

May 2017

BOARD VISION STATEMENT

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

BOARD MISSION STATEMENT

Anticipate the future and Al-Anon's place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

Al-Anon's spiritual principles permeate our policies and practices; we apply emerging technology and communication options:

- **To increase the visibility of Al-Anon so that it is recognized as the number one resource throughout the world for helping friends and families of alcoholics.**
- **To empower the Al-Anon fellowship to be vibrant, inclusive and flexible.**
- **To achieve a viable future for Al-Anon Family Groups, the Board will be adaptive and strategic in its use of talents, skills and abilities.**

Dear Al-Anon Members,

The purpose of this Chairperson of the Board letter is to share highlights from our 2017 World Service Conference (WSC) along with an update from the April Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees, as well as the Annual Meeting of the Board. You will also find updates from our outgoing and incoming Policy Chairpersons, Finance update from our Treasurer and the outgoing and incoming Conference Leadership Team (CLT) updates.

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

We are beginning the process by posting the announcement of the Executive Director position opening on AFG Connects, AFG Announcements, *Group eNews*, an in-house posting at the WSO and on national internet job search sites.

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

May 1 – June 15, 2017 Application and résumé submission period

June 26 – 30, 2017 Video conferencing interviews

Week of July 17, 2017 Final candidate interviews with the Board of Trustees— Virginia Beach, Virginia

September 5, 2017 Desirable start date for new Executive Director at the WSO in Virginia Beach

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

Mary G. has committed to stay on for a period of time to ensure that our new Executive Director, our WSO staff and our fellowship as a whole experience a smooth transition.

The Board believes this transition period is supported by the spiritual principles of our program by offering the sharing of our experience, strength and hope. We then let go and allow the new Executive Director the freedom to oversee the World Service Office in his or her own way as outlined in Concept Eleven.

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

The following are highlights from the 2017 World Service Conference:

The theme for the 2017 World Service Conference was "Our Members: Our Hope for the Future". This year's Conference theme is a reminder of our co-founder, Lois W's following statement to the 1976 World Service Conference on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the World Service Office: "*It's always forward that we have to look, and let our gratitude be for those to come...*" Conference provided the opportunity for focusing our discussions on looking to our future and reaching out to new members, while keeping the foundation of our Legacies in the forefront of our minds. Throughout the week, we were given the privilege of listening and participating through the personal sharings of our outgoing Delegates, our opening and closing dinner speakers, Conference floor discussions, breakout sessions, Committee and Thought and Task Force groups as well as sharing during meal times.

Our first order of business was to approve the 2017 Seating Motion which allows for the seating of non-voting staff members as part of their ongoing training and to gain a

broader perspective of our fellowship as a whole. We were blessed with the presence of International Representatives from three structures: New Zealand, Mexico and UK/Eire (with voice but not vote) each gave a ten-minute sharing outlining their service structure and personal story. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was seated with voice limited to ECRPM business but no vote.

Conference members and their guests were offered the opportunity to visit our “home”, the World Service Office during the afternoon of our first day. The office visit is always an emotional part of Conference. The number of visits does not appear to affect the feelings we all experience as we walk through the doors of our collective home. The opportunity to put faces to the names of our staff, visit the archives and walk the grounds is an experience that is cherished for years to come.

During a portion of the WSO tour, Panel 55 Delegates had the chance to sit in on a Board presentation which allowed the opportunity to increase the visibility of the Board and educate current Delegates with a brief overview of the work of the Board. Topics included: Board Week Schedule, Board Meeting Agenda, the Trustee Résumé, skills, talents and abilities needed to serve. A brief overview of the Board Mission/Vision Statement and Strategic Plan Priorities was given. Time commitment related to Board Committees, emails and preparation for Board Week were reviewed along with personal sharing's of experience on the Board and personal growth gained through serving. Each Panel 55 Delegate left the presentation with tangible information to consider not only for themselves but to also present to their Area as well as encourage members they believe have the skills, abilities and talents needed to serve as a Trustee.

The 2017 World Service Conference included three exciting changes, all assisted Conference members in becoming more informed and connected through the application and implementation of emerging technology and communication options.

The first was the option for use of the 2017 World Service Conference app developed by our WSO Digital Strategy team. The app was available on mobile devices (smartphones and tablets). The app provided instant information related to the daily Conference schedule which included starting times for each session, agenda topics, breakout rooms, as well as the opportunity to personalize the schedule for assigned breakout sessions and notes. A map of the conference center and hotel was available as well as the opportunity to “connect” with fellow members. Staff will spend the following months evaluating the platform and will be looking for feedback to be used towards the development of a mobile app for the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore.

For many years, Conference members have been given a large notebook to store and organize all documents and handouts. This year, in place of the “notebook” a small spiral bound booklet was produced that included the Motion Log, Conference agenda, Conference Procedures Booklet, Voting Procedures, breakout session information and Chosen Agenda Item discussions. All other documents were provided on AFG

Connects prior to Conference, thus allowing personal options for downloading to various electronic devices or printing of hard copies.

The third change was the provision of the 2016 Annual Report, the 2016 Audit and 2017 Budget six weeks prior to WSC. This allowed time for Conference members to review, submit questions and receive electronic copies of responses to all questions ten days prior to the start of Conference rather than in the Hospitality Room during registration.

Conference members approved to amend the text on pages 131-165 in the "World Service Handbook" section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)* Amending the text allows for updates reflecting various structure changes of Standing Committees, the addition of Thought and Task Forces and Work Groups, reorganizing the format to allow a clearer flow of information. Updates also reflect that Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship and that not all international structures have made the same changes.

Conference members also approved amendments of the following sections of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*:

- ❖ To amend the text on pages 95-99 in the "Financial Matters" section in the "Digest of Al- Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)*

The "Financial Matters" revision incorporates core spiritual principles that are the foundation of Al-Anon's financial practices. It also clarifies how Al-Anon's principles of giving and receiving reflect a spiritual approach to *all* financial matters. Although Tradition Seven identifies the responsibility of being self-supporting, members also give out of gratitude and personal abundance for help they have received in Al-Anon.

- ❖ To amend the text on pages 85-86 and 123-124 in the "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions" section in the Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies section of the *2014-2017 Al Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)*.

This amended section about "Conventions and Announcements" also incorporates the core spiritual principles that characterize Al-Anon and/or Alateen events, including criteria by which these conventions, workshops, and other events can more easily be recognized and identified as Al-Anon. The revised text identifies principles in Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions that distinguish events as Al-Anon, and those to announce at our meetings. The autonomy of Al-Anon's service arms is a key aspect of decision-making regarding announcements at meetings.

Further details concerning the amended text can be found in the Policy Update within this letter. Conference members have been provided copies of the full text revisions. The complete revised texts will be posted in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* on the WSO Members website. They will also be included in the new *2018-2020 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)*.

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect site announcement for 2017 as well as the invitation for the 2018 Road Trip! was presented. The 2017 event is being hosted by Colorado on October 21st in Aurora. The 2018 Road Trip! invitation was shared along with hotel planning forms that allow for clear communication for Areas interested in submitting to host the 2018 event. Submission deadline to host the 2018 Road Trip! is September 15th, 2017.

Three Task Forces were presented: *Spirituality in Group Money Discussion, Spirituality in District Money Discussions and Spirituality in Area Money Discussions*. While each topic on the surface appeared to be the same, the presentations of each Task Force and subsequent discussion, revealed the difference in approach and discussion. The overriding theme was the continued importance of connecting our money discussions to spiritual principles. All worthy of use in our groups, Districts and Areas.

During the 2016 WSC, a request was made to form a Thought Force to continue considering ways in which Delegates can be actively and directly involved in the development of the WSC agenda. The Board of Trustees honored the request by appointing a Thought Force, which included three Delegates from Panels 54, 55 and 56, one Trustee and one staff member. The Thought Force was charged with the following:

- ❖ Produce a Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) document with regard to Delegates' participation in the WSC
- ❖ Identify the roles of all WSC members
- ❖ Review history of the Conference Committee and Conference Leadership Team (CLT)
- ❖ Identify current avenues of communication with Delegate members
- ❖ Identify current opportunities for Delegate contributions to the WSC agenda
- ❖ Review the current practice of Orientation for new WSC members
- ❖ Report conclusions of current and potential opportunities for involvement of the Delegate members

The Thought Force concluded that over the decades there have been many changes and at times more/less involvement of Delegates in the agenda process. Their hope was that the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) will continue to explore opportunities for Delegate involvement in the WSC agenda.

Conference members were given time for discussion directly following the presentation and during the last day of Conference. The group conscience of Conference members was that no task force was needed and to allow the CLT an opportunity to consider the possible options for continued Delegate involvement in the WSC agenda.

We hope you will be joining us at the 6th AI-Anon International Convention, **Celebrating One Day at a Time - 2018 International Convention**, July 6-8 of 2018 in Baltimore, Maryland. Registration will begin in September. Registration costs are as follows:

Before December 31, 2017:	\$130.00 USD
Before May 31, 2017:	\$165.00 USD
After May 31, 2017:	\$195.00 USD

You can stay connected to “breaking news” related to the 2018 International on the International Convention website: AI-Anoninternationalconvention.org

2018 “*Day of Connecting*”: A Day of Connecting has been held prior to the official opening of two of our International Conventions; 2008 AI-Anon International Convention in Pittsburgh and the 2013 in Vancouver. The Board is excited to announce that the 2018 Day of Connecting will be held Thursday, July 5th, 2018, one day prior to the official start of the 2018 International Convention. The purpose of the Day of Connecting is to provide members from around the world attending the International Convention with a day focused on topics of service and leadership. The registration fee and program will be separate from that of the International Convention. More information will be shared in the July 2017 COB Letter.

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

Each year the Finance Committee gives a presentation to the entire Conference. Expanding the focus and understanding our financial reports was continued this year. The difference in this year’s presentation was the incorporation of shared leadership between the Finance Committee and Delegates. This year’s breakout sessions focused on “how to share” the information within our Areas and were led by Delegates who had demonstrated a high level of understanding and ability to share the financial information within their respective Areas. Breakout sessions focused on the use the financial reports as resources in educating our membership. The General Session report back included the six Delegates who lead the breakout sessions giving a five-minute financial report as if they were reporting back to their respective Areas. Sharing of individual reports offered an opportunity for all Conference members to take away ideas of how they could incorporate the shared information into their presentation style as well as increased understanding of the financial information as a whole.

Conference members were given the opportunity to meet our new Director of Finance, Niketa Bailey (non-member). Niketa’s PowerPoint presentation of the 2017 Budget and the 2016 Audit Report was a clear demonstration of the level of expertise and commitment she brings to her role as our Director of Finance. The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank the Delegates for the warm manner in which you welcomed Niketa. Thanks are also appropriate for the timely manner in which Conference members reviewed and submitted your comments and questions related to the 2016 Audit Report and 2017 Budget.

Describe the ways in which you are encouraging members in your Area to look to our Legacies and Warranties when seeking solutions to group, District and Area questions?

Directly following the closing of the Annual Board of Trustees meeting, the 2023 International Site Selection Committee, consisting of six Delegates, two Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board and three WSO staff met over the course of the afternoon and the following morning. We had the privilege of listening to 13 Areas, alongside representatives from their local Convention and Visitors Bureaus, present their bids for the site of the 2023 International Convention. As with all our decision-making practices, thoughtful discussion, time for prayer and thoughtful consideration were given prior to the committee selecting the final three sites. The final three sites are: Albuquerque, Denver and Seattle. Visits to all three sites will occur this summer with the recommendation for the 2023 International Convention site being presented to the Board of Trustees no later than January 2018. The Board and staff wish to thank the 13 presenting Areas. The manner in which you shared the commitment of your Areas to hosting the 2023 International along with the obvious partnerships established with the Convention and Visitor Bureau staff made the decision that much difficult. Thank you for the time and effort you each personally gave to this process.

During the course of this year's Conference, we stayed true to our theme, "Our Members: Our Hope for the Future" through our willingness to talk with each other, reason things out, look to and plan for our future. Our collective voices allowed the opportunity for Tradition Two to come alive and be applied within all our discussions and decisions. While we had important work to do, we also took time to laugh and to feel the constant presence of our Higher Power. To paraphrase the words of Bill Wilson at the Opening Session of the first World Service Conference in 1961:

"No matter what happens, your presence will ensure the maintenance of the linkage. Each one of these yearly meetings – be they dull, be they controversial – is really an insurance policy which can guarantee the future unity and function of our society."

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your continued commitment to the families and friend of alcoholics who have found help and recovery within our meetings and to those who yet to find us.

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debbie G." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Debbie G.
Chairperson of the Board of Trustees