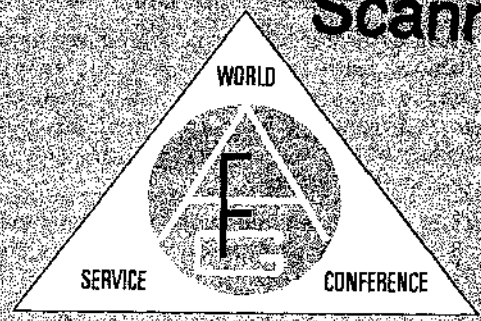


# CONFERENCE SUMMARY 1971 AL-ANON

ELEVENTH ANNUAL WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE  
AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS  
NEW YORK, NEW YORK - APRIL 20-24, 1971



## UNITY: Keynote of the 11th Conference

Dear Delegates:

Welcome to Al-Anon's Eleventh World Service Conference:

During the year you have all been working steadfastly but *separately* for Al-Anon's high cause. Now, together, here, we will gain inspiration and knowledge from each other. We will know the joy of understanding companionship even from members we have never met before.

Bill, I am sure, gives us his blessing because he always said that Al-Anon was the greatest thing that had happened since AA began. God be with us all.

"The idea of UNITY pervades every part of our Conference program," said Penny B., Conference Chairman, who, throughout the year has worked tirelessly with her Committee to make this the most significant in Al-Anon's history.

"From the word UNITY in Tradition One, right through to the words PRINCIPLES ABOVE PERSONALITIES in Tradition Twelve, our purpose is clear. For we know—all of us know—that only by faithful adherence to Al-Anon's ideals can we be sure of expanding its loving service to millions in need all over the world."

Penny B.  
Chairman World Service Conference

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### BRIEFING SESSION FOR NEW DELEGATES

At a meeting held on Monday before the opening of the World Service Conference, Henrietta S., our General Secretary, explained many points of importance to the Delegates . . .

. . . how the quarterly *Area Highlights* provides information to be shared with the Committeemen (now known as District Representatives or DRs)

. . . that all material stamped "Delegate's Copy" is solely to keep the Delegates informed of what is being mailed to the groups

. . . that all Delegates receive, monthly, cards indicating *new group registrations* and copies of *contribution acknowledgments*.

. . . that Delegates will receive, on publication, copies of this *Summary* for distribution to State Officers and District Representatives, as well as sufficient for the local service offices in their Areas.

. . . each new Delegate is assigned a sponsor who is a Delegate with one or more years' participation in the Conference.

Henrietta also gave detailed information on appointments to Standing Committees and procedures relating to them.

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## FIRST DAY, Tuesday April 20th

After a festive dinner at which we happily renewed acquaintance with friends we had not seen since last year, we had a deeply moving message from our beloved Lois. Then followed a lively and inspiring talk by Jim H., of Alabama, whose wife Evelyn has long been an active member of our fellowship.

Then our guests departed and the serious business of the Eleventh World Service Conference began with Penny calling the roll for the first time.

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### Admissions Committee.

Holly C., Conference Secretary, announced that Illinois (S) and Quebec (E) would each seat a Delegate at this Conference and that Rhode Island would have a representative.

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### The Welcome by Wanda R., President of the Board of Trustees, set the keynote for the Conference:

"Welcome to the 1971 Al-Anon World Service Conference. For the eleventh year we have gathered here from all parts of the United States and Canada to guide Al-Anon in even greater expansion and service to families all over the world.

"If we can judge from past years, we can expect a busy time ahead. So our Conference theme, UNITY, is most appropriate.

"Without unity of purpose, our devoted staff could not have been able to accomplish all it has. I would like on this occasion to thank them, one and all, for service rendered beyond the call of duty. We hope the long-awaited move into new and larger quarters and the expanding of our staff will help to ease the tremendous workload they have had to carry.

"As each Conference has had its effect, I am sure this one, too, will have its impact on the future growth of Al-Anon. So, as we begin this 1971 Conference, may we take a moment to commit ourselves to unity of purpose in all we hope to accomplish."

Wanda then read the Twelve Traditions, prefacing them with the comment: "Our group experience suggests that the UNITY of the Al-Anon Family Groups depends upon our adherence to these Traditions."

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"*The Delegate's Responsibility*" was a power-packed statement by Christine W. (Missouri.) She emphasized the importance of the Delegate's being an active liaison between the Area and World Services; that local problems should be resolved at the local level and not at the Conference; that the *tools* of the program — Conference Approved Literature, the Standing Committees, the guidelines, such as the Handbook — should become familiar to all, through the Delegates' efforts.

A particularly enlightening feature of Christine's talk was her review of our great undertaking of the past several years — the production of *Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service*.

"Now we have The Twelve Concepts," she said. "In 1968, the World Service Conference unanimously approved the idea of our developing our own Concepts of Service." (By this time Lois had already been working on its structure, based on that created for AA by its co-founder, Bill)

"Then, in 1969, the Delegates were sent copies of a document worked out by Lois and her Committee, based on Al-Anon experience.

"Thus the Concepts were well considered and painstakingly revised before the Conference of 1970 approved them as guidelines for our service.

"Our three legacies are: 1. *Recovery*: The Twelve Steps. 2. *Unity*: The Twelve Traditions. 3. *Service*: The Twelve Concepts. One theme welds these three Legacies together: **PASS ALONG UNDERSTANDING.**

"I am quoting the history of the Concepts for the benefit of new Delegates who will spread the word in their Areas."

Following this statement, the Delegate from Missouri listed the responsibilities of the Delegate as follows:

1) To come to the Conference fully prepared to participate; 2) To do all the research possible through past Conference Digests/Summaries; 3) to pass on the knowledge gained at the WSC and to share with the Area the experiences and problems of other Areas to solve difficulties that may arise; and finally, on a touchingly warm note, she said: "How well I remember the dilemma of the First Year Delegate: I feel we retiring Delegates should help the first-year people in every possible way."

Christine closed her talk with the following thought:

"We should not leave the Conference with a feeling of: 'Well, I've done my work for three years — I've had the ups and downs, the heartaches and the joys. Now I'll rest.' No! These three priceless years should make us more than ever determined to share Al-Anon as we have seen it practiced here, through action and example.

"My three years here as a trusted servant from Missouri have taught me many things: Respect for criticism, appreciation of love and the joy of service."

## SECOND DAY Wednesday April 21st

After Roll Call and a few announcements, Lois spoke to the Conference on *The Twelve Concepts of Service*:

"The subject on which Penny asked me to say a few words fits beautifully into the theme of this Conference, UNITY.

"Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service are based not only on our own experience, but on a document which Bill wrote to insure the future unity of AA, after many years of thought and trial and error.

"In the early days, the Twelve Steps were sufficient to guide the members, but as the groups became more numerous, problems arose about membership, management, relationship to each other and to the outside world.

"Certain principles began to evolve which produced greater harmony and serenity and these Bill set down as guides for the groups.

"Later, as AA spread across the world, questions arose about the relationships of various parts of the fellowship to each other. Local offices and information centers might tend to represent authority instead of service, if the fellowship's principles were not applied. The *spirit* of the Steps and Traditions needed to be interpreted as a guide to the management of AA's world affairs. All the difficulties and problems of the intervening years gave Bill the necessary experience and insight to formulate the Twelve Concepts of Service.

"These Concepts carry the spirit of the two other legacies to the essential task of working together in harmony to spread the message.

"The Concepts provide the groups with a blueprint by which they can conduct their affairs; they show how minorities can be heard, why no person should have responsibility without a corresponding degree of authority, how all service arms can be balanced so no one arm, or person, sits in judgment over others, and why neither money nor power should be concentrated in one place.

"As new service needs and problems arise in the future, and new generations of world servants see a need for improvements, the Concepts are a frame within which needed changes can be made. If unwise radical changes disregard the Concepts and result in bad blunders, the Concepts will be there to guide a safe return.

"As Christine told you last night, it would be wise for us all to acquaint ourselves with these Concepts; no Delegate or service worker knows when such knowledge will be needed. A detailed topical index may later be added for the guidance of those who need to refer to a specific point.

"Nearly two years were spent by a World Service Committee in interpreting and applying AA's Concepts to Al-Anon.

"It is hoped that the Concepts will be useful in forming service centers in other countries, so they may be guided by the same high purposes. Thus our fellowship can spread indefinitely through the use of the three Legacies, the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts of Service. This was Bill's goal, too."

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**Standing Committee Meetings.** The various members of the Committees, with their Chairmen, then separated, to meet in different rooms to discuss plans and problems relating to *Conference Agenda, Admissions, Alateen, Institutions, Literature and Public Relations*. These meetings provide the one opportunity of the year for the Committee members based at the World Service Office to get together with the Delegate members on matters to be taken care of by correspondence during the rest of the year.

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GUEST OF HONOR at the luncheon was *Marty Mann*, Founder-Consultant of *The National Council on Alcoholism*. After lunch, Marty gave us an inspiring talk from her vast experience in the field of alcoholism.

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At the next session, Chairmen of all Standing Committees reported to the Conference on matters discussed at their individual meetings which had been held in the morning.

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**OUTGOING DELEGATES.** Highlight of the Conference was the assignment, to outgoing Delegates, of the Traditions as subjects of their farewells to the Conference.

*Tradition One* was discussed by Donna L. (Ark.) "Members often do not realize how great an influence our Traditions can have on their personal lives.

"Just about the time Penny wrote to ask me to talk on *Tradition One*, I heard a member say: 'I was having some trouble and I went to a meeting thinking I could find help, and what do you think they had for a program? The Traditions . . . ugh!'"

In vivid contrast to this negative attitude, Donna described how she had been inspired to make the Traditions

come alive for the groups in her Area. She developed a series of *personalized* questions to which she found answers in the descriptions of each Tradition in *LIVING WITH AN ALCOHOLIC*, our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions booklet and in *ONE DAY AT A TIME*. She made a series of cards with the questions and answers and used them at meetings. The results were great!

Among her questions were the following; all can be answered by the First Tradition:

Does my attitude keep others from speaking freely?

Do I sometimes make others feel ill at ease or stupid if they don't agree with me?

Do I consider each member's views with an open mind — or only those that agree with mine?

Do I monopolize time and attention during meetings?

Do I consider every action and decision I make in the light of its ultimate effect on the group?

Donna had many more — all of them pointed directly at *Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; the greatest good for the greatest number depends upon UNITY*. And Donna had proved it for us!

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*Tradition Two* had been assigned to ED. K. (Conn.)

He gave a moving illustration of how the ideas of *Tradition TWO* worked for him in a time of deep trouble:

"At the 1968 Assembly, I was the outgoing Treasurer — and I was ready to retire. When my name was posted as a candidate for WSD, I was reluctant to run. Two sets of eyes were glaring at me; one said, 'Are you afraid you might be elected?' — the other, my sponsor, said: 'Is it possible you're afraid you might not be elected?' In total confusion, I turned to *Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one authority, a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants. They do not govern.*

"I felt free to leave the decision to the group conscience — and I became the Delegate.

"At that time, my domestic life was at its lowest ebb; I felt alone in the world. This job filled the big void in my life."

Ed said that being Delegate kept him so busy, so involved, that he began to feel like himself again. He absorbed the true meaning of being an Al-Anon "servant" — he listened and discussed procedures and problems and learned that "when a conclusion cannot be reached in time of trouble, a further study of the Traditions can and does solve problems."

Ed certainly must have been doing something right, for his tiny state now has 70 registered groups!

In closing, he said: "In these three years I rose from the depths of despair to contentment and happiness. I thought my life was ending, but it was only the end of a chapter. The book of my life is just being written, and you are helping me write it. May God bless and keep you always."

AUDREY S. (Iowa) spoke on *Tradition Three: The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon group provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.*

She reminded us how Margaret, in a FORUM editorial, had emphasized the importance of the words "for mutual aid" and "Provided . . . no other affiliation."

For this reason, Audrey pointed out, we do not champion other causes.

Audrey told us how effectively the Traditions are used as meeting topics in her Area. "The purpose is to give aid and *mutual* understanding, to enable our members to live more peaceably with an active problem and repair the damage they have done to themselves through ignorance of the disease of alcoholism."

She indicated that our Steps and Traditions are both designed to help us overcome the difficulties of living with an alcoholic, or the effects of having lived with one.

"Our need for Al-Anon does not cease with the death of a spouse or with divorce from an alcoholic mate . . . if our lives have ever been altered by alcoholism, we need Al-Anon."

*Note:* Audrey recently suffered a bereavement so she well understands how much we need the sustenance of the program for comfort and serenity.

THERESA L. (La.) gave some interesting light on the FOURTH TRADITION: *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting another group or AA or Al-Anon as a whole.*

"The first part of this Tradition," Theresa said, "tells us we may manage our group affairs in any way we choose; the latter part *restricts us to what is good for the fellowship.* If we abide by the Twelve Traditions, we will not adversely affect other groups. And although Al-Anon has no management or bosses, it is vital that we be willing to be obedient to the unenforceable."

Theresa gave a colorful example of a situation in her Area in which an individual attempted to set up an Al-Anon group without enough background to realize the importance of the Traditions. Naturally the project failed, as did a second attempt with an Alateen group. Her perceptive analysis of this situation gave strong support to the idea of our dependence on our Traditions.

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*(After these inspiring presentations by four of our departing Delegates, we were almost too enthralled to interrupt for the mid-afternoon break! But one brief bit of Conference business was taken care of first.)*

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A MOTION was made, seconded and voted upon to give unanimous approval to the Annual Reports of the World Service Office as they appeared in the Delegates' Brochure.

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After a few minutes for coffee, and a welcome opportunity to stretch, we resumed our places to hear:

### THE TREASURER'S REPORT

Gay G. gave us a clear picture of our financial situation, which reflects our continued growth.\*

On the plus side, literature sales had a healthy increase over the preceding year. Book sales made substantial gains, too, due mainly to our new book, AL-ANON'S FAVORITE FORUM EDITORIALS.

Gay expressed thanks to the Delegates for their untiring efforts in stressing Conference Approved Literature, both

\* The audited annual financial statement is available to Al-Anon groups on request.

because it carries the message and helps to support our world-wide work.

"In the past year," Gay said, "it has been possible for us to achieve three major goals. One was our move to more adequate quarters.

"The work-load had increased so tremendously that we desperately needed more staff. Our cramped offices made this impossible, so we were working under a severe handicap, now happily relieved by the move.

"Our second goal was to establish a Reserve Fund in which we hope eventually to set aside enough to cover a full year's operation in case of a recession.

"And the third was the adoption of a long-deferred Pension-Retirement Plan for our dedicated staff who have so long been overworked and underpaid."

So far, Gay's report was a happy one. But she had to point out that the 8% increase in contributions over 1969 in no way reflected the tremendous growth of our fellowship in numbers of groups and members. Gay said she hoped it would not foreshadow a trend, since the preceding year's increase over 1968 was 20%!

"It's hard to believe," said Gay, "but over three thousand of our groups do not contribute anything to the work of the WSO, which nevertheless serves all groups with equal love and concern, whether they contribute or not.

"This would seem to place an unfair burden on those who do conscientiously help to maintain our services."

Gay thanked the Delegates for their efforts and asked them to continue to help the groups understand their important role in Al-Anon's work.

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### THE WORKSHOP PROJECTS

A new Conference feature was introduced this year: three workshops, each broken into four sections for intensive, in-depth study of certain crucial areas of Al-Anon's structure and proceedings.

Each of the four mini-groups included a Moderator, a Staff Member and a Reporter to make notes of discussions and conclusions. These were afterward coordinated by the Summary Reporter.

At each workshop, the basis of the discussions was a series of questions, pre-planned by the Committee involved.

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### THE FINANCE WORKSHOP

It began in the afternoon of the Second Conference Day. Serving as Moderators: Gay (Treas.) Jo, (Institutions Chairman), Margaret (FORUM Editor) and Henrietta (Gen. Sec'y)

Gay's opening statement reviewed Conference decisions taken at the WSCs of 1962 through 1969. She then touched briefly on the questions to be discussed at the four workshop sections. Notes made by the four Reporters were capsulized by Summary Reporter Ruth H. (Manitoba). Her summary follows:

#### Budgeting Assembly Finances

Most Areas operate on a carefully planned budget based on previous years' experience with postage and printing costs; expense connected with Assembly meetings, including those of Delegates and Alateen Coordinators. The Committeemen (now District Repre-

sentatives) explain to the groups their part in meeting these expenses.

### Financing Newsletters

Some Areas include this item in the annual budget; others charge for subscriptions to cover cost of printing and postage.

### Equalized Expenses

All Areas make provision for accumulating funds for Conference Delegates' Equalized Expenses to be remitted by their Treasurers to the WSO before January 1 of each year. Some Areas fail to meet this deadline and, in a few instances, even "met" the obligation with checks that bounced! Delegates suggested applying gentle pressure — and having two signatures on all checks.

### Fund Raising for Various Needs

Among the many described:

A weekly *Take-a-Ten-Cent Chance*;

A Christmas gift-exchange substitute known to the So. Cal. Area as "World Bank for World Service"

Potluck Suppers for AA (the AAs are asked to pay what they think it's worth!)

Covers for ODAT made and sold by Alateen groups.

### Support of World Services

Most Delegates said they emphasize to Area Committees the importance of tri-annual Appeal Letters; that not all District Representatives follow through in their Districts.

Newsletters usually explain the Appeals, reminding members of the opportunity to take part in World Service work.

Few place much stress on the Birthday Plan, though those who do are enthusiastic about it and hope to see it spread.

Most said they explain that the WSO depends largely on sale of literature to maintain its Twelfth Step work.

### Selling Gadgets and Trinkets

Concern was expressed over the growing preoccupation with the sale of various items as a means of fund-raising. Careful consideration was advised, both as to character and quality of items sold, and to whom they are offered. Anything that purports to be an Al-Anon symbol should be avoided, to guard anonymity. Nor should anything be sold outside the fellowship. "And anyway," remarked one member, "why should this be necessary? What's become of *gratitude?*"

### AA—Al-Anon Convention Finances

Al-Anon's policy of not accepting a share of the profits of AA functions in which Al-Anon participates came into serious question. The consensus: "This is illogical; AA accepts Al-Anon's help, so why shouldn't we share in the profits?"

This matter was later brought before the entire Conference, which voted unanimously as follows:

" . . . that the issue regarding acceptance of monies

from AA Conventions in which Al-Anon works to make them successful, be reopened with AA's GSO."

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*The last item on the agenda of this second day was the meeting attended only by the Delegates, to discuss and evaluate matters of special concern, later to be reported to the whole Conference. Meeting was chaired by Donna L. (Ark.)*

### THIRD DAY, April 22nd

After Roll Call, we heard a fascinating report on **INSTITUTIONAL WORK.**

Jo K. Chairman, stated that "our ultimate goal is to have an Al-Anon group in every facility, hospital, rehabilitation center and penal institution that has a program of recovery for alcoholics . . ." and the reports of the panel members indicate that our Committee has made tremendous strides toward achieving this goal.

Cooperating with AA's Institutional Committee, Al-Anon's help was offered to almost 2000 such AA groups in the past year, resulting in hundreds of referrals.

"Some years ago," said Jo, "such recognition as we have today from professionals would seem like a wild dream! Now we get inquiries from social workers, doctors, chaplains, hospital and correctional institution representatives who realize the importance of the family's early introduction to our program."

Minnie B. (Ky.) gave an interesting account of work in her state: joint activities with AA, such as picnics for which AA and Al-Anon furnish part of the food in cooperation with the institution; Christmas parties. In one prison the inmates produced and acted a play depicting "Before and After AA and Al-Anon."

She also spoke of frustrations due to changes in administration — but indicated that the Kentucky Institutions Committee just sets about convincing the new warden of the need for Al-Anon.

Minnie told us about Alateen programs for juvenile delinquents at which Alateen members speak to the youngsters. In explaining the heartening results of this work, she mentioned a number who had been released by the Parole Board because of their changed attitudes and cooperation. Minnie spoke of their follow-up work in getting these young people to attend meetings afterward. She quoted a moving letter from a released girl: "Without this program it would have been very hard to do my time. A big thanks to each and every one of you. Remember me in your prayers and please keep up the good work you are doing."

A *Question-and-Answer* period chaired by Myrna H. produced enlightening three-minute answers to key questions:

About "How Do We Stimulate Interest in Starting an Institutional Group?" Arbutus, RT said:

" . . . personal contact by well-informed Al-Anon members who are not easily discouraged, to meet with the staff of the institution. The director must be convinced . . . that Al-Anon contact can affect the welfare of the patient favorably.

"If the alcoholic unit has an AA as a counselor, it is much easier to establish an Al-Anon group.

"Stimulate staff interest; invite them to Al-Anon meetings."

Helen F., (Indiana) spoke on

*"Are Alateens Encouraged to Form Institutional Groups?"*

Apparently Al-Anon groups, once established, invite willing Alateens to share time with them, but there is no indication that Alateens have actually formed groups in institutions. A new VA hospital invited Al-Anons to speak, and "the meeting is growing like Topsy." One evening a month, this facility holds a family night at which an AA, an Al-Anon and an Alateen are invited to speak.

Myrna H. then spoke on *"How is an Institutional Committee Financed?"* Myrna is our one-man clearing house for correspondence on institutional matters, so she is well-informed — and *current* — on the many activities in this field, the methods of approach, successes, needs and guidelines. She is constantly passing along this vital information to other interested groups.

"Financing an Institutional Committee or group is related to the structure of the Area Committee. Sometimes the District takes on the responsibility, sometimes individual Al-Anon groups form committees to support this effort.

"Special events meetings, perhaps an Institutional Workshop, are held to raise funds. Institutional groups usually pay no rent, so most of the resulting money can be used to provide literature for the families of inmates."

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The final participant on this panel was Virginia M. (N.C.) who spoke of *"Developing Interest in Institutional Work in My State."*

North Carolina's effort to provide help in this field has been in progress for less than a year — and PROGRESS is the word! Virginia's report is a model of what can be done by determined, dedicated members. Their Institutional Coordinator travels all over the State to visit institutions and offer meetings, after first enlisting the aid of the local groups.

"A lot of work has been going on," said Virginia, "involving many miles, much time, and above all, hope and patience. Two new groups already have been started. Our meetings are attended not only by the families, but by the patients, student nurses, staff members and local people.

"We have included funds for literature in our Area budget.

"I can't help feeling that a great deal more is going on in this field than we realize. As the groups are aware of this great need, I hope there will be a sharing of ideas and experience, especially on the Area level."

Virginia's account of their efforts and successes was most impressive, including her report of several Al-Anon articles which appeared in a quarterly published by inmates of the State Department of Correction in Raleigh, North Carolina.

She really convinced everyone that it *can* be done!

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Henrietta, our General Secretary, spoke to us then about

## THE WORLD SERVICE DIRECTORY

Many factors concerning the Directory have a direct bearing on the fellowship as a whole, and every individual member. Henrietta pointed out, for example that the constant search for new and better production methods saved the fellowship \$3000 on the current Directory, typeset by electronic tape.

Reducing or eliminating errors means savings, too:

—production costs increase when groups change addresses every time a new Secretary is elected, and serious difficulties result when changes of address are not sent in promptly. Lowest cost and greatest accuracy depend largely on groups having a permanent mailing address: a P. O. box or that of a long-time member who attends meetings regularly so she can bring the mail.

(here Henrietta stressed the importance of keeping box rent paid up;)

"The cost of re-mailing runs into many hundreds of dollars each year. When a FORUM is returned, it costs 10¢ to get it back and another 8¢ to re-mail it First Class. And this doesn't count the expense of staff time to look up an alternative address.

Henrietta then reminded the Delegates that every group will receive a new Data Card in November, which should be returned promptly, with whatever changes are necessary on lines 4 and 5.

"These addresses and phone numbers will provide information for the next Directory. Changes of address and/or telephone number will require new lines of electronic tape — the more changes, the greater the cost."

### Group Identification on All Communications

Group name and location should be included on everything sent to the WSO — letters, FORUM subscriptions, contributions and literature orders. This saves much staff time!

### Separate Notes in a Single Envelope

When writing to the WSO on various matters, each item should be on a *separate* piece of paper, addressed to the specific Committee or department. This, too, would save staff time and speed up service.

### Communications to Members

The Directory is a handy tool for announcing group anniversaries, round robins, special events and even personal communications. But reminders of *anonymity* are still necessary, Henrietta indicated. There should be *no reference to Al-Anon* in addressing envelopes; *no mention of Al-Anon* if a postcard is used.

### A New Category in the Directory

In many sections of the country, groups have joined in subscribing to a telephone answering service for referrals. Many subsequently expanded their activities to include P R and Institutional work, publication of meeting lists and Exchange Meetings. The Policy Committee, in acknowledging this trend, decided to have such joint group endeavors listed under the heading *Al-Anon Information Service*.

### Contribution Information in Directory?

At last year's Conference, Ed K. (Conn.) suggested the Directory include a separate page listing contributions by states, provinces and countries. No decision was reached last year, but on again discussing the pros and cons, the question was put to a vote:

*Motion was made and carried that the World Directory be continued in its present form, without the names of alternate Delegates or supplementary listings of contributions.*



Henrietta urged the Delegates to pass along all these facts concerning the Directory and communication to their Area Committees to be channeled to the groups, since this information is vital to every Al-Anon member.

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*The morning ended with the second of the three workshops. As in yesterday's Finance Workshop, a set of crucial questions had been prepared as a basis for the discussions.*

## ASSEMBLY INVENTORY WORKSHOP

Holly C. explained to the assembled four sections that the discussions would relate largely to the *Al-Anon World Service Handbook*, which was scheduled for updating to adjust it to numerous changes in practice that have taken place since it was last revised.

### Handbook Title Change

All four segments of the workshop agreed that, with the growing importance of Alateen in our fellowship, the title of the Handbook should indicate this. Various names were discussed. Finally agreed upon: *World Service Handbook for Al-Anon and Alateen Groups*.

### "Committeeman" Changed to "District Representative"

This change should clear up some long-standing confusions as to the person who represents a District. Committeeman, and sometimes committeewoman, did not seem to be a precise description of the officer. Logical decision: *District Representative (DR)*

### The Role of the Past Delegate

Past Delegates have a wealth of experience to bring to future activities of the Assembly.

In some Areas they serve as Assembly Chairmen, with voice but no vote. Some limit this role, and other offices in the Assembly, to *outgoing* Delegates. In a number of cases, past Delegates serve as Area Librarian or Newsletter Editor.

### Area WS Committee Meetings

Frequency of meetings varied, depending on distances to be covered. In small Areas, meetings may be held as often as once a month. Purpose: to discuss District matters and make recommendations to the Assembly.

### Redistricting

As numbers of groups increase in an Area, so that an undue burden is placed on the District Representative, redistricting is the answer. It was generally agreed that a Committee be selected to consider the practical solutions, based on numbers of groups and distances to be covered. The final recommendation is then brought to the Assembly for approval.

### Area Coordinators for Special Services

Coordinators for Institutional work, Alateen, Public Relations, Conventions, as well as Newsletter Editors and Liaison members of Intergroups and Al-Anon Information Services, are not voting members of the Assembly unless they are GRs. They are, of course, invited to attend all WS Assemblies and *do* have a vote at meetings of the Area World Service Committee.

## Can a GR Become a Delegate?

In sparsely settled Areas where it is not practical to have District Representatives, a GR is eligible to be elected Delegate.

## World Service Conference Reports

These are made variously — at Assembly meetings, in Newsletters, at District Meetings, (some said a short report, with a question and answer period following), at Assembly Workshops and by means of tape recordings which may be borrowed by groups and committee members.

## Improving Communication in Rural Areas

Some groups advertise their meetings in local newspapers; some have answering services; posters are used in buses, churches and other public places. A number make contacts with clergymen, doctors, and public authorities.

*Moderators* for the Assembly Inventory Workshop were Arbutus O. (R T, Western U. S.) Edythe D. (R T, Canada), Mary S. (Chrmn. Policy Com.) Ted K. (VP Board of Trustees.)

*Reporters*, Louise C. (Tex. W.) Margaret R. (Va.) Betty L. (Ont. S.) and Aura C. (Calif. S.) who also served as Summary Reporter.

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*(Time for lunch, which was served in the Pine Room, lower level of the Hotel — and far from being a "break" from our concentration, Al-Anon was the main topic of our table talk!)*

\* \* \* \* \*

The afternoon session began with the important business of electing a Regional Trustee from the Eastern region of the U. S. The resumés of the various candidates had been carefully studied, and business began with a brief review of the election procedures, by Ted K.

One part of the room was sectioned off for the voting members, the roll was called, a blackboard was ready, in full view, to record the votes.

Some of the Delegates availed themselves of the opportunity to give a three-minute presentation of his/her Area's candidate. Written votes; ballots collected by tellers and counted.

*During the balloting, the name of a candidate with a substantial number of votes was withdrawn by the Delegate on the first ballot, without explanation. This made apparent a need to reconsider the procedure for electing Regional Trustees.*

The first candidate to receive two-thirds of the vote was the one elected — and after a number of ballotings, the choice was made: Jewel S. of Illinois, a former Delegate. Second highest in vote count, Anne S. (Mich.) was elected Alternate Regional Trustee.

\* \* \* \* \*

This brought us to mid-afternoon — time for a brief coffee break.

\* \* \* \* \*

## REPORT OF NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ted K., Chairman, announced the slates of candidates for Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and Standing Committees.

The Conference approved the slates in the following

MOTION, which was made and seconded, approving the slate of Trustees as presented, with no changes other than the addition of Louise M. who replaces Sue L. whose tenure has expired. The new slate also includes the new Regional Trustee from the Eastern U. S., Jewel S.

MOTION was also made, seconded and carried to approve the slate for the Executive Committee as presented, with no changes from the previous year.

The Chairman reappointed all Committee Chairmen with the following exceptions: there will no longer be a joint chairmanship of the Literature Committee held by Alice B. and Louise. Louise will now fill the position as Chairman. Alice will be Chairman of the Nominating Committee, replacing Ted.

The Finance Committee will henceforth be known as the Investment Advisory Committee and will be chaired by the Treasurer, Gay.

\* \* \* \* \*

FOUR DEPARTING DELEGATES, having completed their three-year term with this Conference, gave us their farewell thoughts in these interpretations of the Traditions.

Betty F. (Maine) gave her views of the Fifth Tradition, one especially suited to her in its clarity and directness:

*Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.*

"We are best able to help others," Betty said, "when we ourselves have learned how to achieve serenity."

"My personal recovery was a slow process — the old habits keep coming up like air bubbles that rise to the surface as I knead bread dough on my marble slab."

Betty pointed out the importance of the words "*families of . . .*" because so many in the early days reached beyond their capacities and tried, valiantly but unwisely, to help the alcoholic rather than the family members.

In noting how the study and practice of the Twelve Steps brings about changes in us, Betty cited an instance of a member, much younger than the rest, speaking of the "generation gap" and then learning that *age* has nothing to do with our need for and use of the program.

"From another section of our state," Betty added, "a member told about her husband's former wife asking for help. Before Al-Anon, she wouldn't have lifted a finger, but through Al-Anon, her hatred had been erased and she had provided literature as well as making personal contact."

"We, as individuals and groups, should never underestimate our potential for helping families to a spiritual way of life, as we have discovered it in Al-Anon."

\* \* \* \* \*

Christine W. of Missouri, made some excellent points in relation to Tradition Six: *Our Al-Anon groups ought never to endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige, divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always cooperate with Alcoholics Anonymous.*

The keynote was a quotation from a FORUM article of some years ago: "We have learned that so long as we follow our *primary purpose* — to help ourselves and others living with an alcoholic problem — we cannot go wrong. Thus we

do not 'lend our name to any outside enterprise' be it social, political, educational, financial, spiritual, religious or any other phase of daily living."

Elaborating on this, Christine explained that "we contribute to our communities' betterment as *persons*, not as Al-Anon members. We do not have an *Al-Anon Committee for Better Schools*, although we may serve in such causes; there is no *Al-Anon for Cancer Research*, although we may support it; we do not have *Al-Anon Retreats* although many of us attend and find spiritual refreshment in *Retreats as individuals*, not as Al-Anon members.

"Some volunteer to help with office work at NCA. Fine if they do this as individuals, but not as Al-Anon members."

Christine certainly made it very clear that this Tradition places no curb on what we choose to do as individuals. But to keep our purposes clear, no individual should involve Al-Anon, as a group or as a whole, in any outside enterprise.

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Jo B. (Neb.) spoke on our shortest tradition — the eleven meaningful words of The Seventh: *Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*

She suggested that the very character and strength of the Al-Anon entity depends on our not being under obligation to anyone outside our own fellowship. Accepting funds or help of any kind from people outside Al-Anon compromises our singleness of purpose.

Every individual member who is able and willing to do so has the privilege of sharing in Al-Anon's support.

Jo quoted a typical occurrence:

"I had been approached with the idea of selling tickets to a dinner and dance. I remembered that this kind of thing had been brought up at the "Ask-It Basket" session last year, so I simply quoted from my notes and declined."

We neither accept outside contributions or engage in any money-raising projects that would involve us with anyone outside the fellowship.

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Bill O., (Nev.) had clearly read between the lines of Tradition Eight, and found for us some extraordinary spiritual insights. *Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*

"This Tradition reaffirms Al-Anon's policy of always placing its Twelfth Step work on a voluntary basis. When we give freely of what we have found in Al-Anon, sharing with others the strength and hope we have gained through the program, we fill a very special need for the newcomer."

"When we tell our own stories, it becomes clear that we have experienced the same kind of suffering, known the same fears, resentments and frustrations that are making his/her life unmanageable."

"There's a saying: 'You can't tell a person who has never had one what it feels like to have a broken leg.' But we, who have had broken hearts, broken family relationships, can offer the newcomer a singularly warm and wonderful thing that we know as 'identification' — and no price tag can be placed on that!"

"When the newcomer realizes that this is truly a *voluntary* service, for which our only reward is greater spiritual strength for ourselves, that newcomer believes us. We've been there and she/he knows it."

\* \* \* \* \*



At the Delegates-Only meeting the previous evening the following decisions were arrived at. They were placed before the entire Conference by the meeting's Chairman, Donna L. (Ark.)

1) The Delegates recommended that a letter be written by a committee of Delegates before the end of the Conference, emphasizing the needs for funds for our WSO, said letter to be signed by all the Delegates and a copy of same be placed by the Delegates in their respective newsletters in each of their Assembly Areas.

Copies of the letter, signed by each Delegate were handed to each member of the Conference.

The letter read:

"With deep appreciation, we, the Delegates of the 1971 World Service Conference, wish to strongly express our deep concern and awareness of the financial responsibility that belongs to each and every Al-Anon. As Al-Anon continues to grow world-wide, our service needs are becoming greater and must be met by more 'service dollars' Here in New York we can see the immediate need for equipment, materials and staff in our World Service Office. Unless our personal contributions continue to nourish and feed World Service, our needs and world-wide Twelfth Step work could falter. We feel this must be a time of re-dedication and unity of purpose. We urge you to join us in making 1971 the year that Al-Anon comes of age through the personal effort of each Al-Anon member."

2) That the World Service Office obtain a film of Lois telling her own story.

3) That a Committee composed of three Delegates (Arizona, Montana, Mississippi) go to the WSO and express our concern for their needs and find out if money is the only problem.

4) That candidates for Regional Trustee must be past Delegates. (This suggestion was later withdrawn on the ground that it would eliminate many desirable candidates.)

5) That a sincere note of gratitude and love be given to our WSO staff and a vote of sincere love and thanks to Penny for her tireless and dedicated work each year on this Conference.

6) That the Conference start on Tuesday morning. (This is regarded as a possibility but would involve an increase of \$30-\$35 in the Delegates' expense fund.)

The Delegates-Only meeting chairman for next year is to be Estelle D. (Mich.) Selma N. (Md.) was appointed Secretary.

Final business of the *Third Day* was the last of our three Workshops, this one on Alateen.

#### THE ALATEEN WORKSHOP

Moderators for the four sections were Rita C., Ted K., Alice B., and Wanda R. Reporters, Betty F., (Maine), who also summarized the four reports, Bobbie C. (Tenn.), Rene A. (Utah) and John C. (Ohio).

The pre-planned questions dealt mainly with the degree of participation of Alateen within the fellowship structure.

Summarizing the answers, Betty F. wrote:

"Alateen participation has been encouraged at the State level but generally there were few members on the World Service Committees.

"Alateens have been urged to send contributions of

written material to their Area newsletters, the FORUM and their own *Alateen Talk* but the response has been less than expected in view of Alateen's expressed wish to write material of their own.

"A few groups have their own Group Representatives; the majority have voice but no vote at District level.

"In some Areas there have been highly successful Alateen Conventions and Conferences. The Alateen Committees report to their Area Delegates on these. More Alateens have combined with AA-Al-Anon conventions.

"They have proved themselves reliable and competent in handling their programs.

"Some groups are self-supporting; others have needed supplementary help from their Al-Anon groups.

"A few Areas have had Alateen coordinators and chairmen.

"There has been an admitted lack of communication, due in part to difficulty in finding Al-Anon members who are willing to sponsor Alateen groups.

"I am convinced that this Alateen Workshop has made a tremendous impression on the Delegates; they will go home with a more dedicated feeling for this junior segment of our fellowship."

\* \* \* \* \*

The evening of that *Third Day* was "free to relax" — and the Conference members had an opportunity to rest from their intensive labors, at theater, concert, movies or just visiting, to return refreshed for the next day's work.

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#### FOURTH DAY, Friday April 23

The morning began with the Public Relations session, in which Elaine D. (Fla.) discussed

"*Cooperation vs. Affiliation.*" Elaine reminded the Conference of a policy set by the Sixth World Service Conference.

"Al-Anon must continue to grow if it is going to fulfill its primary purpose of reaching the millions who need its help, but who do not yet know about it.

"We fulfill this purpose by attraction and cooperation — as opposed to promotion or affiliation."

Bearing out the specific dictionary definitions of these words, Elaine read:

"Al-Anon is *attracting* when it tells people why we are, what we are, what we do and how; we let them know that we are available if and when help is needed. We state the facts which are communicated via press, radio and TV, always stressing anonymity at the public level.

"Al-Anon is *cooperating* when it works with others, rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened, we reach many more of those in need. This applies to Federal, State and Municipal Alcoholism agencies, private health agencies, law enforcement, judicial and correctional agencies and institutions, general hospitals and state, county or city mental hospitals, councils of churches, doctors, clergymen, nurses, social service workers, educators.

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The Public Relations session continued, this time incorporating the Conference theme, UNITY. Anne C., (Sask.)

showed us clearly how the success of our PR activities depends on unity at every level:

"Before we can have unity in Public Relations work, we must have unity among our members, among our groups — at the District level as well as Area. It is necessary to study and practice our Twelve Traditions as they have been given us for this purpose. Without unity, our groups weaken and die. Therefore group unity is a *must* before we go out to the public with a message that will carry weight.

"If we faithfully use the tools we have been given, our PR work will be successful. These are the Steps and Traditions, the Fact Files, and the PR Guidelines."

Anne pointed out that the success of PR work in her Area was due directly to use of these tools, accounting for their acceptance by churches, the Commission on Alcoholism and an Alcoholism Rehabilitation Center which invites Al-Anon to cooperate in its workshops.

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Louise C. of West Texas had a fascinating report of a wide range of PR activities in her Area. This is an example of how much can be accomplished with imaginative planning and enthusiastic follow-through.

These activities were undertaken by the Dallas Intergroup with such success that they have a 24-hour answering service and a paid secretary!

When the groups were asked if they would support the projected program, the members agreed to give either volunteer time or regular contributions to the PR work.

The following are typical of the undertakings:

1) They got in touch with the Parent-Teacher Associations, nurses groups and colleges. Result: Al-Anon was asked to speak at four colleges; Alateens spoke to four classes in one school. The Director of Education for PTA was so impressed she asked for literature to distribute. Al-Anon speakers appeared at the County School Nurses Association, and four times at Texas U. Al-Anon programs have been on two half-hour TV shows and one half-hour interview — over a thousand dollars worth of free radio time alone!

2) After extensive negotiations, the Dallas PR Committee succeeded in getting two lighted signs on top of two high buildings located on two main highways coming into Dallas. These read: IS ALCOHOLISM A PROBLEM IN YOUR HOME? CALL AL-ANON.

3) A Bus Poster Project. Results: 600 Al-Anon posters installed in buses — every city bus in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. Space was free — Al-Anon provided the posters. And the news media cooperated by giving free space for articles and pictures covering the project. There were many obstacles and considerable expense for the poster production, but it certainly was worth while.

4) The Legal Program. It began with a little 3x5 card Marcella (Intergroup Chairman) happened to notice in a waiting room. It had been placed by the Texas A & M U., and read: EDUCATION — FAMILY LIFE. She called the County Home Demonstration Agent, who agreed to discuss it with her staff. A committee was invited to discuss possibilities with her and the head of the Family Guidance Clinic. First problem: where to begin. They decided to try to reach lawyers. New legislation has made it usual for lawyers to refer divorce clients to a clergyman or a counseling agency to see if couples can work out their marital problems. Although alcoholism is the major cause of divorce, many lawyers did not know this and do not know

where to send people for help. Another meeting was held with two AA lawyers and the V-P of the Family Law Section of the Dallas Bar Association. It was decided to work up six letters, each with a fact sheet about Al-Anon, and send them to lawyers at two week intervals.

Louise told us that all these activities are bearing fruit; calls have averaged three a day, many from young adults.

What is being done in Dallas can be done anywhere. As Louise suggested, it takes "dedicated members who are willing to give their time and money to 'inform the uninformed' about the disease of alcoholism and the help available through Al-Anon."

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The third event on the PR session — and it *was* an event! — was the reading by Selma N. (Md.) of a report of Marty L.'s experiences at *The 1970 White House Conference on Children*.

This Conference has been held every ten years for the past sixty years. Its purpose, according to Marty, was to examine issues concerning today's children in order to draw nationwide attention to the problems and to set the stage for policy and legislation needed to protect and benefit children, and to project what will be necessary to improve the quality of life for children.

"The 3700 Delegates were selected from national and voluntary organizations and represented a broad range of professions and backgrounds: lawyers, educators, parents, behavioral scientists, physicians and welfare people.

"The Conference was built around seven Cluster Areas, on the topics of Individuality, Learning, Health, Parents and Families, Communities and Environment.

"These general groups were divided into 25 forums to insure that every topic would be explored from every aspect.

Marty's report said that Al-Anon World Services had been invited to participate. She was appointed liaison representative for Al-Anon Family Groups at the White House, in which capacity she conducted considerable correspondence and visited the government offices to explain our program.

"I told them our Traditions of cooperation and anonymity and stated our concern for the families affected by alcoholism and the recovery possible through our fellowship."

The White House staff was provided, by the WSO, with a wide assortment of literature, including AL-ANON FACES ALCOHOLISM and LIVING WITH AN ALCOHOLIC.

"We were assigned to the Forum called "Children Who Are Injured" which was part of the Health Cluster. Injuries . . . were physical, emotional, sociological and environmental. We were asked to prepare material on some aspect of injury and then made a video tape! I found myself in a group of pediatricians, safety council people, social workers, school health educators, future nurses, parents and people from business, private and public agencies. Preparing script and filming took three days. Finally the White House staff edited all the films made by the various groups and is putting them together in one big Conference film (in which I appear, with a Conference flower and walking on a crutch!)

"The problems presented by alcoholism were revealed from many sectors of this forum: the unattended child that was dreadfully burned, children from broken homes living in institutions, young drug users, deaths and maiming from traffic accidents. I spoke about Al-Anon and Alateen when-

ever I had an opportunity; I displayed literature and order blanks.

"The complete report, as presented to the President, will be available from the Government Printing Office."

\* \* \* \* \*

Henrietta gave a fascinating report of our world-wide growth as shown by the tremendous increase in translations of CAL, including the books:

"I hope all of us here, and Al-Anons everywhere, realize the fantastic growth of our fellowship. In less than twenty years we have achieved widespread recognition and ever-increasing influence.

"One of the most dramatic proofs of our growth is the demand for more and more literature in languages other than our own.

"I am tempted to mention growth in terms of the multiplying foreign groups, but I'll stick to the literature. That, in itself, is a tremendous demonstration — and so are the problems that go along with it. Many countries need literature badly, but can't afford to have it published. And the WSO couldn't possibly afford to give all the help that's needed or we'd go broke ourselves! But we do help where we can, and we do, by constant communication, try to guide them into prudent procedures based on our experience.

As one example, Germany is having tremendous growth and, as far as literature is concerned, that also includes parts of Switzerland. Their boundless enthusiasm to meet the obvious need for more groups also creates a need for a greater variety of literature. Often individuals want to rush into print with a homemade, unchecked version of ODAT or one of our booklets. There's no thought about copyrights, about the fact that we must review all translations here to make sure they carry the message correctly, and, of course, no thought of where the money is to come from, how orders and shipments can be handled, or how much confusion would result if everyone did things independently.

The General Service Committee in Germany, established two years ago, requires constant guidance and encouragement. When we tell some eager translator that everything must first be cleared with their own General Services, there's rebellion and squabbling, and dozens of letters to the WSO, each stating the conflicting view. Trying to resolve disagreements from 3000 miles away isn't an easy job! But once we get the opposing factions to understand the importance of UNITY, and that it takes love and tolerance to achieve it, things iron out as if by magic.

Sometimes our copyrighted CAL appears without our permission and without reference to our copyright and that's another problem to be dealt with.

Distracting and frustrating as the problems are, they all spell growth, and that's what's really important.

In Mexico and Central America they're even more complex, but we're making good progress there, too.

There is considerable activity in Argentina, with its General Service office and 29 groups. And plans are underway for Portuguese translations, needed by Brazil. CAL is also available in the native dialect of Aruba in the Netherlands Antilles.

And there's our precious Finland, with its tremendous number of groups per capita. And the literature! As of last year, the General Service Office in Helsinki completed translation and publication of *all* CAL leaflets and pamphlets. They have just published their second hard-cover

book, *ONE DAY AT A TIME IN AL-ANON* and are now translating *AL-ANON FACES ALCOHOLISM*. And every translation is first sent to us for review and approval.

"Finland is also doing some translating for the Swedish groups.

"The 52 Belgian and 17 Dutch groups have agreed to cooperate in translating and publication of CAL. They also plan to expand their periodical *OASE* and begin on public relations activities.

"We have translations in Afrikaans, a language of South Africa.

"There is much activity in French literature, too, by the French Literature Committee which serves as an agent of the WSO in the translation and production of the *FORUM* and CAL. Although much handicapped by a mail strike, *LIVING WITH AN ALCOHOLIC* was published in Canada in October 1970.

"The French Literature Committee, whose address is C. P. 366 Outremont, Montreal, 8, Quebec, Canada, has produced a price list of its translations.

"The WSO recently has had printed a two-sheet price list of CAL translations into eight foreign languages. It is most impressive.

"This only touches the highspots; Al-Anon literature appears in more and more languages each year. Surely along with group growth, this is the best sign that Al-Anon is helping where help is needed."

#### ASK-IT BASKET

Everyone eagerly awaits the questions that our Delegates bring with them from inquiring members who may be puzzled about some facet of the fellowship. These are typical:

"What is the difference between cooperation and affiliation?"

To cooperate is to work along with, in a common cause — the way we work with AA. But we are separate entities, not *affiliated*.

\* \* \* \* \*

"At a big meeting last night I heard many sumames. It left me confused about the Tradition of anonymity. Please clarify."

Tradition Eleven says: "... *we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV and films.*" There is usually no reason for secretiveness among members of the fellowships. Read CAL booklet: *Why is Al-Anon Anonymous?*

\* \* \* \* \*

"How is the Conference Chairman elected or selected?"

Appointed by the President of the Board of Trustees after consultation with all the Trustees who must use their best judgment to select the person with the special skills necessary to handle the many varied details of the Conference.

\* \* \* \* \*

"How are local Trustees obtained? What are the qualifications?"

Generally selected from volunteers who have served in various capacities at the WSO and are thoroughly familiar with its workings. The person must be experienced in Al-Anon matters, well-informed on the threefold structure (Steps, Traditions, Concepts),

with sterling judgment and total dedication, stability and vision and with the special skills that enable them to deal with any assignment. They should ever place principles above personalities and weigh decisions in the proper spirit. Trustees must be humbly aware that their responsibility lies with Al-Anon worldwide and not with a particular region or Area. They should never abuse authority even to exercise their own responsibility. And last, but not least, they must be available.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Would an 'Al-Anon Retreat' be referred to in the words 'outside enterprises' (Tradition 6) and 'outside issues' (Tradition 10)?"

It is certainly an 'outside enterprise' and as such, violates the Tradition. Religion is the business of the individual, not of Al-Anon.

\* \* \* \* \*

"What does a person do when they want to have an Al-Anon Retreat? What Tradition must they be careful not to break?"

See above. There is no such thing as an Al-Anon Retreat. Individuals may attend any gatherings they wish to, but Al-Anon's sole purpose is to help families of alcoholics by practicing our own program.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Why doesn't Headquarters offer for sale such things as Serenity pens, praying hands, one-year and five-year pins, etc?"

Simply because we are not in the merchandising business. We have only our beautiful program to sell, and we do that solely through our literature.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Would we . . . break tradition if we sell or take chances on articles other than Al-Anon literature, or objects such as the praying hands bookends, in order to make money for our groups?"

Obviously we would not want to sell anything *but* program-related items, if we feel we must sell something to raise money. Taking chances on raffles is another matter; many group anniversaries raffle off gifts that have been donated by members — toasters, percolators, table linens and so on. Anyone present is free to take chances on these.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is it necessary to adhere to the Traditions as they are written or may we give our own interpretations?"

The Traditions are pretty specific and so should not require interpretation. If members of the group are not of the same mind about a meaning, then it should be left up to the group conscience.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Who makes the decision of combining an Area Delegate and Chairman (Assembly-wise)?"

See Page 10, Item 3 of the Handbook. If another method than that described is chosen, it would require a 2/3 vote of the GRs at the Area Assembly.

\* \* \* \* \*

"During annual AA Conventions, how involved can Al-Anon get without infringing on AA or Al-Anon Traditions?"

We're *invited* to participate; and we do it to whatever extent the AAs want us to. The open meetings we hold at such events are under our own management, of course.

\* \* \* \* \*

"On page 38 of LIVING WITH AN ALCOHOLIC (latest edition) the word 'moral' has been eliminated from the 4th Step. Was this by intent?"

It wasn't *eliminated*, it was left out — by mistake, ours, not the printer's. Just goes to show we're not perfect. It will be corrected in the next edition.

\* \* \* \* \*

"We feel the booklet 'You Can Sponsor a Newcomer' should also be read by newcomers. Unless they know what a sponsor is, they can't ask for one. Perhaps a change of title?"

Excellent suggestion! We'll change it to "*Sponsorship: What It's All About*" and then hope everyone will read it.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is it in the best interest of Al-Anon as a whole, the groups and the individual members, to cancel a meeting in order to attend a special AA function such as an anniversary? Wouldn't it confuse new members about the separate nature of the two fellowships? And where does it leave a newcomer who had to summon every ounce of courage to attend that first meeting?"

An Al-Anon meeting should never be cancelled, just as no AA meeting ever is. Individual members may make a choice, but the meeting should be held, and the officers should be present to fulfill their responsibilities.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Why does WSO-HQ still carry these two names? To which should we refer?"

Our official *legal* title is *Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.*, as it appears in our Certificate of Incorporation. WSO is used within the fellowship to make it clear that this is the service office for the entire world.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is it permissible to have excerpts from the FORUM reprinted in a newspaper or is it against our Traditions?"

Brief excerpts may be used, but only if the copyright credit is included. (Copyright Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and the date)

If a quotation longer than a brief paragraph is to be used, it would have to be cleared with HQ in advance.

\* \* \* \* \*

"How would you get literature Conference Approved? We have a couple of pamphlets that are very good but not Conference Approved."

All Conference Approved material originates within the fellowship. There is no authority which grants such approval to material prepared by outsiders. Write WSO for a copy of the information sheet on CAL.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Could a GR be eligible to become a Delegate without being a committeeman?"

In an Area that does not have Committeemen (now called District Representatives) yes. Otherwise, according to our structure, no. See Page 11 of the Handbook.

\* \* \* \* \*

"What do you do or say, as a member of Al-Anon, if your husband, in AA with 14 years sobriety, drinks far too much Bromo-Seltzer?"

I'm afraid we have to use the First Step here, too. This drug is dangerous and addictive; there is a warning on the bottle. The AA is reminded at many meetings of the dangers of replacing alcohol with drugs.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Can we have a more definitive statement than our "The Al-Anon Intergroup - What It Is - How It Serves?"

The many Al-Anon service centers (Intergroups and Information Services) which are being formed to meet a growing need for cooperative local effort, indicate the need for change in the present statement on Intergroups. This is now being revised to include appropriate references from "The Twelve Concepts" and "The World Service Handbook for Al-Anon and Alateen Groups."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Could WSO send the appeal letters to the GR instead of to the Secretary of the group?"

Not practical -- the GR is the liaison between group and District Representative and not between the group and the WSO. The GR may, of course, remind the Secretary of the importance of reading the letter to the group.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Is it a break in Traditions to have a psychologist or other professional speak at an Al-Anon meeting? Also study of professional books on alcoholism?"

It does not break Tradition, but we have our own program through which we help ourselves and each other. Professionals are occasionally invited to speak to our groups. However if they are not familiar with our program it would be well to brief them on it in advance.

Regarding literature: it would take years of study to get all possible benefit from our own. We should concentrate on Al-Anon publications in group work. Individuals are free to do any supplementary reading they are interested in.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Should Area Coordinators have a vote at Assembly meetings?"

No. Only GRs vote at Assembly.

\* \* \* \* \*

"In large metropolitan areas there are many Puerto Rican and black people who need our help. How can we reach and serve them. In our metropolitan area we have only 60 active black members."

That's an excellent nucleus -- surely they have friends or neighbors who need help. Urge them to offer Al-Anon. Many who need it are hesitant about going into a predominantly white group; they must be reassured that Al-Anon makes no distinctions among the children of God.

\* \* \* \* \*

*(That was a morning filled with important and enlightening business. It seemed like a whole day, but it was only lunch-time to revive us for a busy afternoon.)*

\* \* \* \* \*

Then everybody was delighted to welcome Margaret and her **REPORT ON THE FORUM**

It actually supplemented her report in the Delegate's Brochure in which she contrasted the sad fate of the U. S. publishing business with the bright and successful performance of The FORUM.

"Reversing the dismal general picture," she said, "your International publication, The FORUM, increased in circulation and income. It grossed close to \$3300 more than in the preceding year."

She regretted that it hadn't come quite up to the optimistic budget forecast -- it was short by only 31 subscriptions!

"During 1970, 162,456 FORUMS were mailed; that's slightly more than 13,500 per month."

"Each item in each FORUM was chosen for its fresh point of view, or because it would be helpful in recurring situations or because it gave specific information or inspiration. Helpful criticism, even by AA spouses, was published, too."

The Conference assemblage was much amused by Margaret's telling about a letter which came into the office from a member who was "seriously distressed because Al-Anon doesn't have a national magazine."

"The writer of that letter showed considerable knowledge of Al-Anon, so it's hard to see how she could have missed knowing that we *do* have a national (even International) magazine that performs all the tasks she envisioned for it." Margaret sent her some copies, so now she knows!

Margaret closed with an expression of delight over a recent note from a reader who told Margaret she looks upon the FORUM as her silent sponsor.

And as a postscript, she urged all the Delegates to remind their groups that the FORUM is a *joint* effort, and that she welcomes letters, ideas and suggestions from one and all.

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Then four of our retiring Delegates gave their views and experiences on the Traditions.

*Tradition IX* was beautifully dealt with by Priscilla G. (N. H.)

*Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*

"I feel that the Traditions comprise much of the spiritual part of our program. Being spiritual, they are not always tangible, but I find them a strong force behind Al-Anon in our Area. We just seem instinctively to "obey the unenforceable."

"As far as I know, New Hampshire has no problem with Tradition Nine. We are not organized, but we do have group structure and we try not to have 'bosses.' We rotate our group officers to give every member an opportunity to be responsible for one particular thing -- an opportunity to serve.

"We regard our State Assembly as a 'committee directly responsible to those they serve.' Our goal, since our Assembly began three and a half years ago, has been to involve as many people as possible. This is a safeguard against anyone thinking that the members at the State Assembly 'run everything.'

"Generally it seems to me that this Tradition takes on more meaning in its breach than in its observance. I sincerely hope that no Area is ever faced with the damage which could result from such a breach."

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*Tradition X* had been assigned to Joy M. of New Mexico who illustrated her statement with a clear-cut violation possibility which was, through the reminder of Tradition Ten, wisely avoided.

*The Al-Anon Groups have no opinion on outside issues, hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*

She told of an alcoholism treatment center in Albuquerque which was established last year and is run with Federal funds. Apparently the executives who had been assigned to it knew very little about the field, and they presently discovered Al-Anon and attempted to saddle the Albuquerque groups with the task of counseling and guiding the families of the alcoholics — under their supervision, of course, and not that of Al-Anon.

Recognizing the danger of involvement, the Al-Anon Committee explained in detail why this would violate our Traditions . . . "When the Administrator of the Albuquerque Treatment Program paid a visit to one of the five groups there, he said they wanted Al-Anon to handle all the follow-up calls on the families, at ATP's bidding. We read Tradition X to him and explained that we could not lend our name to any outside agency . . . that we have but one aim, to carry the Al-Anon message to those in need and that if they wanted to contact individuals, many might be willing to help. I understand an offer has been made to start an Al-Anon group at the ATP Center but they were not interested.

"One final thought: if Al-Anon as such should become involved in theological or political issues, segregation or any other public question, we would surely be divided from within. The opinions of our individual members could not possibly be all the same, for we are people from many places and many walks of life with one single purpose: *spiritual growth.*"

\* \* \* \* \*

Frances R. (N. Y. D.) spoke on

*Tradition XI: 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.*

"I was told early in my Al-Anon experience," said Frances, that only first names are used in Al-Anon, that last names were an identification and each individual could choose whether or not he or she wanted to reveal it.

"Of course I got very confused with all the Anns and Marys but after a time I became better acquainted with them and learned and used their last names. Personally I do not use an initial for my last name — what if I should be needed and someone had to look me up — Frances R. wouldn't mean very much!"

Frances also explained that one can be at ease using

only first names for AA members, which makes it easy to guard their anonymity.

"We are making giant strides through public education via the communications media — and that's wonderful. But at this level personal anonymity is of the highest importance and should never be broken."

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*Tradition XII* was discussed in moving words by Blanche, (Ont. N.) She found deep meaning in this brief statement: "*Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.*"

"I came to this fellowship sadly lacking in humility," said Blanche, "I learned it from this Tradition.

"It has taught me to guard against judging and criticizing others and to protect the anonymity of those in the fellowship, both Al-Anon and Alateen, and particularly of AA.

"I know that our members are recovering by means of principles and not personalities; it is through people that the principles speak. I gain so much if I keep my mind on *what* is said and not *who* is saying it.

"Being a Delegate is no credit to me as a person; it is not a 'glory-job' — it has helped me to recognize that Al-Anon principles are working world-wide. I have learned not to let the mechanics of Al-Anon become more important than carrying the message of hope; ours is the language of the heart.

"When I became a Delegate, my first visit to a District was the one farthest away; I traveled 700 miles by bus. I thought, 'what can I say to these people whom I do not know?' My spirits lifted, weary as I was, when I saw four members at the terminal to meet me. I felt I had known them for a long time; they made me feel needed. They were practicing 'principles above personalities' with this warm welcome and friendship.

"If I have often mentioned my personal feelings in this talk on the Twelfth Tradition, it is because I feel Al-Anon is a personal program of recovery."

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*After a brief pause for a refreshing cup of coffee and a stretch, we reassembled to hear the report of the*

#### LITERATURE COMMITTEE.

Alice B., who had been the Chairman for some eight years, announced that she was turning over the Committee officially to Louise M. who had, for the past year, served as co-Chairman.

She told of their working together "in complete harmony and understanding" and commented: "the answer is that there's something special about this fellowship and its servants, and that's *love*, working for a common purpose, subordinating our own will for the health of the fellowship."

She spoke of her finding Al-Anon *after* her husband had become sober in AA:

"All I can remember (there were no pink clouds!) was that our problems came into sharper focus after he was sober. They had to be faced and dealt with. When I was just about ready to give up, Al-Anon happened to me."

She said she was hesitant about going to strangers, not realizing that there were no strangers in Al-Anon.



"I don't know why I went, but I do now. I was being propelled by my Higher Power and didn't realize it.

After telling how she was "led" into serving on her Committee, she said:

"And that's how I came into Al-Anon, with no will or planning of my own and no recognition of the Master Plan that was working for me. This started me on the most spiritually productive years of my life. It has given me a fulfillment I never hoped to find in this world or the next. You'll notice I have not once used the word 'miracle;' I'll let you draw your own conclusions."

And thereupon, she introduced Louise, the new Chairman of the Literature Committee.

Louise began her report by announcing three new members for the Literature Committee who will be working out of the World Service Office. Louise told of forthcoming projects and the new committee members who will work on them.

"In addition to a new booklet for men, we plan to expand our literature for Alateen, and for professionals — and fortunately the committee now includes an Al-Anon man who is a creative writer, a talented Alateen member and a caseworker who is also a long-time member of Al-Anon."

The Delegates gave a hearty welcome to the new Chairman, realizing what has so often been said: "Al-Anon always finds the right person for its need."

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The afternoon session came to an inspiring close with a talk by Doug (S. C.) who, throughout his term as Delegate has also served as a valued member of the Lit. Com.:

#### **Unity Through Conference Approved Literature**

Doug began by reminding the Delegates that in both the Conferences of 1962 and 1965, the Conference unanimously recommended that all Al-Anon groups use only literature approved by a Committee of Conference Delegates. He felt that this had an important bearing on Al-Anon's unity.

"Unity is derived from a Latin word meaning 'oneness'. It means agreement, harmony, indivisibility, uniformity and singleness of purpose. Our Al-Anon Traditions give us clear guidelines . . .

"Our first tells us our common welfare should come first and that progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

"And if any group uses the statement in the Fourth Tradition that 'each group should be autonomous' without the qualification 'except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon as a whole' then that group's concept of unity and regard for our common welfare is damaged.

"Why this stress on the exclusive use of CAL? How can the use of other literature affect Al-Anon unity? Few, if any NON-CAL books or pamphlets, no matter how well-written or well-intended, truly express or advocate our Al-Anon philosophy and singleness of purpose. Too often the stress is religious or philosophical rather than on Al-Anon principles.

"What's wrong with using only Conference Approved literature? Certainly the fine CAL Al-Anon books and more than 50 pamphlets, not to mention the useful material in the FORUM, are more than adequate. If used to their fullest potential, there would be neither room nor time for any other books or literature."

And the Conference certainly seemed to agree wholeheartedly with Doug!

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*(Now it was time to go to dinner, for this was to be a long day, with an evening session beginning at 7:30)*

Three retiring Delegates to hear from now, again on the subject of *Unity* Florence N. (S. Dak.) was the first speaker and she had a fascinating message: *Unity Through the S. D. Al-Anon GUIDE*.

"I bring greetings from Al-Anon in South Dakota to Lois, to our Trustees, to our dedicated secretaries and all at Headquarters, and to all the Delegates. We want you to know that every Al-Anon member in South Dakota is on the team!

"I speak confidently for *all* because we enjoy a remarkable sense of unity and understanding in South Dakota. I want to tell you about one small instrument devised especially to strengthen our unity: *The South Dakota Al-Anon Guide*.

"We meet in Assembly twice a year at the time of the spring and fall AA Conferences. Distances are great, but we gather in crowds for those meetings. We love the time we spend together, the spiritual meetings and the speakers, but for years we dreaded the business meetings which dragged out in discussions of procedures and terms of office.

"It was our dedicated, active Yankton group (started in 1951) that first pointed out the need for a written guide outlining procedures and obligations, specifically for our rural Area. An Alateen page was included to stress Al-Anon represented at the World Service Conference by the Area Delegate and that they have a definite place in our Assembly."

Florence went on to explain that their excellent monthly Newsletter, The Tel-E-Anon, has been published by the Yankton group since 1958 when it was a welcome addition to the small amount of literature then available. Tel-E-Anon it is actually a state-wide sharing which also provides Al-Anon meetings for many who live in isolated sections of the state.

"Al-Anon is spreading in our Area — five new groups in the past year and increased activity in Alateen.

"What a privilege it has been for me to be here and become acquainted with all you wonderful people. I shall never get through thanking God that I could have been so favored."

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The next message on Unity came from Rene A. (Utah): *How to Re-establish Unity*.

"Each of you is probably carrying in your pocket or purse a message relating to my theme, for every United States coin bears a message on unity, a Latin phrase meaning 'One composed of many.' " A good description of Al-Anon, incidentally.

To re-establish unity, Rene suggested, depends on each individual's willingness to understand what attitudes create unity. She went on to say it is important to realize that every individual is different and to respect the difference; to encourage the development of each man's Divine potential.

" . . . to understand that everyone needs others; no

one is entirely independent and that working in harmony with others for common ideals is a bond which fosters happiness and growth.

"... to adhere to the moral uprightness that evokes the confidence of others and gives us personal peace of mind.

"... to be tolerant, regarding the weaknesses of others with compassion rather than ridicule and scorn.

"... that oneness, unity in anything depends upon our own desire to cooperate and perhaps sacrifice personal glory for the loving spirit of the group."

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The final statement on Unity was made by Minnie F., (Wyoming) on *Is Distance a Barrier to Unity?*

"Wyoming is a huge, beautiful state with a few large cities and many small towns, some a great distance apart.

"Is distance a barrier from our good friends? Many of our husbands have driven 100 miles or more to get drunk; now, without question, they drive that far to help an alcoholic in need. Many drive from southern Montana a 200-mile round trip, to talk sobriety and visit.

"Is distance a barrier from God? Not in Wyoming! There are no barriers when we want to acquire peace of mind.

"We have 9 Al-Anon groups in our big state, and 1 Alateen group. Just recently three more groups have joined us.

"Our future growth depends on unity within ourselves, each member, each group, each Assembly. Without unity there is no recovery.

"My husband and I have traveled great distances, sometimes through rain and snow, to attend a meeting or a convention. On such occasions we see our good friends; we call 90% of the people we meet by name!

"You folks must realize you probably have more people in your home group than we have in the entire state of Wyoming. We feel distance is only a state of mind."

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*(The long day ended with a period for discussing unfinished business, and hearing recommendations made by various committees appointed for the Conference)*

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## FIFTH DAY, Saturday April 24

The great feature of this closing session is the Spiritual Meeting which, on this occasion, meant the *Spiritual Implications of the First Tradition*.

(Penny, the guiding genius of our Conference, made her story very brief, for a complete record of her spiritual overcoming of her many crises could make a whole book! She faced with monumental courage her many physical trials, including her recent disastrous accident that would have made Conference participation impossible for an ordinary mortal. She is an example to us all!)

Penny introduced first Joy M. (N. M.) from whose beautiful talk the following is quoted:

"I remembered a talk on Unity given at one of our Assemblies. In speaking of our togetherness and fellowship, she spelled it out: 'U-N-I-T-Y: You 'N I Tie Together in Brotherly Love.' I thought, 'How true, not only in our fel-

lowship, but with our loved ones, our friends, and with the God of our understanding, in all our daily affairs.'"

Joy spoke of childhood tragedies which established fears and bitterness in her, and how these attitudes later affected her coping with an alcoholic marriage.

"I lost my faith in God and I gave God little reason to have any faith in me. Poor God, He had no way of knowing what I wanted. I prayed my husband would come home; then I prayed he would never come home. I prayed he would quit drinking; I prayed he would drink himself to death. And then I stopped praying."

After her husband joined AA, she found that "something was still missing — he seemed to be leaving me behind and I didn't like it. AA told me this program could work for me, too, but I didn't know how to apply it."

In Al-Anon, Joy learned "to release my husband with love and understanding, to make his own decisions, right or wrong, drunk or sober. If God loves him enough to let him make his own mistakes, I love him enough to let him do it, too."

\* \* \* \* \*

Penny next introduced the final speaker of the Conference, John C. (Ohio). The following are brief excerpts from his interesting and inspiring talk:

"To look at all of you here and to realize how much knowledge you have of this program makes me feel very humble indeed. I always remember, however, that each of us can be considered a world authority on his own story."

John gave some telling descriptions of the elements of UNITY: "... *oneness*, especially of that which is *varied*, rather than uniform in its parts ... *solidarity*: the kind of unity in a group or class or community that enables it to express its opinion, manifest its strength or exert its influence AS ONE ... *integrity* the kind of unity which indicates interdependence of the parts and completeness and perfection of the whole."

After years of painful experiences, John found Al-Anon.

"When I heard some of the stories at my first meeting my troubles seemed pale by comparison.

"What I brought to Al-Anon has been re-molded into whatever shape I'm in now. I needed lots of improvement — and I found it in Al-Anon. It has given direction and purpose to my life, as well as the precious gift of freedom — from loneliness, from fears, from anger and resentment."

\* \* \* \* \*

And so the beautiful Conference came to an end, as every Al-Anon meeting does everywhere, with all joining in The Lord's Prayer.

\* \* \* \* \*

## And Afterward?

Some started for distant homes but most journeyed happily, by bus or car, to Stepping Stones where they would be greeted by their ever-loving hostess, our Lois.

But the Board of Trustees, after a brief lunch, met in an afternoon-long session to discuss plans for putting into work the decisions of the 11th World-Service Conference.

*Prepared by Conference Committee  
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