating years in the U.S.

The reasons for the temporary three-year cycle are the following: The WSO headquarters will move in 1996; the International Convention in San Diego will take place in 1995; and the Al-Anon International Convention in Salt Lake City in 1998. The motion is not presented primarily for financial reasons.

Many delegates do not feel comfortable with forgoing an international service meeting for three years and wonder if this is for the good of Al-Anon worldwide. Some members are nominated for a specific length of time, not for two IAGSMs, so their structure would have to adapt its rules to accommodate this change.

The WSO suggests holding an IAGSM luncheon at both the San Diego and Salt Lake City conventions to keep communication open.

The motion was tabled to give delegates more time for discussion. Following considerable thought and discussion, the motion was approved (38 yes, 3 no).

Adult Children and How They Fit in Our Structure

Pat L., U.S. & Canada

When I joined Al-Anon in 1965, there were no adult children groups. However, many of those who shared at the meetings said they had grown up in a family where a parent drank too much. So adult children have always been in the program.

In the 1960s, the issue was men in Al-Anon and male groups. Many members were afraid of men attending meetings; after all, "they" were different. Then we worried about men having special groups: "Why don't they come to our meetings?" Men received mixed messages about Al-Anon. By attending regular meetings and getting to know one another, we saw that the feelings of men and women were very much alike. As men felt welcome in our meetings, the need to have separate groups lessened.

When I started in the program, I was the only one in the group who married my mate after he became sober in AA. I was a very hostile, angry person. I didn't think I belonged with all those who had lived with active alcoholism. I was different! Some of the members also felt I didn't belong. Anyway, each week I sulked, snarled, and/or yelled at the others in my group. And every week, the longtime members smiled at me and said, "Keep coming back." They realized that I needed the healing effects of Al-Anon and knew that if I attended long enough, the healing would happen.

In many ways I was like some of the adult children I meet today: They are angry because they or others have decided they don't belong; they may show the same hostile feelings I did; they find the love and acceptance they need in a special group. I might have joined a special group for those who married after sobriety if there had been one, but I'm glad that I was exposed to all the variety Al-Anon offers. If we keep the door open to adult children, they also may find that regular meetings are for them.

Sometimes groups start and they don't realize that they are doing anything wrong by registering as Al-Anon but using non-Conference-approved literature. Instead of telling them they are wrong, we can tell them what it means to be an Al-Anon group, then allow them to decide whether they want to be in an Al-Anon adult

children group or to join an outside organization.

I was at an Al-Anon event where one of the meetings was an adult children's group. They used material that wasn't Conference-Approved Literature. As a delegate, I was asked to do something. I told the member involved that the Twelve Traditions asked every group to use only CAL. I explained the reason why we asked this and suggested that the district representative go to one of the meetings of this adult children's group and talk with the members about the responsibility of abiding by the Traditions. After the meeting with the DR, the groups decided to deregister as an Al-Anon group. The decision was made without anger and bitterness toward Al-Anon. We didn't tell them what they were doing wrong; we told them the right way to be an Al-Anon group, and they decided to withdraw. This kind of loving discussion may encourage some to come to Al-Anon. If we are negative and critical, a group will probably become angry and not suggest that members attend Al-Anon meetings.

Adult children challenge us to expand our thinking. They ask that we open our minds and hearts to help them grow in Al-Anon. We must meet these needs. We can do this by accepting them just as they are and welcoming all who want the recovery we have been so freely given. As we share, we will realize that our similarities are greater than our differences. We have a new book, *From Survival to Recovery: Growing Up in an Alcoholic Home*, that I believe will help adult children feel more at home in the Al-Anon program.

We need to respond to these groups in a positive, loving way. They can't destroy Al-Anon, but we can. Bill W. said, "If AA is destroyed, it will be by those in AA, not by outsiders." The same is true for Al-Anon. We have nothing to fear from any person who is or has been hurt by the disease of alcoholism. As long as we keep the loving, open-arms approach to all in need, Al-Anon will be able to help all who come to our program.

Some adult children groups are requesting a separate service arm. I hope we will

choose not to create a separate service for adult children. The only reason to have an Alateen service arm is the age difference; young people need literature that is geared to them. Adult children are adults and deserve to be treated as such. I feel it would be wrong to segregate them, even if they feel it would be right. I think time will show that all adult members of Al-Anon are united, whatever the relationship to alcoholism.

Discussion

Members were invited to share their thoughts and experiences. Several members said, that after they had joined Al-Anon as the spouse of an alcoholic, they had discovered they could also call themselves adult children of alcoholics. Most adult children found that their best way to recovery was in sharing experiences with other adult children. In one country there are some "grown-up children groups" that have nothing to do with Al-Anon. Actually, they compete with Al-Anon.

Several members wondered if it would be advisable to give a more specific name to adult children. It is recommended not to use abbreviations, because that only leads to confusion. In the U.S. and Canada, they are simply called Al-Anon adult children of alcoholics.

One person commented that there are some 1500 adult children groups worldwide, and they deserve to get more attention. We are the parents of adult children of alcoholics. We need to reach out to adult children groups because they are the future of Al-Anon; many join Al-Anon at a later age.

Almost each country represented at the IAGSM has adult children groups; Germany even counts 50. Adult children participate in service work in several countries. There seem to be almost no adult children committees anywhere on a national level (Japan could not attend but sent information about their structure, indicating an adult children committee at the national level), though some have GRs; others reported adult children serving as district representatives. Several delegates voice the opinion that the coordination of adult children groups at the

national level is not necessary. Adult children's voices need to be heard; they should come through the structure channels already in place. However, this was not a unanimous opinion. Everyone agreed that people will make their choices of meeting for whatever they need and should be allowed the time and space to make the choice, whether it is beginners, Step, men's meetings, or adult children. Another delegate mentioned that in his home group, people have a choice, as there are five meetings going on simultaneously: AA, Al-Anon, Alateen, adult children, and beginners. This is an ideal setting that encourages transition, especially for older Alateens and old-time adult children of alcoholics. One delegate stated that every relationship enriches the groups, and our goal should be to unite and integrate, rather than separate ourselves.

Warranty Four: Keeping the Al-Anon Doors Open

Hubert V., Belgium (Flemish)

"It is possible that some day might see a deep rift dividing either or both AA and Al-Anon—a cleavage of opinion so serious it might involve a withdrawal of an appreciable proportion of members into a new society..."

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, p. 181

I am going to illustrate this with some history of our structures and GSOs, focusing on the tragic and painful events of the late seventies and early eighties that led to a rupture in our Al-Anon structure.

I will share this with you convinced that all parties concerned have acted with the best intentions and love for Al-Anon. The first names have been changed because the significance is in the story, not the individuals.

The first Flemish-speaking Al-Anon group in Belgium started in 1960. In 1966, the magazine *Oase*, the Flemish *Forum*, was founded at the same time as our first General Service Office. In those days, we did not have any Flemish literature; AA literature was used for the Al-Anon meetings. In 1970, a Literature Committee started

to translate Conference-Approved Literature, and a Flemish *One Day at a Time* became available.

In 1974, the GSO together with the complete literature stock was moved to the house of Chris in Brugge, who played a major role in and contributed largely to the development and growth of Al-Anon in the seventies. The number of people seeking help augmented, and Al-Anon got the attention of the media.

In May of 1975, Chris put forward the idea of making Al-Anon a nonprofit association (NPA). At that time he was director of the GSO. He insisted on the importance of founding an NPA, taking the WSO in the United States as a model, but Al-Anon members failed to reach agreement on the by-laws. In 1977, the treasurer fell ill, and Chris opened a bank account together with two other Al-Anon members.

In 1978, a serious difference of opinion arose about the reprinting of *One Day at a Time*. Some people considered the quality of the translation insufficient. At the end of 1978, a committee of six Al-Anon members was formed to reform and decentralize the structure. The committee suggested the following:

1. Forming an independent-working translation committee
2. Edit *Oase* separately from the GSO
3. Distributing the literature among the five provinces of Flemish-speaking Belgium
4. Relocating the GSO to a centrally situated place (Brugge was too far West)

This attempt to restructure failed. However, on January 12, 1980, a Board of Trustees was formed that had to decide about important issues. In July 1980, Chris and another Al-Anon member came to the first IAGSM in New Orleans. In April 1981, the GSO was moved out of Chris's home but still remained in Brugge. All this time, the discussions about the nonprofit association and the by-laws continued to flare up. On May 7, 1981, a meeting took place between Chris, one of his opponents named, Clare, and a few members of the ICC in New York.

Nevertheless, no agreement was reached about some of the essential elements of the by-laws.

Finally, on August 11, 1981, the NPA of Kasterlee was founded by two provinces, Antwerpen and Limburg. On September 12, 1981, a second NPA (of Brugge) was founded by two other provinces, Oost and West Vlaanderen. The fifth province, Brabant, was internally divided. The rupture was a fact. The differences between the by-laws of the two NPAs were the following:

1. Brugge wanted all group representatives to be present at the yearly Service Conference; Kasterlee wanted only the delegates of the provinces.
2. Brugge wanted the by-laws to state that a General Secretary could hold his function indefinitely; Kasterlee wanted the person holding this function to be reappointed yearly.
3. Brugge wanted the General Secretary to be Executive Director of the GSO; the Kasterlee by-laws did not have such a provision.

Apart from the differences of opinion about the by-laws, the reasons why a number of Al-Anon members decided to have their own separate NPA were the following:

1. They resented the fact that Chris had control over the finances, the literature, and the magazine *Oase*.
2. They resented the fact that Chris kept control of all operations and allowed no authority to his fellow servants. Therefore they tended to lose motivation and interest in service.

After the creation of the two competing NPAs, a struggle started between them for supporters, contributions, subscriptions, and literature. The dissenting Al-Anon members asked the World Service Office for reprint permission. However, the WSO, wishing to stay neutral, informed them that as long as they had not settled their differences, printing permission would be refused to both parties. Nevertheless, NPA Brugge continued to print literature. In addition, both NPAs were excluded from the IAGSM of 1982. In 1981, Brugge organized a Service Conference in which representatives of three

provinces participated. One of these provinces was Brabant.

From 1982 on, the dissident provinces (NPA Kasterlee) started organizing yearly experimental Service Conferences. By conscientiously applying the principles of democratic decision making, adequate information, and participation, they tried to win confidence. One of the instruments they used for this purpose was the Interprovincial Working Group (IWP), composed of the provincial delegates and representatives of the service arms, who met every two months.

These meetings were used for the exchange of information and for decision making on a national level. They contributed a great deal to the restoration of unity. Eventually the application of the democratic Al-Anon principles of openness and participation turned out to be decisive. Principles proved to be more important than personality. The two NPAs lasted until 1985, when the NPA Brugge dissolved.

In 1986, after four successful experimental Service Conferences, the first regular Service Conference was held and attended by representatives of all five provinces. Unity was restored!

What lessons can we pass on to future generations of Al-Anon servants? When in any country the growth of Al-Anon has reached the stage that an official statutory structure has to be established,

- a broad consultation should be organized of representatives of all interested parties from the whole country as soon as possible;
- democratic procedures should be followed (there has to be participation, and decisions have to be preceded by consultations and proper discussions);
- all parties concerned should take an active part in the discussions and the activities and never allow, by passivity or laziness, one person, however competent and energetic, to take control of the whole structure;
- a prudent, carefully checked and justified financial management is essential (money is the source of many conflicts).

If we intend to keep the Al-Anon doors open, we should always keep in mind that our common welfare comes first. If we want to achieve and maintain unity and have a real community, we will have to share our responsibility and authority as Al-Anon servants with others, giving them the chance to become just as grateful and motivated as we are.

Discussion

Another structure's representative stated with a touch of sorrow that similar difficulties arose in his country at the time when the Belgian problems were resolved and that this situation has still not come to a happy conclusion.

The history of another structure indicated that trial and error taught them that difficulties can only be resolved in open, face-to-face discussions. There has been a rift over the appointment of delegates to the IAGSM, and other situations need to be mended. Proposals for a better structure are being made. Care will be taken not to do anything that might be punitive action or interpreted as punitive action.

In some structures, unity is considered threatened with requests for translations in languages other than the most common language.

One delegate remarked that having a Conference with a Board of Trustees builds trust.

The WSO was very concerned about the problem in Belgium as with all others but could take no position. Sometimes it is necessary to let mistakes happen and to suggest that the struggling structure take strength from the Concepts and Traditions, leaning on the wisdom of group conscience.

How the WSO Works Within

Myrna H., ICC

Although Al-Anon is a simple program, the structure of the World Service Office and the way it relates to the volunteer committees and the World Service Conference seem very complex.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., is the corporate title of the World Service Office. This formal title is used for legal and business purposes only. The less formal title, the World Service Office, is used within the fellowship.

The World Service Office is headed by a 19 member Board of Trustees that has the legal authority and responsibility to manage all the WSO's activities and funds. The Board consists of nine volunteer trustees-at-large, nine volunteer regional trustees, and one sustaining trustee, who is the salaried Executive Director. In keeping with Concept Four, "Participation is the key to harmony," the Executive Director serves as the Secretary of the Board with both voice and vote. Along with the Chairperson of the Board, the Executive Director is an ex-officio member of every committee.

The Board meets four times each year, although between meetings there is ongoing communication between Board members and with the WSO staff. The Board also delegates to the Executive Committee, which meets monthly, responsibility for actively overseeing the day-to-day operations of the World Service Office. The composition of the Executive Committee is described under Concept Eleven, but it should be noted here that a member of the administrative staff, in addition to the Executive Director, holds a seat on the Executive Committee. Once again, this is in keeping with the principle of participation, which ensures that no class be set in absolute authority over another.

According to Concept Eleven, "The World Service Office is composed of standing committees, executives and staff members." We have found over the years that the committee system truly works in harmony with both business and service functions. Each standing committee is headed by a volunteer chairperson appointed by the Board Chairperson, with approval given by the full Board of Trustees. The committee chairperson is assisted by a committee in the development and implementation of projects and services. Delegate members serve on most of the service committees and are called upon throughout the year for suggestions and opinions.

None of the service committees is executive in character. All committees explore ideas and make recommendations to the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees. Before launching a new project, each committee asks the Executive Committee or the Board for an opinion on the proposed project so they can move forward with the idea. If a committee receives approval to start a project, it must then submit in writing all the components of the project, including costs, utility, distribution (if applicable), and a variety of other data, so that the Executive Committee and ultimately the Board are fully informed.

Progress reports of all committee activities are provided to the Board each quarter, and the Deputy Executive Director gives monthly updates to the Executive Committee. With the Board having full authority for WSO operations, committees do not work in a vacuum. They are always mindful that the committee is accountable to the Board, which in turn is accountable to the World Service Conference. This is how double-headed management is avoided. The Deputy Executive Director gives updates as she supervises the staff administrators.

Next to the World Service Conference, the WSO Policy Committee provides the broadest expression of group conscience within the WSO's operations. The Policy Committee meets quarterly and is attended by the trustees, Executive Committee members, and committee chairpersons, along with the Administrative Staff, to discuss matters of Al-Anon policy and principle in light of our Traditions and Concepts. This committee is empowered to consider any problems and projects submitted by an Al-Anon member, as well as to reconsider a decision already made if dissented from by any part of the fellowship.

There are 58 paid staff workers at the World Service Office. Of this number, three are Executive Staff: the Executive Director, the Deputy Executive Director, and the Business Manager (who is not an Al-Anon member). There are also currently eight staff administrators, who coordinate services for Alateen, Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community, the World Service Conference, International Coor-

dination, Literature, The Forum, and Institutions. With the exception of the Business Manager, all these staff members must be a member of Al-Anon, as they vote at the Policy Committee and at the World Service Conference. Other staff need not be Al-Anon, as they perform a variety of clerical and specialized services to support the work of the Executive and Administrative Staff.

As I mentioned earlier, of the 18 volunteer Board members, nine are trustees-at-large and nine are regional trustees. Essentially, their functions at Board meetings are the same. One key difference, however, is that the regional trustees can be called upon by the area delegates within the region to help resolve local problems. For example, there has been a dispute of long standing between a district and an information service in one area. It seems the information service objected to the way the groups within the district were conducting their meetings and their public information activities. As a result, the information service dropped the groups in this district from its records and no longer referred newcomers to the meetings. This created a tremendous rift that could not be healed. Accusations went back and forth, and the World Service Office and several trustees were barraged with voluminous letters and phone calls begging for a resolution to the problem.

Though the rift is still not entirely cured, the regional trustee has been trying to work with both sides to help restore unity by bringing them all together to talk things over and reason things out. Because of personality clashes, we know it will take time, but with the regional trustee's gentle guidance and members' willingness to remain objective and open-minded, we feel confident all will be resolved in time. The regional trustee recently wrote that she is trying to improve her own communication skills and has attended a workshop called Cultivating Communication. Communication is really the basis for resolving all the problems that arise.

Throughout the year, the Board of Trustees and the staff continue to send material to the delegates on all matters relating to finances and services, so that when the

delegates arrive at the Conference, they have full background information on agenda items. Further, a Conference Brochure is provided to each member, containing the agenda and full background material.

At the WSO, we try to perform our tasks as would a well-oiled machine. To that end, scrupulous attention to detail and a willingness to cooperate and communicate with one another is required. We are always seeking ways to improve our operations and services so that we are never standing still or moving backward. Our efforts are always to drive forward, to be eager to learn what the members want and need from the World Service Office.

But, unlike a well-oiled machine, we are a service office with a heart. Though it may seem that we serve a top-heavy structure, we really are serving our groups and our members. We try never to lose sight of our focus—helping the people who come to us because they have been hurt by someone else's alcoholism. Our goal is to always reach out and welcome those who have not yet found us.

Discussion: Questions and Answers

Q. Please define "trustees-at-large."

A. In the beginning, all members of the Board were at-large. In 1970 it was decided also to have regional trustees. These trustees are chosen by the regions at the Conference. The choice is based on professional skills and a solid Al-Anon background. Each year three regional trustees are chosen at the Conference, and the Board of Trustees elects them at the Board meeting following the Conference.

For the nomination of trustees-at-large, there is a Nominating Committee that meets in July to review resumes sent in by candidates themselves. In October, six candidates are picked by a rating method and invited to a general Board dinner. The Board then selects three potential trustees, whose names are presented to the Conference in April and who are elected at the Board meeting at the Conference.

Trustees can serve a total of six years (two three-year terms). The Conference affirms the selection made by the Board.

The responsibilities of the regional trustees are the same as those of the trustees-at-large, but the former are often called upon for help by a delegate when problems arise in an area.

Each trustee holds a position as chairperson of a committee.

Q. What is the responsibility of a staff administrator?

A. A staff administrator is in close contact with the chairperson of his or her committee. The administrator's job is to communicate, to feel the pulse of the mail and the telephone calls, to suggest ideas, to implement discussions, and to call for consensus on important issues.

Q. Does the WSO pay fees to trustees?

A. Regions have a small fund through which they can reimburse a regional trustee's travel costs. The WSO has a large budget to cover trustees' expenses for travel and phone. It is essential that we receive a wide spectrum of opinion; trustees' expenses are worth the investment.

Q. What is the value of the Executive Committee?

A. The Executive Director explained that the Executive Committee does the work of the Board on a day-to-day basis and makes recommendations on the many details of the WSO's operations. The WSO is happy to have very talented people on the Executive Committee.

One delegate reported on the difficulties that Al-Anon faces when there isn't a proper structure, Board, or Conference in place. The groups are then afraid that the Board will assume all the power and that it will be seated forever.

The proposed idea is to start with a five-member Board elected at an assembly, which is a sort of conference of group representatives.

In order to ensure better communication and openness, it was suggested that the Board Chairperson write to each delegate after the Board meetings, explaining the happenings at each meeting, using the WSO as a model structure but allowing time for maturation.

Q. Can other structures produce their own TV material?

A. The WSO encourages all structures to do Public Information and to work with their own media. Creating TV public service announcements is an expensive process. Venezuela shared their product with the WSO. The WSO adopted their creative ideas, thus saving time and money.

The history of PI in other countries shows that structures have been making their own posters and TV spots for a number of years. We know that even good material is not always appropriate for universal use. For instance, WSO created a wonderful video with a postal worker. But it cannot be used elsewhere, because of the uniform the person wears.

The WSO does not distribute films made by outside sources. Nevertheless, we cooperate in any way possible (within the Traditions) during the creative and production stages to ensure that these movies are accurate.

Q. Is a GSO autonomous in creating posters and public service announcements in accord with its own cultural reality? If so, does it have to send these creations to the WSO for approval?

A. No approval of the WSO is needed. However, it is important that the Board of the relevant structure approve the material. Committees have a great deal of authority, but they must be accountable to the Board. In turn, the Board receives its authority from the Conference.

**Sponsorship:
The Strength and Heart**

Liisa L., Finland

I had an opportunity to take part in an Estonian Al-Anon meeting with the

International Administrator from the World Service Office last October.

You may know that Finland is situated in northern Europe between Sweden and Russia. To the south, at a distance by boat of a couple of hours, lies Estonia, the most northern of the three Baltic countries. Estonia regained its independence just a few years ago. It had been occupied by Russia for several decades. The Estonian language resembles Finnish and is comparatively easy to understand, but difficult to speak, for a Finn. Many Estonians know Finnish quite well, because they could watch Finnish television programs even when they were part of the Soviet Union.

With the help of Finnish AA, we were happy to arrange an Al-Anon information meeting for the relatives of alcoholics before the local AA meeting. Some wives of alcoholics attended. The first Al-Anon meeting was arranged immediately afterward. We had brought with us some literature in Finnish, and English, and the one Estonian translation the WSO had done. Ever since, letters about Al-Anon have been sent from Finland to Tallin (the capital of Estonia) and vice versa.

My home group and I have been very impressed with the speed with which the Estonian groups have grown to understand the core issues of Al-Anon. The following are extracts from the letters of one Estonian Al-Anon member, Merike:

"To live according to the Al-Anon program is for a lifetime."

"I am living in the third world: In the first world, my husband drank; in the second world, he went to AA; and in the third world, I am in Al-Anon."

There are also, naturally, some difficulties for the Estonian group in understanding the Al-Anon program:

- Alcoholism as a family disease: How does it affect the whole family? Am I also ill?

- Sick people are usually treated by doctors or psychiatrists. How can a group of laymen help?
- Religion was forbidden under Russian occupation. It is difficult to believe in the Higher Power.
- Is it correct to say, "I am the wife of an alcoholic," if the alcoholic denies the problem?

The Estonian group was sent all the Al-Anon literature translated into Finnish. My home group subscribed to the Finnish Al-Anon newsletter for them. The Finnish GSO invited Merike to participate in the two-day summer convention, which was held together with AA. She also participated in a Nordic Al-Anon meeting.

The Estonian group has advertised in a newspaper a couple of times, and an AA member spoke about Al-Anon on the radio. The people who contacted the group after the broadcast were mostly relatives of drug addicts. The group had not accepted them as members. We suggested that they be more tolerant.

Merike has also translated into Estonian some passages from the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Merike writes her translations by hand, and we type it in Finland, because the Estonian group does not have a typewriter at their disposal.

During her visit to Finland, Merike was impressed by the great openness with which the problems of living with an alcoholic were discussed. It is very easy to understand that the Estonians are not used to speaking about problems regarding individual relationships, because of the closeness of the society under Russia, so, Easy Does It!

I am very happy that I have been able to help the Estonians start regular Al-Anon meetings in Tallin. Once more I would like to urge you, when you visit countries where the Al-Anon program is still very young, to please attend the meetings. Sharing is the very best way to support a new group!

Discussion

Delegates shared some of the exchanges

they have had over the years working with one another. Argentina, for example, had a wonderful experience when Uruguay took part in their Conference. The GSO in London acts as an information service for all of English-speaking Europe.

The question was raised of how to connect small countries (like Malta) to an established structure so they can participate in the worldwide scope of Al-Anon. Using WSO history as a model was suggested. Years back, the issue came to the WSO of whether to make Bermuda a part of the North Carolina Area or to consider Bermuda a structure unto itself. Since Bermuda asked to be joined to the North Carolina Area, the World Service Conference voted to include it as part of the North Carolina Area. If a country asks to be part of another structure rather than create its own, then it is probably best to allow this to happen, with the consent of all parties.

Al-Anon in Poland

Olga (Anna) F., Poland

The Al-Anon message arrived in Poznan from Canada. Hanna, a member of Al-Anon, sent the first information to the therapeutic group for wives of alcoholics. This group was conducted by a psychologist at the treatment center for addicts. This group received the first pamphlets, translated by Hanna, and attempted to read them at meetings. In this way they discovered the principles of Al-Anon. This happened between 1973 and 1979.

A group was formed with the help of the fellowship and of the treatment center for addicts, which sent a lot of newcomers to Al-Anon. The members of this first group carried the message to every conference of the Polish AA service. On these occasions the wives of alcoholics accompanied their husbands. In this way Al-Anon meetings developed, and sometimes groups were started in other cities.

In 1980, the first Al-Anon group was registered at the WSO ("Ariadna" in Poznan). In 1984, there were five Al-Anon groups. Al-Anon groups were formed everywhere there was an AA group. The first

Polish directory listed 72 Al-Anon groups. In 1986, the first Alateen group was created and sponsored by Al-Anon Poznan.

A lot of Al-Anon members have spoken on the radio and TV about our program and about the creation of new groups, as well as sharing experience. Public information is often done in cooperation with professionals, the church, and the mass media. The church promotes sobriety in society and encourages people at special congresses to live without alcohol. The clergy invites members of AA and Al-Anon to share their experiences in overcoming alcoholism. During confession, priests encourage penitents to seek help in Al-Anon groups. In these ways a lot of people have found their way to Al-Anon.

Meetings are announced in newspapers. Articles about experiences in Al-Anon appear in magazines. There are also special programs on radio and TV in which Al-Anons are given the opportunity to inform people about alcoholism and to participate in discussions.

In 1987 permission was granted by the WSO to translate and reprint the first pamphlet. It was a folded card with the principles of the Al-Anon program on it. At that time the first intergroup was created in Poznan and was registered with the WSO. It serves 20 groups. The intergroup takes good care of unity and the integration of Al-Anon in all Poland. It encourages others to form intergroups around large cities.

Hanna, our Al-Anon sponsor in Canada, continues to translate pamphlets and books. The Literature Committee in Poznan adapts the language to modern Polish before we submit it for reprint approval. In 1990, the first edition of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* was printed at the Convent of the Capucins near Warsaw.

Members of Al-Anon groups in Poznan have begun special spiritual meetings, called Contemplation Days, held at the monastery near Warsaw four times per year. Members from all over Poland join these meetings to take spiritual rest. It gives them the chance to contemplate, pray together, and confess. Many newcomers join us to learn the Al-

Anon program and the way they can set up a new group. The idea of Al-Anon meetings has now spread all over Poland.

In 1991, four intergroups were in place, and the Al-Anon Temporary National Service Committee was born at the AA National Service Convention. In May 1994, the Temporary National Service Committee, which has the permission of WSO to reprint CAL, had its own volunteer staff and changed its name to the National Service Committee, the Polish GSO that provides service to the groups.

At the moment, the Polish fellowship has 284 groups (248 Al-Anon and 36 Alateen). There are also five groups of adult children, but they do not follow the Al-Anon program very closely. Seven intergroups, covering 180 groups, provide service to families of alcoholics in all of Poland except in the northeast.

Now the National Service Committee is trying to become incorporated. The main difficulty is lack of understanding of the Al-Anon program on the part of professionals and clergy. Professionals often interpret the Al-Anon program as the usual psychological therapy, which is not in accordance with our principles. It happens very often that a clergyman wishes to lead an Al-Anon group that was created at a church; that would exert unwanted influence on the group.

All this work in our country could not have been done without our sponsors in Canada, the U.S., Germany, and elsewhere. We are very grateful for all this help.

Discussion

In eastern Germany there are some 30 to 40 groups. West-German groups in the vicinity have tried to help them, but the easterners are suspicious. The German GSO would like to integrate these groups into the structure, but the Al-Anons in the east are not comfortable expressing themselves yet. The German GSO has a joint project with Denmark on PI, and they invite Austria and German Switzerland to their conference. But the eastern Germans are afraid of being told what to do.

Another delegate reported that Al-Anon groups initiated by the American military have formed in Izmir, Turkey.

The Spanish Delegate reported on contacts with Cuba. Spanish literature printed in the U.S. is prohibited in Cuba, so Spain has sent some. There is hope that groups will soon be formed in Cuba.

Sixty-two Al-Anon groups meet in Russia, with a service center in Moscow. The WSO writes them every six weeks and stresses the meaning of self-support and other Traditions. The problems in the former Soviet Union are tremendous; there are 104 languages spread across 11 time zones. By purchasing material and sending it over to the Russian groups until they can reprint literature themselves, Al-Anon groups around the world have been generous in making the provision of Russian literature possible.

Structures were encouraged to follow the initiative of Finland by going out and helping neighboring countries.

The WSO is also looking to help China when that society is more open. A quarter of the world's population lives there, untouched by Al-Anon. Taiwan had one group, which closed, and Al-Anon in the Philippines is having its own difficulties. The WSO is open to any suggestions on how to intensify the contact with smaller countries. As partners with the WSO, structures can offer more practical support than the WSO initially can, especially to those who have similar languages.

Autonomous—Yet Unified

Jo B., Italy

The principles of autonomy and unity seem to be a contradiction at first glance, but this is the miracle of Al-Anon. Within these principles lies the strength of our fellowship, with the checks and balances of the theme, "Autonomous—Yet Unified."

I would like to start with the Fourth Tradition as a common denominator: "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group, or Al-Anon

or AA as a whole." "Autonomous" may be so interpreted that individuals run their meetings anyway they want, use any kind of literature, and generally suit themselves. This is clearly a misinterpretation.

The autonomy granted by the Fourth Tradition is limited to what is good for the fellowship as a whole. The damage to the fellowship is inestimable if a group departs from the ideas and procedures that ensure, as the First Tradition says, "personal progress for the greatest number" of Al-Anon members.

This brings us to the second part of the theme: "Yet Unified." The Traditions ensure that our program and principles not be subject to change or dilution as we pass them on. If we, in Al-Anon today, do not uphold the basics in the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, then Al-Anon will not be in the future anything like it is today. The power of this spiritual concept "Autonomous—Yet Unified" has the fundamental effect of safeguarding the fellowship from ever losing its identity, enabling it to continue its primary purpose of reaching millions who still need Al-Anon's help but who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.

For starters, I would like to pose a few questions to the participants of this meeting:

- How does incorporation of separate AFG services affect Al-Anon as a whole?
- How does insurance coverage affect anonymity of members and, at the same time, respect individual legislation from country to country? Is it in the autonomy of each group to decide whether they should reveal their identity on insurance policies?
- Does the setting up of local information services (intergroup offices) detract from the services given through the Central Service or General Service Office?
- Who makes these decisions? District? Area? GSO? Board of Trustees?
- Area autonomy—how to operate?
- Sale of literature?
- Permanent committees—how autonomous are they? Do they have their own funds?

- Literature Committee funds—who decides on the administration of surplus from sales of literature? Is it the autonomy of the committee to decide?

You have to be *autonomous* to respect the local legislation in various countries, *yet unified* to be able to carry the message in such a way that the language barrier of each country is synonymous with the language of love spoken in Al-Anon worldwide. Our unity depends on the ability to freely express our individual feelings and yet respect the overall unity of Al-Anon.

We think that autonomy is also up to the group conscience when decisions are made about AA participation at our meetings or about Al-Anon participation at AA meetings, conventions, and the like.

If the group conscience is able to be freely expressed and follows in the steps of the links of service at the group, district, area, and Conference levels, then our autonomy is still there—and yet we are unified.

The individual Al-Anon member grants autonomy to the Board of Trustees over the decisions to be taken regarding the use of surplus funds. Could surplus funds from the sale of literature be considered as profit in some countries? This may be the case. How far does our autonomy go? And how do the various structures deal with these problems in respect to the theme, "Autonomous—Yet Unified"?

I would like to share with you my own personal experience as to how impressed I was to see this very principle applied at this year's World Service Conference. Professional help has been widely used by the Board of Trustees regarding taxation, local insurance, and feasibility studies for relocation. The decision to do this was clearly made in the autonomy of group conscience. The result was unity, because all the delegates were fully informed and had the necessary information to enable them to make the decisions. These decisions were made in great serenity and love, and with a

great sense of responsibility on the part of our trusted servants.

It is in the autonomy of each structure to consult experts for help in matters where professional help is necessary. Autonomy also covers the amount of trust we choose to give to our trusted servants to serve and make decisions for the well-being of our fellowship as a whole. [Autonomy] also means relinquishing control over others and trusting their decisions, which are made for the continued well-being of Al-Anon as a whole, worldwide.]

How do we administer our funds? Again, it is sometimes convenient to use autonomy as an excuse to keep hold of what we may think is ours, instead of turning it over to our General Service Office, area, district, or World Service Office in order to guarantee that the message will always be carried in the most efficient way to those who are still suffering from the effects of the disease of alcoholism either in a relative or a friend.

These principles, under which Al-Anon operates, have been unfolding and continue to amaze me as I travel down this miraculous path with wonder, gratitude, motivation, (and I hope) responsibility, with the help of my Higher Power and each and every one of you.

Discussion

The WSO takes outside help from consultants when it cannot resolve a certain problem, and follows the recommendations of the consultant once the Board approves. The results are communicated to the Conference. When using consultants, it is essential to keep the Conference informed. The Concepts indicate that the Conference can dissolve the Board; and knowing that, the Conference can have confidence in the Board.

The Relocation Committee of the WSO did its work with love and respect. The discussion on property ownership was miraculous, and the decision was reached in all serenity.

GSOs Creating Original Recovery Material

Ric B., U.S. & Canada

Creating and producing recovery material is something that has always been reserved for the WSO. All materials originate from the World Service Conference. The CAL process also states that approval for new material begins with the Conference.

In 1992, the International Coordination Administrator at the WSO received a request from a literature translation team to produce a recovery piece in their own country. A similar request was received in 1994 as well. The question came up whether our Board of Trustees would ever grant permission for the country to produce recovery material. The subject was presented in 1992 to the Board of Trustees, who wanted time to examine the request, as it was a departure from the norm and a change in the WSO philosophy. The Policy Committee, which is the largest expression of group conscience, considered the question as well, and varying viewpoints were expressed.

Ultimately the Policy Committee felt that the subject should be considered as a topic for discussion at the 1992 IAGSM. The Board agreed that the IAGSM delegates needed to discuss and bring the idea back to their GSOs. Should the IAGSM agree to eventually move in this direction, the Board felt, certain criteria should be met.

Therefore, in 1992 a motion at the WSO Board meeting was made, seconded, and carried "...that the Board of Trustees transmits to the IAGSM, that the WSO would agree to licensing or permitting a GSO outside the U.S. and Canada to create original recovery material, provided that the IAGSM concurs and that the GSO meets the following minimum requirements:

1. Before a structure creates and prints recovery material, it would have to have a General Service Office and a National Conference.
2. As part of the Conference, a Literature Committee is required.
3. A review process used by the Literature Committee should be modeled after the CAL process in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies."
4. Any new material would be marked "Approved by the General Service Conference" of that structure.

This year the various structures have had an opportunity to review the topic and the criteria with their Boards. The WSO Board of Trustees reaffirmed its position that the IAGSM must first discuss the topic before the Board would make a final decision.

Discussion

In Argentina, this matter was discussed at three or four Board meetings and presented to the Conference. Opinions were divided, and no decision was reached. Some questions arose: If permission is granted, could such material then be translated into other languages? What about copyright? What would be the role of the WSO?

The issue originated in Germany, where a lack of recovery material dealing with sexual problems was felt. Originally, the German structure only wanted to make a compilation of pieces published in *The Forum* and in *News and Views*, but struggled with the copyright. The question was discussed at the German Board meeting, at its Conference and in the groups. The German Conference voted in favor of the creation of their own recovery material. Since more and more structures are formed around the world, they each have an obligation to carry the message and not continue to be so dependent on the WSO. Concept Four says that the groups have ultimate responsibility for our world services. At the present time, it is not the groups worldwide, but the World Service Conference that has ultimate responsibility. Today each structure may create its own PI material. Germany now proposes that each structure that meets the requirements set by the WSO Board be allowed to produce its own recovery material. The following Motion #4 was proposed:

The IAGSM recommends to the Board of Trustees to decide that each structure may produce original recovery material within the framework set down by the Board of Trustees.

Belgium reported this subject was discussed at all levels, and there was agreement on the idea of granting national structures permission to develop and produce original recovery material, but only on the condition that material be approved both by the National Service Conference and by the World Service Conference. A written declaration from the Flemish-Belgium Board was read, which outlined the WSO's position and the current status of the request to create material outside the WSC. The declaration concludes thus:

Whereas, the request to grant national structures permission to create and produce original recovery material has aroused in Al-Anon Flemish-speaking Belgium uneasiness from and concern for the unity of Al-Anon worldwide and fear for proliferation of inadequate recovery material declares that it, nevertheless, agrees with the idea of granting national structures permission to develop and reproduce original recovery material, but only on one condition, namely that this material shall be approved not only by the National Service Conference, but also by the World Service Conference.

The delegate proposed that the words "requiring WSO approval" be added to the above Motion #4.

The Delegate from German Switzerland reported that while most members there consider themselves grown up enough to create their own recovery material, this opinion was not unanimous.

The Delegate from Brazil stated that full discussions at the Board and the Conference revealed divided opinions. The majority cautioned against loss of unity, our greatest treasure. The Brazilian community is very different from the North American or European, but human nature is the same everywhere. Brazil feels there is no real necessity to create original recovery material elsewhere. Would it not be embarrassing if

the WSO had to turn down a piece submitted by a structure?

French Belgium added that discussion at their Board generated fear of dilution and loss of unity.

At the 1993 Australian Conference, the overwhelming majority voted no to the creation of its own recovery material. In 1994, the Conference voted unanimously "that original material should continue to be produced and approved by the World Service Conference."

Iceland's message after discussion at the Board is that our literature would lose unity and the soft tone if it is created in so many places, and translation would be a problem.

The creation of recovery material was the subject discussed at two Board meetings in the U.K. & Eire, where a fear of dilution and loss of unity was felt. The majority was not in favor.

Belgium added that the size of a structure creating material is important, because where there's a large structure, there is no risk of a small number of individuals imposing their will or creating inadequate material.

Discussion at the Board and the Conference in Spain has led to an overwhelming "no," for now. Sweden was of the same opinion. France preferred allowing creation of original recovery material commensurate with the culture and habits of the country, but with the ultimate approval of the WSC.

The Delegate from U.K. & Eire reported that her Board was not in favor of creation of material. However, the delegates did not share the Board's opinion, which created a dilemma.

The Delegate from the U.S. declared that most of the fears and concerns expressed at this meeting are concerns of the U.S. & Canada structure as well: We don't have the answer to many questions proposed here today about the translation of this newly created material.

Delegates were asked to vote for the

amendment to add the words "and with the approval of the World Service Conference." Result of vote: 23 yes; 19 no. The proposed change was not approved.

Delegates then voted on the original motion which read:

The IAGSM recommends to the Board of Trustees to decide that each structure may produce original recovery material within the framework set down by the Board of Trustees.

Result of the vote: 10 yes; 32 no. The motion did not carry.

Anonymity

Clemens H., Netherlands

When I went to Al-Anon the first time, I was pretty scared, for I did not expect to know anyone. It is rare that I go somewhere I do not know anybody. With trembling knees, I rang the bell and went in. Indeed, everybody was strange to me. The welcome was warm, and soon I felt a lot more at ease with these strangers who appeared to be my fellow sufferers. I noticed how much their stories resembled my own. Here I could air my feelings of powerlessness, worry, oppression, fear, insecurity, and repression, and tell about the incredibilities that filled my days and nights.

For many years I had kept everything to myself, and now I did not have to any longer. What is more, they believed me. The table card with the following text appealed to me immediately:

*Who you see here
What you hear here
When you leave here
Let it stay here*

It is a promise of trust that we repeat at every group meeting. In this way, Al-Anon is a refuge for people in need where they can feel safe; where they can ask for and give help, support, encouragement, and, above all, understanding. My Wednesday night meeting became immediately a fixed date in my agenda; this gathering was a blessing for me that I would not have

anybody take away. It felt like a warm bath that you get into overtired and from which you emerge totally refreshed. Slowly I got rid of my tension and dared to give my telephone number, to tell something about my profession, my daily work, my village, and so forth. Gradually Al-Anon became the refuge where I could be completely myself. I did not have to wear a mask to cut away from my personality what others were not allowed to know.

Anonymity in Al-Anon is time and again a very important topic. Not only the identity of its members should not be revealed, but also their family members and/or AA members. Al-Anon offers help and hope to families and friends of alcoholics. It is not the carrier of the message who is important, but the message itself. The one who carries the message this way sets himself aside and makes himself of secondary importance to the spiritual principle of anonymity. To set oneself aside, and to be humble are not virtues very appealing to people of this day. "Ego tripping" appeals to us more than being an anonymous member of a fellowship or community. But we will have to free ourselves of this individualism and direct our attention to fellowship, brotherhood, and community. Against the tendency of this day and age, we will keep practicing the virtue of humility and, if necessary, discuss it.

When the valuable principles of Al-Anon serve as guides in our daily actions, Al-Anon will be successful in depth, intensity, and size in the nineties and in the new century. It would be wise to put our common welfare above individuality and to show this in word and action at all levels and in all circumstances.

In the Dutch structure, we have had repeated problems in these past years with the application of anonymity. In 1987 an internal telephone directory for Al-Anon was being prepared. By chance, it was discovered that an Alateen group's only telephone contact was the number of an AA member. The group involved preferred the AA sponsor to the Al-Anon sponsor and wanted to have its own way. At that time the Board of Directors was not able to come to a unanimous decision on this subject, and

the Alateen Coordinator, also a Board member, was not willing to change her opinion.

A telephone call to the WSO did not bring about any change in the divided opinion of the Board members, and so it was proposed to present the problem to the groups. Alateen refused, as this could harm the anonymity of the AA member concerned; when looking at the telephone directory, everyone would immediately know the identity of the AA member concerned.

Alateen delivered an ultimatum: It would publish its own telephone directory if the number was to be excluded. To prevent worse things from happening, the suggestion was made to include the number concerned for one year and search for another and better solution.

This would not satisfy, so it was suggested to put the problem before the WSO. However, in the letter to the WSO, the matter was not correctly represented: "A matter has arisen in our National Group Representatives' Meeting, upon which our group conscience has not been able to decide." Up until then, it had been only a Board problem, and it had not been discussed thoroughly at the Group Representatives' Meeting, nor had anything been decided.

The reply from WSO said:

An AA member in an Alateen group is the assistant to the sponsor, and it is best to list the Al-Anon sponsor as the contact. However, if this is impossible and the person in AA is willing to have his or her name as the contact for the Alateen group, that would be a practical solution. Of course, one would not indicate his or her membership of AA, for that is not their role in the group; the person's role is Alateen sponsor.

In translation, "a practical solution" was interpreted as "a good solution," not "a provisional solution for a given period of time." The reply did not get the right interpretation. After this letter was received, it was not sent with a copy of the question and a correct translation to the groups (representatives) for their consideration. In

view of the incorrect and dishonest way it was handled, not at all worthy of Al-Anon, several Board members resigned and decided never to have anything to do with this matter. After some years, seven AA telephone numbers appeared on the list, which was compiled by the Board member/Alateen Coordinator herself. As a result of this conflict, Al-Anon in the Netherlands got into administrative and structural chaos. Many members left service, and the meetings only ended in trouble and conflicts. The remaining Board members were not competent.

Gathering our strength, we have realized a more democratic and open legal structure in stages, with a new generation of active Al-Anons at group, district, and national levels. But we still have the remains of this unsolved conflict, which got worse over the years. After long discussions and the gathering of information, an ample majority of the groups decided on another legal structure and body. Most Alateen groups dissociated themselves from this and sided with the former legal body.

For more details, I'd like to refer to the description of the history of Al-Anon in the Netherlands. An initially innocent-looking difference of opinion grew to be the cause of a long-lasting conflict, which up to the present has not been solved. We had lost sight of the Traditions "our common welfare should come first" and "principles above personalities." Members have been identified with this conflict and the resulting friction, and others can't let go.

Two years ago, the new Board decided to compromise, but in vain. There was no willingness to cooperate, and there were new objections. Two Al-Anon, two Alateen, and 18 Al-Anon adult children groups formed a separate entity. In the fall of 1992, the Board and the National Representatives' Meeting decided to stop further negotiations and contacts. It cost too much emotion and energy.

Nevertheless, we promised that we would be ready to resume negotiations at any moment. Some months ago, new talks started. The initiative was taken by some Al-Anons who had suffered too much

under this conflict. In September, the Board will meet the Board members of the other legal body to reason things out, but quite a lot of suspicion and distrust has to be cleared before we can come to cooperation and integration. We hope and pray for the best.

Recently, a newspaper article was sent to me by an Al-Anon member. It concerned a reporter's interview of an Al-Anon adult children group in one of our districts. First of all, nowhere in the article was the word "Al-Anon" found. Moreover, the business information was not correct; the article said that grown-up women weekly attend meetings of Alateen, a self-help group for children of alcoholics. (All the women were well out of their teens.) In the middle of the story, it read: "Alateen has its origins in AA." Fortunately, we know better, but the reader believes this. On the whole, it is a depressing story in which there is no ring of the message of hope and personal happiness. From the story it appears that the reporter attended a group meeting and literally quoted what the members said. In this very extensive newspaper article it says: "in order to guard privacy, several names have been changed." Not all of them were changed, however; two women insisted on mentioning their own names. We ought to respect every person, but we should also speak up if we believe that mistakes are being made that violate the Traditions. Every individual and every group ought to have the intention to serve the interest of Al-Anon and Alateen and their members: "Our common welfare should come first; principles above personalities." These ideas on anonymity are not exhaustive or complete.

Fiscal Responsibility and Gratitude

Vivan A., Sweden

I came to my first Al-Anon meeting in May 1988. We talked mainly about the Twelve Steps but also a little about service, because our group needed a new group representative. So after a few months, the members asked me to be their group representative. I said yes, because at that time I could not

say no. I did not understand then how much responsibility that "yes" would bring along. In September of the same year I went to my first service meeting.

We talked about many service matters and about Al-Anon's money. I understood that the "money from the hat" was very important. At the meeting there were two delegates who gave reports from the IAGSM. It was very exciting to hear about how we in Sweden could work with Al-Anon members from the whole world. The members of the meeting had to vote on whether Al-Anon should send delegates to the next IAGSM. Many of the members said no, because of the expense. I thought we should be working together across borders. To share experiences is a way of giving and taking, and that is what we do in Al-Anon. I suggested the group representatives go home and stress the importance of the Seventh Tradition.

If everyone gave more money in the hat, Al-Anon could go on sending delegates to IAGSMs. At this time, I understood I could do something for Al-Anon, and I started my service work. Back home in my group, I tried to convince the members of the importance of the Seventh Tradition and of service work. My work as a group representative went on, and after one year I had already begun to work at our service office as a volunteer. At the office I gave information about Al-Anon's program to worried relatives, and I tried to tell group members about the importance of the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts of Service. And of course I stressed Tradition Seven. Most of all I spoke about the importance of taking responsibility and about how Al-Anon money should be spent.

When we had work meetings in our group, we talked about the Seventh Tradition and how important it was to do a little bit of service work. Sometimes I thought the members did not like me, but I found it was necessary to speak about these things. After two years as a volunteer at the service office, Al-Anon had enough money to pay me a salary for one evening per week. I think if we had not worked together, talking about the importance of the Traditions, this

would never have been possible. To serve Al-Anon in that way has given me strength and stability in recovery.

I progressed in service work and soon became the General Secretary; later, Chairperson of the Executive Committee; and now I even have to work the Al-Anon finances. Together with the other members of the Executive Committee I try to divide Al-Anon money as fairly as possible.

Growing in responsibility, I was accepted as the international delegate to represent Sweden at the IAGSM in 1992. Even if it was my dream when I attended my first service meeting, I could not believe it was true when they called out my name at the service conference of 1991. I am so grateful.

All this happened in a very short time, in less than five years, but I think if we work with responsibility and gratitude, we can grow fast.

Discussion

The discussion began with three questions sent to the WSO prior to the meeting.

Q. If we do service work in institutions, may we accept a fee, and is that in accordance with the Seventh Tradition?

A. The expenses of a speaker may be reimbursed, but no fee may be accepted.

Q. How do other structures handle translations? Do they pay a professional, or do they work exclusively with volunteers?

A. The German structure has eight to ten volunteers. Their Board considered the purchase of computers to translate service papers. They also make use of professional translators, provided they are Al-Anon or AA.

Q. Is the Literature Committee entitled to keep the surplus money for literature and printing expenses?

A. New Zealand has only one bank account; it is controlled by the Board. The committees submit yearly budgets.

In the U.S. & Canada the Chairperson of the Literature Committee submits a budget, and the WSO finances the activities.

In Brazil there is only one bank account; it is controlled by the Board. Translators are volunteers. Al-Anon Brazil's income is equally from donations and sale of literature. The Board and the Conference approve the budget from the Budget Committee. The Board has asked that Brazil's national magazine be self-sufficient.

Flemish Belgium has a separate account to receive subscriptions; that makes it easier to administer the subscriptions. The money is transferred to the GSO account twice a year. The yearly budget is made by the Finance Committee and approved by the Conference. The delegate remarked that it would not be healthy if the Literature Committee were to manage its own finances, since the greatest part of Al-Anon's income is from the sale of Conference-Approved Literature.

In Argentina, the Literature Committee once had its own bank account, but that arrangement was abandoned long ago. The sale of CAL is the most important source of income in Argentina. Finances are controlled by the Finance Committee, the Executive Committee, and ultimately the Board of Trustees.

Caution was voiced about the dangers of too much autonomy in committees. No personal bank accounts are allowed. Suppose a person has a fatal accident; then the money in that person's Al-Anon account is lost to Al-Anon, because only the heirs have access.

In Australia there's no separate account for the Literature Committee. They have a paid literature officer who reports to the Budget Committee. He makes recommendations to the Board. In French-speaking Belgium, there is no need for translators, since they buy their literature from Canada. A committee makes selections, decides on the selling price, and places orders. The Financial Administrator decides whether a purchase can be made. In Italy and France, the Literature Committees have their own accounts and do their own ordering.

In the Netherlands, all bank accounts were

merged into one after the 1992 IAGSM. All committees submit budgets. In Spain, two signatures are required for all payments. The structure operates with a budget, and all committees are accountable to the Board. Finland reports the income from literature separately. However, the budget shows one consolidated account. The GSO administers both accounts, supervised by the Executive Committee.

The delegates asked for financial guidelines from the WSO. It was agreed to prepare financial guidelines with the input from discussions at previous IAGSMs and an ad-hoc committee of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Finland, and the U.S. & Canada.

Overcoming Al-Anon Weariness (Or Burnout)

Ros A., South Africa

Exciting changes are taking place in South Africa right now. We have a new government, voted in by the majority, and in fact our new government, within the last few days, just celebrated its one-hundredth day in office. Change is the order of the day, and that same change has to happen within Al-Anon as well.

We feel that one of the prime reasons—if not *the* prime reason—for weariness and burnout is the reluctance of members to relinquish their service positions. This causes rotation of jobs to cease, and fewer and fewer people come into service; they become discouraged and lose motivation and interest in service. Another reason put forward is the criticism and lack of patience that older members display toward newer ones, again discouraging rather than encouraging them to join the service ranks.

Weariness, some believed, resulted from the total exclusion of any life outside of the fellowship—family, hobbies, and so forth. As someone said, "There is life after service."

We also have a unique problem in South Africa; it is very unsafe for women to travel distances at night, whether alone or in

groups. This makes it very difficult for future members to get to meetings, although we do have some members who somehow manage against all odds.

There are 11 official languages in our country, so it is a great challenge to do PI work, which is my service job. But we do have active members from all cultures in service, including members attending our Conferences from what used to be neighboring states. AA and Al-Anon have always been multiracial in South Africa.

We feel there are not as many members as there could be, because we do not have the monopoly on recovery. There are now many other Twelve-Step programs and treatment agencies; these draw members away from Al-Anon.

A new trend in our country is that even though we are invited to participate in seminars on alcoholism, we are now (along with everyone else) expected to pay for any participation in the seminars.

We have had a wonderful experience being here in Brussels with you; thank you for showing us love and friendship. We would like to leave you with the following thought on service: "Pray as though everything depended on God, and act as though everything depended on you."

Discussion

The key words in the discussion were "overinvolvement", "apathy", "control", and "our responsibility".

We must create the opportunity for other people to serve and therefore grow. We can't assume other people feel the gratitude we do.

Weariness through lack of rotation creates weariness of always seeing the same faces. When there's a lot of arguing or hostility in service, people become disenchanted and leave Al-Anon or service. Then it is better to step back, not battle, and let go. It could destroy rather than build. Sometimes it helps when you ask for a moment of silence and recite the Serenity Prayer.

Delegates' Choice

This agenda topic gives the delegates the opportunity to get answers to specific questions and discuss any concerns.

The Delegate from the U.K. & Eire requested that all European GSOs send them a copy of their current directory, and they will send one of theirs in return. She addressed the topic of increased involvement of structures in the organization of the IAGSM. Her belief was that the WSO would like General Service Offices to be partners, not pupils. That has not happened. As she explained, she did not feel that the structures had enough involvement in the decision-making process of the IAGSM, and she would like to see the WSO let go of a parental attitude.

The chairperson explained how the delegates' input is valued and used in deciding IAGSM topics. The delegate explained her request in terms of the concept of delegate participation on standing committees at the WSC. This kind of participation builds trust and widens the scope of intown members. Delegate membership on the International Coordination Committee could do the same. A concern and caution from the U.S. & Canada Delegate indicated that the IAGSM was not conceived to be a decision-making body over the GSO, and having more participation does not give the IAGSM controlling power over the WSO. To have a past delegate chair the IAGSM would be very difficult without that delegate's attending the ICC meeting, but you can be assured that the World Service Conference will be pleased to hear that you want greater participation.

Motion #6 was presented as follows:

The IAGSM recommends that the World Service Conference consider the possibility that a delegate from each zone of the Admissions Committee serve as a delegate on the International Coordination Committee (ICC) as a participant in the IAGSM decisions on a trial basis for two IAGSMs.

The discussion made clear that there is no intent in this motion for the delegates to come to New York for meetings, but rather to be in contact by letter and phone

regarding decisions. Some of the questions raised were:

- How will the delegates from each zone be chosen?
- Is the delegate a spokesperson for the zone?
- Is the delegate chosen, or is it the structure that is chosen?
- Are the delegates to keep in direct contact with the other countries and have all information go through them, and only then to WSO?

The suggestion was made to have meetings of countries within a zone between the IAGSMs, as the delegates heard that the Nordic countries meet separately each year off the agenda of the IAGSM. This year they particularly set out to encourage Denmark to participate again at the IAGSM.

Some delegates believe that participation at the World Service Conference with voice and vote should be offered in the future to those outside the U.S. & Canada.

The Executive Director of the WSO offered these thoughts on whether delegates should vote as instructed by their GSOs or on the basis of how they themselves think: In Concept Two, the idea of delegated authority is expressed, and our whole structure is based on that. (See Service Manual, p. 137.) The GSO elects and trusts you to bring with you their voice and concern, and it is up to the delegate to balance his or her emotions with that of what the structure wants.

Several delegates suggested that the delegates trust the ICC to work out the details of participation. With that in mind, the motion was passed.

A second motion on the same issue of management of the IAGSM—Motion #7 stated:

That the International Coordination Committee consider the possibility of a past IAGSM delegate to be elected as chair of the next IAGSM.

One structure shared an experience of having a delegate chair their National Conference, instead of someone from the

GSO; the results were not positive. Other delegates suggested that the delegates chair portions of the IAGSM. The criteria for chairing the IAGSM were requested, and it was explained that the Chairperson of the Board chooses the International Coordination Committee Chairperson.

After assurances that the WSO was open to greater participation by the delegates, the motion was withdrawn.

After much discussion on the principle of participation, a new motion was formed. The details of how to accomplish this new motion will be a gradual process evolving through the ICC. Motion #8 read:

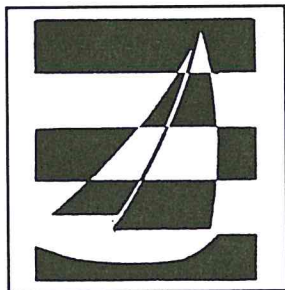
That the IAGSM requests that the ICC expand the opportunities for participation in and leadership of the IAGSM.

The motion was approved (36 yes, 2 no, 2 abstentions).

There were some questions as to who notifies WSO of the selection of a new delegate, and the majority thought notification should come from the GSO. The question of financing additional days at the IAGSM because of traveling more than 12 hours was answered by one delegate—the GSO pays for extra days to help make the traveling more feasible.

The AA International Convention with Al-Anon Participation San Diego, California June 29–July 2, 1995

This Convention marks the sixtieth anniversary of AA. Al-Anon will join with AA in their celebration and evening activities.



Throughout the day, Al-Anon will hold workshops, big and small meetings in Spanish, French, German, and other languages.

For evening action, on Thursday there will be AA dances in five different places. Friday is the traditional and moving AA flag ceremony. Saturday is an old-timers' AA meeting. On Sunday there is a Spiritual Meeting. All activities will take place at an outdoor stadium.

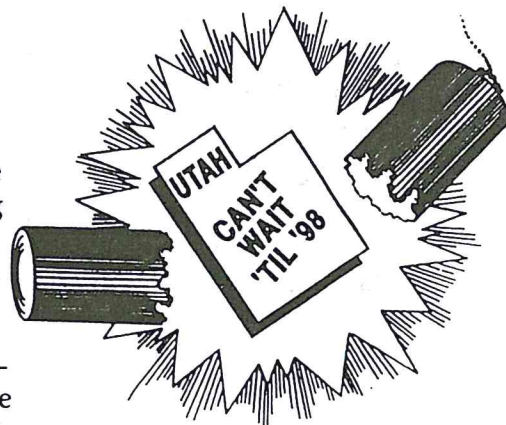
Conventioneers will be accommodated in 185 hotels (some in Mexico) in the price range of their choice. Hotels will be assigned by the Convention Bureau of San Diego, and a large number of Spanish-speaking conventioneers is expected. The universities have beautiful facilities. Transportation around the city and to hotels will be accomplished through a shuttle bus system.

The WSO is planning a small ticketed luncheon event for those serving at the national level. As time draws closer, more details will be sent through the GSO to past and present IAGSM delegates. WSO hopes to make this a joyful face-to-face event for service workers.

Al-Anon's Third International Convention with AA Participation Salt Lake City, Utah July 2–5, 1998

At this Convention, Al-Anon will hold all the big evening events, as well as daytime workshops and other-language meetings. The down-

town area of Salt Lake City lends itself to an Al-Anon Convention, with all event sites within a three-block area and plenty of space for impromptu street gatherings.



International Spirituality Book

The WSO has initiated a project intended to show our diversity and, at the same time, our unity. Members from all over the world are invited to write down in their own language their experiences with the spiritual part of Al-Anon. They should send them for translation to the WSO either through their GSO or directly. The WSO will work to get the sharings translated and pass them on to the Literature Committee, which will make selections from the material received. The sharings will be compiled in a book, hopefully with selections from many countries. The target year for publication is 1998; the cutoff date for submissions is the end of 1996.

Unfinished Business

The Delegate from Argentina voiced his concern that Al-Anon groups are not growing in number in his country, as is the case in a number of other countries. The Argentina Board asked a Long-Range Planning Team to study this, and they will have a one-day meeting in November on this subject, with the theme "Coming Back to Our Basics." The points to be treated, among others, are sponsorship, service level, and ways to improve coordination among the groups and spending more time studying the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts. Brazil has done marvelous work on this. Argentina has benefited from Brazil's experience and used a translation of Brazil's report as a basis to begin study.

The WSO has a similar concern. We are more accurate at counting our groups today, but we are not seeing the growth we need. This will be coming up at the 1995

Conference. Australia is experiencing larger groups but no marked increase in the number of groups. As is true in the U.S. & Canada, they have new groups, but other groups drop. There has been a 50 percent growth in Finland, thanks to adult children.

The Spanish Delegates note that where there is structure and a district, there is also group growth.

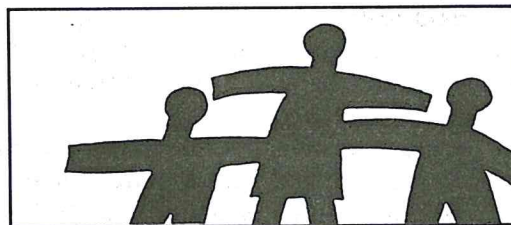
The French Belgian Delegate reminded the meeting of a letter all structures received from a member in Quebec, who states his unhappiness with WSO performance on Russian literature, the selling of Lois's picture, and original material in all countries. This member felt that the WSO was doing unnecessary work to justify its existence. WSO's response was read. It gave a history of some action and underscored WSO's role as a clearinghouse of information to help spread the Al-Anon message worldwide to those affected by a loved one's alcoholism.

The question of Alateen sponsorship and role of AAs as assistant sponsors was raised, since there is some concern and confusion on this matter. The policy at the WSO concerning this is

Every Alateen group should have an Al-Anon sponsor. An AA member may assist a group. If, however, the AA member is also an Al-Anon member, he or she may serve as the sponsor by virtue of his or her Al-Anon membership. Emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program at all times.

Finding sponsors for Alateen groups is difficult in every structure.

Workshop Reportback



Three work groups, composed of delegates who were given the opportunity to choose their preferred work group, discussed the topics that follow.

Communicating— Carrying the Message

Reporter: *Joan W., New Zealand*

Discussion led by: *Monica S., Switzerland*

The key to success in Al-Anon is communication. Whether we are talking to professionals, contacting the media, working within our structure, or setting a good example for each other, we are carrying the message and communicating hope. We are a fellowship of equals.

The Al-Anon message is one of strength, hope, and joy of life. We strive to be effective in two-way communication. We pass our message on and show good example. In spite of all our differences in age, race, background, and social standing, we have one common denominator. It is of utmost importance that we be equals.

The degree of anonymity in communicating is a personal choice of each person. We do not have to be anonymous about alcoholism, but we must take care of protecting the anonymity of our loved ones; it is not up to us to decide about theirs.

In PI work giving up part of one's anonymity is inevitable when speaking in public. It may be necessary to give our name and address to outside agencies so they can contact us. It is important to stay within the confines of the Eleventh Tradition before radio, TV and film.

Some structures advertise meetings in local papers; several have special PI months;

others have monthly PI meetings. In the U.K. & Eire, Regional Service Seminars are organized to encourage members into service. Most structures have speakers available to spread the message and write letters to lawyers, clergy, and doctors. In Belgium, letters are also addressed to big corporations. Displays are set up in libraries as a form of PI. Argentina works mainly with professionals in CPC work. In Italy, taxes must be paid and permission is needed before posters can be put up; work is done in cooperation with AA.

Alateen

Reporter: *Deirdre M., U.K. & Eire*

Discussion led by: *Joy R., Australia*

Alateen members get together at meetings to help one another with common problems. They share experiences, learn about alcoholism, and concentrate on personal growth. As they learn to face problems with courage, they find their lives can be filled with satisfaction, joy, and love.

It appears to be difficult in every country to get sponsors for Alateen groups. We often experience difficulties with sponsors—how does one become a sponsor, and who should they be? We have found that it helps arouse interest in Alateen when we set up workshops for sponsors. Sponsors should allow Alateens to run their own meetings—try not to be teachers. It helps if a sponsor has or had an alcoholic parent.

How can we attract Alateens? Should we distribute lollipops? No, our aim is to help human beings who suffer the effects of alcoholism. Alateens deserve to be pampered a little. We must also focus our PI work on Alateen issues. It may be a good idea to form a sponsors' committee. It would also

be a good idea if an Al-Anon group sponsored an Alateen group and helped them financially and provided transportation.

To integrate Alateen better into the Al-Anon structure and make sure Alateen's voice is heard, some structures invite them to their district meetings and provide financial support. In Germany, Alateen has its own structure, with delegates to the Conference and a member on the Board. This situation evolved because Al-Anon did not acknowledge Alateen enough. Alateen even has its own newspaper. In French Belgium, Alateen made a video film with the help of sponsors. In Spain, Alateen has its own committee under the responsibility of a Board member. In Norway, one member of the Board speaks on behalf of Alateen, though only two groups exist.

Meetings in schools could solve problems for children whose parents do not follow the AA or Al-Anon program. Sponsors are very hard to get. In the U.K., meetings could be held in schools, if only there were sponsors. In the U.S. there are many Alateen meetings in schools, but they are not very successful. One attempt to improve them was to set up separate meetings for boys and girls. It is useful to get the school counselor involved; that will make it easier for pupils to attend.

In South Africa, letters were sent to all schools, a video shown, and literature distributed. Schools were very interested. They attempt to fit Alateen into after-school activities. There are concerns about anonymity.

It is not easy to motivate Alateens to move on into Al-Anon at a later age. We must try to get them involved; tell them we need them and their experience in the group. A sponsor can be useful to ease the transition and thus reduce the impact of change from Alateen to Al-Anon. Make the Alateen member realize the importance of his or her experience as a means to help others. We must be open to the fact that young people have their own way of expressing themselves, and we should not tell them repeatedly how they should act and behave. In South Africa there is a young Al-Anon transitional group. Giving Alateens a sense of belonging will encourage participation.

PI—Attraction and Promotion

Reporter: *Marleen W., Belgium (Flemish)*

Discussion led by: *Gunnhildur O., Iceland*

Our Eleventh Tradition states:

"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, and films. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members."

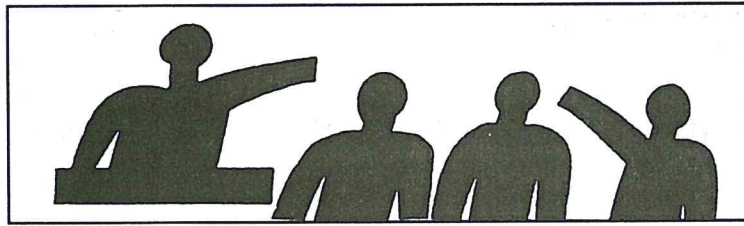
We can hardly do PI work without knowing the Traditions, of which One, Five, Eleven, and Twelve are related with PI work. Through PI work at institutions, through social workers and schools, we reach people who are still suffering. We do not wish to use the Traditions as a weapon. Sometimes we have to compromise and give up a bit of one Tradition for the sake of another.

The most important thing that distinguishes attraction from promotion is that the former is produced with the heart. We do not have to convince but just tell people where and when they can reach us. Al-Anon is anonymous, not secret.

Opinions on the sale of Conference-Approved Literature to libraries and commercial bookshops were divided. Some structures already sell outside Al-Anon. Our aim is to reach out to people who need us. Many structures may not sell outside of Al-Anon because of their nonprofit status. In such cases, the PI people distribute brochures at information sessions and donate books to libraries.

Members should be attracted into PI work from each group. It is of prime importance that members are told how to do PI work, since this is how perceptions of Al-Anon are formed. We should make sure that others get a chance to do public information work. Most delegates found that unity is enhanced when PI material is printed nationwide, not by individual districts or groups. Most structures use only American material translated into their own language.

Round Table Discussions



The delegates had the opportunity to talk informally at round table discussions, treating four different subjects:

Leadership:

*Ric B., U.S. & Canada;
Louise B., ICC*

Adult Children:

Maxine K., ICC

Increasing Contributions and Sales:

*Myrna H., ICC;
Pat L., U.S. & Canada*

Problems other than Alcohol at Meetings:

*Bob V., ICC;
Mary Ann K., ICC*

A room was assigned to each topic and to members of the ICC. The Delegates from the U.S. & Canada and members of the ICC were assigned to each of the topics. IAGSM delegates wandered from room to room to discuss specific situations and share ideas. The ideas listed came from notes taken at these sessions.

Leadership

The suggestion was made to read Concept Nine carefully. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service, the Board of Trustees assumes primary leadership. The primary leadership spoken about in this Concept applies to the members of the Board in each structure.

The system of rotation of Board members of the U.S. & Canada was reviewed, and a six-year term was stressed, with some then serving on the Executive Committee for another three years, with annual approval.

It is the Chairperson of the Board who appoints committee chairpersons, and a few members stay on standing committees longer than six years in order to complete a project.

The question was asked how frequently structures hold Board meetings. In one structure, trustees sign a letter of resignation when they are appointed. That makes it possible for the Chairperson of the Board to confirm the dismissal of a nonperforming trustee simply by putting the date on a letter and thereby revoking the powers of attorney.

Some information concerning Board meetings at the WSO was given. Board meetings are held every quarter and last from Friday evening until 10:00 a.m. Sunday, if necessary. The Board gets together Friday evening and begins with an Al-Anon meeting, followed by "clearing the air". (Members may say what's bothering them.) This helps remove anger and dominance at the Board meeting, which officially begins the next day. Consultants are sometimes brought in to give a presentation. Everyone gets the training needed to do a better job.

In places where there are few suitable candidates, it may be advisable to call the delegates together and tell them that a committee chairperson is needed. Do a group inventory at the Conference; give delegates the opportunity to say whether they find the meetings to be too long, scheduled on the wrong day, or too frequent; get input from the delegates; hear their complaints; find out what they want or do not want.

Members from other structures do not attend the WSC at their own expense. The structure they represent pays; otherwise this

opportunity would be available only to those with money.

Adult Children of Alcoholics

Al-Anon adult children groups are equal participants in recovery, yet they need to be on their own. We need to welcome them as special groups who work their own program; we must give them true love and acceptance. Lead them, but never force them. Encourage loving discussions and work with them by opening up your mind and your heart. Tell them that they are needed. Encourage them to hold workshops. You gain understanding for one another and, therefore, a family relationship when one goes to Al-Anon adult children groups.

Opposing views were stated: Adult children groups should have their own coordinator. The time is not ripe for a separate committee. Use the official name "Al-Anon Adult Children of Alcoholics"; do not use abbreviations.

Increasing Contributions and Sales

U.K. & Eire makes use of the tax benefits on donations. The GSO communicates that they need money and have drafted several letters for this purpose.

In Flemish Belgium, donations are declining; literature sales are in upswing; the Literature Committee is active—more books have become available by new translations.

In New Zealand donations are on the rise, and sales are up as well. September is gratitude month and that brings in donations. Theme meetings using literature increase sales.

Norway made a calculation of the costs of all the services per member and informed all the groups. They suggested a contribution per member based on this figure, and the contributions doubled.

French Belgium explains the needs of Al-Anon to newcomers and has a "serenity container" into which members can throw coins of the smallest denomination for each day of serenity.

Australia depends on literature sales as the main source of income. Donations are steady; most groups contribute. Groups give all excess funds to the district which passes them on to the GSO. It is important that we tell the members where the money goes.

In Brazil, literature sales have grown, but donations are not steady. Many members are poor and feel that buying literature, rather than donating, gives value for money.

In Germany, donations are on the decline. Appeals are made in newsletters. There is a new book at each yearly convention. There are two baskets—one for service, the other for social needs.

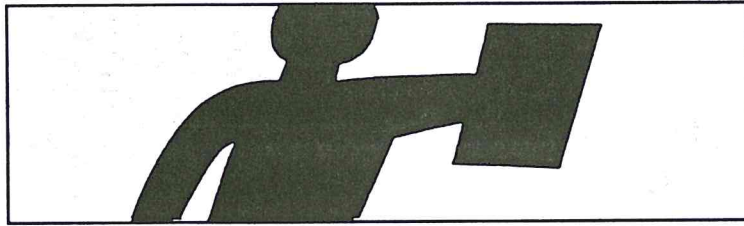
U.S. & Canada wrote a leaflet that has not helped much; the funds spread thin.

In South Africa, fund-raising may help with organizing suppers and raffles.

Problems Other than Alcohol at Meetings

Be gentle with those who come to our meetings with problems like drug-addicted relatives. Be welcoming and encourage newcomers to listen before deciding whether or not they consider themselves members. We must be cautious not to absorb people who need to start other self-help programs.

Motions



Note: The IAGSM Chairperson establishes the number of persons authorized to vote at the meeting.

The Admissions Committee recommends to accept the Polish structure as a part of the IAGSM and to seat their delegate.

The motion is passed (41 yes; 1 abstention).

The Admissions Committee recommends to transfer South Africa to Zone 5 and placement of Poland in Zone 4.

The motion is passed (39 yes; 2 no; 1 abstention).

Schedule the 1996 IAGSM in 1997 and hold it in the U.S. Schedule the 2000 IAGSM outside the U.S. and after that meeting return to the two-year cycle with alternating years in the U.S.

The motion is passed (38 yes; 3 no).

The IAGSM recommends to the Board of Trustees to decide that each structure may produce original recovery material within the framework set down by the Board of Trustees.

The motion did not pass (10 yes; 32 no).

To add the words "and with the approval of the World Service Conference" to Motion #4.

Voted before Motion #4. The motion did not pass (23 yes; 19 no).

The IAGSM recommends that the WSC consider the possibility that a delegate from each zone serve as a delegate on the ICC as a participant in the IAGSM decisions on a trial basis for two IAGSMs.

The motion is passed (32 yes; 4 no; 3 abstentions).

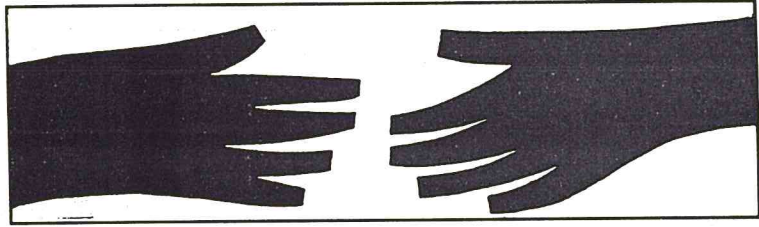
That the International Coordination Committee consider the possibility of a past IAGSM delegate be elected as chair of the next IAGSM.

The motion is withdrawn.

Requests that the ICC expand the opportunities for participation in and leadership of the IAGSM.

The motion is passed (36 yes; 3 no; 2 abstentions).

Spiritual Meeting



Two members shared their personal and heartfelt stories of life before and after finding the doors of Al-Anon. Their messages reminded everyone of the global reach of our fellowship linked with the unity we share.

Alice G., of New Zealand relayed her early experiences of growing up with a strong belief in the power of prayer and of her childhood memories of a convent school. Praying to God for the right course her life should take, Alice married. Although her husband drank heavily, Alice assumed he would stop once their lives together progressed. As time went on, Alice wondered why God was punishing her with her husband's drinking.

Four children were born and life became a struggle. Conversation was replaced with arguments. Alice explained, "The hardest thing to cope with was the feeling of utter despair that God had left me. Where was this God to whom I had prayed and trusted?" On the edge, Alice decided there was only one way out of this life of torment, "I would kill myself." After rigging a rope to a beam, Alice recalled a voice that echoed, "What about the children?" Realizing that the God of her understanding was still looking after her, she abandoned her plan.

This awakening led her to talking with a priest who reminded Alice that she had taken a vow "for better or for worse." Although angry, her mind agreed and she decided that as she had accepted the good times, she must also work through the bad times. "As I realized later, I had accom-

plished the first part of Step One; I had admitted that I was powerless over my husband's drinking."

Suddenly a miracle happened and Alice's husband stopped drinking. Her life did not change dramatically. She remembered, "I began to think I had merely changed a drunk for a religious crank!" Her husband's job forced the family to move to another town where there was an Al-Anon meeting that met once a month, "At least I was put in touch with other members who understood how I felt." Three more children followed sobriety, and they became known as the "before and after AA family!"

"As I look back on my life I realize that time was the best thing that happened to me—it brought me to Al-Anon." Alice found she could no longer blame anyone else for the way she was and that those "defects" existed before marrying an alcoholic. Al-Anon had given her a whole new understanding of her Higher Power. "This loving God chose me to find this wonderful program and make a better life for myself and our family." Celebrating 46 years of marriage with 36 years of sobriety and 34 years in Al-Anon, Alice thanked God for the blessings received—a sober husband, seven wonderful children, and a bonus of nine beautiful grandchildren. Explaining that problems still exist, "Today I can find God in the problems that come along and I see them now as a way to bring me closer to Him."

"I thank God for bringing me to this wonderful place today. I love you all in a very special way."

Marita P., from Argentina shared her experiences that also began with childhood memories of spending 14 years in one of the best schools; living there from age three to 16. Life revolved around the school—plays, theaters, fairs, excursions, sorrow, envies and competitions. Marita explained, time at her home was usually spent reading. Marita shared the love that she had for her father and her memories of how happy a man he was. At parties, all the men drank and her father became even more cheerful. One time she recalled, her father left a wedding reception and two bottles of whiskey fell from his clothes. Her love soon turned to despising him and everyone around him. The blame was her mother's and grandmother's since they ignored Marita's father.

At 15, Marita's parents emigrated from Argentina, but she remained to finish school. As time moved forward, Marita was

fearful about leaving her protected world and decided to stay and become a nun. The Mother Superior encouraged her to go with her parents and think about what her future should be. Nothing had changed from her youthful years with her family. Marita explained that her whole focus was on watching her mother and protecting her father; she spent no time at all on her own growth and feelings, "I sacrificed myself."

Service at the district, GSC and GSO showed Marita the way to growth with her brothers and sisters in Al-Anon. "I used my energy to progress, to accept the individuality of my parents, my husband and children—each of them with their own thoughts and needs. With the Al-Anon program, Marita was able to "look at each day like a pretty gift that I can use in my own way. The way I choose to help today is by sharing my hope with relatives of alcoholics that need love and peace of mind."

A Summary Of Al-Anon's History

Structure	Number of Groups, Al-Anon	Number of Groups, Alateen	Year Al-Anon Started	Year of First Conference	Current # of Members at Conference*	Name of National Newsletter
Argentina*	435	55	1961	1985	44	Amistad
Australia	566	86	1952	1970	22	Austra-Link
Belgium (Flemish)	113	16	1961	1982	50	Keerpunt
Belgium (French)	89	2	1965	1981	78	Serenite
Brazil	1,130	89	1966	1979	--	Boletin Al-Anon
Colombia*	140	8	1960	1992	28	Renacimiento
Costa Rica*	248	---	1960	---	--	Compartamo
Denmark	66	2	1980	1985	--	Perspektiv
Finland	208	10	1953	1970	--	Tietoavain
France	120	3	1960	1978	100	La Chaine
Germany	922	42	1967	1986	--	Intern
Iceland	51	2	1972	1982	30	Hlekkurinn
Italy	308	15	1976	1980	--	Incontro
Japan*	109	4	1979	1992	43	Hiroba
Korea	44	---	1984	---	--	---
Mexico	2,095	280	1965	1973	--	Delta
Netherlands	79	12	1975	---	--	Stapsgewijs
New Zealand	129	10	1954	1970	16	News & Letters
Norway	79	2	1960	1982	--	Trinn For Trinn
Poland	253	36	1980	1991	--	AA's Newspaper
South Africa	172	39	1974	1976	--	Unitas
Spain	208	29	1972	1988	45	Serenidad
Sweden	164	23	1970	1991	45	Al-Anon Kontakt
Switzerland (German)	50	2	1964	1973	--	M & F
U.K. & Eire	940	138	1952	1970	52	News & Views
U.S. & Canada	18,439	2,203	1951	1960	110	The Forum; Inside Al-Anon

The following countries have working structures, but detailed information was not received: El Salvador, Guatemala, Paraguay, Switzerland (French), Uruguay, and Venezuela.

* Figures taken from previous summary. U.S. & Canada figures taken from 1994 WSC Summary.