

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

## 1997 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

Communication — Our Hope for the Future  
Virginia Beach, Virginia April 13-17, 1997

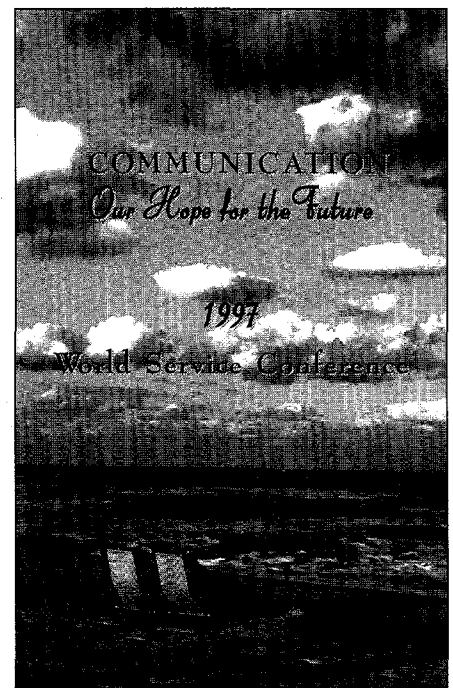
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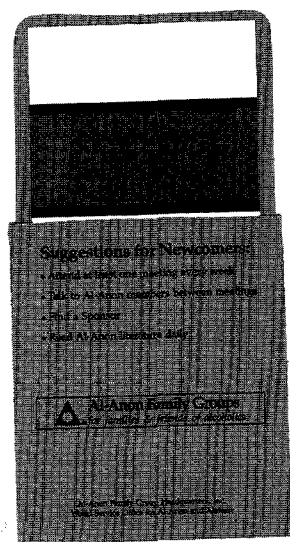
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### CONCEPT II

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

"... it is evident that, in order to get effective action, the groups must delegate the actual operational authority to chosen service representatives who are empowered to speak and act for them. The group conscience of Al-Anon could not be heard unless a properly chosen Conference were fully trusted to speak for it in most world service matters."





centers (LDC) have been delayed or duplicated. A suggestion was made to send the raw materials for beginners' packets directly to the LDCs for compilation and distribution to assist the WSO. A question was also raised as to whether the sparse volunteer base in Virginia was having an impact on the ability to mail packets out.

The Director of Business Services and Executive Director shared the members' frustration and confirmed that the office had been having difficulties related to the relocation. The staff in the shipping and customer service departments are all new. While a few bugs in the customized computer software are still being resolved, the majority of the set-backs have been remedied. The WSO remains dedicated to getting all orders and concerns resolved quickly to continue to serve the fellowship.

The volunteer base had its impact. In the New York office the same people volunteered day in and day out for several years so they were experienced and motivated. Many members from Virginia and North Carolina have been willing and have the same dedication to Al-Anon but the time they can give is limited. The WSO has held successful "Volunteer Saturdays" however, the number of packets needed to supply the LDCs is higher than the number volunteers can currently produce. Working with the LDCs, the WSO will continue to send the materials to the centers and request that they make up the packets. To have an outside vendor perform this task would be cost prohibitive and would result in an increase in cost per packet. Members expressed their support for the WSO during this tremendous undertaking.

Concern was expressed over the postponement of the Regional Service Seminars (RSSs) and that decisions made at the world service level were effecting the local level. Members shared the frustration about the postponement of the RSSs in 1998 to 1999. The RSS meetings are wonderful vehicles to excite other members into service. The RSSs have filled a void and provided a unique connection into service for Al-Anon members. Some felt that four years between RSSs may be too long.

One region explained that they plan to conduct a mini-service seminar with those areas willing to participate and that this has diffused a lot of the concern. Some members involved with the RSSs were somewhat relieved with the postponement as they wanted to support the International Convention yet felt committed to also support their local Regional Service Seminar.

A question was raised as to whether the WSO should have held a vote on the postponement of the RSSs. A member replied

that the Board has fiscal responsibility for these kinds of decisions and provided an example on page 165 of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

This decision was raised at the Long Range Study Panel and recommended to the RSS Committee composed of the regional trustees. Their recommendation to delay RSS's to 1999 then went to the Board. This Board decision was made so that all the energies of those involved in service as well as those at the WSO could be focused on the 1998 International Convention.

The WSO staff has been reduced from 67 employees to 56 and with the International Convention, Al-Anon has accepted a major undertaking to rent the whole city of Salt Lake for four days. Our credibility depends on whether we can make the commitment to the city by having 7,000 to 10,000 members attend. The RSSs were not the only meetings postponed for 1998. Back in 1994, at the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting, delegates voted to give up an entire meeting in their rotation cycle so that the structures around the world could support the International Convention.

Some questioned if the decision was a way to save money. The cost of a Regional Service Seminar is a fixed cost dependent upon hotel costs and the number of staff members and regional trustees. Other costs depend on the trustees' requests, including special equipment and Internet connections.

Many members will not be attending the International Convention for various reasons including cost.

The equal importance of the RSSs was stressed as a building block to continued service in Al-Anon and one panel of delegates won't have the benefit of an RSS. Although this convention will be different from RSSs, there will be service workshops at the International. One member shared her experiences attending a service workshop at a previous International Convention.

Members felt that one of the primary issues was the lack of timeliness in making the decision to postpone the dates. Much work had been underway and much effort expended. A more timely decision would have made the communication and implementation of the decision a lot easier.

On another topic, a request was made to link French-speaking members from the Al-Anon Internet Home Page to a French Home Page and for information on how to obtain Internet guidelines. It was explained that only the WSO Home Page is official and all other pages are operated by individuals. The Policy Committee decided that to avoid the appearance of affiliation, WSO Home Page will not hyperlink to others. The WSO invites others to link to the official WSO

Home Page.

The next discussion centered on regional delegates' meetings and whether or not it was appropriate for staff members to attend.

Another issue was related to the need for literature directed toward older members such as grandparents who are raising their grandchildren because of alcoholism, retirees who are faced with alcoholism later in life, and older members with adult children alcoholics. Fellowship Communication is working on just those needs for this demo-

graphically growing population.

The final topic discussed the delegates' expenses at the WSO and the delay in sending checks. The World Service Office apologized and explained that accounting had mistakenly prioritized expense checks. As soon as the delay was discovered, checks were mailed.

Connie thanked the members for putting the Concepts into action, particularly Concept Four, "Participation is the key to harmony."

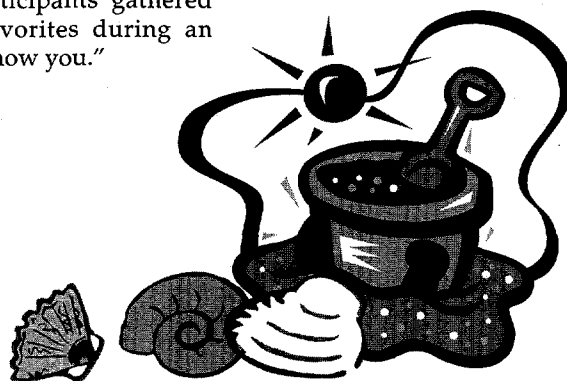
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## ICE BREAKER

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What better way to kick off a week of hard work and dedication than an evening of fun. World Service delegates, staff, and volunteers gathered for a beach party in a large, windowed, beach-front room in the hotel. The beach motif was complete with towels, chairs, and the Atlantic Ocean as a back-drop providing a photo opportunity for Conference members. A name game was played and the winning team received a seashell necklace. Buckets filled with sand and shells decorated the tables where Confer-

ence members enjoyed their own ice cream sundae creations. Participants gathered around singing old favorites during an evening of "getting to know you."



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## 1996 ANNUAL REPORT

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Ric began his presentation by helping everyone make the transition from New York, "Yo! Welcome to Virginia, y'all!" Ric explained to the Conference that he had a fantasy that the WSO would move to Virginia and no one would notice. The reality was that only 14 staff members relocated to the new site, and a significant amount of experience did not relocate. The office staff is undergoing a tremendous transition including a new computer system and a new phone system.

A list of corrections and answers to questions submitted by Conference members was distributed.

Conference members were asked to submit additional grammatical or factual errors in the Annual Report directly to Ric to ensure the final document is correct, and the floor was opened for questions and discussion.

A question was raised whether future reports would include information on spe-

cial groups (e.g., adult children) in addition to the Lone Member and Institutions information. It was explained that Group Services will focus on those who have different needs, but will be reporting on the services provided to all groups. The Lone Member and Institutions information was detailed as a result of projects approved by past Conferences.

Another question asked how the air play time of our Public Service Announcements (PSA's) is tracked. A chip imbedded in the PSA sends a signal each time a PSA is aired. The WSO receives regular reports on the air play time.

In a new formatting design for the Annual Report all members of the WSO staff are listed in the Appendix unless a staff member had a particular role in a project.

A motion to approve the 1996 Annual Report as amended was carried.

**Ric B.,**  
*Executive Director*

# DELEGATE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

## Susan A.

Associate Director, Conference

The committees are made up of staff, volunteers and delegates from each panel. Delegate member committee appointments are based on a variety of criteria: the previous delegate's committee assignment; the number of delegates in the region who are on each committee; incoming delegates' preferences, and the timeliness of the return of the request form. The Delegate committee appointments were announced.

COMMITTEE	Panel 35 (1995-97)	Panel 36 (1996-98)	Panel 37 (1997-99)
Admissions/ Handbook	Penny R. .... WA Kitty S. .... AL Roger C. .... AB/NT Carole M. .... NJ	Annie A. .... UT Betty W. .... NF/LB Pat D. .... LA	Roberta V. .... FL (S) Cheryl C. .... MN (S) Geri Lea H. .... MI Janine L. .... RI
Conference Committee on Trustees	Luz N. .... AZ Kay J. .... MT Colleen R. .... MN (N)	Bob B. .... ID Judy D. .... WY Jan R. .... AR	Willie W. .... CA (S) Suzanne O. .... PQ (W) Bonne M.-C. .... TX (E) Mary T. .... IN Lyn D. .... TN
Group Services	Joanne B. .... WI Patty C. .... ND Vicki L. .... WV Genevieve B. .... AP	Bobby S. .... SC Donna V. .... IA Juanita C. .... IL Marjorie L. .... NH	Cathy C. .... CA (N) Bernice L. .... MB Wendy G. .... KY Leola T. .... MD/DC
Literature I	Juanita P. .... VA Barbara A. .... GA John H. .... MA	Joan V. .... CT Marie D. .... ME Loretta F. .... SD Douglas J. .... NV	Dee R. .... FL (N) Deb R. .... PA La Vaughn R. .... NY (N) Lynda E. .... OH
Literature II	Kay B. .... OK Michelle M. .... CO Madeline J. .... MS Ann D. .... PQ (E)	Pamela H. .... NY (S) Dolores R. .... NM Ben R. .... SK Valerie B. .... AK	Susan N. .... DE Sheri A. .... TX (W) Ruth H. .... ON (S)
Public Outreach	Rose J. .... BC/YT Joan D. .... NC Joan C. .... VT Shirley L. .... OR	Cieni P. .... PR Marg St.G. .... NE Lucy A. .... ON (N) Mary Paula H. .... MO	Dorena S. .... IL (N) Keo O. .... KS Brigida C. .... HI

## ADMISSIONS/HANDBOOK COMMITTEE REPORTBACK

### Mary A.-T.,

Chairperson

### Susan A.,

Associate Director, Conference

The committee reviewed the Area World Service Conference Chart found on page 143 of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* and considered a suggestion to depict the area assembly on the chart. Several concerns arose, including: the purpose of the chart, consideration of area autonomy, and whether the charts are self-explanatory and easy to understand. After a lengthy discussion, the committee agreed to table this item.

The definition for "Evolving National Structures" was also reviewed. A motion was presented to the Conference to add a description of "Evolving National Structures" to the "World Service Handbook" section under "Terms Used in Al-Anon." A few years ago, the Admissions/Handbook Committee clarified many items in this section of the book. The motion carried.

The committee discussed several options for the *Links of Service* poster. It was de-

cided that the vote to discontinue the poster did not have substantial unanimity. After further discussion, suggestions were made which included: give *Links of Service* to the designer for an updated look, keep the light-hearted cartoon appearance, add the link depicting the delegates returning to the areas to give their WSC report, and keep producing a supply of the current poster until the new design is reviewed and approved.

The JOY OF SERVICE GR leaflet was discussed and several suggestions were made to make it more "joyful:" include sharings of personal and spiritual growth; increase the number of graphics and use fewer words; tie it in with the new design of the *Links of Service* poster; refer to guidelines or the *Service Manual* rather than restating the sections; eliminate fear by giving information; discuss fellowship; show confidence; and show other GRs sharing.

# GROUP SERVICES REPORTBACK

An update was given of the first quarter activities as follows:

- A bookmark describing group service positions was produced
- The Seventh Tradition leaflet was completed and distributed to committee members
- A new group binder was approved for distribution to new groups. The Executive Committee established a price of \$15.00 plus postage for purchase by existing groups.
- Members of the Committee were surveyed and offered suggestions for the overall redesign of the guidelines
- *Let's Take a Group Inventory* (G-8) was updated and distribution will take place following the WSC
- The January-June issue of *Getting in Touch* was mailed in *Area Highlights*

The Alateen Advisory Committee agreed to make our membership aware of the vulnerability of Alateens and stated "let's get the issue of abuse out of the dark and find solutions." There are increased requests from professionals for Alateen meetings in schools that often go unfilled due to the lack of sponsors.

A leaflet on Al-Anon's co-founders was processed by the Archives Committee and will be sent to the Group Services Committee for input. The Archives Advisory Committee selected as its slogan "Look to the Past to Protect the Future." A new system for accessioning archival material was developed based on subject rather than the cur-

rent chronological numbering system and will begin with items accessioned at the WSO.

Trends in Group Services communications for the first quarter of 1997 were: crosstalk, dual members, and online meetings. There was a slight decrease in the total number of groups this quarter. The number of 800# calls processed daily in Group Records averaged 137. As a result of a question by a committee member about the number of requests for Alateen meeting information, Group Records will now maintain demographics on the type of calls received.

The Alateen Advisory Committee requested Alateen participation at the World Service Conference. A recommendation will be made to the Conference Committee that two members of the Alateen Advisory Committee be allowed to attend the WSC with voice for a three year trial period beginning with the 1998 Conference.

The Alateen Advisory Committee recommended revised language in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, on "Membership and Groups, Membership Eligibility." The Committee agreed the current wording discourages participation by younger members and a suggested revision will go to the Policy Committee.

Information was shared about electronic meetings and interest was expressed in learning about this new type of communication between members.

**Ann H.,**  
*Chairperson*

**Sandra F.,**  
*Director,*  
*Group Services*

# LITERATURE COMMITTEES REPORTBACK

The two Literature Committees met jointly for the first committee meeting.

A copy of *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* was given to each Conference member. It was agreed by the committees that no action be taken on a *Paths to Recovery...* companion workbook at this time.

The committees were asked to give feedback on *Courage to be Me—Living with Alcoholism*. Members liked the design and found it very easy to read. The feeling was that it has tremendous potential. Fellowship Communication plans additional outreach efforts with this book.

Literature Committee members participated in the development of the literature inventory review form included in the inventory packets given to all delegates. Each delegate was asked to take their packet back

to their literature and Alateen coordinators for their assistance in coordinating this project. Also included was a questionnaire for LDCs, written instructions and an informational video.

It was agreed to send all Literature Committee members a summary of projects each committee is considering.

There is approximately a two year supply of the book *Al-Anon Family Groups* in the warehouse. A consensus was reached not to recommend discontinuance this year.

A draft copy of "Definition of Major versus Minor Revisions" was distributed. Members were asked to review and return their comments to the Fellowship Communication staff.

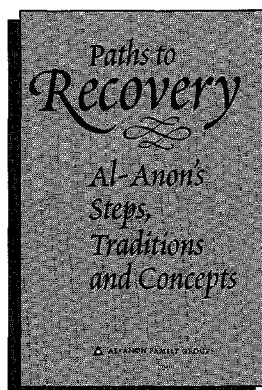
A motion was presented to the Conference to develop a newcomer brochure with a single newcomer piece. The committee

**Pat L., Trustee,**  
*Chairperson Literature I*

**Mary Lou M.,**  
*Associate Director, Literature*

**Nancy B., Trustee,**  
*Chairperson Literature II*

**Caryn J.,**  
*Director,*  
*Fellowship Communication*



Al-Anon's Latest Book  
(B-24)

explained that a member submitted a small booklet-idea that she developed. This could be used as a prototype. The WSC granted conceptual approval.

The committees presented a motion to the Conference requesting conceptual approval to develop a daily reader for Al-Anon adult children.

In the Conference floor discussion, delegates shared the perspectives of the members they were representing as well as their personal experiences.

Concern was expressed about approving more material, particularly during this time when an extensive literature inventory is underway. Others felt that having a daily reader directed at one focus group may open the gates for other specialty daily readers. Al-Anon is inclusive, not exclusive.

Members shared that Al-Anon meetings are using other program literature and one way in keeping Al-Anon pure is to have a daily reader for this segment of our fellowship. Granting conceptual approval doesn't mean anyone would be excluded. Looking at the bell curve presentation, it seems that our groups reached a peak when the adult children groups were new, fresh, and exciting. We couldn't meet the demand of those groups and they went somewhere else.

One member shared her experience as an adult child which led her into service. At her first district meeting, she was asked to leave, but others convinced her to stay which led her to where she is today. She stated, "Just because our bodies have grown, doesn't mean we have. We're asking you to help."

While "a group is a group is a group is a group," an individual is important also. To help Al-Anon be more inclusive, we have to pay attention to the voices of those in the fellowship, and keep an open mind and heart. Members all over the world are asking for this and other material to be translated.

The value of hearing minority opinions and trusting in the group conscience was

appreciated. The Conference is the group conscience to hear and communicate what the groups are saying. Looking at the struggle with Alateen being identified as a separate entity, it was suggested that Conference members pray hard about this. When a member walks into the meeting room, the relationship with the alcoholic doesn't have an effect on why we are there.

In the 1986 *Conference Summary* during the open discussion it was noted that Al-Anon adult children were willing to send in sharings. That was eleven years ago. There are about 1200 adult children groups. This will help bring them into the fellowship. One-third of our members grew up in these homes. It's a book for everyone.

Another member shared that he left Al-Anon in 1983 when he discovered he was an adult child because he didn't find what he wanted. He came back because he didn't find it in the other place either. Each morning he reads four books, *ODAT*, *Courage to Change*, *As We Understood* and another daily reader that's not from Al-Anon, and it should be.

The idea was shared that this material would be a wonderful tool to make a more comfortable transition to Al-Anon for the generation of Alateens growing up.

Following the discussion, the 1997 World Service Conference granted conceptual approval to develop a new daily reader for Al-Anon adult children.

Literature Committee I, in the form of two motions, requested Conference approval for major revisions to the pamphlets *Al-Anon IS for Men* and *Does She Drink Too Much?*

A question was asked relative to timing of this request in light of the literature inventory that is taking place. The committee explained that these two pieces were on the committee's agenda before the literature inventory was developed, therefore, these pieces are not included in the inventory material.

The motions carried.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH REPORTBACK

**Margaret M., Trustee,**  
*Chairperson*

**Phyllis M.,**  
*Director,*  
*Public Outreach*

A report from October 22, 1996 to March 30, 1997 documenting 8,611 "Ask Yourself" PSA broadcasts was distributed to all Conference members. The value of these airplays is 8.2 million dollars. A pre-survey indicated that of the 65 stations surveyed, 56 responded that they were aware of Al-Anon and thought it was a worthwhile organization with local relevance to their viewers. Yet only one station in the survey could remember receiving a PSA campaign from Al-Anon, although we have been produc-

ing PSAs since 1984.

16.5% of the stations who broadcasted the PSAs did so as a result of fellowship efforts. The vendor was able to track the amount of TV airplays with an encoded computer chip embedded in the PSA. The technology required does not yet exist in Canada. However, a follow-up survey of the Canadian TV stations who received the PSA found them to be positive about the content and relevancy of the PSA.

The Military Outreach literature sleeve

was produced, and a Military and Veterans' Hospital Pilot Project with the US Department of the Navy was designed for Institutions and CPC Coordinators. Area Institutions and CPC Coordinators will be involved in the follow-up of these mailings. Similar mailings to Naval bases and treatment centers are planned for the future.

The 1996 *Membership Survey* pamphlet (S-29) was graphically redesigned and finalized for production. PI, CPC, and Institutions Service Kits were reviewed. In addition to being labor-intensive to assemble, the contents were found in need of extensive revision. Interim kits were created for the coordinators. The committee reviewed a draft of the new order form that will replace the Service Kits. The order form eliminates duplication of information and labor intensive packaging.

The Public Outreach Service has placed an ad in the magazine, *Professional Counselor*. The ad focused on thanking our professional friends who are responsible for referring 46% of our members to Al-Anon. It includes an offer for a free copy of the 1996 *Membership Survey*.

The exhibit booth was enhanced to focus on the Al-Anon/Alateen purpose. A table-top and free-standing model were purchased. Positive feedback from the committee was received. A photograph of the new exhibit booth and literature display was provided along with a copy of the guidelines for members manning the booth at conferences and conventions.

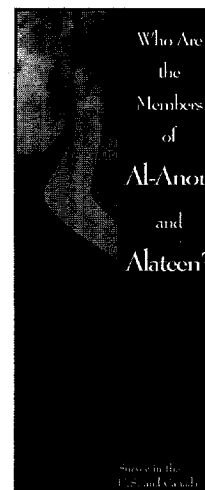
*Pebble in the Pond* will be revised in 1998. As an interim measure, to update members,

a memo will be inserted in this booklet that will list all changes in service materials.

The committee discussed the coordinators' service projects, mailings, and surveys. The results of the first survey to PI, CPC, and Institutions Coordinators have been analyzed to determine how much time they have to spend on service projects, the types of projects they prefer to work on, and the resources they have available to them.

National Public Information of Canada reported that 7,500 *Al-Anon Speaks Out*, 1997 Canadian bulletins, were mailed to professionals. A full-page announcement on Alateen has been produced for the *Children's Safety Guide Book of Canada*. As a result of the airing of the "Ask Yourself" TV PSAs during the months of December, January, and February, 61 calls to NPIC were received. A French translation of the film, *Lois' Story*, is now available as a VHS videocassette rental through NPIC. Arrangements were made with CJOH TV in Ottawa and local Alateen groups for a news segment for the series, "Battle of the Bottle," which aired February 5, 1997. A military mailing in Canada will be forthcoming.

The National Public Information of Canada dinner was held Sunday evening. Georgette G., NPIC Office Manager, gave a participatory, informative, and motivating presentation. The Canadian delegates responded positively to the Public Outreach Services' commitment to learn more about the demographics of Canada as a way to enhance their ability to bring Al-Anon to all parts of our structure.



1996 Membership Survey (S-29)

## TREASURER'S REPORT

Income from operations totaled \$3,564,139 in 1996, about \$426,800 (10.7%) less than anticipated. Expenses for the year were \$4,159,566, \$97,400 less than projections. As a result, the General Fund experienced a loss of \$595,427 compared to a projected loss of \$266,000.

A gross profit of \$2,458,701 was realized on literature sales, this was about \$437,300 less than expected. Sales of several books and other literature were far below projections. *How Al-Anon Works* (\$123,000 less than expected), *Courage To Change* (\$89,000 lower) and other literature (\$170,000 lower).

Contribution receipts were \$780,558 versus a budget of \$770,000. Contributions reached a peak of \$1,043,200 in 1991.

*Forum* subscription income totaled \$315,869, \$15,900 more than anticipated. The subscription base of 40,000 at year-end compared with a base of 32,700 at the beginning

of the year.

Investment income of \$9,011 was earned in 1996.

As noted above, operating expenses of \$4,159,566 were less than expected. Specifically, expenses were significantly lower than expected for labor costs (by \$47,000), occupancy (by \$56,100), and postage by (\$20,500). Costs were much higher than expected for telephone (by \$21,300), stationary and office supplies (by \$17,700), and French Literature Service (by \$21,200).

Beginning in 1995, we were required to account for health care benefits for future retirees. Post-retirement health benefit costs are recorded in the Reserve Fund. A net charge of \$82,179 was incurred in 1996. \$5,457 was actually expended for these benefits. Because of the relocation and the turnover in staff, significant expenditures, if any, would not occur for 20 years. The Board of

**Don C., Trustee,**  
Treasurer

**Richard Keilly,**  
non-member,  
Director,  
Business Services

Trustees, therefore, directed that this liability would be assumed by the Reserve Fund.

The Building Fund earned interest income of \$1,422. All day-to-day expenses incurred in connection with building were charged to the General Fund and are recorded under occupancy.

At December 31, 1996 your World Service Office had total assets of \$8,714,111 and liabilities of \$3,807,817 leaving a net fund balance of \$4,906,294 distributed between three funds — General, Reserve and Building.

The Reserve Fund had a balance of

\$3,562,672 at year-end after recording investments at market value and assuming the cost of post-retirement health benefits.

The Building Fund established in 1995 to record the purchase of the World Service Office shows the final cost of the land and building at \$2,950,225.

Conference members participated in discussion about the Treasurer's Report relative to the Reserve fund and relocation costs. A motion to approve the 1996 Auditor's Report carried.

## 1997 BUDGET REPORT

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**Don C., Trustee,**  
*Treasurer*

**Richard Keilly,**  
*non-member,*  
*Director,*  
*Business Services*

The 1997 budget, because of uncertainties concerning the expected sales of two new books, was presented on a break-even basis. Projected expenses of \$3,862,000 were offset by conservative income projections.

Included in the 1997 budget is the income and expense for French services previously provided by Al-Anon's Canadian office, Publications Francaise (PFA), which ceased operations at the end of 1996.

**Income:** A moderate decline in sales of existing literature, part of a continued trend, is expected for 1997. Offsetting the decline is income of \$555,000 from two new books, *Courage To Be Me*, published in December 1996, and *Paths To Recovery*; and income of \$100,000 from sales of French literature, realized when PFA's operations ceased.

A gross profit of \$2,722,000 (74.2%) is projected to be earned on literature sales of \$3,669,000. *Forum* subscription income of \$345,000 is \$29,000 higher than in 1996 and is based on an average monthly mailing of 40,000 copies. French *Forum* subscriptions should provide \$5,000 in income. Contributions of \$780,000 are equal to the amount received in 1996.

**Expense:** Overall, expense of \$3,862,000 is 7.2% less than in 1996. Further, if the additional costs (\$76,000) of absorbing the Canadian operations, noted above, were excluded the percent decline in expenses from 1996 would be 9.2%.

Labor costs, as expected with the office relocation to Virginia, should decline by \$177,000 (7.8%). The WSO will employ a full-time staff of 56 people in 1997 which includes two people for French services.

*Forum* postage of \$136,000 reflects an increase in the subscriber base. A new line item, Outreach Activities, includes charges for promoting the two new books and for

working with major corporations on creating an Al-Anon awareness in the workforce. Added to the budget are new line items for the printing and mailing of the French *Forum*, \$24,000 and \$15,000, respectively. The budget also includes a cost of \$8,000 for our new website on the Internet. The site includes information for *Getting In Touch with Al-Anon* worldwide.

The current year's budget also includes a charge for French Literature Service (\$23,000) to cover the cost of storing the inventory at the former PFA office during the required three-year trial period under the new arrangement.

The International Al-Anon General Service Meeting (IAGSM) will be held again in 1997, after a one-year delay because of the relocation, at an expected cost of \$45,000.

Following the presentation of the budget, Conference members were given the opportunity to comment and ask questions. Regarding the relocation expenses and member contributions, it was explained that over \$500,000 was donated by members and applied to the cost of relocation which was over \$2,300,000. Other questions focused on literature sales projections for 1997, Internet costs, International Convention expenses, use of local auditors and benefit costs.

At the conclusion of the discussion, a motion to approve the 1997 Budget Report carried.



# 1997 BUDGET

Schedule 1

	1996 <u>Budget</u>	1996 <u>Actual</u>	1997 <u>Budget</u>
<b>LITERATURE SALES</b>			
As We Understood	\$ 51,000	\$ 45,400	\$ 42,000
Al-Anon Family Groups	15,000	13,900	15,000
Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism	23,000	21,600	23,000
Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage	46,000	45,500	46,000
One Day at a Time	360,000	375,600	360,000
One Day at a Time - large print	30,000	32,600	30,000
Forum Favorites - Volumes 1 - 4	22,000	18,700	15,000
Alateen - Hope for Children of Alcoholics	20,000	21,100	21,000
Courage To Be Me	55,000	28,300	145,000
Alateen - a day at a time	73,000	75,000	72,000
Lois Remembers	12,000	13,400	12,000
12 Steps and 12 Traditions	125,000	110,400	105,000
In All Our Affairs	55,000	47,800	45,000
How Al-Anon Works	560,000	437,300	320,000
Paths To Recovery	100,000	—	410,000
From Survival to Recovery	140,000	107,100	95,000
Courage to Change	820,000	730,700	700,000
Courage to Change - large print	75,000	71,300	73,000
French Literature	—	—	100,000
Other Literature	<u>1,225,000</u>	<u>1,054,500</u>	<u>1,040,000</u>
<b><u>Income from Publications</u></b>	<b><u>3,807,000</u></b>	<b><u>3,250,200</u></b>	<b><u>3,669,000</u></b>
<b>COST OF LITERATURE DISTRIBUTED</b>			
As We Understood	11,000	10,200	10,000
Al-Anon Family Groups	3,000	2,400	3,000
Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism	6,000	4,800	5,000
Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage	7,000	5,600	6,000
One Day At a Time	101,000	103,300	108,000
One Day At a Time - large print	10,000	9,600	10,000
FORUM Favorites - Volumes I - IV	4,000	3,900	4,000
Alateen - Hope for Children of Alcoholics	5,000	4,500	5,000
Courage To Be Me	18,000	8,500	56,000
Alateen - a day at a time	19,000	24,300	26,000
Lois Remembers	2,000	2,600	3,000
12 Steps and 12 Traditions	24,000	23,500	21,000
In All Our Affairs	11,000	9,100	9,000
How Al-Anon Works	133,000	108,600	84,000
Paths To Recovery	34,000	—	91,000
From Survival to Recovery	24,000	17,500	16,000
Courage to Change	156,000	152,300	175,000
Courage to Change - large print	12,000	18,500	14,000
French Literature	—	—	20,000
Other Literature	<u>331,000</u>	<u>282,300</u>	<u>281,000</u>
<b><u>Cost of Literature</u></b>	<b><u>911,000</u></b>	<b><u>791,500</u></b>	<b><u>947,000</u></b>
Gross Profit from Literature Sales	2,896,000	2,458,700	2,722,000
FORUM Subscriptions	300,000	315,900	345,000
FORUM Subscriptions - French	—	—	5,000
Interest Earned	25,000	9,000	10,000
Contributions	<u>770,000</u>	<u>780,600</u>	<u>780,000</u>
<b><u>Total Income</u></b>	<b><u>3,991,000</u></b>	<b><u>3,564,200</u></b>	<b><u>3,862,000</u></b>
<b><u>Less: Expense (Schedule 1A)</u></b>	<b><u>4,257,000</u></b>	<b><u>4,159,600</u></b>	<b><u>3,862,000</u></b>
<b><u>Excess of Expense - General Fund</u></b>	<b><u>(\$ 266,000)</u></b>	<b><u>(\$ 595,400)</u></b>	<b><u>\$ 0</u></b>

# 1997 BUDGET

Schedule 1A

	1996 <u>Budget</u>	1996 <u>Actual</u>	1997 <u>Budget</u>
<b><u>OPERATING EXPENSES</u></b>			
Salaries (includes Temp Help)	\$1,776,000	\$1,795,500	\$1,630,000
Payroll Taxes	159,000	135,400	140,000
Employee Benefits	379,000	336,100	320,000
Total Labor Costs	2,314,000	2,267,000	2,090,000
Occupancy - NYC	375,000	363,200	—
Building Occupancy - Virginia	230,000	185,700	350,000
Packing & Shipping (Net)	(6,000)	8,300	8,000
Postage - FORUM	108,000	106,600	136,000
- French FORUM	—	—	15,000
- other	175,000	155,900	175,000
Telephone - office	36,000	50,600	45,000
- 800 #'s	18,000	24,700	30,000
Stationery & Office Supplies	118,000	135,700	120,000
Office Services & Expenses	50,000	41,200	36,000
Outreach Activities	—	—	32,000
Repairs & Maintenance	28,000	25,700	25,000
Committee Travel & Meetings	118,000	138,700	128,000
Office & Adm. Travel & Meetings	7,000	6,200	20,000
Legal & Audit	30,000	15,800	25,000
Printing - FORUM	135,000	141,400	150,000
- French FORUM	—	—	24,000
- Conference Summary	16,000	16,400	16,000
- Inside Al-Anon	22,000	12,600	—
- Other	25,000	28,500	24,000
CPC Exhibits	21,000	19,100	21,000
Direct Conference Costs	62,000	64,200	62,000
French Literature Service	35,000	56,200	23,000
Canadian Public Information	36,000	30,400	36,000
Regional Service Seminars	15,000	12,700	20,000
In-Office Volunteers	25,000	15,200	15,000
Insurance	28,000	23,100	14,000
Internet	—	—	8,000
Miscellaneous	29,000	26,400	22,000
<b><u>Total Operating Expense</u></b>	<b><u>4,050,000</u></b>	<b><u>3,971,500</u></b>	<b><u>3,670,000</u></b>
<b><u>NON-OPERATING EXPENSE</u></b>			
CPC Survey	13,000	13,400	—
International Al-Anon General Service Mtg.	—	—	45,000
PSA/PI Campaign	18,000	24,800	30,000
Depreciation & Amortization (Exc. Bldg.)	176,000	149,900	117,000
<b><u>Total Non-Operating Expense</u></b>	<b><u>207,000</u></b>	<b><u>188,100</u></b>	<b><u>192,000</u></b>
<b><u>Total Expense (Schedule 1)</u></b>	<b><u>\$4,257,000</u></b>	<b><u>\$4,159,600</u></b>	<b><u>\$3,862,000</u></b>

# DIRECTOR CHOSEN WORKSHOP—LITERATURE

One of our responsibilities at the Conference is to hear from the membership, especially on those issues which may be difficult to understand. The communications survey gave conflicting answers, some of which led to this topic.

Directors chose this statement, **"Literature and the income from literature sales have been the primary resource to the fellowship for passing on recovery, unity, and service. Is this statement true today?"** Where should we be going with literature? The intent is to find out what the membership thinks through the delegates and discussion on this topic. It is our hope that these ideas will guide the future direction of Al-Anon's World Service Office.

**Sandra F.,**  
*Director of Group Services*

From 1951 to 1961 there was no mention of Conference Approved Literature — there was no Conference. Groups and members wrote their own literature based on their interpretation of the AA program. In 1951, two pamphlets were written by the Clearinghouse — *One Wife's Story (Lois' Story)*, and *Purposes and Suggestions*.

In 1952 Al-Anon's first price list included items such as: *The Non-Alcoholics*, *God Bless 'Em* by an AA member; *About the Alcoholic Husband*, Reprint from an AA book, a subscription to the *AA Grapevine*, and *Primer on Alcoholism* by Marty Mann.

Throughout the 1950's, there were "service wars" over literature when a piece of literature was sent to the Clearinghouse and failed to gain approval from New York. In looking through the WSO Archives, it was easy to see the deep concern of our pioneers. Here Al-Anon was in its infancy of developing a program for the family, and so much of the literature published by these groups was focused on the alcoholic.

At Al-Anon's first Conference in 1961, the subject of Conference Approved Literature was discussed. The *Conference Summary* stated: "It is wonderful that the interest of groups all over the country had led them to publish their own pamphlets, but the literature isn't always in line with Al-Anon.

**Mary Ann K.,**  
*Director of Membership Outreach*

Our literature goes where members can't go and it stays when members can't stay. We have seen this dramatically demonstrated in the "To Russia With Love" project. Thousands of pamphlets were carried over or mailed to members. These members either visited but couldn't stay or wrote, but couldn't visit.

Our literature sets the boundaries of Al-Anon beliefs. The Al-Anon of Argentina is the same in principle as the Al-Anon of Alaska. No religious practices influence our literature, such as questions from Poland on

Some of it may have a local slant, some of it a religious slant. It could produce a very serious diffuseness of Al-Anon principles." After delegates from various areas related their experiences, the final decision was that Al-Anon have Conference Approved Literature.

During the next several years, a formal procedure was drafted to outline the steps taken before a piece of literature could become CAL. In 1992, the Board of Trustees, in conjunction with the Literature Committee, developed a process for discontinuing pieces of literature. At the 1995 WSC, in reaction to the pending discontinuance of Al-Anon's first hardcover book, the Conference passed a motion that the Board of Trustees notify the Conference members in writing of its intent to discontinue any hard/softcover books one year in advance.

Last year, to keep up with the growing demands of CAL, the Board of Trustees authorized the development of two Literature Committees. What we say and do here today will also find its way into the *WSC Summary* and subsequently the "history books" on the subject of Conference Approved Literature. In many ways, this presentation could be titled, "CAL, Where Do We Go From Here?"

confession, or a Belgium member's proposal to remove the word, "God" from all material. How do we set the criteria for what is allowed? We do it by guidelines set up for Conference Approved Literature. How have members maintained this over 46 years? Through the literature.

Delegates to the IAGSM voted not to allow other countries to create their own literature because they believed our unity would be in danger. They trusted that the WSC would give the world the literature Al-Anon worldwide needed.

**Ric B.,**  
*Executive Director*

*Purpose and Suggestions* was the first piece of literature published by the World Service Office.

**TRUE:** This was one of the two pieces of literature written in 1951. The other was "One Wife's Story." On the first order form they sold for \$.03.

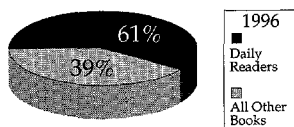
Before the adoption of the Conference Approved Literature (CAL) Process, individuals, groups, and areas published and sold their own literature.

**TRUE:** The 1961 *Conference Summary* states, "It is wonderful that the interest of groups all over the country has led them to publish their own pamphlets...." Later, problems developed which led to the CAL process.

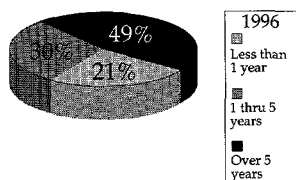
Overseas structures must have reprint permission in order to publish Conference Approved Literature in their own language.

**TRUE:** In order to secure permission they must make a formal request in writing to the attention of the Associate Director, International, Membership Outreach.

Daily Readers As a Percent  
of All Book Sales



Al-Anon Membership As A  
Percent Of All Members



Daily readers account for more than 40% of all literature sales within the United States and Canada.

**TRUE:** In 1996 more than 40% of all literature sales were daily readers. Additionally, 61% of all books sold in 1996 were daily readers.

General Service Offices around the world depend on the sale of literature. At an IAGSM it was reported that 40% to 80% of all funding to keep these national offices functioning came from the sale of literature. So we can see that literature, its creation and sale, is vital to our worldwide fellowship's very existence.

Surveys done by WSO sent a conflicting message: WSO produces too much litera-

**Richard Keilly,**  
non-member, *Director of Business Services*

Al-Anon, at its inception in 1951, relied principally on contributions to fund its operations. Today, income from literature sales provide the bulk of the WSO's annual income. During the period of 1984 to 1996, there have been serious declines in literature sales.

During the same twelve year period the number of books available increased from 9 to 17 titles. Overall book distribution declined by 14% in spite of the additional titles becoming available. During the same period, the sales of other recovery literature declined by 27%.

The number of groups in the US and Canada, after declining for five straight years, recorded an improvement in 1996.

**Caryn J.,**  
*Director of Fellowship Communication*

The staff presented a lot of information quickly, and now it was time for the Conference membership to be heard. Delegates were invited to share their ideas on the topic: "Literature and income from literature sales have been the primary resources to the fellowship for passing on recovery, unity and service. Is this true today?"

### Open discussion

Literature plays a very important part in recovery. I'm hearing members say there are too many books. It's not that they don't have good things to say, but time is at a premium, and they don't feel they have the time to read it all. Many in the area have asked for a series of books, shorter, and dealing with recovery issues — anger, resentment, and self-esteem.

70% of our general fund comes from literature sales. Literature is important in doing Al-Anon work worldwide. We need more literature for special focus groups and people who have different needs. Our membership survey confirms that we're not reaching minority groups. We need to address this.

Last year, I decided to read some books I've had for a long time. I always felt better just having the books on the shelf, but decided I could recover even better if I read

them. I realize how wonderful our literature is when I read it. It helps me tremendously. I realize that the guilt, anger, and resentment have nothing to do with me—they're from the past. When I talk about the literature at meetings, people start to read again which brings us back to basics, to our grass roots, and gives us something to pass on to newcomers. I notice that people are attracted to covers, even though there may be nothing inside. My only suggestion would be to add more color to the covers.

These are some ideas of why the overall literature creation and the income from its sale are important to Al-Anon worldwide.

Membership in Al-Anon, in terms of years in the program, changed dramatically between 1984 and 1996. In 1984, 70% of the membership was in the program less than five years; in 1996, that figure had declined to 51%. Conversely, 49% of the fellowship had at least five years of membership, a 63% increase.

In summary, during the twelve year period, sales of recovery literature have declined, the number of groups rose slightly in 1996, and Al-Anon membership has changed to a point where there are fewer newcomers, and substantially more long-term members.

This information is not intended to draw conclusions, but to provide you with information to use during discussion.

I'm hearing from the groups that the prices are too high. The AA Big Book has been \$5 forever, yet ours sells for so much more. I read the Alateen book when it came out and was so enthused. It's really new and innovative. You don't have to be an Alateen member to get help from the material. Many people don't like change so

them. I realize how wonderful our literature is when I read it. It helps me tremendously. I realize that the guilt, anger, and resentment have nothing to do with me—they're from the past. When I talk about the literature at meetings, people start to read again which brings us back to basics, to our grass roots, and gives us something to pass on to newcomers. I notice that people are attracted to covers, even though there may be nothing inside. My only suggestion would be to add more color to the covers.

the new books are not always accepted. I'm glad to have had the opportunity to represent the fellowship and provide feedback.

I am the daughter of an alcoholic, the wife, mother, sister, and on and on and on. I don't know what got me here, but I got here. The minute a new book comes out, I put it in the bookcase, but I have no time to read. I go to meetings that focus on literature which gives me the opportunity to review it. I go to groups that are poor and give them literature. My area has mixed opinions—some say too much literature, some say not enough. When they complain that there's no literature for a specialty group, I remind them that the literature comes from us and they need to write. Literature doesn't do it alone—we need the group support as well.

My home group is a study group. We're also using book titles in our newsletter every month. We would like to be able to order literature on-line.

One night when I was chairing a meeting I didn't know what the topic should be so I reviewed each piece of the literature with the group. It was one of those Higher Power things. Every topic I picked was exactly what I needed to hear.

I'm not surprised that the survey forms were conflicting, I feel the same way. We need to re-emphasize the purpose of literature in the fellowship.

As the way we communicate changes, information flow will be in a form that doesn't generate book sales.

The meeting should be the vehicle by which to display literature and pass it around. We need more literature study groups. Audio books would be a great idea for those on the move who don't have a lot of time to read.

Our literature is light in the darkness. The ODAT is so very special to me. We have problem-solving sessions at area meetings each month and use the literature as our sources. The *Dilemma of the Alcoholic Mar-*

*riage* has so much information — the keys to communication without getting people angry.

Let It Begin With Me. When I came to Al-Anon we didn't have this much literature. We're making mistakes in our meetings by reading from copied sheets rather than directly from our books. Newcomers don't know where the material comes from. I read from the *Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* book recently at a meeting. People were amazed and wondered where it came from. Our new literature is wonderful, but let's not put the old material on the shelf.

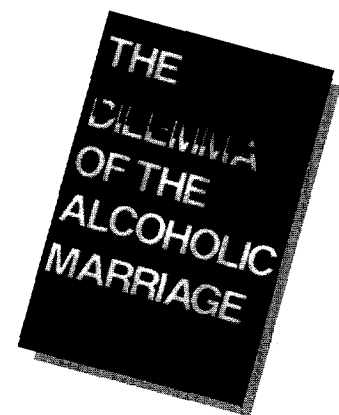
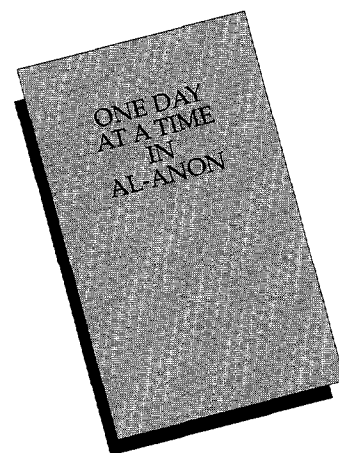
I feel badly that we have to rely on our literature sales for survival. If our contributions increased, we wouldn't be having this discussion. We should concentrate on having our groups be more self-supporting and support WSO. We are the primary source. I hear from the area that we are a publishing company.

It's been an honor to serve on the Literature Committee to see the CAL process at work. I no longer identify with one book as "the" book. We have such diversity and that's okay. Small groups cannot afford some of the literature, so availability is a problem. Our biggest complainers are those who haven't read the material.

Our newcomers can't afford the books. They want pamphlets, and most are not opposed to special focus literature. When I came to Al-Anon before most of the literature was available, I found out I was an adult child, wife of, mother of, etc. What we have works.

I'm not surprised that our daily readers are high on everyone's list. My area has a bad habit of using them for meetings. We would like to see more spiritual material.

Doing the literature inventory is a positive thing and I hope it causes us to look at our titles — sometimes they can give a perception of what the material is about. We've enjoyed the updates to the literature — new formats, new colors.



**Phyllis M.,**  
*Director of Public Outreach*

Conference members were thanked for sharing their experience, strength and hope, and for representing the membership. The information will be invaluable to the fellowship. In addition to this session, a feedback form was distributed to receive further input from all Conference members.

**Ric B.,**  
*Executive Director*

We decided prior to this presentation that it wasn't about us telling you something, the purpose was for you to tell us what you wanted. We have heard your ideas.

All of the information about Al-Anon that needs to exist is already in print.

**FALSE:** Our pioneers believed we should always consider the "...creation of fresh material to meet new needs or changing conditions." Concept Eleven, Page 183, 1995/1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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## Conference Site Report

Pat S., *Chairperson*

Susan A., *Associate Director, Conference*

Since the end of the 1996 World Service Conference, the search has been on for a location for the 1998 Conference. Fourteen sites from Virginia Beach to Williamsburg were visited in an effort to find a location that would fit our meeting room and budgetary needs.

A proposal has been made to hold the 1998 World Service Conference at the Holiday Inn Executive Center in Virginia Beach, April 19-23, 1998. Although not on the beach, this site offers ample meeting space, delicious meals, free airport shuttle service, and a lower price. In 1999 we hope to convene at a hotel in New York or Connecticut enabling us to realize our goal of visiting Stepping Stones once every three years.

## Executive Committee on Real Property Management

John B., *Chairperson*

Richard Keilly, *non-member*

*Director, Business Services*

At the WSC in 1996, it was reported that the Relocation Committee was completing its assignment of moving Al-Anon's World Headquarters to the new facility in Virginia Beach, VA. At the end of the 1996 WSC, John visited the new location to inspect the building and check on installations. Upon his arrival home following surgery, he spent a summer of "recovery in many areas of his life."

Al-Anon's new World Service Office opened as planned. As with most major construction projects, there were a few glitches, but none that were major problems.

Motion #5 to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was approved by the WSC in 1995 after Motion #12 in 1994 directed that a corporation or executive committee be established to oversee the management of the real property in order to separate property maintenance and management from the day-to-day operation of the Al-Anon fellowship.

The composition of the ECRPM Committee is: three at-large members, the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and the Director of Business Services. The chairperson of the committee is Board-appointed and reports directly to the Board.

The committee's first meeting was on June 15, 1996. Don C., Board Treasurer, was the

acting-chairperson and John attended via conference call during his convalescence. The first order of business was to define the scope of operations and responsibilities of the ECRPM. The memorandum from the Board to the WSC of April 23, 1995 outlined the need for the committee and was the basis for defining the purpose and direction.

The committee's discussions covered many aspects of the WSO as a tenant in the new building. The consensus was that the ECRPM develop proposals for occupancy based on known and projected costs normally handled by a building owner or landlord. Included are the building, maintenance, and grounds. Budgeting will provide for normal landlord/owner services and maintenance.

The tenant, Al-Anon, would be responsible for property and services within the facility considered to be normal tenant improvements and/or services. This would include furniture and furnishings, computers, telephone, and security systems.

Items that could be identified as "real property" would be within the ECRPM's charge. The common understanding of real property would be used as a guide — the building, the grounds, and anything permanently affixed to the structure.

Discussion covered items which could be included in operations and capital budgets that would be submitted for inclusion in the overall AFG, Inc. budget. New or major capital costs would be reviewed by the ECRPM, approved, and then presented to the Board for final approval prior to implementation.

The ECRPM advised the Board and Budget Committee of the mandatory loan repayments due for the next fiscal year and all future years. This information may be used to determine cash flow and the advisability of prepaying portions of the mortgage. The Board has established and funded a reserve fund for ECRPM capital projects.

A review of the proposed 1997 occupancy budget was discussed at great length. With only four months' operating data to use for projections, concern was noted relative to several cost areas. The committee agreed to revisit the concerned service areas to obtain refined cost data. The committee submitted the 1997 Occupancy Budget to the Board and it is contained in the budget presented to this Conference for approval.

After inspection of the building and grounds, a list of comments was compiled.

Most items were the WSO's responsibility, others were for the contractors or actions that the RPM would initiate.

Al-Anon has a beautiful new home that belongs to our fellowship.

### Communications Consultant Report

Pat B., *Executive Committee Chairperson*

During the early 1990's, it was apparent that a negative trend was developing with the decreasing number of groups, contributions, literature sales, and *Forum* subscriptions. A communications consultant hired in 1993 reviewed Al-Anon's communication strategy and made recommendations for improvement.

The most critical part of the process was obtaining information from the members through questionnaires. This information provided the basis for short and long-term goals and recommendations. The Long Range Study Panel worked concurrently developing the Five-Year Plan and providing a Service Plan annually.

Leadership, communication, and service goals were key items that needed improvement; some have been completed and some are still in progress. Highlights of the actions were reviewed with Conference members. Pamphlets are being developed for GRs and DRs to communicate the "Joys of Service." In an effort to increase the visibility of the Board, the trustees have implemented a plan to call delegates quarterly after the chairperson's letter and to increase contact between the regional trustees and the delegates.

The Conference participants were provided with detailed information listing the actions implemented as well as those that are in various stages of development. Conference members shared their appreciation for the increased communication and visibility at all levels of service.

### Al-Anon's 50th Anniversary Celebration

Mary Ann K., *Chairperson*

Felix M., *Trustee, Board liaison*

The Committee for the 50th Anniversary Celebration of Al-Anon Family Groups will present a plan at the 1998 World Service Conference. The goals of the celebration are two-fold: to include as many members as possible in some way during the year and to let the world know that Al-Anon has been, and will continue to be, a resource for families and friends of alcoholics in all walks of life and in all countries.

All the ideas shared at last year's Conference were reviewed and divided into subsections. Phyllis M. will draft the section on Public Outreach. Pat A. and Margaret G. will review our history books and recommend the best way to present Al-Anon's history for this event. Evalynn N. and Mary Ann K. will draft a portion on the theme.

At the January 1997 Policy Committee meeting it was agreed that the production of a calendar for this milestone would be within our policy boundaries. This will be a way to tie together all the events of our 50th Anniversary in the year 2001.

### The Forum

Connie D., *Trustee, Chairperson*

*Forum* subscriptions increased from 32,217 in January, 1996 to 41,324 in December, 1996. First quarter subscriptions in 1997 are down slightly to 40,958.

The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee, comprised of members from Ohio, Alberta, Arizona, New Jersey, and Georgia, meets quarterly and reviews 160-200 manuscripts each meeting. Pat Q., is the new WSO *Forum* Coordinator.

There have been significant changes in the presentation of *The Forum*. The logo has been redesigned and the back cover uses a photo suitable for framing with text from either our slogans or Conference Approved Literature. The inside front cover now has the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts of Service printed on a rotating basis. Whenever the Concepts are printed, the Warranties can also be found within the publication.

"Reflections" has been re-introduced and entitled, "Cal's Reflections" which are from our own Conference Approved Literature to help us stay focused on recovery and avoid copyright complications.

Beginning in September, members' names and location have been listed after the title — just as we do in a meeting when we say, "Hi, my name is Connie."

*Inside Al-Anon* was moved into the pages of *The Forum* starting with the May issue. In November, we started using a local professional photographer for the front and back cover pictures as well as selected inside photos. The pictures used in the January, February, and March issues tied in with stories related to the Traditions.

In the March issue, we began publishing members' photographs. Members are invited to send in their photo sharings for consideration. Full face pictures should not be submitted, nor those with existing copyrights. Much like a sharing, once submitted, it becomes the property of Al-Anon.



March 1997

Cover: *Stepping Stones*

## Al-Anon's



## Anniversary

"Talk To Each Other" was introduced in May, 1996 providing a forum in which members may request feedback.

Three articles, the front and back cover, plus the calendar may be reproduced on the Internet. "The Lighter Side" was introduced in 1996 to share more humorous experiences.

*The Forum* is always in need of sharings on "The Lighter Side" and how members use the three legacies, the Steps, Traditions and Concepts, for their personal recovery. Additional submissions are requested from men and Alateens.

### Al-Anon Home Page

Phyllis M., *Director, Public Outreach*

Claire R., *Associate Director*

Al-Anon Family Group's World Wide Web site <[www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)> was launched on October 12, 1996 at the WSO Open House. As of April 1, 1997, the site had been visited over 11,000 times. Individuals in thirty-six countries have visited the site.

Claire R., Associate Director, Public Outreach, guided Conference members on an electronic "tour" of the features of the WSO's website. The Home Page and entire website was designed with the newcomer and the professional in mind as a Public Outreach service tool. The Home Page features colorful icons as well as a tool bar for navigation to the various sections. In addition, the home page text clearly informs visitors that the site is the official WSO Internet voice of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. (WSO) and that their visit to the WSO website is confidential and anonymous. The WSO cannot identify newcomers or professionals by their e-mail address or their names. As in our face-to-face meeting rooms, newcomers need to know they are in a safe environment when visiting the WSO website.

Newcomers are guided to meetings as well as provided with the basic information they need about the program. In essence, both the newcomer and the professionals can obtain instant information from the "user friendly" design of the site.

Since our goal is to encourage newcomers to attend a meeting, the first icon connects the visitor to the "How to find help in your neighborhood" section which is an electronic *Getting in Touch* pamphlet of worldwide local and national service offices. With a click of the mouse on a state or country, the user is given the local contact information they need. The information is updated twice a year just like the printed pamphlet, *Getting in Touch*.

The second link, "Are you affected by

someone else's drinking?" lists the familiar 20 questions from the *Are You Troubled By Someone's Drinking?* leaflet to help newcomers identify with a need for Al-Anon. While the user reads through the questions, they can navigate to the 20 questions of the *Did You Grow Up With A Problem Drinker?* and contact information for help. We realize newcomers can be impatient and we don't want them to leave the WSO website without telephone numbers.

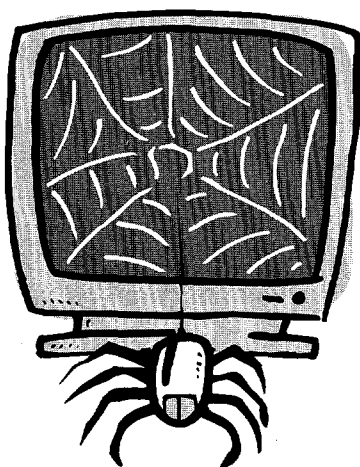
"Are you a professional looking for resources?" consists of an on-line version of the pamphlet, the *Fact Sheet For Professionals*. There is an electronic form similar to the pamphlet's postcard which can be downloaded and faxed to the WSO for a subscription to the *Al-Anon Speaks Out* newsletter and packet of introductory literature. The card has a "www" identification mark so the WSO knows it came from the website.

The Statement of Purpose, Preamble, Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service are also hot-linked to help visitors learn about the Al-Anon program of recovery.

A catalog of literature is available on-line with the "www" identification code. A calendar of events, as listed in *The Forum*, has also been included on the site so members will know about conferences, conventions, and Regional Service Seminars. Order blanks for literature and *The Forum* can also be down loaded and faxed to the WSO.

The WSO website is always "under construction." We want visitors to "keep coming back" so we have plans to expand the site later in the year. The next phase will focus on enhancing the Alateen and Spanish portions of the site. Phase three may include French.

Conference members were very excited about the WSO website. One delegate inquired about electronic literature orders and was informed that the WSO is working on this as well as an e-mail address for the office. Another question related to a recent decision by the WSO Policy Committee which would not allow the WSO's website to hyperlink to other sites, e.g., information service and area sites or to electronic meetings. This is to help the WSO site retain its service arm autonomy and to avoid being held accountable for the information local members post electronically. Members were reminded that the WSO website is like an electronic "magazine" and that all of its sections can be downloaded by the site visitor.



Visit us at

<http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>



## Internet Ad Hoc Committee

Larry A., Trustee, *Chairperson*

In 1995, the Executive Committee formed the Internet ad hoc committee to advise on matters concerning the Internet. In 1996, the Al-Anon/Alateen Worldwide Website was moved to the Public Outreach Department.

The committee reported that there are seven electronic meetings with known membership in 19 countries. The meetings range from small chat rooms to very large e-mail lists with hundreds of members. The WSO maintains a list of all electronic meetings with the hope to eventually follow the normal group registration process. However, the process for registering these groups has not yet been developed.

The Policy Committee reaffirmed that service materials and monthly *Forum* sharings approved for posting on the Internet are available for both individuals and Al-Anon service arms.

The World Service Office requests cooperation in protecting Al-Anon's copyrights by not reprinting any recovery literature online. The WSO follows the same guidelines for copyright infringements in print. Anyone wishing to share CAL recovery can identify the piece and page number and refer readers to the printed material. The Internet Committee asked the Executive Committee to publish the list of Al-Anon/Alateen materials approved for posting on the Internet once a year. This list together with the WSO list of electronic meetings was distributed to all Conference members.

To avoid the appearance of affiliation with other websites, the ad hoc committee and Fellowship Communication are looking at disclaimers to pass along to website managers who have Al-Anon material on their page.

Guidelines for meetings and members online are being developed. A draft document has been given to the Policy Committee for review. The sharings from the membership which are being used to develop the guidelines came from the ad hoc committee members, surveys sent to two of the electronic meetings, letters and e-mail from on-line meetings, and letters from Al-Anon members who do not have any computer experience.

The committee expressed the desire to have the guidelines completed as soon as possible in order to begin researching the copyright issues.

An e-mail address has not yet been established at the WSO, but should be ready within the next few months. Approval will be given to printing the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts on other websites provided the website managers follow the reprint pro-

cess for all other Al-Anon material.

The committee also explained that members can download the information on the Home Page and print it. Members should include a credit line that the material has been "Reprinted with permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., Virginia Beach, VA."

## International Coordination Committee

Margaret G., Trustee, *Chairperson*

Marsha W., *Associate Director, International*

The Ninth Al-Anon International General Services Meeting (IAGSM) will take place October 16-19, 1997 at the Virginia Beach Resort and Conference Center. To date, 24 structures will be represented by 44 delegates. French Switzerland and Korea will be sending representatives for the first time. The delegates will share their experiences on various topics including finances, the Concepts, Alateen, and the Internet.

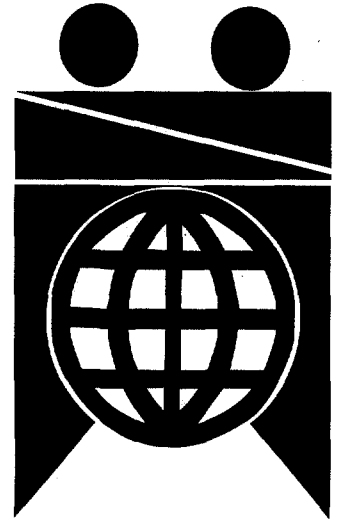
All General Service Offices were sent a letter announcing the WSO Home Page this past Fall. Since then Germany and Italy have requested the list of approved CAL for the Internet and advised us that they are considering starting a Home Page.

When contacted regarding their support of an upcoming WSO project, the printing of *In All Our Affairs* in Spanish, the GSOs in Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Spain advised WSO that they would purchase copies of the first printing.

After last year's request for support for the "Adopt a Russian Group Project," areas responded very favorably. The Associate Director, International reported that the correspondence she received from Russian members is reflecting a real grasp of the program. To date, the groups in Russia total 102 with the largest concentration in Moscow which has 15 groups.

There were several "firsts" during 1996. New Zealand expressed an interest in hosting a Regional Service Seminar and requested a copy of the guidelines. As a result of surfing the Internet, a letter was sent from a teenager in Austria requesting literature about the program. In Estonia, the first group celebrated their 100th meeting. In Brazil, the GSO reported the 18th General Service Conference gave unanimous approval for purchasing property in São Paulo. Finally, in Sweden, the GSO sent a letter indicating that they are planning to print the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for the first time.

Helen R. and Margaret M. will attend the IAGSM representing the US and Canada.



*IAGSM symbol adopted in 1992*

## Long Range Study Panel

Marion W., Trustee, *Chairperson*  
Sandra F., Director, *Group Services*

### Bell Curve Update

Don C., Trustee

Don C. began an update of the Bell Curve by explaining, "Last year's Bell Curve presentation focused on supply and demand. Demand typically starts high while supply starts low. As supply increases the demand levels off."

In 1951 Al-Anon's early pioneers registered the first 96 groups, when the demand was there, but supply of service didn't exist. Lois and Anne began to produce guidelines and pamphlets. Over the years the supply increased and in 1975, Al-Anon was a monopoly. Then things began to change and other groups joined the Twelve Step program market. Today there are over 200 recovery programs which people may choose. In 1980, the supply of goods and services being provided by the World Service Office was meeting the demand. In 1990, Al-Anon and Alateen reached its peak in group registration and we started to lose groups. No matter how much we put into it, the market seemed saturated and demand declined. This was a wake-up call for each of us.

Something wonderful happened this year. We can report that the trend has started to reverse itself. We are beginning to start a new Bell Curve. Contributions and *Forum* subscriptions show similar trends.

The Conference members were asked to break into groups for a brainstorming session using the Bell Curve concept as a means of revitalizing our fellowship. Members were asked to share their experience in conducting or using the Bell Curve presentation in their areas following the 1996 WSC. The teams could also develop tips on the most effective way to conduct the presentation in 1997 at each level — district, assembly, workshop, etc. The teams were asked to brainstorm measurable goals to apply to the Bell Curve concept (e.g., number of Alateen sponsors, contributions to the area, number of GRs at the assembly).

WSC participants shared their ideas and the results were compiled for distribution following the Conference. Each team was asked to select one member who will be attending the 1998 WSC to provide a five minute update.

### Five Year Plan

Marion W., Trustee

Al-Anon's Five-Year Plan was adopted by the Board in 1994. It was designed to provide our WSO staff and volunteers with a document that maintains our focus on the

Board's goals of the fellowship for the years 1995-2000. The Five-Year Plan is a living document, and we need to continue to review the goals and objectives, making changes as necessary. Each year the Board of Trustees provides an update to the Conference on the progress.

Fellowship Focus Groups began in 1995 when the Board approved the concept recommended by the LRSP of having members in the areas aid the implementation and development of the Five-Year Plan. Following the 1996 WSC, nine FFGs were established in different areas within each region in the US and Canada.

The new Fellowship Focus Groups (FFGs) worked to "Evaluate and Improve our Communication Structure" (Goal 2), and to "Enhance WSO Internal Operations so it Remains a Model Service Organization for Our Fellowship and the Public at Large" (Goal 4).

The LRSP encouraged all members of the fellowship to work on the goals and objectives of the Five-Year Plan. During the Regional Service Seminar breakout session of the Conference, areas were asked to volunteer as Fellowship Focus Groups.

Highlights of our implementation of Goal Two included: the 1997 WSC theme, "Communication - Our Hope for the Future;" the development of the AFG Service Plan, "The Year of Inventory/Communication Renewal;" the Al-Anon Home Page on the Internet; a group binder for new groups registering with the WSO; improving communication that Alateen is Al-Anon; and strengthening communication and interaction between DRs, Alateen, and Alateen sponsors.

Goal Four results included: holding Open Policy Meeting at the WSC; conducting Volunteer Saturdays at the WSO; and staff interviews in *The Forum*.

Two members of the participating FFGs shared their progress on Goals Two and Four. One group brought together a cross section of Al-Anon members who met on one Sunday every month. They developed a GR survival kit, and discussed expanding it for all service arms. Another area came up with an idea for a packet of materials for a new person in service. The FFGs agreed that they had fun and were productive.

### Al-Anon Family Group Service Plan

Sandra F., Director, *Group Services*

The Service Plan is part of Al-Anon's Five-Year Plan. This is the third year of the Service Plan. The first, in 1995, focused on "The Year of Renewal." In 1996, 12,000 copies of the packet, "The Year of Leadership

Renewal," were mailed out. This year, 1997, is "The Year of Inventory Communication Renewal." To date over 11,000 copies have been sent out.

At the midpoint in Service Plan activities, the time has come to take an inventory to determine if we are on the right track. If not, then it's time to alter the course.

One Conference member shared her responses to the Service Plan questions.

"How can we welcome newcomers warmly?

"What service positions are open in our district, and what can we do to fill them?

"What activities can we plan that will involve the entire area?

## Regional Service Seminar

Pat A., Trustee, Chairperson

Mary Ann K., Director, Membership Outreach

The Regional Service Seminars encourage direct communication from the region. They have been a valuable link to our fellowship.

The Committee recommended to the Board the postponement of the three RSSs in 1998 to 1999, in order to concentrate the efforts and resources of the fellowship on the International Convention.

As the cost of registration had not been increased since the RSSs began in 1980, the committee recommended raising the registration costs of the RSSs to \$25.00 starting in 2000.

The committee further agreed to change the guidelines: The complimentary room and meal package will be given to the host committee chair and the registration chair, and the refreshment breaks will be on a cash basis paid by the attendees.

There will be an AIS/LDC workshop at one RSS each year.

To give the committee some indication of the long-term impact on RSS attendees, a follow-up evaluation will be sent to those who attended the US Southeast RSS.

Canada Central and US Northwest finish out the RSSs for this year.

## Service Structure Inventory

Blanche M., Trustee, Chairperson

Al-Anon's Five-Year Plan, Goal Three, involves taking an inventory of our service structure (WSO, area, district, group, etc.)

Questionnaires were sent to the delegates requesting feedback on how best to proceed. Many responses were submitted and all were collated into a report. A summary was then prepared and distributed at the 1997 World Service Conference. The feedback included suggestions for questions to use in

conducting the inventory and various areas to be surveyed.

The Conference members were asked to participate in an open discussion on the next steps. The Service Plan inventory was devised through a top-down approach, and the hope was to develop a bottom-up plan for taking an inventory having the delegates involved in the design and implementation. How should Al-Anon proceed with an inventory of the service structure? What should the expectations be? and What will be accomplished? The WSC members were asked if they were ready to make a motion to take an inventory of the service structure, and whether the existing Service Plan would be the vehicle.

Members were not sure whether the service plan would be all encompassing or whether every aspect of the service structure was included in Goal Three of the Five Year Plan. Many were interested in adding the World Service Conference, the assemblies, regional service seminars, and other parts of the structure to the inventory. Creating a service equivalent of *Blueprint for Progress* to conduct the inventory was suggested. Another idea was to develop a comprehensive form to conduct the inventory.

During the discussion, a consensus was reached to have the WSO develop a draft form and send it to the delegates for feedback. Concern was expressed over using a vehicle other than the Service Plan since it has been widely distributed and is in use at various levels of world service. Others shared that taking a service inventory will be a very lengthy process that might best be served through WSC workshop discussions. Another idea was to have the members, groups, and districts complete the Service Plan and forward the output to the delegates for their awareness and action. A question was raised on whether taking an inventory of anyone other than oneself would be appropriate. Members agreed that the term "inventory" in this case would be defined as an assessment or evaluation.

A motion was presented and approved that in keeping with the Five-Year Plan, the 1997 World Service Conference recommends taking an inventory of our service structure using the Service Plan format for those parts of the service structure it addresses. An Inventory Ad Hoc committee will continue this process for those parts of the structure that are not included in the Service Plan.

Further discussion centered on conducting an inventory of the WSC at the 1998 Conference and a consensus was reached to have the inventory theme as a workshop topic. In support of the consensus, a motion was presented and approved to have an inventory of the WSC at the 1998 Con-



ference according to the Five-Year Plan, including workshops. Members shared varying viewpoints on the specific wording and intent of the motion — would the Confer-

ence be limited in any way? Could questions be sent ahead of time? Would there be the opportunity for report-backs to hear all that was shared?

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

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**Ric B.,**  
*Executive Director*

This year, the WSO staff presented an update on how the new structure is working.

Ric introduced the session, "We hope this helps you understand the structure a little better. None of this works without you. Al-Anon as a whole can feel blessed with a quality WSO staff. Nothing we do is of value unless it serves the families and friends of alcoholics."

Each department director introduced their staff, committee chairs, and committee members. The "Meet the New Structure" portion of the agenda consisted of break-out sessions in which each WSO department presented an in-depth look at the functions they support. The setting was informal and Conference members were encouraged to wander from room to room to learn about the new structure.

As there were no changes to the Administrative structure, Ric introduced the Conference Committee on Trustees and explained their role in the nominating process. An Administration break-out session focused its attention on explaining the WSO Committees serving the Al-Anon fellowship. The composition, structure, operation and schedule of the Policy Committee, Budget Committee, Executive Committee and Board of Trustees were discussed in great detail. All the questions anyone ever wanted to ask were answered in an open forum setting. The mystery surrounding these key committees was removed as WSO staff and volunteers described their roles in providing service to the Al-Anon fellowship.

### **Business Services Update**

*Richard Keilly, non-member, Director*

All Services of the World Service Office defined as business functions are supervised by the Director of Business Services - accounting, customer service, technology; office management and human resources, literature production, and shipping/warehousing.

The Accounting department handles all the normal accounting functions such as: maintaining the books of account, payment of invoices, accounts receivable, and monthly and quarterly financial statements.

Customer Service department comprises the former accounting and *The Forum* circulation departments. They process all literature orders, contributions and *Forum* subscription renewals, deletions, additions, and changes. All customer inquiries regarding these items are handled by this department.

The Technology Services staff member trains the staff on the computer software, and keeps apprised of all the latest technology, maintains our Local Area Network (LAN), and recommends hardware and software upgrades.

Office management and human resources are under the direction of the Office Manager. Personnel matters and employee problems are addressed here, as are office maintenance, office supplies, salary surveys, and the hiring and terminating of employees.

Literature production focuses on assisting all service departments in the design and production of literature including in-house design work by a graphic artist, the printing of literature within the office whenever possible, and obtaining the best price to print quality literature.

The normal practices of shipping literature and maintaining the literature inventory are handled by a staff of five in our shipping/warehouse operation.

Business Services demonstrated the inner workings of the World Service Office. The department composition was presented by the Director, the Technology Coordinator and the Customer Service Supervisor. Technology is progressing and most system glitches have been resolved, ensuring that literature and *Forum* orders are processed quickly and accurately.

## Fellowship Communication Update

Caryn J., Director

Mary Lou M., Associate Director, Literature

This department is a clearinghouse for all members' sharings since Al-Anon's literature and *The Forum* merged into one department. A second Literature Committee was created to increase the Conference's involvement in meeting the fellowship's needs for literature. *The Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee now includes members from throughout the United States and Canada who meet quarterly to review the manuscripts.

Fellowship Communication oversees all Conference Approved Literature (CAL), *The Forum*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, and the handling of all copyright and reprint authorizations.

In 1996, the committee produced the first Alateen book in 23 years, *Courage To Be Me - Living with Alcoholism*. The long-awaited book on Al-Anon's legacies, *Paths to Recovery - Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts*, was near CAL approval when a total rewrite was deemed necessary. Upon completion of the rewrite, the manuscript was resubmitted to the volunteer and delegate Literature Committee members who gave enthusiastic approval. The book was presented at the World Service Conference.

A *Guideline for Writers, Editors and Indexers* was completed which will be a supplement to any WSO contracts to clarify what is expected as well as the uniqueness of Al-Anon's CAL process.

A primary mechanism of carrying the Al-Anon message is through our Conference Approved Literature and *The Forum*. The Fellowship Communication Team, with input from committee members, has completed an extensive "Carrying the Message Plan" with a focus on increasing the use and availability of literature within, as well as outside, our fellowship.

The committees have also continued to refer to the many suggestions gathered at the 1996 WSC during a brainstorming session in considering Al-Anon's literary future.

Two new projects are in the developmental process. The INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALITY (working title) piece, given conceptual approval by the WSC in 1995, is proceeding with an adequate balance of international sharing. The plan is to introduce the book at Al-Anon's 1998 International Convention. ALATEEN EVERY DAY (working title), a new daily reader authorized at the 1996 WSC, is in need of many sharings. Alateen sponsors and Alateens are encouraged to have "writing meetings" to inspire the additional sharings needed.

"Cal," our new cartoon character, has been a hit. His workshops on CAL as well as his new "reflections" in *The Forum* are thought-provoking and inspiring. Cal now has two costumes that can be borrowed to add some fun to literature workshops.

The "new" *Forum* has been an overwhelming success. With a subscription increase of 30%, Al-Anon members have embraced the voice of the fellowship.

During their break-out session, the Fellowship Communication Team presented a behind-the-scenes look at the process used to produce Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and *The Forum*. Delegates were given inventory materials to assist with the massive effort to understand the value of each piece of Al-Anon literature. *The Forum* team provided members with information on how to conduct a *Forum* writing workshop. The Conference Approved Literature journey, from inception to publication, was a back-drop for the group's session. Delegates received a complete packet of information on CAL and *The Forum*, including guidelines on reprinting and quoting from Al-Anon materials.

## Group Services Update

Sandra F., Director

Evalynn N., Associate Director, Alateen

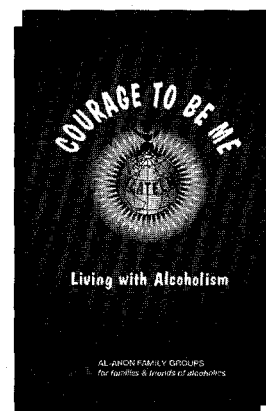
The vision for the department was announced: "Group Service activities are to reflect the warmth, understanding, and love that characterizes the Al-Anon program."

Having all staff members of the team trained to respond to all individual, group, district, and area calls and correspondence from everywhere in the US and Canada is proving effective.

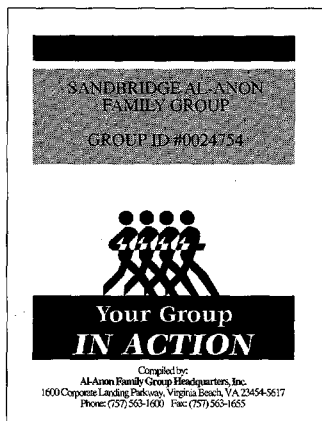
An innovative aspect of the new structure is placing Group Records within the department. Work is still underway transitioning the technological aspects of Groups Records.

The Group Services Committee now provides area input into projects formerly designed by the WSO staff. Examples include the new group binder, guidelines, the Seventh Tradition Leaflet, and a new bookmark depicting all group positions. Although individual feedback had always been sought through members and the WSO volunteers, the new delegate committee provides an organized method of keeping a diverse area eye on projects.

Of concern to the committee, however, has been the broad scope of Group Service activities.



New book for our younger members (B-23)



New group binder



Public Outreach Poster in Spanish

The committee meets annually during the WSC. Communication between the 1996 and 1997 Conferences was through periodic reports and an interim conference call. During the call, the committee suggested dividing the 12 delegate members among specific segments of Group Services such as Alateen, Group Records, Information Services or Archives. This topic was discussed at the Group Services Committee meeting.

The Alateen Advisory Committee has offered many suggestions for revitalizing Alateen. Interest was expressed in having direct Alateen representation at the WSC. This idea was addressed when the Board of Trustees approved having two Alateen members attend one of the Group Services Committee meetings during the 1997 WSC.

The Archives Advisory Committee directed its focus on the Archives itself. It sends to the Group Services Committee those projects that require delegate member input.

In their breakout the Group Services Department provided a "health-fair" type of tour through the department. Group Services Staff wore colorful T-shirts signed by all members of the department that were raffled to six Conference members. The Group Records section encouraged delegates to spread the word that using the universal registration form is a valuable tool for both the WSO and the areas. Archives shared valuable information on how (and why it is more important than ever) to protect Al-Anon's historical data. Conference members participated in an Alateen workshop focused on four actual situations that have occurred with Alateen members or groups (with names changed in keeping with anonymity). Participants were asked what they would do if they were confronted with similar situations and their answers recorded for consideration by the Alateen Advisory Committee. Everyone who entered the decorated room complete with banners and balloons was asked to list a favorite meeting topic on a flip chart. All suggestions will be considered when *Suggested Programs for Meetings* (G-13) is revised. A handout was distributed containing the Alateen and Archives Workshops, a questionnaire seeking input on area group record needs, other information about Group Services in general, and a Q & A sheet on Group Records.

Following the breakout session, a copy of the new group binder was distributed to Conference members. In most cases, the binders were personalized with the member's home group name and ID number on the cover.

## Membership Outreach

Mary Ann K., *Director*

Marsha W., *Associate Director, International*

Susan A., *Associate Director, Conference*

Mary Ann explained that although grouping these like committees in one department was a change in structure, the committees themselves did not change. The update focused on the various functions within the Membership Outreach Service.

The most significant change to the structure was the introduction of French Services to the WSO. This change was highlighted in the *Inside Al-Anon* section of the April *Forum*. An Al-Anon member, Nancy L., from Quebec, hired as the Language Services Coordinator, has been helped tremendously by Alberte C., the former General Secretary of PFA.

French Services is modeled after our Spanish Services. Translation Services is led by a long-time employee who relocated from New York, Raquel K.

The support team members are invaluable to the fluent operation of the department.

There are three Spanish and three French bilingual members at the WSO who are resources for communicating with the fellowship.

In their breakout focusing on their theme, the "Magic of Getting Together," the Membership Outreach team treated Conference members to a festive atmosphere as each of their "gatherings" were on display. Entering the room, members were greeted with a look at themselves in a mirror bearing the words, "You are the Conference and the Conference is You!" The Membership Outreach structure, as it appears on the organization chart, color-coded and all, was mapped out on the floor as a guide on the tour. French & Spanish Services, The Al-Anon International Convention, Al-Anon's 50th Anniversary Celebration, the Regional Service Seminars, IAGSM and the World Service Conference celebrated the gathering of Al-Anon members worldwide.

Membership Outreach is all about getting together, and talking to each other, and reasoning things out. No one in the department works in isolation. Everyone works with committees so no one person's ideas dominate.

During the Spanish Services Luncheon held on Tuesday, Raquel welcomed 30 delegates with Spanish-speaking groups in their areas, along with 10 WSO members involved in outreach to the Spanish groups. Raquel gave a special welcome to Hilda B., the GSO Representative from Mexico. Hilda addressed the group in Spanish expressing her joy in having the

opportunity to be part of the Conference.

Material given to the delegates included Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on CD with a script and bookmarks with slogans from Mexico. The WSO received the computer program, Word in Spanish, as a gift from Mexico.

The participants were advised that there are currently 5,500 groups in 20 Spanish-speaking countries, and 11 General Service Offices. There are also currently 15 bilingual members serving as liaisons between the WSO and the Spanish-speaking groups. During the past year, Spanish Services has been working on: *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics*, *Check It Out* for Al-Anon and Alateen posters, PSAs for radio and television, incorporating *Inside Al-Anon* into *Al-Anon y Alateen en accion*, and updating material.

The floor was opened to the delegates to share highlights of Spanish services within their areas. One member shared that the groups in his area want to expand their district to meet the growing needs of Spanish-speaking groups. Another explained that as an alternate delegate, she was able to work with these groups and grew personally as a result. One area has a new meeting that includes members from Venezuela, Mexico, and Argentina.

## Public Outreach Update

Phyllis M., *Director*

Claire R., *Associate Director*

The Public Outreach Department has been challenged with three major assignments: administratively consolidating three services (Public Information, Cooperating with the Professional Community and Institutions), communicating with three sets of coordinators, and developing a plan for working with the area service structures to consolidate their public outreach services into one service by April, 1999.

Since relocating, Public Outreach has focused primarily on consolidating the three services. Public Outreach service materials comprise 26% of all Al-Anon's literature and service materials. Much of this literature overlaps and may be suited to consolidation. We still communicate with and maintain records for three sets of coordinators.

To insure that Canada is included in the Public Outreach Service and to bring it alive to the US membership, the NPIC Office Manager has been fully integrated into the Public Outreach team. The NPIC Committee heightens our awareness and knowledge about Canada. It is a primary Public Outreach team goal to recognize these members in our day-to-day work.

Communicating with the coordinators whose areas are in various stages of consolidation began with the implementation of the first of several Public Outreach coordinator mini-surveys. The first survey told us that our three sets of coordinators have approximately five to seven hours a week to devote to service commitments. One of the many questions that still needs to be asked is how much time can be spent on WSO projects in comparison to local projects.

Many professionals now believe that getting a client to any Twelve Step program is the goal. The Public Outreach Service has begun to address the issue of this "one size fits all" trend to determine how to reclarify our identity as a fellowship for families and friends of alcoholics.

A questionnaire in the Spring *Al-Anon Speaks Out* newsletter is a first step in planting the seed to attract professionals to the concept of recommending service to their clients. Al-Anon service is an important tool in the process of recovery. Their clients will stand a better chance of remaining committed to recovery and Al-Anon's service structure will be enhanced with more volunteers.

Exhibiting in the US and Canada is a significant investment. Public Outreach has begun an intensive evaluation of how to improve the return on this investment. New exhibit booths have been purchased with a back-lighted graphic. Staff has been assigned to attend conferences where the booth is displayed to provide on-site, first-hand feedback. Exhibit guidelines and communications with volunteers have been improved and updated.

The volunteer Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee assists the department in its day-to-day work. This committee will analyze the many fact sheets that fall under the three services; review, edit and make recommendations on the letters to the professionals and consider the need for new questions for the 1999 *Membership Survey*. Recommendations on all these projects will be reviewed by the Public Outreach Committee for approval.

The committee has been attentive to the Five-Year Plan Goals for 1996-97 focusing on communication and improving internal operations. Concurrently, the Public Outreach staff is committed to operational problem-solving through team participation.

The Public Outreach Service remains committed to keep the lights burning and the doors open for the still suffering families and friends of alcoholics.



Public Outreach Poster in French



Public Outreach Pilot Project for the Military

During their breakout, Public Outreach brought together the various media used by the WSO and the membership to fulfill their outreach responsibilities to those in need. The new exhibit booth was on display and Conference members were provided with guidelines and a demonstration for its most effective use. Moving on to another medium, the new Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were aired for viewing by Conference participants. The WSO web site and Internet "Search Engines," the latest technological outreach method, were demonstrated to a fascinated audience. This segment was designed to give Conference members who have never "surfed the net" the opportunity to be introduced to computers and the Internet. The newly designed literature sleeve and military packet, *A Resource for the Military*, was distributed to all Conference members along with an explanatory cover letter describing the Military Outreach Pilot Project. The packet contains key materials to help outreach efforts within the military. No matter the medium, printed word, visual sights, or computer-enhanced images, the message remains the same, "...whenever anyone, anywhere reaches out let the hand of Al-Anon always be there..."

## 1998 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

**Ric B.,**  
Chairperson

**Mary Ann K.,**  
Convention Coordinator

What better way to spread the news of Al-Anon's 1998 International Convention than through a "live news broadcast." "Live from Salt Lake City, Utah," Conference members were given a tour of the site and heard from many of the reporters on activities to take place. Staff members working on special events and assignments acted as reporters. Copies of the skit are available on request.

Highlights from the broadcast:

All **speakers and workshop leaders** will be selected from those who register.

**Workshops** will be held during the day Friday and Saturday.

**Big Meeting Friday Night** - following the Language of Love Parade with members in costume.

**Hospitality/Entertainment** - All day Thursday, dancing in the evening.

**Conference Reunion Luncheon** - Friday, July 3 (ticketed event).

**Pioneer Luncheon** - Saturday, July 4 (ticketed event).

**AA Meetings** (daytime) at the Doubletree Hotel.

Please wait for the Registration/Housing form coming to all groups in September.

At the conclusion of the broadcast, Annie A., Utah Delegate, distributed information to the Conference, and asked WSC members to send six flags from their area to the Host Committee. Mary Ann K. explained that registration will begin in the Fall of 1997. Al-Anon Family Groups must build a convention history with the hotels and various sites in a selected city. Members were asked not to circumvent the housing process established for the Convention since if they do, Al-Anon will not get credit for the rooms.

Various options are available for those areas interested in having a hospitality room. One option for members to consider was to throw all their support to the Utah Host Committee's Hospitality Room. There are only 77 groups in Utah who are trying to raise enough money to welcome the world, and they need some help. By opting for one huge hospitality room, everyone could mingle together.

Frequently asked questions and answers appear in *The Forum*. Permission was granted, for a limited purpose, to reprint this section in Al-Anon newsletters. Members were asked to send a copy of the newsletter to the WSO once published.

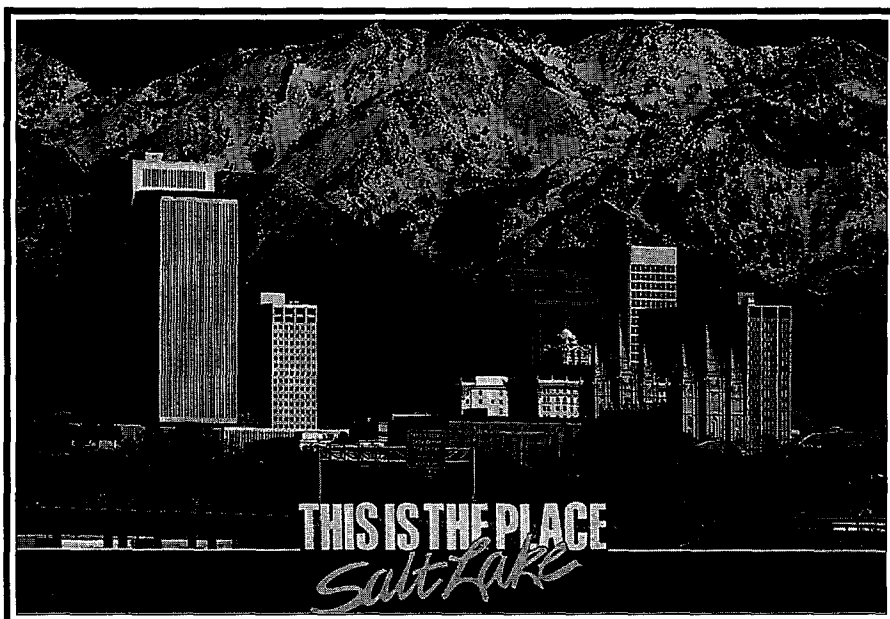


Photo courtesy of Salt Lake City Convention and Visitors Bureau



# MEXICO'S REPRESENTATIVE SHARING

It is with great emotion and love that the Al-Anon family in Mexico sends their greetings to all Al-Anon delegates attending this annual service Conference, as well as to the World Service Office staff, Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee.

It is for me quite a great responsibility, but I am sure I will come through it and with the help of the God of my understanding I will take with me everything which may help to enhance our confraternity.

The Al-Anon message, for the very first time, came to the Mexican territory in 1963, when the sorrow and disappointments that are a consequence of living with an alcoholic, motivated a person to talk about these circumstances to someone. Thank God, she chose someone who knew about the Al-Anon movement originating in New York City. Thus, this person kindly suggested he get in touch with the World Service Office. An answer as well as written material arrived and Al-Anon began.

Later, in 1976, we were proud to receive a visit from beloved Lois. Her words became the seeds which sprouted Al-Anon all around Mexico. Her loving words can help us today, "I would like you to always remember that all of you and me are in the same order, so everyone is equal. You are doing now what I have done in the past. When you get an idea you have to develop it, and others will maintain it as an endless chain. As I did at the beginning, it belongs to all and each one of you to continue communicating this message of love and relief to people who need this help as well as I once needed it. We all have the responsibility to continue this. Please be loyal to Al-Anon, my love to all the AA, Al-Anon and Alateen..."

In Mexico City in 1972, a group of volunteer members who thought about the necessity of giving service to the groups already existing in the country and especially those new groups, created a General Service Committee. Later, in 1973, they convened the first National Service Assembly which later became the National Conference with a Board and General Service Office. Since that time we have growth, taking always as our guide the World Service Office and maintaining a very good relationship.

In 1983 our National Service Conference approved the motion that our oficina de servicios generales (OSG) would have all the permanent committees as it is shown in the Twelve Concepts of Service, we have now: Alateen, Archives, Conference, Public Information, Institutions, Guides, Litera-

ture and Finances, Executive, and International Coordination Committees.

Our Nominating Committee has been a great help to make a good selection of qualified Al-Anon members which may fill possible vacancies. Also working with this committee is its Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT). As our country is divided into three regions — Northwest, Center and Southwest — we have two delegates from each region.

We have Regional Service Seminars each year being a great help for the region. This year the Regional Service Seminar will be held at Guadalajara, Jalisco on August 1, 2 and 3.

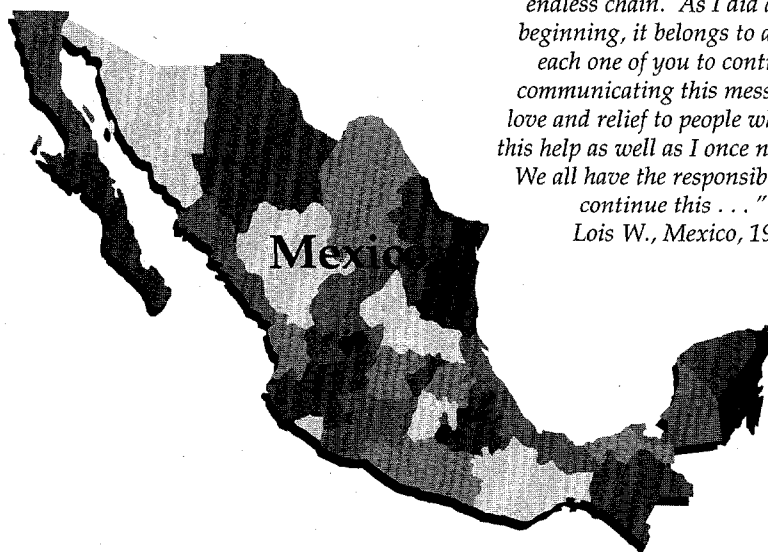
We celebrate conventions on the same dates as the AA conventions, every five years; we are preparing for the one in the year 2000. When the date of the convention coincides with the Regional Seminar we postpone it for the following year. Every November we also have an Open House to which we invite all members to see the office and meet the office staff, Board of Trustees, and Executive Committee, as well as the Chairpersons of all the permanent committees.

We reprint literature of the World Service Office with the license they give to us to do so. With volunteers we are working on a help plan to the institutions jail at Islas Marias, a help plan to Cuba, as well as mailing with lone members.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to share your experiences, which will undoubtedly enrich all Al-Anon members in Mexico.

**Hilda B.,**  
*Representative from Mexico*

*"I would like you to always remember that all of you and me are in the same order, so everyone is equal. You are doing now what I have done in the past. When you get an idea you have to develop it, and others will maintain it as an endless chain. As I did at the beginning, it belongs to all and each one of you to continue communicating this message of love and relief to people who need this help as well as I once needed it. We all have the responsibility to continue this . . ."*  
*Lois W., Mexico, 1976*



# TIMELY TOPICS/ AGENDA ITEMS:

## OPEN DISCUSSION

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All Conference members may submit topics to be considered as agenda items. Four Open Discussion topics are chosen by vote to be discussed at the Conference. The remaining topics are sent to workshops for discussion and reportback to the Conference. Questions or issues receiving less than five votes are referred to the Ask-It-Basket. All Conference members vote for the three topics they feel are the most important. The four topics receiving the most votes are the agenda items discussed at the four open discussion sessions. To insure that the topic is handled without bias, someone other than the person who submitted the topic is chosen by lot to moderate the discussion.

### **Remaining Fully Self Supporting**

*Moderator - Jan R., AR*

The first open discussion topic focused on how Al-Anon can continue to be self-supporting realizing the financial struggle it has been experiencing.

One member explained that some groups were withholding funds because they didn't like what was happening with Al-Anon's literature or what the WSO was doing. Communication was highlighted as the remedy for many of the groups' issues. By explaining the reasons for decisions, and opening up the lines of communication, members can gain a greater appreciation and respect for much that has happened. Others echoed similar words sharing that communication has been the resolution to many problems. Much has changed in Al-Anon during the past three years, and many members are afraid. Sharing the rationale for decisions has alleviated much concern and negative feelings.

Let it begin with me, and setting a positive example were cited as a means of encouraging members to support various levels of service. Contributing when the basket goes around does not go unnoticed.

Others shared that their areas are angry because they don't think the amount of contributions and where they are sent should be dictated. Members and groups want a voice in where their money is sent. Contributions to the district should be used by the district and the same holds true for contributions to the area. Concern was expressed that the WSO computer system cannot currently provide contribution details to the delegates.

Contributions to the WSO have increased this year. This is something we should celebrate. We should take time to focus on the positive rather than emphasizing the negatives.

It was suggested that we take the focus off money and put it back on the program

— the finances will be taken care of. An observation was made that AA's handle their money like they did when they were drinking, and that Al-Anon's handle their money like when the AA's were drinking.

Another member highlighted an idea that has worked well in one area. The treasurer sent a letter to the membership detailing a budget report at various service levels. At the bottom of the letter was a slip that included addressee information on where members or groups could contribute to the district, the area and world service. This additional communication has been extremely valuable in reporting back to the membership.

Members need to support WSO more, and we need to emphasize this. Last year, Al-Anon was forced to use money from the reserve fund, members need to understand this. Our World Service Office does not only support Al-Anon in this country, but worldwide to operate effectively and efficiently for all of us.

One idea to save money at all levels was to videotape the delegate's report of the Conference, and send it out rather than visiting various locations for a one-on-one report. Driving instead of flying can save a tremendous amount, and communicating these cost-saving measures helps Al-Anon members fully understand.

Focusing on what's important and where the priority lies within group and individual members is the key. One member shared that her group was very small and comprised of fixed income members, yet they were able to scrape together funds to send some money to each level of service. The answers to our problems lie in the Steps and Traditions.

Fun in the fellowship was stressed as a positive means to increase contributions and share the program.

## Encouraging and Supporting Service

Moderator - Rose J., BC/Yukon

The second timely topic for open discussion centered on the difficulty in getting more members into service and the follow-up support of service workers.

The responsibilities of the group representative as detailed in the "Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* were reviewed as a lead-in to the discussion.

Enthusiasm has so much to do with attracting members to service — it is infectious. Service sponsorship is vital to supporting new members in service. A GR workshop at assembly helps provide information and gain excitement. We need to ask — don't wait for volunteers. Giving members projects to work on helps get more members involved and telling GRs that they can do the job is very effective.

A suggestion for all members to consider: if you have enthusiasm, thank God for it. If you don't have it, get down on your knees and ask for it.

One Conference member shared that car-pools transporting members to and from assemblies was a great idea in getting more members to attend. Having fun while getting the job done keeps the enthusiasm and excitement at high levels.

At assemblies, we get members there, and make them listen to us without letting them talk — they get bored. What we have to say is important, but what they have to say is important, too. We should plan the agenda so all members can be involved.

Sponsorship is one of the key elements to support members into service. A member with a strong sponsor will fall into service naturally.

One member explained that as a DR, she wrote a letter to each GR inviting them to assembly and always asked a question. If she didn't hear back in response to the question, she would call the members, and let them know how important it was to meet them. That personal contact means so much to each member. They are treated as special with events at every assembly for them.

The answers are in our books. When the groups go back and follow the Steps and Traditions they get enthusiastic, and the rest will follow. We work really hard to make service fun with GR orientation sessions, and a friendship lunch to give support.

Communication is our hope for the future. Workshops at the assembly on different service positions strengthens our ability to get more members growing in service. Service is part of our recovery. Telling members they are doing a good job and being available to talk to them lends support.

Another idea was to hold discussion groups with GRs and DRs to discuss group problems providing a forum at the assembly where members can share.

Treat the GRs and DRs as stars. That's what one area does. The GRs and DRs each get a star to wear when they attend the assembly. Members are assigned an assembly sponsor who guides them through the meeting. They know they are not alone.

## Ambiguity in Conference Approved Literature

Moderator - Madeline J., MS

The topic for discussion by the full Conference body focused on the ambiguity with some of our literature. It has been suggested that when literature is published it should read the same in all publications to eliminate various interpretations which cause confusion.

Conference members shared that we have various generations of literature, and words can be interpreted differently. Al-Anon literature is written by the membership who tell the story of what works for them which may or may not help another. To keep things consistent in our literature would be difficult and would eliminate the individuality of the sharings.

Another explained that she always thought everything was ambiguous, and that no one was going to tell her what to do when she came into Al-Anon. Many members are

looking for the rules when they walk through the doors. The *Alateen's Dos and Don'ts* (M-9) is the only publication that provides direction or rules. None of our literature has the precise answer to any one problem.

The Fellowship Communication staff asked that all members communicate what is ambiguous and what information is causing a problem. As reprints are done, changes can be made.

The Al-Anon literature has helped members think for themselves and not look for rules. It has given members freedom to think and form opinions. Our recovery is our responsibility. A member expressed how she has learned to live in the gray areas and has greater freedom not living in black-and-white.

One delegate explained that the question

to her meant the ambiguity in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, and that we need to ensure the terminology is consistent from one section to another.

Another shared that she reads poetry or sonnets differently than other reading material. The same is true with our literature. There are many different voices and something can be learned from each of them. One of our tasks as delegates is to pass on that information.

A consistent message is that we need different messages at different times and Al-Anon's literature meets that need. The Al-Anon program has many different viewpoints and more and more voices can be

heard through our literature. Keep an open mind, take what you like and leave the rest were encouraged when reading the books and pamphlets.

Others discussed the revision of several books over the years and whether the message was the same which may trigger concern from the members.

The best we can do is share our experience, strength and hope. Talking about the role Al-Anon literature has played in recovery is a responsibility each of us must take. There are people where we were in their recovery and we need to share with them the value and importance of our literature.

## On-line Meetings

*Moderator - Bobby S., SC*

The final timely topic for open discussion related to the Internet and on-line meetings. Questions have been asked about the structure and guidelines for on-line meetings and the information to be shared on-line.

Members expressed their interest in the latest technology supporting Al-Anon's fellowship. Using chat rooms and home pages with a focus on the Steps and Traditions, members conduct Twelve Step work. One person explained that membership in on-line groups is growing, and fear of the technology is diminishing as the comfort level increases.

Some WSC participants thought that the Internet was a wonderful vehicle to do workshops where many members can share at the same time. Our Higher Power is as involved in this wonderful new tool where much can be learned as in face-to-face meetings. The technology is something we need to embrace and not fear — take what you like and delete the rest!

Many on-line meetings are conducted in a very orderly fashion with a chairperson who facilitates the discussion. A method is used to alert the chair that a member wishes to speak, which allows for many voices to be heard.

Others shared that while they have attended on-line meetings, they do not replace face-to-face meetings.

Some on-line members have been asked for information and it was stressed that group autonomy decides what information can be asked. A suggestion was made that

the on-line meetings have involvement with an area for support.

Another concern was that there may be "thirteenth-stepping" going on over the computer and care should be taken.

Many adult children members who left our meetings are now coming back over the Internet. We have another chance to give them Al-Anon's message of hope.

An ad hoc committee appointed by the Board of Trustees has been researching the on-line meetings with the intent of producing guidelines, responding to other needs such as open and closed meetings, and registering with the WSO. Conference members were educated that a chat room is a place which only a certain number of people can access at one time, typically 25 to 30 people. "Flaming" occurs when people wander in and out of the chat rooms who don't belong and disrupt the intent. Work continues on this growing medium. For further information see the Home Page section.

Other members voiced concern that the computer age is shutting out a lot of members from service. In some locales, service positions are reserved for those who have computer access while other members willing to serve are not permitted.

A member suggested that we must remember that the only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcohol in a relative or friend. Al-Anon does not require that a member own a computer or be computer literate.

## Timely Topics Workshops

The Timely Topics/Agenda Items not discussed on the floor of the Conference were sent to workshops with reportbacks to the full WSC.

### Section 1

Information shared on the topic of limiting the printing of new literature until the current

literature is used, and whether new material is a duplication, included: drop the prices on older pieces to clear the inventory, make the literature visible and appealing, remind members that the literature is produced at the request of the membership, communicate that newer pieces address the same focus as prior pieces, but carry different views, and that our basic program is not just one book, but a basic focus with various needs and views.

Responding to the question on whether we are meeting the needs of our diverse membership, the workshop shared that Al-Anon is a program of diversity and it is worldwide. Statistics of representation may focus on membership in the US and Canada, but may not be representative of Al-Anon worldwide. Continuing our public outreach efforts, we should also focus on understanding other cultures, and what members need.

Feedback on when to remove groups off meeting and mailing lists referred members to Warranty Two, no one has the right to remove a group from the meeting list. Group autonomy should always prevail.

Leadership and whether we are creating one-person shows is covered in Tradition Two. Control is fear-based. Concept Nine states that leadership is a necessity at service levels. A leader serves and nurtures. In the journey of recovery, we learn to lead, and trust in our service workers.

A question was raised asking if there should be a policy or guidelines about required attendance and asking members to sign a form for attendance. The workshop team suggested that the group members decide if they want to sign a form.

## Section 2

Another workshop question focused on members who are fearful of change, specifically as it relates to the WSO structure. Members shared that a lack of information many times breeds mistrust. *The Forum* and *Inside Al-Anon* provided an organizational breakdown or overview with names and position definitions. Reorganization is a process and it takes time. Familiarity will diminish the complexity.

Another topic discussed related to dual members and service beyond the group level. Communication and voicing opinions is necessary to reduce fears of the unfamiliar. Responding in an argumentative mode does more harm than good. Try to focus on the positive, and what AA members can do in Al-Anon service. Members were also referred to the 1996 WSC Summary for more information on the topic.

How groups can exercise group conscience without breaking Traditions was a workshop topic. Autonomy at the group level is limited since the rest of Tradition Four states "that which affects Al-Anon as a whole." Autonomy may be abused at the group level, and then reversed or not accepted at the area level since the area has its own autonomy. Sharing healthy experience, strength, and hope is the responsibility of each one of us, and utilizing the words from our literature as the answer will help guide us.

A suggestion was made for having an 800 number for group information and another asking for help. The workshop questioned who would benefit. If the WSO has both, it could cause confusion. Possibly a local 800 number would be more helpful.

Regarding resentment by Al-Anon members when an AA member attends a meeting, the members shared that *The Al-Anon Focus* pamphlet could be given to the AA member. Embrace the unknown rather than avoiding it is a healthy response. Increased awareness can also help alleviate the issues.

## Section 3

How to handle members who commit to service, but don't perform the duties was discussed. It was suggested to develop duties and responsibilities guidelines which are specific and provide examples. Publish meeting dates so people can be aware. Emphasize to members that they are making a commitment, and need to be responsible. Have service sponsors support the members, train and coach the new service workers, or have an orientation meeting to introduce the members to their responsibilities. Individual members need to be responsible for their personal inventory.

Attraction versus promotion was a topic for workshop input. Attraction is walking the talk by setting an example. Call people to see how they are, use TV spots and leave literature in doctors' offices telling Al-Anon's story. Be ready to do Twelve Step work at any time, and give your light away. Promotion promises cures, it harangues and nags. Attraction inspires hope. Attraction nurtures and cares. Share what we are and what we have. We have to give it away to keep it. Reach out and give encouragement.

Whether the new structure meets the needs of Alateen and Al-Anon Adult children was discussed. The new structure is too new to determine if it meets our needs, but it appears that we are now better equipped to address those needs than in the past. Group Services focuses on all the needs of all the groups. Literature is trying to meet those needs as well with new and updated material. The Alateen Advisory Committee provides representation

of this vital group. We need to respect our unity and our differences, and remember that everyone comes from different places. Other suggestions were to host a conference for the opportunity to meet other members. By listening to the needs of our fellowship, we can best determine the course of action. We come for experience, strength, and hope because we have been affected by someone else's drinking.

The issue of having lap-top computers at Conference, and whether they encourage unity and equality or are disruptive was a workshop question. Members felt that the use of computers is distracting, but so is the sound of automatic cameras rewinding. The question comes down to courtesy, and what is best for the majority. This a question for group conscience. There is space on the Conference evaluation form for members to share their views.

#### Section 4

Suggestions on how to keep members involved without their suffering boredom and burn-out, included: accept that long-time members may not want to attend any longer, offer rides to meetings, conduct a meeting on wheels, invite them to speak, have a reunion meeting, and respect members' feelings.

The impact the Internet has on Tradition Eleven prompted the response that much is still unknown while studies are underway. Nothing will replace face-to-face meetings. Members explained that there will be no need to change Tradition Eleven since it covers "media."

The best approaches for handling disruptive members, included: group conscience to ask the member to leave, have a meeting or workshop on chairing a meeting, the chairperson is charged with keeping the meeting on track, and meet with members after the meeting to discuss.

A suggestion to centralize office and work services within an area was discussed. Different needs in different geographical areas may prevent this, however, each area should decide how best to handle the work and office needs.

The question of whether conferences and conventions are giving members what they want — tapes, trinkets, laughter, rather than literature. Members agreed that conferences and conventions can certainly have all available to members. Members should say what they want at these events.

#### Section 5

Cooperation between assemblies and information services to avoid double-headed management and duplication of effort was a topic. Suggestions focused on having a liaison between the service functions, keeping group records updated, having them work on a project together, writing articles for their newsletter, and helping them to know they are included in the structure. The groups need to support both with contributions.

How to communicate with isolated groups triggered several comments. Send newsletters and copies of meeting minutes, move district meetings around, and call the groups to keep them informed. Try using teleconferences or videotapes as a means to keep in contact. Get in the car and visit.

Feedback on how to get members at-large to see the benefit and necessity of service, included: make service personal, let people know it can be fun, share or delegate to include other members, talk one-on-one and listen, and let members know they are valuable to service.

It was asked, "where it was written that district representatives attend local area assemblies," and who pays for it? Members explained that page 30 of the *Service Manual* states that DRs and GRs are expected to attend the meetings of the assembly whenever they are called by its chairperson. Pages 112, 118 and 119 also provide suggestions for finances and attendance.

Members who become paid staff may not serve as volunteers in a policy making positions, and the need for guidelines was a workshop topic. To avoid a conflict of interest, double-headed management is avoided. Members who become paid staff must resign a service position. Positions may be interpreted as those from group representative to delegate. The relationship with the WSO does not change whether an entity is incorporated or not.

#### Section 6

Suggestions to help members and groups understand the role of the delegate and the WSO included: take time at the assembly to share what the roles are, give a presentation on the new service structure, have an orientation meeting for new GRs and DRs, and ask for feedback and questions from the groups.

Regarding the WSC and whether delegates actually make decisions, workshop members suggested that we re-examine the Concepts, particularly Concept Nine, "...the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership." Other comments included that there are many checks and balances in Al-Anon's process. Many motions come from the delegate committees and it is each delegate's responsibility to ensure that their voice be heard. Our Higher Power

watches over the Conference.

A workshop team provided feedback on how to address our shrinking numbers. Do more public outreach, meet the objectives of the Five Year Plan, encourage diversity in our meetings, try early morning and rush hour meetings, update our meeting lists for accuracy, stress sponsorship, and bring others into service.

Concern was shared in a topic that centered on why the parents of an active alcoholic visit, but never come back. Remind these members that Al-Anon is for them even if their loved one has multiple addictions. Encourage the parents not to attend meetings together. Ensure that others with similar backgrounds speak with them. Be sure they have access to the literature that will meet their needs.

The final workshop topic was on increasing availability of answering services. To save costs a number of AIS offices have switched to an automated system which will link the caller to a live person. If Al-Anon combines services with AA, we must ensure that they are provided with a current Twelve Step list, a meeting list, and literature to read.

## LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP

The goal of the workshop was to share ideas on how to empower individual Al-Anon members to become leaders, to provide a workshop to take back to the areas, to learn more about themselves as family members of Al-Anon, using our Conference theme - "Communication: Our Hope for the Future."

To the tune from Mission Impossible, Conference leaders wearing trench coats and hats skulked into the meeting room. "Good afternoon Conference members. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to solve the mystery found in your breakout room. Your moderator has been assigned to introduce your mission. This message will self-destruct in ten seconds."

Assuming assigned Al-Anon member roles, workshop participants worked as a team to choose from available materials those that were appropriate to conduct a meeting and then to agree on a list of five steps to help the group become a viable part of the district. The Conference members then spent time discussing how the team worked together.

**1. How did members of the team resolve differences?** WSC participants reported back to the Conference body that they practiced the First Tradition, Concepts Four and Five, Warranty Three, the Group Inventory, and talked to each with love, kindness, and humor in order to resolve differences. Loud and honest discussions were helpful in reaching a consensus and majority. Use of a demonstrated process, then allowing time for arguing, and gentle leadership to stick to the issue at hand were valuable lessons.

A process of elimination and tapping into the resources available were helpful to the resolution of differences. Tolerance, humor, and communication — talking and listening — were the keys. A respect for differences led to a group conscience and consensus.

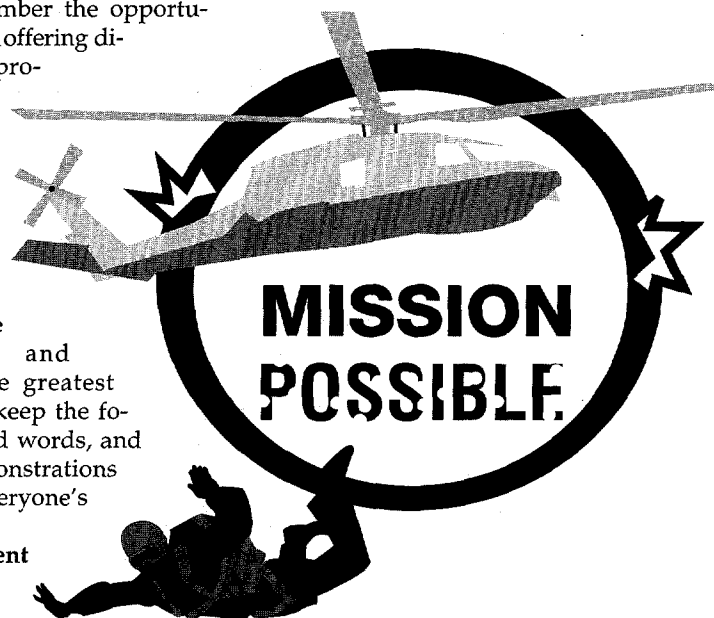
**2. How did team members support each**

**other?** Members respected differences, offered options and choices, and used humor and fun. Every member participated and treated each other as equals, keeping the focus on Al-Anon principles. Teaming up, non-reaction to outlandish comments, and non-verbal behavior were steps to support. Giving each member the opportunity to speak and offering direction helped provide support to members. Using the philosophy that no one was wrong, not criticizing, and finding acceptance were vital. Principles above personalities and progress for the greatest number helped keep the focus. Smiles, kind words, and hugs were demonstrations of support for everyone's viewpoint.

**3. What different leadership skills were used during the workshop?**

Patience, using the word "I," imaging, listening, being honest and enthusiastic. Listening to the message and focusing on the principles were consistently used through the various tasks of the workshops. Keeping an open mind and tolerance, while being supportive and understanding, were key skills. At times, a great deal of patience was required in order to effect the necessary compromise. Informing people, and knowing what to say and when to say it, allowed for flexibility, creativity, and honesty.

Optional comments on the exercise, included: one group named themselves "The Mixed Bag." This exercise was good for per-



sonal growth. Members shared that it was very hard not to take control during the session. The workshop illustrated how important a group is and that leadership starts before the meeting starts. If we practice principles in all our affairs, things will turn out

right. One team learned of the importance of having a chairman to keep unity within the group and that a lot can be learned from the negative. Another team learned that focusing on their individual issues isolated the newcomer.

## POLICY COMMITTEE

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**Helen R., Trustee,**  
*Chairperson*

**Ric B.,**  
*Executive Director*

The Policy Committee submitted several motions for Conference consideration to amend the text in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The first change was a result of discussion at the 1996 Open Policy Meeting which was sent to an ad hoc committee. The new text is intended to clarify wording regarding "Anonymity in our Personal Growth." The motion carried.

The text in the Twelve Concepts of Service uses different language than the original Warranties in the charter which confused some members who thought these statements were exact quotes of the Warranties. To clarify this, a footnote was added, where appropriate, to explain that it is descriptive text drafted by Lois W. and adopted by the 1970 WSC. The Conference approved the motion.

A motion was made to add to the "Anonymity Within Al-Anon" section of the *Policy Digest* a request that members provide phone numbers as well as names and addresses on letters to *The Forum*. This revision would increase efficiency if follow-up with a member was needed, particularly with the introduction of *The Forum* articles on the Home Page. Staff members would be able to get the writer's permission to publish the letter on the Al-Anon Internet Page. The motion carried.

The final revision was intended to clarify that the triannual appeal sent by the World Service Office is directed at the individual group members rather than the group.

Conference members shared that while the proposed changes were an improvement, there appeared to still be some confusion in the text. The goal was to ensure the triannual letter is always addressed to members of the group, and not to the GR.

The Policy Committee withdrew the motion to revise the wording. Later during the Conference, the committee submitted a second version based on input from the Conference body. Following discussion, a motion to approve the revisions carried.

One of the love gifts distributed at the World Service Conference was a bookmark titled "Gifts of Al-Anon," which included a numbered excerpt from the book, *From Survival to Recovery*. A question was raised as

to the appropriateness of this excerpt. In 1994, the Literature Committee considered titling and numbering this excerpt. The Literature Committee brought the idea to the Policy Committee where the proposal was rejected. In 1995, a delegate distributed a beautiful paper handout titled "Gifts of Al-Anon" including numbering the sections of the excerpt. Neither reprint was approved. It was explained that we do not have "Gifts of Al-Anon." In order to reprint any portion of Conference Approved Literature, permission must be granted by the WSO to preserve our copyright. Conference members were asked to keep this in mind when creating love gifts or other mementos.

As was done last year, the Policy Committee invited all Conference members to attend an Open Policy Meeting to understand how the process works. The topic discussed related to the creation, sale, and distribution of a pin or medallion commemorating Al-Anon's 50th Anniversary. The question was raised whether this would violate policy as it appears on page 71 of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* relative to commercialism.

Policy Committee members shared their views on the rationale of having the current policy, including the diversion from our primary purpose. Members were concerned that producing a one-time piece such as a pin commemorating Al-Anon's 50th Anniversary could appear that we are closing our eyes to the policy to fit our own needs or opinions. Others felt this would be a wonderful one-time offering and a means to display our experience, strength, and hope. Varying viewpoints were shared and the conversation turned to whether the creation and sale of a pin or medallion should be done at all if it is deemed to be in violation of policy. Since there was no substantial unanimity on the subject, this will be on the agenda of the next Policy Committee meeting.



# CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON TRUSTEES REPORTBACK

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The function of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) is to assist in the process of nominating the trustee at-large for approval at the Conference. In 1984, the CCT was formed for a trial period of three years. The CCT is made up entirely of delegates, and in 1990, the CCT became a permanent subcommittee of the Nominating Committee. The CCT meets with the Nominating Committee annually at the World Service Conference.

In 1994, the Conference added the review of Executive Committee for Real Property Management résumés to the duties of the CCT. These résumés were to be processed the same as the trustee at-large as far as the time-frame for accepting résumés and the process for evaluating the candidates.

All Trustee at-large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management résumés are sent to the members of CCT during the last week of August. Each member of the committee evaluates and scores the résumés using a ten-point ranking system on each of five criteria. The five criteria are service experience, personal history, personality traits and principles, special/unique skills, and purpose to serve as expressed by the candidate. The CCT members send their comments and scores to the Chairperson of the Conference Committee on Trustees who

tallies the scores and sends the information to the Executive Director. The Executive Director forwards this material to the Nominating Committee for comparison with their own evaluations and comments based on the same process.

The CCT has the right to disapprove any candidate with a written explanation. If that candidate is then selected by the Nominating Committee, any member of the CCT can file a minority appeal to the Nominating Committee and, if necessary, to the Board of Trustees.

"This report explains the process used to score each candidate, but what it doesn't explain is how difficult it is to do this. To evaluate another member of the program is, to say the least, extremely difficult," Kay said.

During the CCT standing committee meeting, no major changes were necessary. The committee had a brainstorming session on how to better circulate the résumé forms.

A question was asked about eligibility for the chairperson of the CCT. The chair must be a second-year delegate and serves for a one-year term.

Jan R., AR, was elected chairperson of the nominating committee for 1997-1998; vice-chairperson will be Willie W., CA(S).

**Kay J., MT,**  
*Chairperson*

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## NOMINATING COMMITTEE

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Gratitude was expressed to the Conference Committee on Trustees and the Nominating Committee for their conscientious work in 1996 and 1997. The input from the CCT was instrumental in the decisions made by the Nominating Committee.

During the committee meeting, it was felt that there was some confusion over the selection process. The committees reviewed the résumé forms for trustee and the Executive Committee on Real Property Management (ECRPM). There was discussion concerning the limited amount of space on the ECRPM form to indicate a candidate's current level of activity in service. It was noted that the guidelines only state that the candidate be an active Al-Anon member, and not necessarily in service at the area level.

Historically, the résumé format had been a one-page form. The intent was to keep all

things equal for all candidates, and to address the needs and qualifications of the Board. The committee agreed by consensus to use the forms as they currently exist.

The timetable for the résumé process was distributed. It was agreed that advisory committee résumés be sent, with an explanatory cover letter and timelines, by the first of the year so that delegates have them before their Spring assemblies.

A mailing of all résumés and timelines, along with a cover letter, will take place on January 1 and again on June 1. Résumés will also be distributed at RSS breakouts during the Conference.

The similarities and differences between RT and trustee at-large were briefly discussed. The primary difference is the selection process. Once elected, they do the same

**Larry A., Trustee,**  
*Chairperson*

**Ric B.,**  
*Executive Director*

job.

The role of trustee at-large (TAL) and regional trustee (RT) are often misunderstood. While the committees look for business expertise and marketing skills in a TAL candidate, these skills alone are not useful without active Al-Anon background and service. Some believe that experience as a delegate makes a better candidate for trustee at-large.

The duty of a trustee is to focus on the fellowship as a whole rather than a distinct area or region. The one-year time lapse between the end of a delegate's term and the résumé due date, as stipulated in the guidelines, helps separate delegate and trustee responsibilities and allows a candidate to be chosen on the basis of qualifications rather than on popularity.

Again, RTs do not represent their region — they represent Al-Anon as a whole and reside in the region. RTs are recommended by their area and are nominated at Conference. Members who meet the qualifications and are willing to serve as a regional trustee submit a résumé to the area. The area selects one candidate's résumé to forward to the WSO. The WSC affirmed the regional trustee nominations as selected on Monday evening of the Conference:

**Canada East** - Catherine J.

**Canada Central** - Tom C.

**Canada West** - Marjorie S.

Trustees at-large may live anywhere in the US and Canada, and are nominated by the Board of Trustees. Members who qualify submit résumés to the WSO by August 15. The résumés are forwarded to the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) and the Nominating Committee for evaluation. At its October meeting, the Nominating Com-

mittee, using the input from CCT, selects six candidates to be invited to dinner at the January Board meeting. Three nominees are selected by the Board and presented to the World Service Conference for traditional approval. The slate is elected at the annual meeting of the Board following the Conference. The following slate for trustee at-large received traditional approval from the 1997 WSC:

Don C. 2nd three year term

Wilma K. 1st three year term

Mary C. 1st three year term

Traditional approval was given by the Conference for the officers of the Board of Trustees:

Helen R., *Chairperson*

Nancy B., *Vice-Chairperson*

Don C., *Treasurer*

The at-large members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) serve three-year terms with one position rotating each year. The selection process mirrors the process for trustee at-large. The at-large member of Executive Committee for Real Property Management received traditional approval:

Helen W., three year term

The Conference members were also informed of the nominees to the Executive Committee:

Pat B., 3rd one-year term, Chairperson

Pat S., 2nd one-year term

Doris S., 1st one-year term

The administrative staff member is Mary Ann K., who will be serving the second year of a two year term.

Congratulations were extended to all the nominees.



*Traditional Approval Process*

## REGIONAL TRUSTEE PLAN

**Doris S.,**  
*Board Chairperson*

In 1985, the World Service Conference granted approval to add three new regions. In 1986, the Conference voted to add one region per year and in 1989, the WSC instituted a three-year trial plan. The trial pe-

riod ended in 1994 and the Conference voted to extend the RT Plan as a trial for an additional three years. The 1997 World Service Conference marked the end of the extended trial.

A motion was made to end the trial period which commenced with the 1986 WSC motion and to make the regional trustee plan permanent. During the discussion members expressed their support of the expanded plan. Communication has improved with additional RTs and the increased representation of the fellowship. Areas felt they received a touch of the WSO and a glimpse at the bigger picture with the addition of three RTs.

A question was raised on the additional expense involved in having nine trustees rather than six. An approximate expense of \$4,500 to \$5,500 per year per trustee, plus approximately \$20,000 for the total cost of three Regional Service Seminars are savings that would be realized if we went back to six regional trustees.

Some Conference members shared their memories of when the trial period first be-

gan. Over time, the feelings changed from anger and frustration to appreciation and gratitude for the opportunity to grow by being smaller.

The trial was extended in 1994 due to some major changes being addressed at that time — relocation, ownership of property, and potential staff changes. Other historical milestones were discussed to provide the delegates with a sense of where we have been and where we are going.

A suggestion was made that the Board look at its sizing, and specifically, the number of at-large trustees and report back to the Conference next year. It was explained that initially, there were only in-town trustees but there was a need for a wider representation of the fellowship which led to the formation of the Regional Trustee Plan.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the motion was approved.

## REGIONAL TRUSTEE SELECTION REPORT

The selection process began one year ago during the 1996 World Service Conference. The nominating teams for each region electing a regional trustee are comprised of the delegates from each of the areas within the Canadian region, one other delegate and an alternate chosen by lot from among the first and second year delegates, and one member of the Board of Trustees and an alternate, also chosen by lot.

The Chairperson of the Board serves as Chairperson of the RT Nominating Committee. She conducts the voting procedure and is assisted by a member of the regional nominating committee.

Nominees are selected at their election assemblies. The names are forwarded to the WSO immediately and before January 1. Once all resumes have been received, the profiles are gathered for mailing to Conference members for review prior to the World Service Conference.

Roll calls were taken for the three regions nominating regional trustees at the 1997 World Service Conference — Canada East, Canada Central, and Canada West. See "Nominating Committee" in this Summary for these results.

In 1998, regional trustees will be nominated from the US Northeast, US Southeast, and US North Central regions. The process to accomplish this began during the RSS breakouts as the present regional trustees distributed packets containing profile sheets, a list of area chairpersons, and the RT Plan to the delegates from the three regions that will be nominating an RT.

The RTs, acting as liaisons to the WSO, are asked to keep informed of the dates of the election assemblies for each area, follow up with their delegates, and encourage delegates to nominate candidates from their areas.

After an area nominee is selected at the election assembly, the delegate is asked to send the nominating information to the WSO immediately following the election and before the January 1, 1998 deadline. Failure to do so constitutes forfeiture.

It is equally important that the delegate notify the WSO when they do not have a candidate to submit for RT.

In June, following the Conference, a duplicate packet is sent to the area chairperson of each of the nominating areas alerting them of the procedure for nominating an RT through an assembly election process and requesting they pass on information to the group representatives in their assemblies.

After January, 1998, when all résumés have been received, the profiles are gathered for printing and mailing to Conference members for their examination before the 1998 Conference. It is hoped that each area in the 1998 nominating regions will submit an RT nominee and whenever possible, an alternate.

At the January, 1998 Board meeting two members of the Board plus an alternate will be selected to vote in each region.

**Doris S.,**  
*Board Chairperson*

**Susan A.,**  
*Associate Director,  
Conference*

### US SOUTHEAST

Betty W., NF/LB  
Marge LeB., NH  
Loretta F., SD

#### Alternates:

Janine L., RI  
Jan R., AR

### US NORTH CENTRAL

Marie D., ME  
Lucy A., ON(N)  
Bobby S., SC

#### Alternates:

Cieni P., PR  
Leola T., MD/DC

### US NORTHEAST

Bob B., ID  
Judy D., WY  
Betty W., NF/LB

#### Alternates:

Dee R., FL(N)  
Cathy C., CA(N)

*Conference members from among the first and second year delegates, selected by lot from outside the electing regions to participate in the 1998 RT elections.*

## CLOSING SESSION

**Pat S.,**  
*Executive Committee Member*

Pat extended thanks and appreciation to Skip L., Conference Chairperson, whose term is coming to an end, for a great job not only this year, but the two prior years as well. The floor was opened to all Conference members during this closing session to share their thoughts and comments on the 1997 World Service Conference.

"Thank you to the trustees and the staff. I hope that I can transmit to my area in some way the hard work you do putting this Conference together. It's been an eye-opening experience to be here, and I will never be the same again."

"Thank you for making this such a warm experience. After the ice-breaker session, I felt so much more comfortable. I hope that those of us coming back next year can do for the newcomer what you all did for me."

"This is my last chance to go to the mike for a long time...thanks."

"When I say WSO back home, they don't know what's behind the name. I wish they could all see this."

"I felt so much love here. I'm not afraid at all. We're all the same and accept each other as we are."

"I was so afraid I would break the rules, or put my foot in my mouth, or that I couldn't follow in the footsteps of the person before me. Thank you for making my first experi-

ence a good one, a loving and accepting one."

"Now I know what makes the Al-Anon machine work — miracles happen because of all the love in this program. Thank God for giving me this. I love you."

"I know how important my opinion is. After the last two motions, I know why they call Al-Anon a simple program for complicated people."

"I wanted to say that I had mixed emotions about leaving, but the Policy Committee meeting came flashing back!"

"Any time, anywhere I needed help you were there for me. The only difference between first and third year delegates is that we third year delegates fake it better."

"I received only love and support in these rooms. When I leave here it's not always a pretty picture, but I know that each of you is praying for me."

"I've been looking forward to this moment most of my life. I was told to follow God's plan. I always thought I was making this experience happen. During the roll call on our first day I realized God was making this happen."

"Fear kept me in my seat for the first two years. Fear that I wasn't good enough, not as eloquent as you, and afraid of what you would think of me. Now I don't care. Serving as delegate enhanced my life and gave me a spiritual life I hadn't had before. Thanks for helping me to realize that I am doing the best I can."

"I remember three years ago at our orientation meeting saying that I came to be delegate because I wanted to know how Al-Anon works. I still don't know how, but it does."

"Through the Steps, Traditions and Concepts I learned that I am okay, and can say what I need to say whether you agree with me or not. We are all on the same road to take care of our program, and we're going to get there together. Thank you for letting me come along."

"I've been transformed by the power in you."

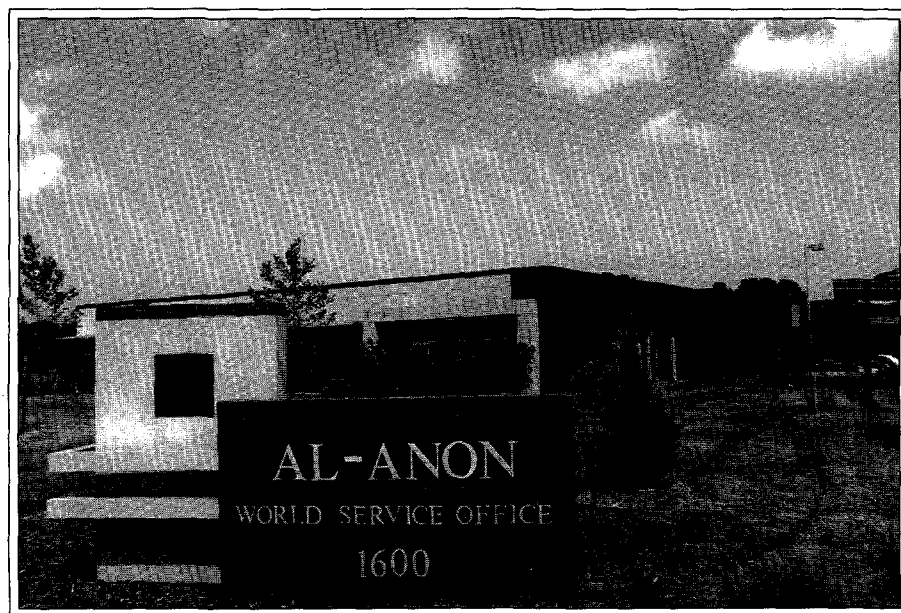
"I am the person I am today because of this experience."

"I'm convinced that chicken is our fourth legacy! Myrna isn't here and we're still eating it."

"I never want to leave the fellowship that has given me the life I live, and each one of you is a part of that."

"Some of the highlights of my life have occurred here. I know this fellowship is in God's hands."

*Following the Conference, 1997 Conference members and their guests were afforded the opportunity to visit the WSO, Al-Anon's new home.*



"I know I'm here to keep you honest with commas!"

"To have the privilege of attending our first Conference after an historic move is a very special experience. This has been an awesome journey, but I'm ready to let go, and pass it on in the spirit of rotation."

"It's easy to represent the area and ask questions. It's hard to be me and tell you how much I love you. You made miracles happen, and I'm really grateful."

"I've experienced personal growth and seen a lot of growth in fellowship. My wife called to tell me she had been to her first Al-Anon meeting — that makes her a dual member. We've discussed this issue for the past three years at Conference — I'm still not sure I'm going to sleep with her when I get home!"

"Thank you for your smiles, ¡vaya con Dios!"

"This is the best gift I have received from my area."

"Through this process I've learned to be mature about a lot of things."

"Thanks to all the Board members who are leaving us. You have done a wonderful job. Thanks to our third year delegates, you have made my job as Board Chair so easy. You have been loving and trusting. Until we meet again."

"Doris, our Board Chair, has that feeling for the fellowship that we need to do our jobs. To the Conference members, thank you, The WSO needs twice as many prayers and letters."

"There isn't any place else in the world where you can get this much love in a week."

Skip L., Conference Chairperson, and Susan A., Associate Director, Conference, presented the Panel 35 delegates with scrolls commemorating their experience at the World Service Conference.

At the conclusion of the session, Skip L., commented, "I declare this 1997 World Service Conference closed."

With the business portion of the 1997 World Service Conference concluded, it was time for everyone to relax, and share in a lighter moment. In traditional fashion, the outgoing Panel 35 Delegates performed in a lively and humorous parody, "The Day in the Life of the WSC."

The Northeast Choir performed their rendition of the Battle Hymn of the Sponsees. The melody reminded everyone that "you can't use those words in here, they are not program approved, only Al-Anon is spoken here."

Once the group was assembled, the parody took another turn. A panel of WSO look-alikes took center stage.

The Panel 35 skit concluded with a resident story-teller sharing his tale, "We have quite a few stories, and some fairy tales (holding up the budget), and the occasional fantasy (holding up Long Range Study Panel presentation). At the end of the Conference, we put our stories in a big story book (the *Conference Summary*) to take back to the children in your area."

The skit concluded with the delegates singing, "We Are Family" as they exited the room.

# SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Juanita P.,  
VA

What an honor it is for me, as a Virginian, to have been selected as one of the speakers on the closing night of our first World Service Conference in Virginia. One of the many blessings that Al-Anon has brought to my life is that I am actually invited to events now. Before Al-Anon, I was not the kind of person that you would have even considered asking to this kind of an event. So, for me to enjoy receiving your invitation is again proof that this program can and does make a remarkable difference in one's life.

When I think back over my life experiences, I see a panorama of changes and happenings that confirm God's hand has been firmly on my life. My biggest problem has been that I didn't want to put my hand in His. I kept looking for a handout, and when my demands weren't met, I rebuffed any contact with my Higher Power. I became an agnostic and quite an arrogant skeptic at that. So, when I walked into my first meeting and came face-to-face with all these nice old ladies who spoke so candidly about God's presence in their lives, I cut them off. I thought that the only people who needed God were old women and sick people, I was neither.

I came to Al-Anon because my second marriage to a second alcoholic was falling apart. My despair over how I could have allowed this to happen again was beyond description. The wonderful plans we had made a few short years ago had only covered up the tremendous obstacles.

I look back now and see all the hands that reached out to me and my three small daughters as God's hand clothed in the fellowship of Al-Anon. One of the first things that was placed in my hands and became the mainstay of my program was our literature. The walls that alcoholism had built around us came falling down and were transformed into stepping stones that we could use to walk into a new way of life.

One of the first miracles God brought into my life was to make the sale of our farm possible. This farm was the last leg of our "geographic cure" journey. I knew what a toll the isolation had taken on our family and I told God that if He would help us sell and move the 45 miles back to town that I would go to a meeting whenever the doors opened. He did and I did.

I believe that answered prayer gave me, through the beginnings of service work, the connectedness that I so desperately needed. I was back with people, and it was here that I found that the name of our fellowship, Al-Anon Family Groups, was just that — my family. From then on, I would do anything I could to be a part of that family. I was the one who went to meetings thirty minutes early, started the coffee pot, found the literature, and could hardly wait for the first person to arrive. My children and I flourished with such love and care. This love even reached the alcoholic and drew him to find sobriety.

It sounds like the perfect story, doesn't it? Not! When we were told that there would be sacrifices in recovery, I thought they meant that he would finally make all the sacrifices to pay me back. I would get everything I had always wanted: an adoring and rich husband, and no other problems. I had enough problems—I was ready for recovery. Well, if you are living, it's a sure bet that you will have living problems and that was exactly what happened. I hit the wall of life hard and

had to begin applying the Twelve Steps to myself with a different attitude.

My sponsor guided me to pray that God would be the bridge of love between myself and my husband. Because I was so tired of living in a war zone, I gave up and did that. I prayed that we would just get along under one roof, and remember, be careful what you pray for — you might just get it! God had just prepared my heart for my next spiritual adventure — the rabbit died!

"Oh, no!" I exclaimed.

"How did that happen?" he shouted.

Through the next few months, God brought many special and loving occasions to us through this pregnancy. My daughters and I shared some wonderful family life discussions, and we watched together as this new life grew. For me, who had memory blackouts of so many of the special times with my children, this really was a second chance to discover what I had lost due to the effects of alcoholism in my life. My husband was my labor coach and was there to see our ten and one half pound son born in May of 1982.

This was a special time and a difficult time. We had experienced such overwhelming financial problems that we just teetered on the edge of bankruptcy for years. We had problems with the IRS, banks, credit cards, loan companies, my parents, and on and on. People told us to consider bankruptcy, we thought about it, but decided that we would work just for today on the debts, and let God take care of the rest. It took us 13 years to pay off the last remaining debts from the drinking years. We never gave up our dreams. God has blessed us so greatly and restored to us that which we had lost and so much more.

During these early recovery years, I experienced the greatest loss of my life when my father died suddenly. He was a most special person, and losing him took some of the light out of my life that will never be replaced. He loved me, my sister, and my mother with all his heart. He was a recovering alcoholic. When the Steps talked about a loving God, I had a real life example of what that could be. I am so grateful that Daddy lived long enough to see our family get into recovery. As I staggered emotionally through my grief, the hands that held me up and led me back to meetings were again God's hands through Al-Anon friends. I found an even deeper relationship with my Higher Power through working the Steps and found that love really does carry me through the changes in my life.

Several years ago, God led us from our hometown to another location in Virginia. I appreciate the sacrifices that the staff at our WSO have made to come here. I moved within my home state and nearly lost my mind with grief and sadness. I can only imagine how hard it is to leave your home area completely. First, I lost my original Al-Anon family and I never dreamed how painful that would be. Then, to have nothing familiar—no landmarks, no neighborhood—made for a very lonely and frightened person.

Again, the fellowship and hands of new friends made such a difference to me. They eased my terrible homesickness and also helped me accept that my youngest daughter was not going to do what I had dreamed for her. She was going to make decisions that would put her in a position to be hurt, as she is an untreated alcoholic. They helped me see that I am beginning another spiritual adventure. I cannot recover with-

out meetings. I still go whenever the doors open. I still hook up the coffee pot, put the literature out, and wait for the next person to come in. I found comfort in renewing my use of the principles of our program, especially the Seventh Step. When I found myself so alone, I reached out and asked God to help me start over. I needed Him to do for me what I could not do for myself.

Life has been both wonderful and hard. The Twelve Steps really were designed for desperate people like me as a shortcut to God. Through those Steps I have found friendships that I would never have experienced without this program. One of the wondrous gifts I have been given through service work is to become delegate. As in all of my service work, I see this position as a way to say "thank you" to our program for all that I've been given. It is not the title, but the joys of knowing such special people, that means the most to me. I really am a most fortunate child of God and tonight, and always, when we say, "When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there," I will celebrate that affirmation along with all of you, my dear special Al-Anon friends.

## John H., MA

I was born on a plantation called Greenfield. Although we didn't live in the big house, I always thought we should have. Both my parents were the youngest of their large families and they had to run away secretly to get married. I was always aware that my parents spent the rest of their lives trying to redeem themselves and I was their primary tool.

I was not the first grandchild, not even the first male grandchild, but I was clearly the best. Of course, I was not the best and I knew it, but I was supposed to be the best and I knew that too. I could do almost anything I chose, but I chose only the things I could do well because I had to be the best.

When I ran away, it was to college in New England. I used the opportunity to escape my family as well as the South. I married a Yankee, drove a little convertible and owned a dog that slept inside the house. After the Navy and I settled our debt, I went to Yale to become an architect. After graduation, we moved to Boston where I found work and where I also found that I was a homosexual. Boy, was I excited. I finally knew the reason I had always felt different — I was different.

After a few years, my wife and I separated. Well, actually it became impossible to accommodate my boyfriends inside our marriage because I had fallen in love with a drunk that took all my energy. Of course, being gay was not the ONLY reason I had always felt different—I was a child of alcoholism, and even though there is a generational jump, the effects are as if I had grown up with the active disease. I didn't know this when I met my qualifier, Earl. The morning after he and I met, my wife and I had the first argument about my "lifestyle." She knew the rules of the game had changed; I knew everything was finally going to be great.

We didn't move in together immediately. He kept pulling away. We were "together" and "separated" so regularly that friends got tired of hearing about it. "The problem," he said, "was our lives were too complicated." Seemed reasonable — two wives, five kids, different work styles, living across town from each other, and the list went on. We were supposed to be together, but just couldn't figure out how to do it. No amount of drama was too much. We tore apart in all the ways al-

lowed. There were whispered, vicious separations at parties, keys hurled across lobbies, clothes ripped in dramatic exits, and always the earnest, "let's try again."

We finally did decide to live together, both our divorces were in process. Earl's drinking had progressed, but I barely noticed. It was several years after sobriety that I found a journal entry from those days in which I talked about the drinking as a source of our trouble, but at the same time I didn't think that way. After a lifetime of being with people who maneuvered in the shadow of alcoholism, I was playing in the full glare of the disease, face-to-face, and the change was exciting.

We did have a few unusual house rules. One was that I was not allowed to drink out of his glass or cup. Well, I had met his mother, and that seemed like the kind of thing a kid would learn from his mother. Of course, the real reason was that I would be drinking coffee while he drank black vodka. I would drink juice while he drank orange vodka. While I had tea, he had brown vodka. But the issue was this rule of his mother's.

As awash in denial as I was, I sensed this was a dangerous place for me, and had made plans to move back into an apartment. The day before my move, Earl called me at work and said, "I'm an alcoholic and I need help." And did I get help! I left the detox center elated; once again the problem had been identified—it was alcoholism and Earl would take care of it. Now my life would really be great.

I arrived at the hospital the next morning carrying all the things he would need to make his stay a pleasant and successful one. They would not even let me see him. They said there was nothing for me to do to help and when I insisted, they suggested I find an Al-Anon meeting. Of course, I did. Now that I knew what the problem was, I just needed to find out what to do and this Al-Anon place was where they would tell me.

I went to a noon meeting the next day and heard very little of what they said. They were all women. I supposed they were all talking about their husbands, but have learned since they were talking about themselves. I was surrounded by straight women and I was scared. They were supposed to give me the answers and yet I was sure they wouldn't talk to me if they knew I was gay. Near the end of the meeting, I mustered up my courage and told them why I was there. It was one of the most wonderful moments of my life, one that has been repeated many times. I literally saw their love and support, as if there were two large hands that came toward me to offer understanding and support. That love has never waned.

I dove into the program a bit deeply, walking the talk as I had been trained all my life to do. I was a GR in less than six weeks. I was so happy. All our troubles would be swept away by Earl's sobriety. I furnished that pink cloud with all the skill I had and six months later Earl asked me to leave. His sponsor said it was a choice between me and sobriety. Earl did not present the situation as clearly as that. He intentionally let me find out he was planning a holiday without me—actually, with another man. I was furious. Unlike the attacks of anger before, I was not overwhelmed. I had absorbed more of the Al-Anon message than I realized. We had an honest, grown-up argument and agreed that, in spite of our love and effort, we could not make the relationship work. He helped me move out and I found I could live, and live pretty well, without him. I kept going to meetings, mostly because I had made myself indispensable to Al-Anon, if not my drunk!

A few months later, Earl called and said he wanted to try again. I was a little apprehensive, but he IS an alcoholic, so this time we started all over. We knew better than to repeat

any of the past again! We both worked our program, and slowly learned to build a life in sobriety. It was not easy. I had to accept that no matter how important I was to Earl, our life had to come second to sobriety. I have not always liked that. I resented planning our life around his meeting schedule until I learned to plan it around mine too. It took me a long time to accept that some of the problem really was me and my attitude. All those years of assuming the blame had not included assuming my responsibility. Adult children are not easy to love, and Earl and I have learned that we have both been affected by the disease of alcoholism all our lives. We are not as opposite as we used to be. Now neither assumes the blame nor expects to be right all the time.

Just before we leave for our *nueva vida* in Palm Springs at the end of June, Earl and I will celebrate our 18th anniversaries in the programs—separately, of course. I worry that the rest of my story will sound like it's being told in clichés. We do have a life second to none. All the promises have come true or it seems likely they will. I am no longer a frightened child huddling in a body that is rushing through a life that is not mine. This is my life, and I am taking responsibility for it. That means I get the joy and the sorrow. I can feel the pride of my accomplishments and the sorrow of the disappointments.

Our life together began before sobriety. It was not always successful or even acceptable, but there were great moments. The alcoholism did not define who I was or who Earl was. It warped everything beyond hope, but it was not all that there is. I am daily grateful for this fellowship and the chance it gives me to live the life I am meant to live and not the rehearsal that I trapped myself in before. There are some scary things going on in my life today, heart disease for me, cancer for Earl, but I live serenely when I choose to use the wisdom I have learned in Al-Anon and the courage that is your gift to

me.

My mother just died and I am gratefully aware of how differently I am dealing with her death than I did with my father's. When he died, before most of my story begins, I was still busy being the best little boy in the world. I spent weeks with my father watching him while I gave him a morphine shot every few hours. A few weeks before he died, my father and I discussed his impending death and how we could manage things. I then wheeled him out into the living room. He raised his hands, smiled his best grin and invited everyone to join us for lunch. I could handle the illness, the shots, the harsh reality. I could not handle the strength and joy. I turned on my wobbling heel and walked out of the house. I walked until I was back in control, able to do my job again, to do it well and without passion. My father lived for only a few weeks, but it took me 15 years to get back to that point, to be able to cry, to fall apart, to be loved, and to let someone take care of me.

During the last few months of Mother's life, although she needed a lot of help and got a lot of love, she did not cry. She didn't want any of us to cry, but we did. I still did what needed to be done and I gave my mother a loving and honest farewell. I asked for a lot of help and accepted a lot of love. I miss my mother as much as I ever missed my father and I feel complete and comfortable that I did the best I could have done.

Recovery has allowed me to shorten the distance between my life and my feelings. For that I thank each of you. No matter where we do our work, we do it together. It's the people on the spiritual path in front of me and behind that show me where I am. It's a good trip. I am glad you can share it with me.

## DELEGATE SHARINGS

Each outgoing delegate gave a three-minute talk on the Conference theme: Communication – Our Hope for the Future

### Kitty S., AL

Before coming into Al-Anon, a few twenty-four hours ago, I remember that I didn't really know how to communicate. I would argue the point endlessly, otherwise I would remain silent. I didn't know how to hear, or how to be heard. I was full of pain, fear, and frustration. Alcoholism had taken a toll on my self-esteem and I was primed for what Al-Anon had to offer. May I never forget from where I came lest history repeat itself.

At my first Al-Anon meeting, I was struck by the warmth you showed me — you smiled at me with your eyes, you greeted me, you hugged me and you told me to keep coming back. My second meeting found me surrounded once again with your warmth and love. You remembered my name, and your hugs made me feel like I belonged here. As I shared with you, you didn't just hear my words, you listened to me, you saw past my facade of pained silence and I found myself being drawn out of the darkness I had been alone in for so very long. I found myself more willing to trust you to help me along my journey. I watched you share with one another. I saw you honor and respect each other. Most importantly, I saw you use your eyes, ears and hearts to listen. I wanted to be a part of

this!

Communication as I know it today is more than talking. In fact, words are the least important part of communication. To really listen and hear what someone is trying to share with me, I must use my ears, my eyes, and my heart. When someone is screaming at me, all I hear with my ears is the screaming, and I may interpret this as anger towards me. But when I use my eyes and heart to see the pain on their face, their hands trembling with fear and their body stooped and worn with the weight of their world, I no longer hear anger. I am able to understand that this is a hurting human being, Al-Anon's program teaches this kind of communication. I can become God's skin, and love that person unconditionally as those in the fellowship love me.

I have listened to you eye-to-eye, nose-to-nose, knee-to-knee and heart-to-heart. Now I know the rest of the story. My hope is that we will continue to value one another by communicating to those who have found us, and to those who are still searching. Al-Anon has taught me, through each of you, how to listen, support, and encourage.



## John H., MA

Communication is one of the things that alcoholism really warped in my life. Growing up in the shadow of alcoholism, I learned to be discretely manipulative, to be candid, without emotion, and to read a listener fast enough to never offend. Information was a weapon to be used to gain friends and destroy others. I didn't lie, but I did encourage others to assume things about me that I wanted to be true. I didn't so much communicate as lecture and argue.

We didn't discuss things in my family, we issued reviews — on other people, on dress, on manners — and I sensed that implicit in each of those judgments was a life lesson. I also knew that I was more guilty than those whom we judged, so I became arrogant and worthless at the same time.

How different my understanding of communication after years of recovery. Good communication requires humility, to know my own skills and limitations and to acknowledge my place in the world as a valuable and responsible person. It requires honesty to share my real self whenever I have a chance; to accept the effects of the disease and the effects of recovery and to share those on a regular basis. It requires courage, to speak up when my opinion is not popular and to listen when others don't agree. It requires patience, with my own impatience, with the hesitation of others. It requires tolerance, of my failure to articulate when my feelings overwhelm my intent and when others hear what I say rather than what I mean. These qualities of communication were improved by my four years at Conference. For this I am truly grateful.

Communication by the fellowship must incorporate these qualities as well. We must continue to speak honestly and courageously whenever we can, to whomever will listen, in whatever mode will best be heard or read or seen. It means appreciating that Al-Anon has a gift for those troubled by alcoholism, a gift that, as Lois W. said in Montreal, can change the world. Communication also requires commitment, of time to do service, of money to support world service. I know the recovery we promise works. It works for me and it works for others I love. The mission of this fellowship, should we choose to take it, is to let every man, woman and child who is or will be affected by alcoholism also know there is the hope of recovery.

## Vicki L., WV

When I arrived at the Al-Anon doors, my concept of communication was very confused. In Al-Anon I was encouraged to express my thoughts and feelings. I learned that just because someone voiced an opinion or experience different from mine, it didn't make them right and me wrong. How awkward that was at first! As my self-esteem grew, I became more comfortable with speaking at meetings or to my sponsor. It was as if a dam had broken — I never shut up. Of course I was "gently" helped into finding balance.

I soon learned that communication has two distinct parts — talking and listening. The listening part didn't come easy for me. It was suggested that I become familiar with Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions. These traditions have taught me to keep the focus off personalities and on what is best for the fellowship as a whole. I try to apply them to every aspect of my life on a daily basis.

I believe today my Higher Power has led me to service work not only to learn "how" to communicate, but to make talking and listening the basis for my action. Bill W.'s essay on Leadership has made a lasting impression on me as a "servant

leader." One passage in particular speaks to me in light of our Conference theme, "A good leader originates plans and policies for the improvement of our fellowship. In new and important matters, he nevertheless consults widely before making decisions. Good leadership knows that a fine plan or idea can come from anyone, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership often discards its own cherished plans for those that are better, giving credit to the source."

I am truly blessed that my Higher Power has allowed me to experience the most spiritual aspect of Al-Anon service — the group conscience process of the WSC. The Twelve Concepts of Service and General Warranties are the foundation for communication. Adherence to them at each "link of service" is vital in carrying the Al-Anon message. We must never forget or ignore the importance each of these entities has in the "links of communication," for each one holds our hope for the future.

## Genevieve B., AP

The ability to participate in the sharing of each other's thoughts and feelings is the basis of any successful relationship, and in an alcoholic relationship that ability is one of the first casualties in the battle to conquer and control this dreaded disease.

Before Al-Anon I prefaced most of my statements to my spouse with, "Now you listen to me." In those days, there were only two courses of action we could take—my way or the wrong way. In our household, most of our communication occurred when my husband came home drunk, and I, after sitting alone for hours rehearsing my speech, would let him have it. Usually, he just fell asleep during my tirades, incensing me even more and leading to the silent treatment for the next several days.

When I found Al-Anon, I began to gradually realize the futility of reproaching someone for being sick, and the senselessness of trying to communicate with my husband when he was probably functioning in a blackout. In my early days, I remember an older member telling me at a meeting, "Try keeping your voice low and be courteous to your husband. Pretend he is a house guest." He bloomed under that unusual treatment!

I came to recognize that there is more to communication than constant talking — I had to learn to listen. One night several years ago, my husband and I attended an open Al-Anon meeting. Our World Service Delegate was our guest speaker, and after the meeting I noticed her and my husband across the room deep in conversation. On the way home, he said to me, "You know, that woman gave me total eye contact all the while we were talking and she never once interrupted me. She is a wonderful listener." Ask me if I was impressed! I never forgot it. Since then, I try really hard to be a good listener and concentrate on what the other person is saying. I have found that people (me included) feel worthwhile and good about themselves when someone takes the time to listen to them.

All those attitudes that work so well to foster good communication in my home and personal relationships also work remarkably well at group, district and area level of service. When people feel that their opinions are valuable, they are more apt to reconsider their attitudes for the good of the whole.

## Joan D., NC

On coming to Al-Anon, the first person I felt safe enough to listen to and talk to was my sponsor and with her help I learned to express myself much better.

When I became a group representative, I learned to report what was happening at the district level. Here I found however that not everyone was interested in what I had to say and at first

this hurt my feelings. My sponsor reminded me that my job was to listen, to Let Go and Let God, and to report back to the group.

Later, when I became district representative I found myself, at first, involved in a communication nightmare. Clear communication, enthusiasm, and placing principles above personalities helped me develop some degree of peace of mind.

The job of area chairman was an even greater challenge for me. I still didn't have the communication skills the job required. Once again my sponsor took the time to talk to me, telling me to Let Go and Let God, to be myself, and to listen carefully to others.

Being delegate has been a wonderful learning experience. Someone must have told you folks about my problems with communication because before I even arrived I was appointed a service sponsor. She told me what I needed to know, what needed to be reported back to my area and she helped me at Conference to communicate my area's concerns to others.

Last year's Conference was another great learning experience. The difference between the first Conference and the second demonstrates that the techniques I learned in Al-Anon, to communicate ideas clearly and to listen carefully, really paid off. The bell curve greatly helped me inform my area about Al-Anon's future if changes were not made.

Through Al-Anon, I have learned many different communication skills, and I am convinced that our future is bright and hopeful if we continue to listen and talk to each other. I must always remember what my sponsors have shared with me time and time again - I am merely a trusted servant. I should Let Go and Let God and always place principles above personalities by listening with an open mind to everyone's point of view.

#### Shirley L., OR

These past two years have been a really challenging and growing period for me. This, my third and final year as delegate, has changed me for life. I guess you could call this a lifetime sentence.

As a lifer, I've been subjected to unconditional love from so many of my Al-Anon friends; to acceptance from all parts of my area, region and here at the World Service Conference; to tolerance when my communications were garbled or different from others, and to willingness and cooperation from so many to carry the message to those still suffering from the results of alcoholism in their homes.

Along with these gifts I've found a program which helps me find serenity when the see-saw of life leaves me stranded in the wrong position. It helps me take care of myself instead of always putting down others to feel good about myself. The after-effects of alcoholism don't stop just because one member of a family finds sobriety. There may be a death or illness of one, another may become delegate. My family is a prime example of that recurring ripple effect.

The theme this year, Communication - Our Hope for the Future, is truly one that will live on as long as Al-Anon/Alateen and AA are alive and well. We must carry the message, we must continue to welcome the newcomer, we must practice these principles in all our affairs, we must reach out to others and communicate. They say that there are no musts in this program but, according to my sponsor, there are a lot of "damn well better!"

My hope and prayer is that these two fellowships will be there for our 13 children of which six have already found sobriety, for our 32 grandchildren, some of whom are already

affected by the disease, and our eight great-grandchildren. This truly IS a family disease.

I feel privileged to have spent time in New York at Conference and to be here, this first year, in our new home in Virginia. The principle of rotation of leadership enables our fellowship to be a fountain of new and revitalized ideas. I am so pleased I could be one little drop in this cascade of bountiful blessings.

#### Joanne B., WI

Reflecting on these past few years as delegate, I have learned volumes about myself and worldwide Al-Anon. I've seen that my "style" of communication is reflective of my personality, and an asset rather than what I considered a shortcoming. I've adopted a phrase which has helped me with communication in my personal, professional and Al-Anon dealings, "Say what you need to say, not what you want to say." Being human sometimes I fail at achieving this goal, but when I succeed, I am loved, respected, and understood more for myself.

Living in alcoholism there was no communication, and even in recovery, if I'm not vigilant at focusing on myself, control can effect my relationships. The communication I've learned during my years in Al-Anon and especially in service, has enabled me to express my needs and put some of the pieces of my life back together.

Shortly after being elected delegate, my son was sentenced to prison where he remains at this time. All communication between us had disappeared before this. Gradually, by living one day at a time, letting go and letting God, and the daily practice of unconditional love, I have great hope that our relationship will not only be healed, but thrive in the future. If not, I will be at peace with my efforts and work on letting go of the rest.

The purpose of Al-Anon is to help those who suffer from the effects of this wretched disease called alcoholism. Practicing my Tenth Step daily has helped me stay on track with others in all facets of my life, and love myself in spite of my shortcomings. Personally, I like to communicate my program by example. If I remain calm when life is not, if I look at life with hope and excitement in spite of life's challenges, if I project serenity and self-confidence, then there is hope that those still suffering will be attracted to this program. If our groups, districts, areas and Al-Anon worldwide reflect and communicate our love for this program and express our recovery through serenity in everything we do, the future of the Al-Anon fellowship will live on forever. If we each do our own part, how can we fail? Our Higher Power is guiding and walking with us during this journey called life.

Thanks for communicating your gentle love, your experiences in service and your acceptance of me as I am. I shall remember this experience as delegate and serving the fellowship worldwide with great fondness forever.

#### Juanita P., VA

Communication, rightly balanced, is one of our greatest hopes for the future of Al-Anon/Alateen. For me, communication needs to be rooted in the basics of our program. The most important basic is that this is a program powered by love. What I communicate and how I communicate, when sponsored by love of God and this fellowship, will by its nature, reflect what is good for Al-Anon/Alateen as a whole.

I believe we are responsible for making the basic communications with our fellowship, whether at assemblies or district

meetings, as understandable as possible to the widest range of members. If it took me years to understand what the "delegate's equalized expenses" were, then I need to have the awareness that members may have the same kind of trouble understanding other principles and policies.

One of the most important lessons I'll take away with me from my experiences as delegate is that I will use the wonderful education this service work has been, and remember to use it carefully when I interact with members in my area. My sponsor always took the negatives I brought to her, and showed me a positive by using love and tactfulness as the guides in communication. That is my goal throughout the rest of my spiritual adventure in this program, to be powered by love.

#### **Roger C., AB/NWT**

When I came into the Al-Anon program much of my communications consisted of ensuring that you knew that I was thinking exactly what I thought you thought I should be thinking. That type of people-pleasing behavior was not easy, and so often I simply withdrew and kept my thoughts to myself.

The disease of alcoholism is a disease of isolation. However, through the program, by attending meetings and reading literature, gradually you helped me break down the barriers that I had built up over the years. I learned that I was allowed to have my very own opinions and feelings and you encouraged me to express them. Sometimes you told me things I wanted to hear, and on other occasions you told me things that I really needed to hear but upset me. I am grateful for the members of my group who cared enough to be really honest with me — even to the point where they thought that I might not return. I needed that to force me to really look at myself and do something about it. Communication, member to member, and within the group, is the heart and soul of the Al-Anon program.

As a result of the program I also changed the way I communicate with my Higher Power, and it is amazing how much He smartened up when I started listening more and spending less time telling Him how to run the show! On a daily basis I have to remind myself that He is in control, and I also have to remember to ask Him for help. I have discovered that if I am willing to ask for help and actually start doing something, I will be shown the way. I have learned by experience that "when the student is willing, the teacher will appear."

As we move into the 21st century it is important that our fellowship take advantage of the various forms of electronic communication that are becoming part of everyday life. We have to keep with the times in order to provide the services that our members need. It is vital, however, that we recognize that "talking to one another and reasoning things out" is just as important today as it was 50 years ago. This Conference and the World Service Office have worked very hard at meeting these two needs and I know that our future is in good hands.

#### **Joan C., VT**

Communicating is a skill I thought I was good at. I could tell people how to do something whether they asked or not. I was able to tell my spouse just what I thought of lots of things. The only problem was I said everything in my mind and never to him. He never was someone who could share his thoughts very easily, so I became adept at deciding what he was thinking in many situations.

As delegate I am continuing to work on my communication skills. I was allowed to participate in service at this level because our delegate resigned after her first year. As alternate I

was asked if I would like to step in. I joke that I got here by default, but I'm not sure whose fault it was. Actually I am truly grateful for the privilege of serving as delegate.

Prior to last year's Conference, I thought that Vermont Al-Anoners were apathetic about working their program. We were struggling to get GRs to our assembly, to maintain groups, to have district representation.

When I gave my report I filled boxes and stacked them before me. In the biggest box I put literature including guidelines for being a sponsor, running a meeting or being a GR. I talked about these items as tools for me to work my program and for a group to use. In the next box, I put the guidelines for the district level. The next box was for the area and the last one represented WSO. I wanted people to see that WSO was a resource for them. I explained that we are not isolated in working our program, but have a lot of resources to help.

Until this year we would ask area committee members and district reps to come to the February meeting with any questions or concerns for the delegate to take to Conference. This year I went on the road. Until my term expires, I will continue to travel letting people know there is a face behind the word "delegate." I don't grow if I isolate, I can't expect Vermont to grow if its trusted servants isolate. Communication is the key.

On a personal note, my Higher Power is having a laugh on me. In early January, my spouse quit his job of 15 years. He applied for and obtained a job at my company. Now I HAVE to talk to him on a daily basis. Maybe I can use this opportunity to develop skills to use in other parts of my life. I'm one of his bosses at work and I need to let him be his own boss at home.

#### **Barbara A., GA**

I was taught to live a life of silence. "Don't talk," was a family rule, and secrets and skeletons filled our closet. My mother had been married before she met my father. My father's father tried to commit suicide, and died five years later in a mental institution having been beaten to death by his caretakers. My great-uncle was murdered by a rival moonshiner on his front porch. My alcoholic grandmother took care of me two and a half days each week.

I have always been as sick as my secrets. Finding out that it was okay to talk about who I was, learning that communication was possible, was the beginning of recovery for me. You, here in the rooms of Al-Anon, didn't turn away from me no matter how bad my past had been. Unconditional love was possible, and I had never believed that it could be.

I never had an opinion about anything, at least an opinion that I had voiced to another. My journey towards forgiveness and acceptance of myself and others required me to get rid of the old "dumb blonde" me.

My next challenge was to begin to understand that just because I had an opinion, it did not necessarily mean that I would always get my way. Communication has meant that I have had to learn how to listen as well as to share. The word negotiation is now in my vocabulary. It IS okay to ask for what I want even if I don't get it. I have learned how to let the God of my understanding speak to me. I have witnessed the power of the God of our understanding speaking to the group conscience — at group, district, information service, area, and world service levels, as well as in my family.

Even the possibility of disagreement in my family was not acceptable. In a "don't talk, don't have an opinion" family we just stuffed our opinions. It was pretty hilarious when my family tried to make a decision about where we were going to

eat. In Al-Anon, I have learned through service that we can agree to disagree, and then still hug on the way out of the room. Through my service to the World Service Conference I have had the honor of seeing healthy communication in the midst of conflict, the importance of the minority opinion, and open dialogue about tough subjects.

The unconditional love you have shown to this Georgia Peach has forever changed my heart and my life. I will be eternally grateful.

#### Luz N., AZ

Growing up in a family in which I was the youngest of seven, I learned through osmosis because we did not talk about "it," whatever "it" was. I would have many questions in my head, but never had the courage to ask them. I remember watching my family get together to drink, talk loud and sing along with a piano, guitar or harmonica. I thought it was fun.

The man I married fit into my family life-style. He liked to drink. I certainly was not going to tell my family what was happening at home with my husband's drinking. The family didn't talk about what happened when we got the drunks home. All we shared were remedies on how to cure hangovers. Instead of being fun, I felt lonely and became irritable and unreasonable.

When I came to Al-Anon more than 17 years ago, I knew my life was unmanageable. I came looking for the secret formula that would bring controlled drinking to those around me who were causing chaos in my life. The patient answers were always the same, "This program is for you." I could see that what we had here was a problem with communication. These people did not understand my problems.

In Al-Anon, the answers to my many questions have come from many sources. Answers have come from sharing at meetings, from working the Steps, from workshops, talking with my sponsors, from Al-Anon literature and service work.

Step Eleven, through prayer and meditation, I have learned a different way of communicating with my Higher Power. No longer do I ask for what I want or make bargains with this Power. I ask for guidance and the courage to carry out His will for me.

*The Dilemma Of The Alcoholic Marriage* states, "The open door to helpful answers is communication, based on love. Such communication depends on awareness of, and respect for, each other's unique individuality. In the pamphlet, *Living With Sobriety*, there is a chapter on communication with suggestions on talking and listening and risking disapproval. This I have found essential in service. *Alateen — A Day At A Time* suggests we practice the second part of Tradition Six, "Cooperation can be the beginning of communication. Concept V states that I will be heard. I also am learning to listen, and when differences of opinion or conflict arise I can communicate using the guides this program suggests. In *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics*, it says that communication is a two-way street, and that in dealing with conflict we can learn to exchange and build on ideas.

My hope for the future is that Al-Anon will carry the message to all registered groups and to the newcomer. That we all join hands and commit to being a part of the link that keeps us strong and carries the message. My hope is that Al-Anon will be here for my children and my grandchildren.

#### Madeline J., MS

Seven years ago when I came to Al-Anon, I began a journey

in my life that has led me into learning good communication skills. While I considered myself a communicator, Al-Anon made me look at how I communicated with the people around me.

Some of my pre-Al-Anon communication skills were ranting, pouting, cajoling, scripting my arguments, and silent but deadly. Most devastating to me personally was the last straw syndrome. All the areas of my life were affected by inappropriate communications. Who would listen to an out-of-control person who didn't even know what had made her upset?

I first learned to listen at meetings, learning that everything didn't deserve a response or a defense. Then I learned to have the courage to communicate by speaking with my sponsor. I learned to take what I liked and leave the rest — to speak up when things happened, and not wait because I did not want to upset things. I also learned the most valuable lesson — How Important Is It?

As my journey in service began, I learned more communication skills. I found love and understanding in disagreement, learning to disagree without being disagreeable. I found how to speak my thoughts without fear of embarrassment or ridicule. I learned to lead a meeting ensuring that all had a chance to speak and to bring the focus back without offending anyone. I found people in service whom I admired. Their communication skills attracted me. They were able to pause before they answered, were able to admit that they did not know the answer, but most of all they emulated trust to me. I wanted some of that — no, I wanted all of it.

Every time I began a new job in service, I was unsure that I possessed the skills, but you told me that I only needed to be willing — and you were right. This built my self-confidence. As delegate, I had to take home issues that were unpopular, and I was afraid. I learned to trust the process and my God. I found the answer in learning whom I was representing. When I come to Conference, I am a delegate from Mississippi, while I return home with the message of our ultimate group conscience. It is not my personal opinion or vision.

My hope for our future in Al-Anon is better communication at all levels of service, to seek every new form of communication without forgetting the basics that kept each of us coming back. Just like we encourage the newcomer to pick up the phone and to visit other meetings, we need to reach out to each other. No service position should seem lonely. I used to define isolation as my independence. I took care of everything myself because it was easier. I have to be able to ask for help, to bring enthusiasm, to involve my group and those I sponsor.

It has been a wonderful three years and I am not saddened by leaving because I know as long as I am in service, our paths will cross. I have much to be thankful for and much more to experience. I can keep trying to give back to Al-Anon what I have received.

#### Rose J., BC/Yukon

God, with humor and two alcoholic marriages, led me to a meeting of the Al-Anon Family Groups and a new life was freely given to me. It was not a coincidence that I was chosen — out of a hat — to serve as a delegate and become one of the Panel 35 servants. Truly, an exciting time to serve Al-Anon.

Over the years, I have learned many lessons in this program — how to love unconditionally, attempt to live the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts and to communicate. Our suggested meeting closing asks us to talk to each other, reason things out, and let understanding, love, and peace grow in us. Much help has been given to me because I was willing to share with others

and accept the love and care extended to me. I felt that I had an obligation to pass it on — listen to others, share my own experiences, failures, successes and willingly sponsor newcomers.

I believe that now more than ever before, we have to carry the message of hope. We can offer hope with a program of recovery that no other group has to give. Alcoholism, in the 1990's is no different than it was in 1935 — families are in pain, depressed, frustrated, and angry in the same way. The feelings of loneliness and helplessness still exist for so many today. Let us all communicate hope for the future.

My personal theme for these three years has been, "Together We Can Make It." The BC/Yukon Area newsletter has allowed me an opportunity to share an article each month and communicate some of the news from the WSO. It is with much gratitude that this medium has made it possible for me to visit many districts and groups.

Over the years, because of the programs in our home, my husband and I through sincere and honest communication have done our best to support one another in all things. Something that at one time was not even dreamt; today, we have hope for the future. Having been given this privilege and responsibility to serve as a delegate has truly been the highlight of my Al-Anon membership. I believe that Al-Anon Family Groups will grow and flourish if all of us pass it on by using every tool and opportunity to communicate. It is our hope for the future. Together we can make it.

#### **Colleen R., MN (N)**

My communication prior to Al-Anon consisted of screaming, slamming doors, throwing objects, or silence. Uncontrolled rage was characteristic of the bitterness and soul sickness that consumed me. After a failed marriage and losing custody of my children, I came to Al-Anon with the shirt on my back. Through the effort of a sponsor who cared enough to establish daily communication, I remained long enough to discover that I could change. I did not have to live in spiritual and emotional poverty. I am grateful to those members who communicated hope and love to me.

Communication has always been a stumbling block for me. It took two years before I shared at meetings. While serving as GR, then DR, I had to share information, and as area secretary, I was the keeper of our historical record. Each position provided an opportunity to communicate my thoughts and ideas.

As delegate, I was entrusted to communicate concerns and ideas and to be the area's voice. I have found that being informed and prepared with an understanding of our service structure and our history has helped me communicate with confidence. My greatest struggle has been communicating with different personalities while trying to embrace the Al-Anon principles.

Protecting our future will require the willingness of each member to live the Traditions in thought, word, and deed. Each member must undertake the responsibility for safeguarding the spiritual principles in our Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

While safeguarding our legacies, we must concentrate on what we are communicating to the fellowship. Our effectiveness is determined by how we communicate our purpose and hope to those affected by alcoholism. We need to communicate what Al-Anon is, and what it is not. I believe it is important to share our history so that those members yet to come will realize our Traditions have been tested, and stood the test of time. Our primary purpose must be protected against outside influence, the signs of the time, and even technology. Personal face-to-

face contact and sharing cannot be replaced — our fellowship was founded on one-to-one sharing.

As we approach the 21st Century, the responsibility of preserving our fellowship is a growing challenge. Let it begin in my heart and home by working the Steps and striving to fulfill God's will for me. Hopefully, my life will be in harmony with Lois's vision of Al-Anon service. The Conference experience has enriched my life. I thank the members of my area for their love and support. I thank my husband for his love, patience and encouragement. I thank God for His kind and gentle guiding spirit. I am grateful for what we have shared here. I believe that as I continue to allow myself to be a channel, I will be doing my part to assure that Al-Anon will be available to those in need as long as God deems necessary.

#### **Carole M., NJ**

I remember coming into Al-Anon in 1979, and being told "go to meetings, get a sponsor, and use the telephone." Listening, sharing at meetings and on the phone were our main tools for recovering and learning about alcoholism and its effect on the family. These tools helped me stop isolating.

I remember the first time I found the courage to share the "secrets" I never told anyone because of fear and shame. I felt relieved, and had a sense of hope because you didn't judge me, criticize me, or stop talking to me. Instead my sponsor hugged me, and told me she loved me. She then shared some of her experiences that were not so different from what I had shared. How freeing it felt—I was not alone. I learned that I was not a bad person, but a sick person suffering from the family disease of alcoholism.

When I first came, we had some literature but nowhere near the choices we have today. Over the years the disease of alcoholism, the family disease, was brought to the public's attention through radio and television. I remember seeing a public information spot on TV. It was late at night and I thought, "who is sitting up this late watching TV?" A light bulb lit, of course, loved ones, like me who were waiting for the alcoholic to come home. I also realized that Al-Anon was not a "secret club," but a fellowship of men and women who have been affected by someone else's drinking; the main objective being to help one another learn how to live happy, joyful lives whether the alcoholic stops drinking or not.

Through the years I have grown in Al-Anon, Al-Anon has also grown. Today we have literature to meet most of our members' needs and to answer the questions regarding alcoholism and Al-Anon itself. Our outreach has been restructured to inform as many potential members as possible and to invite the professional community to learn about our program. There are meetings all over the world. Where I live, I can go to a meeting seven days a week. No matter what meeting I go to I feel safe sharing openly and honestly, knowing whatever I say will stay within the walls of the room and the confines of each member's mind.

A new means of communication is computers and the Internet. It is wonderful to sit at a computer and chat with other Al-Anon members. I don't believe it takes the place of meetings and meeting places, but it is the next best thing to being there. Anyone can get on their computer and find out about Al-Anon, and how to find help 24 hours a day. I believe modern technology will only help us in our purpose to help relatives and friends find out about our wonderful program and aid our members in their journey of recovery. However, I only hope in our push to use new technology, we remember not to leave anyone behind.

### Kay B., OK

As I reflect back before Al-Anon, I had no communication with anyone and hope for the future seemed non-existent.

The beginning of my service work started when I had not learned that it was all right to say, "No," and it fulfilled my need to be needed and wanted. It was communicated to me early on that all I needed was a desire and the help and ability would be there if I had the courage to ask, whether it be God or someone in the fellowship.

Each time I took on a more difficult task, I can't describe the fear I had, but every time this occurred there was always someone telling me I could do it. I had only to express my need. By being able to communicate my feelings, fears and needs, I have a wealth of knowledge coming back to me from others who have walked before me. It has enhanced my family life beyond my greatest expectations. I can express myself without fear of rejection. Al-Anon has taught me I'm a worthwhile person with a gift that means far more than any material possession—a love in my heart for this fellowship and my fellow man. I charge myself with keeping my lines of communication open so hopefully I will always hear what is being communicated and be open and honest enough to feel with my heart.

I had no idea my journey would take me this far. I can remember sitting in our area meeting as a new budding GR I didn't have a clue as to what was going on, but whatever it was I was giving it my all. The thing I do remember is listening to the delegate's report and thinking I would like to become delegate some day. Of course my mind was telling me I was nuts and too stupid to even entertain such a thought. After many years of struggling with my self-esteem and just being willing, here I am. I believe this is God's reward to me for believing in Him and learning that we all have a place, whether or not it's the place we believe we deserve.

Thank you for allowing me to communicate how much I love this fellowship. I will continue to work for the good of all Al-Anon members and I thank you for giving me hope that this way of life will remain pure and simple for our loved ones who will come after us.

### Patty C., ND

I put off writing this three minute talk as long as possible. The inspiration just didn't come and I had no idea what to communicate to you about communication. In desperation, over a cup of coffee, I explained my dilemma to my sponsee. She told me, "Say a prayer, then sit alone in a quiet place and it will come." I listened.

The next morning with pen in hand, I said a prayer, became willing, did some footwork (I looked up communication and hope in the dictionary) and I listened. I came to see how much communicating I had done to get this far. You see, communication to me is an exchange of ideas — sharing and listening — whether it be with another Al-Anon friend or in meditation with my Higher Power; in my group, district or area; speaking at or attending a convention; leading or participating in a workshop.

Communication is the conveyance of information. We've used TV and radio, the telephone, mailings, and now we have computers and the Internet. Technology is only an avenue for communication. We need to use it wisely. I am responsible for what I say and how I speak to people no matter what means I am using. I believe good, honest communication has the power to put out little fires followed by the appropriate actions. Being here with you at Conference has taught me that.

Communication can also be non-verbal — the squeeze of a hand after the closing prayer, a hug given or received, a smile, how we walk, and how we talk. Well, it looks like all I needed to do was to start writing!

Hope is the trust and anticipation that something good will happen. When I first came to Al-Anon, I found hope in the fellowship here. I was lonely and you accepted me. When I came to believe that I could be restored to sanity in Step Two, my life changed. I was willing to do the rest of the Steps. I had a spiritual awakening and could understand what you had been talking about, this God of your understanding. As I write, I see that hope — meaning desire, want, wish, and trust equals came to believe. This preceded progress for me in the program. We need hope for the future of Al-Anon. If we give up hope who will carry on? We must also communicate hope by our words and actions. Al-Anon saved my life. All I have to share with you is my experience, my strength and my hope. And I must never forget hope. The glue that holds all of this together for me is the love I have found in this fellowship. May it never end.

### Ann D., PQ (E)

Communication was my only hope for a new life, but I was completely blocked before coming to Al-Anon. You taught me how to come out of my shell and share my feelings. You taught me to greet the newcomer with a smile. You taught me cooperation with members when I was group representative. You taught me to express myself as district representative and to listen as delegate.

I learned to communicate my hopes, my fears and my enthusiasm in our newsletter, at conventions, and at assemblies. I tried to keep information flowing. I have seen several instances in our area where lack of communication has created real problems. I hope, before my mandate is over, that I will have been able to alleviate some of the road blocks.

Communication is a real concern at all levels in Al-Anon. It could be doubly difficult with a new structure and new employees. Let's give it a chance and keep an open mind.

Best of all in Al-Anon, I learned to communicate with a Higher Power. With help from Al-Anon members, I learned to open my eyes, my ears and my heart.

The Higher Power is in our group meetings, our district meetings and our assemblies. The Higher Power is especially present at the World Service Conference. Otherwise, how could so many people from so many different backgrounds dare to work together in harmony. I'd like the whole world to know about this wonderful place and experience that is Al-Anon.

What of Al-Anon's future? Where are we going? What form will Al-Anon take in years to come? Let's turn the future of Al-Anon over to a Power greater than ourselves. All I ask is if I can help in any way, I be given the courage to act.

Listen carefully to the murmur of the wind, to the trickle of the steam, to the pain in a newcomer's voice and the answers will come.

### Kay J., MT

Over the past three years I have experienced a lot of hope for the future, in my personal life and my term as delegate. In working with newcomers and those I sponsor I have learned to communicate the special love that I received so many years ago. There is always a closeness that I feel when I walk into a meeting whether it is my home group or when I am visiting on vacation. I have also felt the love from many parts of the



state as they have helped and supported me through the last three years — not to mention keeping me on my toes.

When I was growing up I kept to myself and never allowed anyone to get too close. I could handle any problem by myself and I didn't need help. When I married the alcoholics in my life, I didn't want to admit that I needed help. The hardest thing for me to do was to communicate with others that I really couldn't do it by myself. But when I finally made the decision to ask for help, it was there. You loved me when I wasn't lovable, you treated me as your equal, you cared for me when I didn't care for myself.

When you ask me to give back what I had so graciously received, my answer was "yes." I was so excited about becoming a GR, then a DR and I was going to FIX the district. You taught me to Let Go and Let God in district matters too! When you showed me how to do the jobs, you also told me that it was okay to make a mistake and I didn't have to be perfect. You see, everything I learned came from you because you had the ability to communicate hope that my life can, and will get better.

Communication also means to listen as well as talk and my sponsor said "Your Higher Power speaks to you through other people, even those you don't like, so you need to listen to everyone." Sometimes the best help I can be is to just listen and say, "I love you."

In my personal life I have been able to communicate with my three sons and their wives or girlfriends. I can now let the people in my life be part of my life. My husband I have a wonderful relationship. We are best friends and we share hope for the future. I have been able to attain the things in my life that I have always wanted. I don't necessarily have riches, but I am so very rich. "I ask God for all things so that I might enjoy life, and God gave me life so that I might enjoy all things."

My Higher Power put me on this earth for a reason and I believe I am exactly where I'm supposed to be, doing exactly what I'm supposed to do. When I turn my will and my life over to the care of God, then I have hope for the future.

### Michelle M., CO

When I first heard the theme for this year's Conference, I laughed. The alcoholic in my life feels we need to spend time with a therapist to learn to communicate. I feel I've learned to communicate in Al-Anon. Whenever I give a report, tell my story, or share in a meeting, I am communicating my thoughts, ideas, and opinions as well as experience, strength, and hope. In Al-Anon, I've learned to communicate by sharing.

As I look back over my almost 40 years on this earth, I remember the various ways I've shared with others. When I was growing up on ranches in Wyoming, our boss would come to the house for dinner. We would share dirty jokes and laugh a lot. This communication was to share fun.

My junior year in high school, my family moved to southeastern Oregon, high desert country. My only way to communicate with friends back home was through letters and cards. It was a great way to say "I'm thinking of you and I miss you."

Shortly after I began in Al-Anon, I went to visit my folks. My mom and I sat on her front porch one day watching my daughter play in the sprinklers. I will never forget the chat we had about spirituality. I never realized my mother had such a spiritual nature or that she passed it on to me by her example. That afternoon, we communicated our mutual respect for a Higher Power.

In Al-Anon, I've learned to communicate with my Higher Power through prayer. In high school, I had such low self-

esteem that I thought God did not have time to listen to the prayers of poor little Michelle. I got it in my head that the only time God could possibly have time to hear me was midnight on Saturdays. Since Al-Anon, I've grown to believe my Higher Power always has time for me and really cares about me. Now if I can just get the part about "thy will be done and the power to carry that out."

During summer breaks from college and the first summer I was married, I worked for the Wyoming State Highway Department. One of my co-workers was Albert, an older man who had worked there for many years. When we had the trucks loaded up for a project, someone would invariably ask, "What else do we need?" Albert always answered, "All we need now is courage." I've remembered this phrase a lot over the years, and feel it has a lot to say about communication, life, and Al-Anon. We need courage to face the future, to grow with the changes in the media and to meet each obstacle and difficulty before us with grace and love.

Thanks so much for helping me these past three years to learn to communicate my hope for the future of Al-Anon and for myself.

### Penny R., WA

I came to my first Al-Anon meeting so I could learn to communicate. I wanted to find out what I needed to say to my husband to get him sober so we would have a better future.

You can imagine my dismay when you told me that there was nothing I could do or say that would force my husband into sobriety, but you did have something I wanted — joy in your lives — so I kept coming back.

I attended my home group every week. I read every book and every piece of literature published by Al-Anon. I studied the Steps and Traditions, and began applying them to my life. The more my husband drank, the more involved I became with Al-Anon.

In the process I learned a lot about communication. You convinced me that I could not carry on a rational conversation with an irrational person. You taught me about detaching with love. You taught me to listen and learn; to keep an open mind; to share my experience, strength and hope; and to participate in discussions. You taught me that my opinion was just as important as anyone else's — that I was a valuable person.

Communication is both the giving and receiving of information. Communication does not exist without listening. God gave us two ears and only one mouth for a reason.

Hope is what we receive when we walk through the doors of Al-Anon. You gave me hope that I would find happiness whether the alcoholic was still drinking or not. You gave me hope that my spirit would be awakened, and that my future would be better than my past.

During my term as delegate, I have carried the theme of each Conference to my area — that of our vision and hope in a changing world, that leadership is a special trust, and finally that communication is our hope for the future. By keeping an open mind, listening to the minority point of view, trusting in the process, and having faith that we have but one authority, a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience, I and my area have surmounted many difficult issues.

My love and thanks to my area for the privilege of serving as delegate. My hope is that we continue to communicate the Al-Anon message to the families and friends who still suffer from someone else's drinking so that they too, may have hope for the future.

# ASK - IT - BASKET

## Administration

1. Would it be possible with all the travel that is paid for by the fellowship that all frequent flier miles go to the World Service Office for helping to reduce travel costs?

A. The greatest majority of travel is by our volunteers who in many cases use their frequent flyer miles to purchase tickets for Al-Anon service. Because we are self-supporting through voluntary contributions, there is no way we could mandate such a request.

## Board of Trustees

1. On expansion of regions from six to nine. What was the purpose or goal? Was this goal met? Was there an evaluation made of the purpose(s)? These questions should be first answered before a decision is made whether to continue the trial for another three years.

A. These issues were discussed on the Conference floor pertaining to the number of regions. See the discussion in this Summary entitled "Regional Trustee Plan."

2. At-large trustees - can they be reduced to six?

A. The Board continually discusses its composition. During the last such discussion, it was determined that a balance of nine regional trustees and nine trustees-at-large would best serve the Al-Anon fellowship.

3. Expansion of Regions - When this was proposed, we were in the 80s and at a time of expansion. Now, we are in a time of consolidation and streamlining - isn't it time to downsize at all levels? What benefits are we actually deriving from the new regions and what is the cost?

A. See numbers 1 and 2.

## Budget Committee

1. Price books in round dollars (\$10.00 for *How Al-Anon Works* rather than \$9.95)

A. The book was priced this way so that it would stand out on the order blank.

2. Consideration - handling credit card purchases for literature over the phone.

A. Unless additional staff is added, this is not currently possible.

3. Would WSO's answering service (800#) be available 24 hours a day?

A. A plan to have automated group information is included in a later phase of the update to our telephone system. We are waiting for improvements to the technology before we proceed.

4. Is individual contributions a new idea? Always groups vote on how money was spent before - decided among service structures. Isn't this a suggested program?

A. Individual contributions have been a part of Al-Anon since our early beginnings. The "Policy Digest" section on "Finances" (pg. 69) addresses the types of contributions Al-Anon can accept within the Traditions. For many years there has been confusion as to the triannual appeal and at the 1997 WSC clarification was stated by approving Motion #8. Many groups give at regular times.

5. When can we expect a balanced budget?

A. A balanced budget for 1997 was presented at the 1997 WSC.

6. Is it possible to leave the contact's full name off of the appeal envelopes - (A GR feels her anonymity is threatened if she passes it around.)

A. The group can use its name and a post office box. If the GR is uncomfortable, perhaps someone else can receive the mail during her term. She may also cover up her name on the envelope or use a different envelope to pass in the group. A meeting on anonymity within Al-Anon as defined on pages 67-68 of the 1995/1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual may also be helpful.

## Business Services

1. The new computer is not meeting the needs of groups and records.

A. Problems are being addressed on a daily basis and will be resolved in the near future. On the average, conversion to a new computer system takes one to two years to work out the unanticipated challenges. Since May, 1997 group print-outs are now going to delegates in a timely manner.

2. Acceptance of donations for requested documentation — There have been several times individually, we have written for specific documentation from WSO and included a donation and we receive the documentation with our donation returned. We send the donation to help defray the cost of shipping and possibly copying.

A. Our new customer service staff has been educated on how to handle such donations. They will no longer be returned. As a rule, the WSO can not accept designated donations. A simple donation without directing its use would help too.

## Fellowship Communication

1. Can we have an article or piece on the history of *The Forum*?

A. We will put in on our schedule for a future 'Inside Al-Anon' article.

2. Keep the name Al-Anon off the covering of books (Can't take recently published books into public without breaking my anonymity) or provide plain book jackets sized for our books.

A. Al-Anon's first two books, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (B-1) and *Al-Anon Family Groups* (B-5) are among many Al-Anon books that contain the name Al-Anon name in the title. If a member is concerned about anonymity possibly the member can attach a paper cover.

3. How can Concepts be used for topics at meetings? How can the word be spread on what they are?

A. Al-Anon's newest book *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* (B-24) has text, members sharing and personal meeting questions on each of Al-Anon's legacies to assist members in using the Concepts at meetings. See also Al-Anon's *Best Kept Secret - The Concepts* (P-57).



4. The area feels the *Blueprint for Progress* should be updated - it is not simple, needs to be clearer, requires too much writing, and AA's Big Book version is comparable.
  - A. The *Blueprint for Progress* (P-5) along with many other pieces of Al-Anon literature are being inventoried by the Al-Anon fellowship through your area delegate, Literature Coordinators and Alateen Coordinators. Five areas are reviewing this piece and will be making recommendations to the Literature Committees. For additional suggestions on doing a Fourth Step inventory please refer to the suggestions found in Al-Anon's newest book *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* (B-24).
5. Why is there no literature on service sponsors? Maybe we need that to help folks in service.
  - A. This is the first request we have had for such a piece. Literature Committee I is reviewing the pamphlet *Sponsorship, What It's All About* (P-31) and may consider mention of service sponsors. Al-Anon's newest book *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* (B-24), has several references to service sponsors listed in the index.
6. What are the responsibilities of sponsorship?
  - A. Please refer to our pamphlet *Sponsorship, What It's All About?* (P-31) for assistance.
7. Regarding the Al-Anon logo-which side represents Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service? Where is this explained in our literature?
  - A. The introduction in Al-Anon's newest book *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* (B-24) answers part of your question. The 1981 January/February issue (B-24) of *Inside Al-Anon* states the following, "The three sides of Al-Anon's triangle have been labeled Recovery, Unity and Service. These correspond to the Steps, Traditions and Concepts." A diagram of the logo shows Concepts - Unity at the bottom, Steps-Recovery on the left side and Traditions-Unity on the right side.
8. Why take the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions out of The Forum? Isn't it supposed to be a "meeting in your pocket"?
  - A. The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee, in response to the requests of many Al-Anon members, now publishes the Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service in larger type on a rotating basis inside the front cover of the magazine. There is not sufficient space to publish all three legacies monthly.
9. Can literature that is now out of print still be used in meetings?
  - A. Yes, any Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature is recommended for use at meetings. However, duplication or sale must be approved by the WSO as we still hold the copyright.
10. "Let It Begin With Me" - When the Service Manual is reprinted will you please restore the first line of our Declaration - 'Let It Begin With Me.' This line is missing from the Service Manual and other CAL. It works havoc when members are trying to say our Declaration in unison and some start it with the way it was originally written, 'Let It Begin With Me' and others start it with 'When anyone anywhere...'
  - A. In researching the archives we find you are correct. Corrections will be made as we reprint existing Al-Anon literature.
11. Audio tapes for beginners meetings are no longer available. Can a group copy these tapes for use in their meetings?
  - A. Please write the WSO for reprint permission. Each request is considered on an individual basis. Copyright and reprint guidelines were provided to each delegate at the 1997 WSC for use in areas, districts and groups.
12. May we have a CAL pamphlet written about our Third legacy, Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service, and include "of Service" in the title so members and others will know it's about Service?
  - A. Al-Anon's *Best Kept Secret - The Concepts* (P-57) is available in our catalog and order form for \$.60. Al-Anon's newest book, *Paths to Recovery - Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* (B-24), discusses each Concept of Service in detail.
13. Could/should/would the Literature Committee consider developing an identification piece for Lone Members? Some longtimers become shut-ins and need to know of an alternative way to share and receive Al-Anon's message.
  - A. This request will be submitted to one of the two Literature Committees for consideration.

## Group Services

1. How do groups handle dominance at meetings?
  - A. Some suggested methods are: to have a personal discussion with the individual; conduct a meeting on the 'Three Obstacles to Success' from *Alcoholism - The Family Disease* (P-4) (discussion of gossip, religion & dominance); take a group inventory using guideline G-8, Let's Take a Group Inventory.
2. The 1997 Al-Anon Family Group Service Plan is terrific, could we make it a permanent piece of literature for members? It would surely help members and groups stay on track.
  - A. The Al-Anon Family Group Service Plan is designed to coincide with the goals of Al-Anon's Five-Year Plan. Since 1995, the goals have been changing annually; should the goal for 1998 remain on the subject of inventory, the plan would probably be printed for another year.
3. An Alateen meeting hasn't had any kids for over six months; the sponsor still wants to keep the group on the meeting list - should this be deleted? What does WSO think about it? The sponsor still attends the Al-Anon meeting scheduled for the same time?
  - A. If the sponsor is willing to keep the meeting open, there does not appear to be any problem with leaving the name on the list.
4. Will the new group loose-leaf binder be available for purchase by the older registered groups?
  - A. Yes, the Executive Committee authorized sale of the binder at \$15.00 plus postage to all existing groups after July 1, 1997.
5. The Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual has the suggested format for chairing a meeting, could they also include a suggested format for a group business meeting as many members have requested this to help them conduct business meetings similarly to other groups.
  - A. The new group binder contains a reprint on Group Business Meetings; this reprint is also available to any Al-Anon or Alateen member upon request.

**6. Guidelines for crosstalk? Policy to address issues that are tearing some groups apart. Misunderstanding, dominance, leaders critiquing members.**

A. Articles in previous issues of Inside Al-Anon about crosstalk indicate that the definition is subject to members' interpretation and isn't easy to define. Taking a group inventory often helps the group deal with misunderstandings, dominance and critical members.

**7. What are the guidelines for Step study groups committed to actually working through the Steps over a period of time?**

A. There are no guidelines for Step study groups. Members use Conference Approved Literature.

**8. A request for literature for children under 12 (preteen) to be read, in simple terms that they can understand.**

A. There currently is a younger member insert in the publication Alateen Talk. In addition, many of the Alateen Talks Back (P-68-P-73) series of booklets and the new Alateen book Courage To Be Me-Living with Alcoholism (B-23) contain many sharings that are geared to be comprehensible to young people under 12. In order to have literature, younger members need to send in their sharings.

**9. Is there a policy (or guideline) for dealing with legal situations such as subpoena or records re: meeting attendance, Alateens reporting abuse in meetings, etc. What can we provide? What happens if we don't comply?**

A. There is a section in A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship (P-86) titled 'Legal Responsibility' that covers the issue of abuse. Unlike certain professions (medical or clergy), Alateen is not considered a "privileged" entity. If subpoenaed by the court, an Al-Anon member is required to comply with court rulings. Groups may want to examine whether passing an attendance book or keeping records of group meetings for long periods is beneficial to the group.

**10. How does a sponsor handle a situation where an Alateen reveals that they are experiencing abuse?**

A. The suggested method is to urge Alateen members to take any action needed to protect themselves. As stated in A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship (P-86) insofar as mandatory disclosure: "check your local laws but generally child abuse laws relating to mandatory disclosure usually refer to individuals who function in a professional capacity and not to volunteers."

**11. In the newest manual, "Steering Committee" has been changed to "Business meeting," (not sure of page number). Although steering sounds like controlling, it has caused confusion in groups which have a meeting with officers prior to the weekly meeting and also a monthly meeting during the regular meeting to discuss "business." What do they call the first type of meeting?**

A. A definition of the business or steering committee can be found on page 37 of the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual — the terms are interchangeable. Methods of group management vary from group to group and are up to the autonomy of the group as expressed in its group conscience.

**12. Is it appropriate to have an AA member speak at an open Al-Anon meeting?**

A. It is common practice to have an AA speaker along with an Al-Anon and Alateen speaker at an open meeting or special event such as a group anniversary. This is a matter of group autonomy. As stated on page 89 of the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual: "It is from Al-Anon and Alateen members that we hear

*the ideas and experiences that guide us in our personal recoveries."*

**13. In 1991 WSC approved a motion to provide service for younger members in Alateen. Al-Anon and Alateen are nonprofessional and in allowing younger members in Alateen, sponsors need to be more creative. We are not teachers or baby-sitters. It is difficult to attract Al-Anons and convince them they don't need to be teachers.**

A. The 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (p. 61) states that although the name "Alateen" implies that Alateen is for members in their teens, that "there are younger children who need and are ready for sharing in Alateen." The Group Services Committee at its April, 1997 meeting supported serving any family member that is able to comprehend and apply the Al-Anon principles.

**14. Could a plan and guidelines be set up for the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual meetings, plus suggestions on getting these manuals to all GRs, DRs and alternates?**

A. Guidelines are usually established at the WSO based on repeated requests from our membership; so far this has not happened with the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual. Setting up such a guideline can be an excellent district or area project. When the Manual is printed, one free copy is sent to every registered Al-Anon and Alateen group. In addition, the WSO places articles in Inside Al-Anon Xtra, The Forum and Area Highlights. Perhaps at that time, your district can work on a plan to study the Manual and insure that all DRs and their alternates obtain a copy.

**15. Liability Insurance - groups, district, area. Some groups are having to move their meetings because they cannot possibly afford liability insurance. Can WSO provide more guidance to area/districts/groups about options and process regarding insurance? Some groups have internal resources - most don't.**

A. In some cases the person in charge of the facility where the group meets can arrange for the group to be an "additional named insured" on its own insurance policy at a nominal cost with the group paying the additional premium; some districts or areas have arranged for one insurance policy covering the groups on a blanket policy at a nominal cost; if all else fails some groups have had to relocate. There are a few companies which sell insurance to non-profit groups. Check with local insurance carriers or in the reference sections of the public library.

**16. Can a member of Al-Anon be told they are banned from a specific Al-Anon Group? What if they are a long time trusted servant? Example: Someone feels that anonymity has been broken. What steps need to be taken before this is done?**

A. Each situation is different. It is impossible for us to provide you with a clear answer. Please refer to pages 15-16 of The Twelve Steps and Traditions (P-17) for a discussion on Tradition One in dealing with a disruptive member and Warranty Four in the Concepts of Service. It is important that we not violate one of our principles in upholding another.

**17. Members who are attending only their own group and are fairly new to Al-Anon, do not participate in district or area meetings, place personalities over principles (meaning when their DR attends meetings they feel an intrusion). Maybe the three obstacles need to be stressed more in our meetings. Is there really an awareness that they exist?**

A. To educate the group please refer to pages 129-130 of the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual for the duties of the DR. The group may want to use the "Three Obstacles to Success In

*Al-Anon* from Alcoholism the Family Disease (P-4) (p. 36) for a workshop. Additionally, district representatives as Al-Anon members may attend any Al-Anon meeting.

**18. Alateen membership is declining. Our Alateens would like to make a video, updated to meet their needs. How does WSO feel about this venture?**

A. Alateen group registrations over the last year show a slight increase. Many groups use the video *Alateen Tells Like It Is* (AV-16). Members may also send their requests for updating to the WSO for consideration.

**19. Is there any advice on how to handle parents and friends of narcotic addicts that attend our meetings and insist on talking about their particular drug addiction problem?**

A. There are some suggestions found on page 93 of the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual titled 'Families with related problems'. Groups could also study the third tradition section in *Paths to Recovery* (B-24). You may also want to refer to our pamphlet *Al-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53) for additional assistance. It is important to handle such people in a loving Al-Anon way.

**20. List the services that a dual member can provide - ex: Alateen Sponsor, all service positions at the group. . . What else?**

A. Pages 63-64 of the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual details Al-Anon's policy on dual members in Al-Anon service. Many also say, "Let's tell our dual members what they can do." The service work of many local and area committees can utilize the talents of dual members: Public Information, Institutions, Cooperating for the Public Community, telephone service work, conventions, workshop, archives. Each area is autonomous and they define other service activities.

**21. In Canada and the US there are well over 1000 Al-Anon adult children groups. These groups are attended by approximately 12% of our membership. Sadly, the 1996 membership survey not only fails to discuss the demographics of these groups, it also neglects to mention their very existence. Do we really care about our Al-Anon adult children groups? If so, why not discuss them in the survey?**

A. The survey was addressed to all existing Al-Anon groups which include adult children groups as well as many others. Please contact Public Outreach for the full 1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Membership Survey Report that is available and includes survey statistics for adult children. If you have suggestions for the 1999 survey please submit them to the Public Outreach department.

**22. Group Services is entrusted with caring for many different facets of our fellowship. Their portion of the 1996 World Service Office Report was most thorough in outlining what they had done for Alateen, archives, Lone Members, inmates, the disabled etc. There was, however, no mention of Al-Anon adult children nor any of our other so called 'special focus' groups. Would it not be wiser for us to tell these facets of our fellowship just what is being done to address their special concerns and needs?**

A. The rationale in the WSO restructuring was to bring 'like' services together. Group Services serves all groups equally. The 1997 WSO motion #12 authorized the creation of an Al-Anon adult children daily reader in response to the requests received from these important members of our fellowship.

**23. A reprint from "Inside Al-Anon" (Vol. 9, No. 6, 1986) entitled "Special Issue For and About Adult Children of Alcoholics," has been an invaluable tool in welcoming adult children into the fellowship. Part of this reprint was fortunately reproduced in a recent edition of *Area Highlights*. However, other parts such as 'Suggested Reading List' are outdated. Can this wonderful reprint be revised or revamped?**

A. A reprint can not be revised. The group service department will look at other ways to carry the message. Individual groups could create their own Al-Anon reading list and submit for possible publication.

**24. Group Services which is primarily responsible for Alateen, has an Alateen Advisory Committee. Group Services is also primarily responsible for Al-Anon adult children. Both of these special facets of our fellowship have numerous groups. Both require special attention. Ought not Group Services also have an Al-Anon adult children advisory committee?**

A. To date our Conference supports the concept of providing the same services for adult children as for other group members.

**25. Any advice on how to handle an AA who is not drinking but is not active (does not attend his group meetings), is very quiet, but very subtly tries to control everything around the house?**

A. Attend more meetings, keep the focus on yourself and work with your sponsor.

**26. When does the area or district step in to refill a position or resign a position?**

A. Each district or area is autonomous. A district or area inventory may help in resolving unfilled vacancies. If it is necessary to seek the resignation of a trusted servant all possible means of dealing with the problem should be given a chance, seeking the guidance of area trusted servants.

**27. When the WSO sends a copy of their response to an Alateen inquiry to an area Alateen sponsor, is it possible to also send a copy of the original letter for background purposes?**

A. It has been a long standing policy not to provide copies of original letters so that individuals can feel they may write to the WSO in confidence.

**28. Some of our Al-Anon guidelines (G 1-G 33) state "This Guideline may be photocopied," others for no apparent reason, are missing this statement. Why the difference? Can we please duplicate all of these guidelines?**

A. Many guidelines are being re-written and we will insert the statement in future printings. Yes, you may photocopy all guidelines.

**29. An Al-Anon information services office is located in a large city and sells Conference Approved Literature as a literature distribution center to groups in large geographical areas (some 150 miles away from the city). The AIS reps are from the two districts in the city. Should contributions be requested from the outlying groups who order literature?**

A. Contributions at all levels of service are voluntary. Requests can be made; however, it is up to group autonomy to contribute.

**30. Is the use of area funds for busing Alateen members from their school to an Alateen meeting at a neighboring school within the Traditions?**

A. Yes, however there are many other issues to consider. The liability of the area if a child is injured on the bus is one. Parental permission slips would be a necessity. This is an issue of area autonomy provided that it does not draw Al-Anon or Alateen into public controversy. Another question is whether the area is setting a precedent which would require it to fund several buses throughout the area. Providing for one group and not another would be a violation of the Traditions.

## Membership Outreach

**1. International Convention - What can we do to help? What is the cost? Explain what each area can do, what WSO will do & what the host committee will do? What is the cost to WSO, area and Host?**

A. Information pertaining to Al-Anon's 1998 International Convention to be held in Salt Lake City July 2-5, 1998 was summarized in the May Forum. Information was also passed on to Conference members in the form of a skit. See the International Convention section of this Summary. The Host Committee in Salt Lake will direct members to their destinations and provide an atmosphere of hospitality at the time of the Convention. WSO handles all the coordination of registration, housing, the program and the special events. The International Convention is always budgeted to be self-supporting.

**2. In our area newsletter there is a statement about résumés. "Those who had presented their résumés prior to the assembly, read them at the mike." We do not use résumés for anything unless it's trustee—are assemblies in more than one area doing this? The election of your delegate, alternate delegate, chairman, secretary, treasurer require willingness not résumés.**

A. Yes, some areas do use résumés. Each area is autonomous and can set their own guidelines for their use.

**3. RSS - Are they continuing? Heard that they have been put on hold - whose choice was that?**

A. The previously planned 1998 Regional Service Seminars have been postponed for one year. This was discussed at the Long Range Panel, recommended by the Regional Service Seminar Committee for the Board of Trustees for their approval. For further information see discussion in the Open Forum section of this Summary.

**4. What will happen in the next five years when we have our International? Are we going to keep changing the RSSs the year of the International? Are our RSS's in competition with the International?**

A. Competition implies winners and losers. In 1998 the focus of service can be found at the International Convention. No discussion has been made on future Internationals until we create our history in Salt Lake.

**5. The current equalized expense of sending a delegate to WSC is \$900 US. This amount is sent to WSO by January 1 of each year. The delegate must purchase a travel ticket from his/her personal funds and be reimbursed by WSO. There seems to be a duplication in accounting at WSO level and can also cause hardship for some delegates who have to come up with enough money to buy a ticket and wait to be reimbursed. In the past, the area treasurer would send to WSO the difference between the cost of travel to WSC.**

The treasurer would then send the delegate a check to cover the cost of travel. Could we please look at going back to this method of payment?

A. This question was answered by the Director of Business Services on the Conference floor. Some areas advance delegates funds for travel and then the delegates reimburse the area. Please contact the Associate Director of Membership Outreach, Conference for your specific needs.

**6. What can we do with the groups of adult children that have already made their own Spanish translation of the book *From Survival to Recovery*?**

A. You might ask these individuals to send the translation to WSO. However, to reprint a book in another language the translation must be reviewed and other criteria met. Promoting the use of translations without WSO approval is a violation of our copyright.

**7. Why can't area officers receive *Area Highlights* or mail from WSO? Since I hold an office at area assemblies, but not a DR or GR, I receive no mail from WSO.**

A. Area Highlights may be copied for all area officers or any members who wish to have a copy. It is sent to the delegate, area chairs, area coordinators and DRs.

**8. It has come to the attention of members in one area that the AA GSO received "incentive" moneys from the cities of San Diego and Minneapolis bringing the AA International Conventions to these cities. Did Al-Anon receive moneys from Salt Lake City resulting in the International being held in that city?**

A. Al-Anon has been offered complimentary meeting space as an incentive to hold the Convention in Salt Lake. This is a typical type of incentive from any city to attract conventions, much like an area getting free use of a conference room for an assembly based on the purchase of meals and room rentals.

**9. Page 100 of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* indicates that a district representative is elected from "incoming, outgoing or active past" DRs. Please define active.**

A. Please see page 126 of the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual. Each area is autonomous and as such many have stated additional parameters.

**10. 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*: Page 135, first paragraph - Convention Chairs have voice but no vote at Area World Service Committee. Page 66 - first paragraph last sentence says the Convention Chair has a vote.**

A. Each area is autonomous, therefore, page 135 is correct. The Admissions/Handbook Committee will refer the question about page 66 to the Policy Committee for review.

## Policy Committee

**1. Some Al-Anon members bring the AA Big Book to meetings and insist it can be used in meetings. We quote from the 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* page 79 "Other Literature at Meetings." Could the statement (see pamphlets *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-45) and *Al-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53)) be added at the end of the paragraph?**

A. This will be referred to the Policy Committee for discussion.

**2. AA Big Book at Al-Anon meetings it's alive and well. Some think it's CAL and back to basics.**

*A. The AA Big Book is not Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature see page 79 in the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual - 'Outside Publications' for an explanation.*

**3. Can "Alcoholics Anonymous" (AA's Big Book) ever be Conference approved? (Area did answer this issue - due to copyright laws, would not be able to change anything, i.e. the Twelfth Step, to conform to Al-Anon's language.)**

*A. No. The Alcoholics Anonymous book was written by alcoholics. Al-Anon CAL is written by Al-Anon members who share their experience, strength, and hope in recovery from the effects of someone else's drinking.*

**4. Page 93 of the 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, 'Labels' paragraph is different from the paragraph in the old Service Manual page 126. The old paragraph is clearer and more direct about what professional terms are. (Old paragraph, "It is suggested that the use of professional terms such as co-dependent, para-alcoholic and co-alcoholic be avoided since they perpetrate the tendency to focus on the alcoholic.") Could this be changed back?**

*A. Yes, however, the Policy Committee and Conference discussed these concerns before making the changes.*

**5. When writing articles for outside publications a member can be remunerated by not signing our name. Is this truthful? Can this part of policy be changed?**

*A. Yes, however signing anonymous or using a pseudonym protects anonymity. Letters to the Policy Committee are discussed before any change in Policy is brought to the WSC.*

**6. At a service assembly this year, the subject of the make up of the Conference 2/3 Delegates and 1/3 Staff was discussed. They reviewed our Service Manual to try and find the motion or precedent referred to that established this procedure. They could not find it in the Service Manual. Please clarify and direct us to the origin of this Conference procedure. Shouldn't this information be written in our Service Manual?**

*A. This procedure was established by the 1985 WSC. This suggestion will be forwarded to the Admissions Handbook Committee.*

**7. Re: Service Manual Part 5 - "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service General Warranties." Why not take Step Ten now and correct the wording in the descriptive text, Concept of Service 12, General Warranties, pages 193-202, to conform to the "Al-Anon World Service Charter" approved in 1967?**

*A. The Warranties were adopted by the 1970 World Service Conference as part of the Twelve Concepts of Service. The 1997 WSC clarified why the text is different.*

**8. At a convention, cups and T-shirts are being sold that were ordered from an outside company with committee members selling them. Profit goes toward convention expense. Does this practice conflict with Al-Anon policy?**

*A. For suggested guidelines see page 71 of the 1995-1996 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual.*

## Public Outreach

**1. Can the list of all meetings be available on the web page of WSO?**

*A. No. Maintaining accurate listings for the information services and General Services Offices in the "How to contact us" section of the website is the most practical idea for Al-Anon at this time. Additional financial and personnel considerations would be required before listing all meetings on the web site.*

**2. Do we have available an article for newspapers about Al-Anon that places principles above personalities?**

*A. No. Anonymity (PI 51-Rev) describes the equality of members. Other service tools primarily used within the fellowship are: Anonymity (P-65) and Attracting and Cooperating (S-40).*

**3. Suggest outreach project nationally to professionals providing How Al-Anon Works and follow-up contacts.**

*A. Mailings with complimentary copies of books previously undertaken did not yield substantial results. Our experience has been that professional audiences need to be targeted and that it is essential to have personal follow-up which requires extensive staff resources and/or a large corps of members within the areas willing to contact the professionals. Areas could choose to do targeted service projects of this type.*

**4. Someone (a former Al-Anon member) has set up a workshop (for a fee) on 12 Step programs. Al-Anon is mentioned. This is being done in an Adult Education Center. Area members feel that this is breaking Traditions & Concepts even after information received from WSO.**

*A. If it is identified as an "Al-Anon" workshop this would be a violation of Tradition Six and/or Tradition Eight. If Al-Anon as an organization is used in the context of the workshop as one of many resources this would be acceptable.*

**5. We have posters to attract new members to Al-Anon and Alateen. Can Public Outreach consider producing a poster to attract new members to Al-Anon adult children meetings?**

*A. All posters are designed with an intent, to attract all potential members.*

# 1997 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

## MOTION #1 (97 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions) - CARRIED

That the following persons be seated at the 1997 WSC with voice but no vote:

John B. Al-Anon Member, Chairperson, Executive Committee for Real Property Management  
Richard Keilly nonmember, Director of Business Services  
Hilda Maria B. Al-Anon Member, Representative from Mexico  
Georgette G., Al-Anon Member, NPIC Office Manager Sunday, April 13 and Monday, April 14  
Patrick Q., Al-Anon Member, FORUM Coordinator Wednesday, April 16 and Thursday, April 17

## MOTION #2 (95 Yes, 1 No, 0 Abstentions, 1 Void) - CARRIED

To approve the 1996 Annual Report as amended.

## MOTION #3 (94 Yes, 1 No, 1 Void) - CARRIED

To approve the 1996 Auditor's Report.

## MOTION #4 - (94 Yes, 3 No, 1 Void) - CARRIED

To approve the 1997 Budget Report.

## MOTION #5 - (93 Yes, 4 No) - CARRIED

Re: To amend the text on pages 68, 69, 1995 -1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Policy Digest section as follows:

### *Anonymity in Our Personal Growth*

Each member has the right of decision regarding personal anonymity within the fellowship. We share as equals, regardless of social, educational or financial position. Common sense in the use of anonymity provides freedom and the security each member is assured in Al-Anon. Our spiritual growth has its roots in the principle of anonymity.

## MOTION #6 - (96 Yes, 1 No) - CARRIED

Re: To approve revision to the "Twelve Concepts of Service" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, pages 193, 197, and 202 as follows:

Page 193

### Warranty One

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

\*Note: The Warranties are found in the Conference Charter (pages 14 -15 of this manual). The wording above, drafted by our co-founder Lois W. and approved by the 1970 World Service Conference, is part of the descriptive text and not the actual Warranty.

Page 197

### Warranty Two

None of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others.\*

\*See footnote page 193

Page 197

### Warranty Three

That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.\*

\*See footnote page 193

Page 198

### Warranty Four

No Change

Page 202

### Warranty Five

That though the Conference serves Al-Anon, it will never perform any act of government; and that, like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall always remain democratic in thought and action.\*

\*See footnote page 193

## MOTION #7 - (92 Yes, 5 No) - CARRIED

Re: To amend the text on page 68, 1995 -1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Policy Digest section *Anonymity Within Al-Anon* as follows:

Letters to *The Forum* should give full names, addresses, and phone numbers.

## MOTION #8 - (95 Yes, 2 No, 1 Abstention) - CARRIED

Re: To approve revision to the Finances section of the 1995 - 1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 69 - 70 as follows:

### Finances

In order to fulfill our primary purpose, all contributions are used to meet expenses for worldwide services, including a portion of the operating expense of the World Service Conference.

### Contributions to WSO - Individual

#### *Triannual Appeal*

In keeping with the Seventh Tradition of self-support, the 1966 World Service Conference voted that three letters of appeal for individual contributions be sent annually from the WSO to Al-Anon members in the United States and Canada (March, July, and November). Since it is not possible to maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon, the appeal letters are mailed to the groups' address of record. It is requested that the letter be read at three successive meetings followed by a special collection other than the regular group collection. This gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level. In November, the appeal is extended to members of groups worldwide.

#### *Direct Contributions*

At any time during the year, individuals may contribute directly to the WSO, indicating their membership since Al-Anon is self-supporting. The limit on individual contributions is \$10,000 per year.

#### *Birthday Plan*

The Birthday Plan is an optional means of members expressing their gratitude to Al-Anon by contributing a dollar a year for each year's membership. Members of the area assembly stimulate interest in this plan.



#### *Memorial Contributions*

Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased. (See p. 69, "Direct Contributions")

#### *Bequests*

The WSO may accept a *one-time* legacy from an Al-Anon member in any amount up to \$100,000. (Contact the WSO for details)

#### **Contributions to WSO - Groups**

Groups usually make donations to the WSO on a regular basis without limit.

#### **Contributions to WSO - Other**

##### *Al-Anon Service Contributions*

Districts, Al-Anon information services (intergroups), literature distribution centers, areas, general service offices, and other Al-Anon service entities may also contribute directly to the WSO without limit.

##### *Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions*

A portion of the funds derived from Al-Anon and Alateen conventions is often contributed to the WSO. (See p. 66, "Distribution of Proceeds.")

##### *AA Conferences/Conventions*

Contributions received from AA conferences/conventions that are offered to Al-Anon as acknowledgement of its participation in these functions may be accepted by the WSO or its service arms.

#### **Earmarking Funds**

All regular contributions are allocated to the General Fund. Contributions cannot be earmarked for special purposes unless recommended by the World Service Conference.

#### **MOTION #9 - (91 Yes, 2 No, 4 Abstentions) - CARRIED**

To end the trial period commenced with Motion #8 of the 1986 WSC for three additional Regions, two in the US and one in Canada, and to make the Regional Trustee Plan as adopted by the 1988 WSC permanent.

#### **MOTION #10 - (95 Yes, 2 No, 1 Abstention) - CARRIED**

The following is a description suggested for insertion in the World Service Handbook section, Terms Used in Al-Anon (pages 99 -103 in 1995 -1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*):

##### **Evolving National Structures**

"A network of Al-Anon groups (outside the US and Canada) in process of developing a service structure."

#### **MOTION #11 - (87 Yes, 8 No) - CARRIED**

To give conceptual approval to develop an Al-Anon newcomer brochure.

#### **MOTION #12 - (77 Yes, 21 No) - CARRIED**

To give conceptual approval to develop a daily reader for Al-Anon adult children.

#### **MOTION #13 - (97 Yes, 0 No) - CARRIED**

To approve a major revision to the pamphlet, *Al-Anon is for Men*.

#### **MOTION #14 - (96 Yes, 1 No) - CARRIED**

To approve a major revision of the pamphlet, *Does She Drink Too Much?*

#### **MOTION #15 - (78 Yes, 15 No, 4 Abstentions) - CARRIED**

In keeping with the Five Year Plan, the 1997 WSC recommends taking an inventory of our Service Structure using the Service Plan format to include areas that are now listed in the Plan. An Inventory Ad Hoc Committee will continue this process for those parts of the structure that are not now included.

#### **MOTION #16 - (84 Yes, 10 No, 3 Abstentions) - CARRIED**

An inventory of the World Service Conference at the 1998 World Service Conference be taken according to the Five Year Plan including workshops.

## 1997 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MEMBERS

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Mary Ann K., Director of Membership Outreach  
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Joanne B., Wisconsin  
Judy D., Wyoming

### - International Representative -

\*\*Hilda Maria B., Mexico

\*Nonmember, non-voting

\*\*Non-voting



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ric B.

### INTRODUCTION

The World Service Office provides herein a report of its activities to the World Service Conference (WSC). These reports are printed in the Conference Summary that is available to the entire membership. An abridged version, appearing in *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, is sent to all registered English-speaking groups and is translated into French and Spanish.

### OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. meets quarterly and is responsible for: carrying out the mandates of the World Service Conference; establishing business policies of the World Service Office (WSO); estimating revenue; administering service to the membership; publishing and distributing Conference Approved Literature (CAL); approving the quarterly and annual reports submitted by the Executive Director and WSO staff.

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is empowered to act on behalf of the Trustees between Board meetings. It has legal authority bestowed by the Board of Trustees to have oversight of day-to-day affairs of the WSO.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (WSO) is a not-for-profit organization, listed under Section 501 (c) (3) of the US Internal Revenue Code, and has been incorporated in New York State since 1954.

With a staff of 54 full time employees, the Executive Director is responsible for overall supervision of the WSO staff and for administration of the organization's policies. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Director serving on the Executive Committee or the Executive Director's designee acts in his stead. The Director of Business Services is directly responsible for business operations and controlling finances. Changes to the WSO structure upon relocation in 1996 were approved by the Board of Trustees on a three-year trial basis beginning June, 1996.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., is committed to equal employment opportunity and is in compliance with all existing federal, state and local fair employment laws and guidelines. AFG, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin or handicapped status. Every effort is made to maintain a work atmosphere that is free from harassment.

### ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Doris S., Chairperson

The six candidates for trustee-at-large attended dinner with the Board and then each shared for ten minutes. Three nominees were selected by closed ballots: Phyllis M. (second term), Mary A. (second Term) and Margaret M. (first term). Phyllis M. resigned after accepting a job as Director of Public Outreach. Howland R. was nominated in April prior to the Conference. Gerry V. resigned at the end of the Conference due to personal reasons. Pat A. was nominated to replace Phyllis as Vice-chair nominee.

All nominees for trustee-at-large and regional trustee, as well as Board officers, Executive Committee at-large members, at-large members

of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management, and the respective chairs of the two Executive Committees were elected, having been given traditional approval by the Conference where required. The Board Chairperson announced her selections for committee chairs and assignments, which the Board approved.

Interim actions of the Executive Committee were approved by the Board quarterly.

The Board adopted the following policy: "That the WSO be directed that the use of blended sharings to create personal stories be discontinued."

The proposal to have French services provided by the WSO effective January 1, 1997 on a trial basis was approved. A literature distribution center will be established in Montreal. Severance pay was approved for PFA employees who remain until PFA closes.

The Board reviewed all handouts prior to distribution at the Conference as well heard the practice presentation on the Bell Curve. Other handouts on relocation costs, Communication Consultant's Report, fiscal road map for 1997 and summary of financial trends were approved for distribution to the Conference. Revisions to the 1996 budget which were presented to the Conference were reviewed.

Following Board approval, future liability for post-retirement health care charges will be recorded in the Reserve Fund and not charged in the regular budget.

The service of members on the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee was extended in order to insure a smooth transition now that the magazine is back to a monthly schedule. A plan for adding new members and relieving existing members was discussed.

Changes were made in at-large and advisory committee guidelines. The Alateen membership requirement was reduced from five years continuous active Alateen membership to two years and at least 13 years of age. The International Coordination Committee is to be treated as an advisory committee for the purpose of choosing its membership. Committee members are appointed to serve one-year terms up to a maximum of six years. Trustee or delegate service on these committees does not count toward the maximum of six year committee membership. Volunteers may divide these terms between one or more committees but may serve on only one committee at a time. The geographic area for selecting at-large members on delegate committees was adopted "not to exceed a radius of 250-300 miles of Virginia Beach." Advisory committee members can be selected from anywhere in the United States and Canada.

The Board approved holding an open house at our new home in Virginia Beach October 12th and 13th, 1996. About 500 Al-Anon members from all parts of the globe attended the Open House in October.

The Board set aside time on the July, October and January agendas to discuss development topics relating to 1995 Board evaluation. An ad hoc committee is developing a new form for the Board to evaluate itself in 1996. An ad hoc committee to work with the Long Range Study Panel in developing a Service Structure Inventory for 1997 was appointed.

Holding an LDC/AIS workshop once each year on a rotating basis in conjunction with a RSS, if financially feasible, was approved.

While it was not feasible to honor the Conference motion to reprint *Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions - Illustrated* because of cost, an alternative method for reproduction was offered. Limited reprint permission

will be granted to areas or LDCs to copy this pamphlet upon request.

The trial period for expansion of regions will end at the 1997 Conference. The Board recommended that the nine regions be made permanent.

The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (RPM) submitted their report to the Board. The Board voted not to receive the RPM minutes as this would not be consistent with what the Conference approved as to non-involvement of the Board in the details of property ownership, thus maintaining a separation.

Al-Anon's World Service Office now has an official Worldwide Web site on the Internet on a trial basis, with Board review in April. There is a visual counter to indicate how many "hits" we are getting.

Registration forms for the 1998 Al-Anon International in Salt Lake City will be sent out in the fall of 1997. Members are asked not to contact hotels directly, but to wait for the registration forms.

It was recommended that no audible beepers or cellular phones be used during the World Service Conference sessions beginning in 1997. Two local Alateen members on the Alateen Advisory Committee will attend a Group Services Committee meeting at the 1997 World Service Conference.

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

*Pat B., Chairperson*

In its continuing review of the Communications Consultant's Final Report and questionnaires, the committee accepted the preliminary goals for implementation of suggestions as determined jointly by volunteers and staff. After review of reports from the Alateen, CPC, Institutions, Budget and Executive Committees, a report of progress to date was developed for the 1996 World Service Conference.

The committee assigned the remaining proposed actions on the Goals in the Five Year Plan to the various departments and committees for their review, implementation and reportback to the Executive Committee in November. The Executive Director reported to the Board in October WSO progress in implementing the communication goals established by the Board with volunteer/staff input. The committee decided on a format for the Communications Questionnaires Report to the World Service Conference for submission to the Board of Trustees in January 1997.

The Executive Committee approved project proposals to have a pre-Conference conference call for new Conference members and a conference call for the Institutions Committee; to produce new PI posters; to produce *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism and Alateen: Hope for Children of Alcoholics* in soft cover; to proceed with the registration of the Al-Anon/Alateen name with Internik, with the understanding that we need to be operational in order to register and that the e-mail address will not be circulated at this time; to offer introductory subscriptions for the new *Forum* at \$7.00 US (\$10.00 non-US) when six individual subscriptions are sent in together (offer expired March 31, 1996) and to offer current subscribers 13 issues for the price of 12. Pricing and print quantity decisions were made for *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship - An Unforgettable Adventure*, *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians and Courage To Be Me - Living with Alcoholism*; Group Services Department attendance at an Alateen Sponsor Workshop in 1996; extension of the NPIC lease for one additional year; the expenditure of up to \$25,000 to engage an outside communications company to distribute and monitor usage of the public service announcement, "Ask Yourself"; discussed the placement in the WSO lobby of flags of the countries in which General Service Offices are located; gave conceptual approval for the development of a single service leaflet of our co-founders, Lois W. and Anne B.; approved participa-

tion in the American Library Association's "Publisher Shelf" to display ten book titles at two of their scheduled events; changed the contents of and renamed the Library Collection to Recovery Collection; created an Alateen Recovery Collection; agreed that individual issues of the *Forum* could be priced on the cover at \$1.00 US; approved the purchase of one free-standing and one table top model exhibit booth; discussed methods of notifying members about publications which can be used on the Internet; approved trial period for an automated attendant on the 800 numbers through April 30, 1997.

The Executive Committee approved a request to delay reprinting the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* until after the 1998 World Service Conference.

The Executive Committee approved project proposals to have PFA translate *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship - An Unforgettable Adventure*; and *How Al-Anon Works* in French.

The following committee members were approved: **Alateen:** Laurel L. - 1st year, Mary Ann S. - 1st year, Agnes L. - 1st year, Vicki R. - 1st year (Al-Anon members); John S. - 1st year, Louise W. - 1st year, Richard McD. - 1st year (Alateen members); **Archives:** Diane C. - 2nd year, Juanita G. - 1st year, Judene G. - 1st year, Louise B. - 1st year; **Forum Editorial Advisory Committee:** Skip A. - 1st year, Sandi D. - 1st year, Ora B. - 1st year, Suzie C. - 1st year, Roland D. - 4th year; **Literature I:** Catherine T. - 1st year, Joanne F. - 1st year, Margaret McP. - 1st year, Carla A. - 1st year; **Literature II:** Victoria L. - 1st year, Karen C-S. - 1st year, Patricia L. - 1st year; **Public Outreach:** Penny C. - 1st year, Patricia I. - 1st year, Kitty K. - 1st year, Frank R. - 1st year; **Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee:** Nancy B-L. - 3rd year, Pat H. - 1st year, Pat R., - 1st year; **International Coordination Committee:** Mary C. - 2nd year.

Phase I costs for creating and maintaining a home page on the Worldwide Web were approved in the amount of \$4,800.00 as well as the monthly expenditures of \$255.00 for access to the Internet and continual updating of the pages. This approval was for a trial period through April 30, 1997 with Board review in April based upon the March 31 statistics in order to monitor the effectiveness of the page.

The ad hoc committee on the Internet reported that it is working on a timeline for developing guidelines for on-line meetings. Further information will be provided as other ideas are completed.

The Executive Committee also recommended that the Board set the equalized expense for the 1997 World Service Conference at last year's level of \$900.00 US and that the total cost for sending a delegate is \$1,200.00 US. Normally, the Budget Committee would recommend this directly to the Board.

#### POLICY COMMITTEE

*Helen R., Chairperson*

A letter was received from a delegate regarding concern in her area over the "blending" of personal sharings in *How Al-Anon Works*.... After discussion, the committee agreed that action needed to be taken by the Board to stop this procedure. In implementing the Board's motion on prohibiting blending stories to create personal recovery stories, definitions of the following words were reviewed: composite stories, blending, augmenting, and editing. It was felt that confusion over the terminology created confusion over what practices were being halted. After the committee shared its ideas, it wanted to listen to the Conference before drafting any final language or report. Wording was added to the Literature Committee Guidelines to assure that personal sharings remain faithful to the writer's intent.

Policy Committee reviewers approved the manuscript for the new Alateen how-to booklet titled, *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship: An*

*Unforgettable Adventure* as well as *Al-Anon is for Gays & Lesbians* and *Courage To Be Me - Living with Alcoholism*.

For the first time, an open Policy session was held at the 1996 World Service Conference to allow delegates to observe firsthand the workings of the committee. Guidelines for the Mock Policy Meetings were reviewed and distributed to the Conference members. The committee selected a member's letter expressing concerns regarding the wording of "Anonymity in Our Personal Growth" on page 68-69 of the 1995-96 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* as the topic for discussion at the Open Policy session at the Conference. After the discussion during the Open Policy session, it was decided to form an ad hoc committee to study the wording further and report back to the committee. As a result, the text on pages 68 and 69 were clarified as to the intent of anonymity.

A member from CA (N) wrote and requested that the Policy Committee study the issue of dual membership in accordance with the Traditions and Concepts. The committee agreed that this was a matter for the Conference to discuss since it had previously rejected changes in the policy by wide margins.

The ad hoc committee on developing a process for changing Steps/Traditions/Concepts requested clarification as to what the Policy Committee wishes to do with the proposed process developed and suggested by the ad hoc committee. After further discussion, the report from the ad hoc on changing the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts was received without further action.

An ad hoc committee was formed to study the wording on Page 75 regarding "Employees in Service" as a result of several letters received from members in CA (S). After extensive review and discussion, it was decided to leave the language as it currently is.

A Policy Committee member requested that the Al-Anon Declaration wording be changed to be more proactive. After discussion, no action was proposed.

A request for reprint permission of *Forum* articles from the Washington Area was denied.

A revision, by way of footnote, to the Twelve Concepts of Service Section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* was approved for clarification.

It was recommended that telephone numbers be added to the information sent by the person submitting articles to *The Forum* in order that they may be contacted if their article is chosen for inclusion on the Al-Anon/Alateen Home Page on the Internet. The postings of sharings on the Internet were expanded to include the cover, the back cover, and the calendar of *The Forum* in addition to the three features or articles already authorized earlier in the year.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Larry A., Chairperson

The committee presented a slate of Board officers, at-large Executive Committee members and Executive Committee chairperson to the Board in January. The committee also presented a proposed change to the standing committee guidelines regarding length of service on committees. A recommendation was made to have the vice chairperson attend all closed committee meetings during Board week (except the Nominating Committee, unless already a member), to provide the opportunity for the vice chairperson to be as informed as possible.

The committee held a special meeting at the Conference to suggest a slate of nominees to replace Phyllis M. as a trustee-at-large nominee. The committee met with the Conference Committee on Trustees dur-

ing the Conference to discuss and revise the application form for the Executive Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property Management. The selection process using the new résumé form for trustees-at-large was also reviewed.

The scoring process for the trustee-at-large form as well as the Executive Committee for Real Property Management was discussed, as new committee members have joined the committee this year. Six nominees for trustee-at-large and one nominee for Executive Committee for Real Property were selected in October. The trustee-at-large nominees will meet with the Board in January prior to the final three being nominated. The committee also reviewed the revised résumé forms and made grammatical and style corrections to the forms in keeping with the recommendations of the CCT. The committee also discussed that the officer résumé form is only used for Conference members after the Board nominates the candidate.

The Executive Director also reported on the variety of problems associated with the selection of at-large and advisory committee members. The recommendations of the Nominating Committee were reported to the Board of Trustees and appear in the Board of Trustee portion of this report.

### LONG RANGE STUDY PANEL

Marion W., Chairperson  
Sandra F., Secretary

The Board of Trustees assigned to the Long Range Study Panel the topics of reviewing and evaluating the new structure for the WSO, monitoring and evaluating the Five Year Plan and studying trends. The Panel prepared a Bell Curve presentation for the 1996 WSC outlining the declines in Al-Anon groups, in the distribution of literature and *Forum* subscriptions. Suggestions for reversing the trends were discussed and several areas held similar sessions within their area.

The Fellowship Focus Groups (FFGs) that had been developed in 1995 to implement goal #1 of the plan (leadership) were evaluated. They were positively received and following the WSC, nine other regional FFGs were selected from within different areas in each region to work on Goals #2 (evaluate our communication structure) and #4 (improve WSO internal operations).

In 1997, the Five Year Plan goal is to take an inventory of our service structure. An ad hoc committee was formed by the Board of Trustees to work with all Conference members in developing a procedure to conduct the inventory. In keeping with this goal, the AFG Service Plan titled "1997 The Year of Inventory" was developed.

In planning for the 1997 WSC, the Panel determined it will provide an update of the "Bell Curve," deliver a reportback on the AFG Service Plan, the status of the Five Year Plan and will discuss taking a structure-wide inventory.

### RELOCATION COMMITTEE

John B., Chairperson

The Relocation Committee monitored the progress of the building construction in Virginia Beach; computers were ordered, the telephone systems and interior signage selected. Job descriptions were finalized with the Executive Director in training and recruitment and hiring was begun both throughout the fellowship (for those positions requiring Al-Anon membership) and locally in the Virginia Beach area. A budget was established for new hires' relocation expenses, as this was not included in the original relocation projections. A meeting was set up with the national relocation consultant to talk to employees about their household moves and to keep costs in line. Bids were obtained to move the office.

The total estimated cost of relocation now is \$2,231,000 instead of the \$1,950,000 estimated as of April 1995; fewer long-term employees are relocating than originally estimated, creating higher severance costs than previously calculated and the phone system will be considerably more than the original estimate.

The move began in late May and in spite of advanced planning had several problems. Files were lost or arrived out of order; one printing press was dropped (our insurance carrier made appropriate adjustments); equipment did not arrive as originally planned; and the disposal of the office furniture and other materials in New York did not go as smoothly as forecast. The non-profit organization which had agreed to accept the furniture was unable to do so on our timetable. As the landlord was charging us additional rent for this period, the furniture and other materials were discarded. The Relocation Committee finished its work with the 1996 Conference.

The Executive Committee for Real Property Management visited the building in June and began its responsibility as landlord for the existing property. The final employee to be relocated is the Language Services Coordinator (French) who will be moving to Virginia Beach in early 1997.

## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

### **LEGAL**

The services of several attorneys have been utilized to assist us in several matters. Additionally, we found it necessary to confer with local counsel in Virginia and New York on matters relating to employment.

### **PENSION**

Dan Mazzola who provides the management of our pension plan met collectively with all non-relocating employees to inform them of pension distribution options upon separation from employment. He then met separately with each employee to determine their disbursement preference and counseled them on IRA rollover programs should they decide to keep their pension funds. He also pointed out that taking a cash contribution prematurely would result in a 20% withholding for all withdrawals and can result in additional penalties under the age of 59-1/2 years.

Funds were transferred from our mutual fund stock accounts to money market accounts to cover expected distributions to terminating employees. Continued counseling regarding the employees' need to follow up on rollover distributions was necessary. Some employees failed to complete the necessary paperwork to receive their funds by the end of 1996. It is believed that all terminating employees who wished to withdraw their pension funds at this time have done so.

The final audit of the pension was completed and the Pension Committee met during October Board week to review the status of the pension for the previous year. Employees received a notice outlining the return on their pension funds as required by law.

In late December, the Director of Business Services and the Personnel Manager met with employees interested in learning more about their eligibility to participate in tax-sheltered annuity accounts (403b accounts). Individual employees can designate a portion of their salaries to their designated 403b fund and avoid taxation on both the income and revenue generated from the investment until final withdrawal. This is a service provided to Al-Anon without cost or match by the employer.

### **AUDIT**

The auditor from Owen J. Flanagan and Company spent considerable

time conducting the annual audit. The Annual Reports for the Conference members were mailed prior to the Conference. Mr. Flanagan, who has not only been our auditor but a good friend to Al-Anon since our beginnings, passed away in early April. He will be greatly missed. The auditors began preliminary review of schedules and procedures in October and again in December in anticipation of beginning the auditing process in early February, 1997 for the 1996 year. Confusion with the computer system and delay in transferring accounting records to the Great Plains Dynamics System may result in higher than normal auditing fees for the 1996 audit in that several schedules that were prepared by the computer did not match actual transactions and had to be hand-reviewed and reconstructed.

## ***GROUP SERVICES***

***Sandra F., Director***

### **COMMITTEE**

*Ann H., Chairperson  
Sandra F., Director*

This committee began its three-year trial when it met during the 1996 WSC. It consists of twelve delegate members plus the Chairperson and the Director. Alateen and Archives staff and volunteers attend meetings without vote to provide information about Alateen and Archives and to obtain information about Al-Anon and Alateen groups as a whole. This committee provides a link between the WSO and the groups it serves. Delegate members bring the shared experiences of their areas so the committee can offer recommendations on how the WSO can best serve our membership. Prior to the 1996 WSC, a questionnaire was sent to the delegate members asking them to prioritize activities within the scope of Group Services. Alateen, Al-Anon information services and Group Records were the three top priorities.

Guidelines were reviewed for the Group Services, Archives and Alateen Advisory Committees; they were subsequently approved by the Board of Trustees. Communication between meetings included: a questionnaire on the development of the Seventh Tradition leaflet; another on guidelines as a whole and specifically those that fall within the purview of Group Services; and input on a new group records information form. A conference call meeting is planned for January, 1997.

### **SERVICE BOOKMARK**

The bookmark slated for new group packets outlines service positions at the group level. It was based on a prototype of one being developed by the Hawaii area. The delegate from Hawaii was contacted and permission was given from her area to adapt this service tool.

### **SEVENTH TRADITION LEAFLET**

A draft of a new leaflet is being reviewed by the Budget Committee based on input from the Group Services Committee. The committee suggested the leaflet delineate contributions to the various levels of service (group, district, Al-Anon information service and area) outlining what these service arms provide. It was also suggested group fund-raising ideas be included.

### **NEW GROUP KIT**

Every group that registers with the WSO is sent a new group kit, several pamphlets and the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. Work began on developing a new kit that includes a loose-leaf binder, format for a meeting and other information that responds to frequently asked questions and concerns. It is targeted for completion by the 1997 WSC.

### **GROUP SERVICES CORRESPONDENCE/CALLS**

Prior to the restructure of the WSO, correspondence and calls were handled geographically by various staff administrators. Group Services currently responds to communication from members, groups, DRs, AISs and areas. When responding, callers and writers were encouraged to work through their own structure. Responses that do not appear in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* or other publications were discussed during departmental staff meetings. Outside of routine questions and requests for information, correspondence and phone call trends mainly fell into three categories: 1) **Group/Meeting** problems such as: concern over dwindling numbers of members attending meetings and group growth; confusion about the section in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* that suggests that groups can identify and read a statement in their opening appropriate to their own group preferences; having Alateen-age members attend an Al-Anon meeting when there were no Alateen meetings available; long-time members becoming disillusioned with the way Al-Anon meetings are conducted today; lack of enthusiasm and interest in performing service work (groups, districts and areas share this issue); members tape recording the meetings and many calls asking why the AA Big Book cannot be considered as CAL in meetings. 2) **Dual Members**: many calls about dual members serving on an AIS board or Alateen conference boards. 3) **Group Funds**: inquiries about how, how much, and where to disperse group funds; outside contributions and memorial contributions by non-members; what determines qualifications for attendance scholarships to conferences and assemblies; tax exempt questions; theft of funds by treasurers; AA club affiliations and the amount charged by those clubs for rent; the use of group funds to have holiday parties and to buy anniversary pins.

### **MEMBER SERVICES**

#### **AL-ANON INFORMATION SERVICES/INTERGROUPS (AIS)**

The WSO responded to numerous questions, including requests for guidelines and manuals, concerns about liability and the role of the AIS in terms of the overall structure.

Group Services and Business Services are working together to combine the ID numbers of AIS and LDC offices that function as one unit at the same address in order to eliminate duplicate mailings and avoid confusion when placing orders or corresponding with the WSO.

Several Al-Anon members who own self-help bookstores questioned becoming an LDC in order to take advantage of the LDC discount and payment opportunities. They were informed that they don't meet the LDC criteria.

Two pilot projects were instituted to support the work of the AIS offices in Virginia Beach and the New York Intergroup. Letters to the local groups were sent from Group Services expressing the need to support their local service offices.

#### **GETTING IN TOUCH WITH AL-ANON/ALATEEN (S-23)**

This directory of Al-Anon information services contact numbers and addresses around the world was updated and printed twice this year. The directory was listed by several national self-help clearinghouses and is also available on the new WSO web site.

#### **SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED**

There were numerous requests for information on materials for the visually and hearing impaired. The WSO received several calls from the hearing impaired requesting the WSO obtain TTY TDD equipment so they can communicate directly.

There seems to be a trend of disabled members requesting literature that is simple to read and focuses on dealing with disabilities such as

the feeling of isolation, fear, loneliness along with the stories of their strength and courage to get beyond those barriers.

Our listing of agencies that have been granted permission to transcribe our literature into Braille, large print and cassette, (S-14) *Materials for the Visually Impaired*, was updated and reprinted.

### **LONE MEMBER SERVICE**

The move to Virginia Beach with the new database computer system created some problems with the Lone Member files. It took several months for Group Services to research, locate and update the over 500 Lone Members, Alateen Lone Members and contacts in the system.

There were several requests to expand the Lone Member service to the Internet in order to shorten the time to register Lone Members and facilitate correspondence between Lone Members and contacts. There have also been repeated requests to increase the frequency of publishing the Lone Member Letterbox. Lone Members who have sent contributions specifically for that purpose were informed of our policy of not earmarking funds. There has been an increase in homebound Lone Members who are disabled and are not able to go to meetings.

### **INMATE CORRESPONDENCE SERVICE**

Pleas were made for male contacts throughout the year in all WSO publications. A great deal of interest was generated during the October Open House and both men and women contacts increased approximately 25% this year.

Several inmates left the program due to their release or parole. Efforts were made to set them up with meetings and contacts in their home areas. There were 40 new inmates registered (26 men, 14 women) and 18 proposed.

### **GROUP RECORDS**

#### **DATA BASE**

Group Records, with the help of Technological Services, has been correcting most of the records imported from our data base in NY. Work is still required to correct records and make the fields more "user friendly" for providing information to our members. It is also difficult to retrieve statistical information.

#### **GROUP RECORDS 800 NUMBER CALLS**

The Executive Committee approved having a voice mail message on a trial basis so that callers can be directed to either Public Outreach, Group Records or to a recording that provides information to frequently asked questions. This facilitated callers being channeled to the appropriate source for help. It also saved staff time providing better response time and giving sufficient time to correct group records. The Executive Committee reviewed the system in December and extended the trial through April 1997.

#### **GROUP INFORMATION FORM**

A new group information form was reviewed and edited by the Group Services Committee. It was designed for simplicity and consistency in Group Records and replaces a variety of forms previously used for new group registration and group updates.

#### **DELEGATE PRINTOUTS**

Due to the inaccurate importing of data and other flaws in our computer system, there was a delay in providing printouts to some of the areas. New methods of updating information are being researched and a schedule was established for providing printouts in a timely manner.

## ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

In June, Group Records listed its first electronic meeting. There now are six meetings listed. There have been over 50 calls looking for information to access on-line meetings. Listing on-line meetings is in keeping with the Policy Committee decision of conducting a three-year pilot study of listing on-line meetings with the goal of eventual full registration.

	<u>1996</u>	<u>1995</u>
Information Services & GSOs	318	329
Literature Distribution Centers	207	201
Lone Members (US & Canada)	172	142
Al-Anon Groups Worldwide	28,065	26,819
Alateen Groups Worldwide	<u>3,040</u>	<u>2,867</u>
Totals	31,105	29,686

<u>1996</u>	<u>US</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>Overseas</u>
Al-Anon	15,660	1,914	10,491
Alateen	1,885	175	980
Information Services & GSOs	188	21	109
Literature Depots	167	22	18
Lone Members	149	23	78

<u>800 Number Calls</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1995</u>
	23,332	16,947

## ALATEEN

### ALATEEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Betty B., Chairperson  
Evalynn N., Associate Director

The Advisory Committee accepted the conceptual changes recommended by the former Alateen Committee to the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies regarding age limits of Alateen members. Work assignments were given to prepare for the next meeting. They included: development of proposals for establishing meetings at schools; researching appropriate literature for recommendation to schools; researching demographic information regarding the teenage population in specific areas to determine why Alateen membership is dropping. Part of the reason appears due to the shift in age of the population as a whole.

### ALATEEN AD-HOC COMMITTEE

The Board of Trustees established a committee to determine how to improve the safety of our younger members since Alateens, their sponsors and the WSO can be vulnerable to situations involved with child abuse. The committee determined that it is essential to raise the consciousness of the fellowship regarding these issues and that both Al-Anon and Alateen members need to work on solutions. The Board subsequently delegated further action to the Alateen Advisory Committee.

### ALATEEN RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT

Extended review by the Alateen Advisory and Executive Committees is in progress.

## A GUIDE TO ALATEEN SPONSORSHIP - AN UNFORGETTABLE ADVENTURE (P86)

This booklet made its appearance at the 1996 WSC. Four months after the booklet premiered, inventory showed that 7500 copies had been distributed. There has been overwhelmingly positive response from our membership regarding the contents of this booklet and applauding the former Alateen Committee for filling a long expressed need for this booklet. Order forms for the booklet are sent in every piece of Alateen correspondence, are included in Alateen conference packets, coordinator and sponsor packets.

### ALATEEN TALK

A new look for *Alateen Talk* premiered in the summer issue with the theme of "Change." Feedback in general has been favorable, particularly from Alateen members who have been responsive to the format and content. The fall issue featured the theme of "My Alateen Group and What it Means to Me." It also featured a word search puzzle in the "Younger Members" insert. Response to the Younger Members' insert has also been favorable. *Alateen Talk* sharing sheets for at least two issues in advance are mailed with each issue. The files are beginning to fill with up-to-date sharings on the requested topics. To date, the age of the youngest contributor is 4 years old. Her artwork is featured in the fall issue. Scheduled topics are: Winter 96/97 - Sponsors; Spring 97 - Alateens & Service; Summer 97 - Bridging the Gap Between Alateen & Al-Anon; Fall 97 - Slogans at Work and at Play; and Winter 97/98 - Family Recovery.

### ALATEEN COORDINATORS & SPONSORS

A mailing to all Alateen Coordinators introduced the new Associate Director of Group Services and the Assistant to the Director. Packets were sent to delegates in areas without coordinators. The packets included a letter outlining the goals of Alateen services, sharing sheets, a current roster, copies of *Alateen Talk*, etc. New coordinators are offered a complimentary copy of *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship* upon request. Several Alateen conference files maintained at the WSO, some over twenty years old, were sent to area coordinators for their area archives. The "Sponsors" page section in *Alateen Talk* has been expanded to include brief sharings from new sponsors. Welcoming letters and packets were sent to twenty incoming Panel 37 coordinators and one for a Panel 35 successor to a relinquished post. The welcoming form letter for new sponsors was redesigned and includes the name and phone number of the area Alateen Coordinator and is mailed to each new sponsor with an order form for *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship*. Each time a new group and sponsor is registered with WSO, an "FYI" (For Your Information) letter is sent to the area coordinator to encourage a follow-up contact with the sponsor.

The Associate Director of Group Services attended the P.O.S.S.E. Alateen sponsor conference in Garcia, TX in September. Contact was made with twenty-four sponsors and the East TX Alateen Coordinator. A workshop was conducted on Alateen Literature titled: Who Writes It?

### ALATEEN CORRESPONDENCE & PHONE CALLS

In all calls and letters about Alateen issues, contact with area Alateen Coordinators and area delegates was encouraged. An FYI letter was also sent to the area Alateen Coordinator and/or delegate with a copy of WSO's response encouraging follow-up. Correspondence and phone call trends fell into four specific categories: (1) **Abuse (sexual, verbal, and physical)**: by Alateen sponsors; older Alateens to younger Alateens; Alateens abusing the mandates of their meeting facilities. (2) **Sponsors**: co-sponsoring; dual members sponsoring without an Al-Anon member; problems with transitioning Alateens becoming sponsors too soon; sponsors not attending Al-Anon meetings; and the role of Al-Anon groups in resolving sponsor issues. (3) **Coordinators**: attending a meeting by virtue of their position and without the courtesy of a group conscience; attempting to resolve problems re-

ported to them and not being allowed into the meeting to facilitate solutions. (4) **Meetings:** increasing number of calls requesting information about setting up Alateen meetings within schools and youth facilities; where to find Alateen meetings; and how to start meetings. One school in East Texas sent a packet of letters from nine students wanting information about Alateen. Acknowledgments were sent to each student at the school's address and to the school staff for their efforts in mailing the requests.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ALATEEN SPONSOR QUESTIONNAIRE

The list of recommendations was prioritized, with a public information effort within Al-Anon regarding the importance of Alateen sponsorship ranking highest. To further this goal, the Alateen Advisory Committee approved a letter from an Alateen member in CT making a plea for sponsors. It was distributed to area Alateen Coordinators to use as a tool to attract Al-Anon members into sponsorship. Also underway by the Alateen Advisory Committee is to seek ways to involve district representatives in recruiting Alateen sponsors.

### ALATEEN LITERATURE

The Alateen Committee completed their responsibilities to the new Alateen book, *Courage To Be Me - Living with Alcoholism* in April and turned the project over to the Literature Committee. The new daily reader will also be handled by the Fellowship Communication Department.

### ALATEEN CONFERENCES

The Associate Director of Group Services or the Assistant to the Director of Group Services attended Alateen conferences in Virginia, Maryland, Mississippi, and North Carolina. Connection was made with 327 Alateens and 96 sponsors. Writing workshops and sponsor workshops were presented at each conference. Alateens were encouraged to increase their representation and participation at the district meetings and area assemblies.

### ALATEEN PI

The Director of Public Outreach and the Associate Director of Group Services were interviewed by phone by a reporter for the *Arizona Republic* for an extensive article about Alateen. The article focused on the need for sponsors and for literature geared toward the younger members. It also featured the new Alateen book *Courage To Be Me - Living with Alcoholism*.

## ARCHIVES

### COMMITTEE

Lorill W., Chairperson  
Sandra F., Director  
Barbara M., Archives Coordinator

Brainstorming sessions were conducted based on suggestions from the previous Archives Committee. A contest was held seeking a new Archives logo designed to maintain interest in our heritage; several area archivists responded with suggestions and the committee will select the logo when it meets in January.

### PAMPHLET ON CO-FOUNDERS

When Lois' Story was placed in *How Al-Anon Works...*, it was discontinued, leaving a pamphlet of Anne B. only. A free-lance writer who formerly helped set up finding aids for the WSO Archives in NY was selected to write the pamphlet. The Archives Coordinator supplied the writer with research material and a first draft is expected in January.

### ARCHIVAL DISPLAYS

One of the small display cabinets in the lobby was arranged with archival material and artifacts. It contained early literature, books,

pictures and some of the first 87 cards received from AA that prompted Lois and Anne to send the first letter. The display premiered at the Open House in October. Another display case was filled with photographs of Lois and Bill, the typewriter from the Clearing House and other memorabilia. These two display cases will contain original documents and feature different archival holdings based on suggestions from the Archives Committee.

### AREA ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS

The committee's focus early in the year was to determine which documents to retain and which to return to the areas. Holdings were returned to the respective areas upon request.

### PORTRAIT OF ANNE B.

The previous Archives Committee requested a painting of Anne B. to serve as a companion to the one of Lois. A companion painting was contributed by a member, approved by the committee and completed in time for the Open House. A copy of the portrait was sent to Anne B.'s daughter who sent a letter of appreciation and confirmed that it was an excellent likeness of her mother.

### ESTABLISHING ARCHIVES

During the early part of the year, each department accessioned its own material for possible transfer to Archives. Decisions were made concerning which holdings to retain and those to discard or return to the areas. It took several months after relocation to re-establish the Archives. Shelves from the old display case that originated in the WSO when it was located at 115 E. 23rd Street were missing and were replaced by our in-house maintenance person. Many items were framed or re-framed and put on display shelves in the room. Handouts were copied in readiness for guests to take. A member who is a calligrapher produced signs for the displays.

File cabinets have been inventoried and labeled. Cardex card files (our early method of group records information) have been reorganized and placed in file cabinets. Archives maintains a copy of publications each time they are reprinted. Missing publications were accessioned to the files containing literature.

Minutes from 1992-1996 of Board, Policy and Executive Committee were copied and put in boxes. They were also scanned into the computer for the years 1988 through 1996. All Conference Summaries through 1995 have been scanned and 80% have been edited as readable documents onto optical disk.

### RESEARCH REQUESTS

The majority were for group histories. Other notable requests included information for a doctoral dissertation; photos of WSO's locations—beginning with AA's 24th Street Clubhouse; the process for changing the Steps and Traditions; phrase "ambassadors in the field" pertaining to WSC delegates; numerous requests for copies of skits; clarification on whether "To Wives" and "The Family Afterward" from the AA Big Book were Conference approved; when were the slogans made official; and the history of the Al-Anon/Alateen Declaration.

## FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATION

Caryn J., Director

### STATUS OF PROJECTS

#### *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians*

The pamphlet was completed, copies provided to the delegates at the



WSC and distributed to the fellowship.

#### ***Courage To Be Me - Living with Alcoholism***

The manuscript was completed by the Alateen Committee and forwarded to the Literature Committee and Policy for final CAL approval. Production and publishing were completed in late December.

Literature distribution centers were sent advance notices of the book and pre-release features were published in *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* and *The Forum*.

#### **TWELVE/TWELVE/TWELVE (working title)**

##### ***Paths To Recovery - An-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts (proposed title)***

The manuscript was completed by the contracted writer and reviewed by both Literature Committees and Policy Committee reviewers. Staff worked with the writer to assure that each personal story in the manuscript was true to the writer's original sharing. Although it was considered generally acceptable by the reviewers, the decision was made to re-write and edit major portions of the book to bring it up to the standards Al-Anon members have been requesting. The re-write was completed in late December, and the manuscript was re-submitted to the committees and Policy reviewers for approval. It is hoped to have the book available to the fellowship in April 1997.

#### ***How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics***

In preparation for the second printing of this book, the Literature Committee completed a revision of the introduction to the story section of the book to indicate that some stories may reflect "combined experiences" of more than one person. Staff members made edit changes to correct errors in the first printing.

#### **Conference Approved Literature (CAL) Process**

As recommended by the Policy Committee, the process for changing the title of any piece of CAL was incorporated into the CAL Process.

#### **Restructure of Literature Committee**

The two new Literature Committees met together at the WSC to begin defining their duties. After a request from the delegates, Literature Committee guidelines for review of manuscripts were developed.

Resumés were reviewed for new advisory members of the two committees. At year end, eight of the ten committee slots have been filled. At the July meeting, again in a joint session, the various projects in progress were divided between the two committees. It was decided that new proposals will be presented to both committees for discussion and evaluation. Once a project is approved, it will be assigned to one committee for development and review.

#### **Literature Inventory**

In preparation for a thorough inventory of all Al-Anon literature, to begin in 1997, an inventory worksheet was developed with input from both Literature Committees. All areas in the U.S. and Canada will be asked to participate in the inventory process. Delegates will receive instructions for the first phase of the inventory at the 1997 World Service Conference.

#### **LITERATURE COMMITTEE I**

*Pat L., Chairperson*  
*Mary Lou M., Associate Director*

#### **ALATEEN EVERY DAY (working title)**

Development of a new daily reader for Alateen was authorized by the 1996 WSC. The working title ALATEEN EVERY DAY was selected. New and innovative sharing sheets were developed and distributed throughout our service structure via *Area Highlights* and *Alateen Talk*. Over the next two to three years, new sharing sheets will be used to generate participation from the fellowship. The first sharings (15 in

1996) to come in to the WSO have followed the suggested format and have powerful Alateen messages.

#### **ADDITIONAL PROJECTS - LITERATURE COMMITTEE I**

**WSC Brainstorming Review** - At the 1996 World Service Conference, all members participated in a brainstorming session to provide Fellowship Communication with guidance as we move towards the future. Superb ideas were generated and shared. The results were divided between the two Literature Committee for evaluation. Each suggestion assigned to Literature Committee I was reviewed and ranked. The committee will utilize the list in its work in 1997. It is noteworthy that a number of the top priorities are already in progress (the desire for more materials on our legacies and sponsorship, for example, are being addressed in the new book and in review of the sponsorship pamphlet).

**Review Of Pamphlets** - The committee has been assigned to review and offer direction on the following pamphlets:

**Sponsorship - What It's All About** - The committee was presented with a 1991 memo requesting consideration of an expanded piece on sponsorship. All committee members were sent an inventory sheet to utilize in reviewing the existing piece. Recommendations will be discussed in 1997.

**Al-Anon IS for Men and Does She Drink Too Much?** - A male member asked the committee to consider rewriting/revising/updating/combining these pieces as they are dated and written in the past tense. Committee members will be sent an inventory sheet to utilize in reviewing the existing piece. Recommendations will be discussed in 1997.

**Alateen's "Just For Today"** - Alateen members have stated that this is outdated and needs revision. The committee agreed. All committee members will be sent an inventory sheet to utilize in reviewing the existing piece. Recommendations will be discussed in 1997.

**Why Conference Approved Literature?** - The committee will begin review of this piece in 1997.

**Slogan Research** - After a request to add "Keep Coming Back" as an "official" Al-Anon slogan, it was agreed that research was needed on the history of our slogans. Group Services completed the historical research and provided us with documentation. There has never been a formal process in place for separate approval of a slogan—they have become slogans through general use and acceptance. The consensus of the committee was that if a statement is in Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature, it has been through an approval process.

#### **LITERATURE II**

*Nancy B., Chairperson*  
*Caryn J., Director*

#### **INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALITY (working title)**

Sharings from around the world are beginning to give this piece a unique life of its own. The first draft was reviewed and comments submitted to the writer. Additional sharings from overseas countries were received as the result of a second request for sharings sent mid-year to all GSOs. It is still believed that this piece will be ready for the 1998 International Convention in Salt Lake City.

#### **ADDITIONAL PROJECTS - Literature Committee II**

**Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism** - Committee discussion on the possible revision of this book was tabled awaiting the results of a Public Outreach Committee survey on the effectiveness of this piece. At year end, Public Outreach provided a recommendation to the Literature Committee for discontinuance of the book.



**Writers Guidelines:** Writers guidelines for future free-lance contracts were drafted and reviewed by committee members. Final guidelines will be available for Executive Committee review in early 1997.

**Declaration research:** Group Services researched the archives and provided us with a history of the Al-Anon Declaration. All members of the committee agreed that final decisions pertaining the use of the Declaration should be made at the 1997 WSO full standing committee meeting.

**Review Of Pamphlets** - The committee has been assigned to review and offer direction on *This is Al-Anon*. All committee members were sent an inventory sheet to utilize in reviewing the existing piece. Recommendations will be discussed in 1997.

**WSC Brainstorming Review:** The committee prioritized their assigned ideas and selected eight topics as priorities to discuss further in 1997.

### OTHER LITERATURE ACTIVITIES

#### Project Approval/Requests

Throughout the year numerous pieces of Al-Anon literature were reviewed and approved for re-printing. Address changes are made with each request as well as known typographical errors. In cooperation with the Publications Department, many pieces were processed efficiently.

#### Requests for Reprints

Numerous requests to reprint from both our literature and *The Forum* were processed. Some requests were in proper format for approval; others were informed of the process and mailed appropriate forms.

Several writers of new books on alcoholism, Alateen, the family and Al-Anon asked for permission to use quotations from copyrighted material. Each request was thoroughly reviewed and in some cases denied. Two publishers requested use of Al-Anon's or Alateen's name within their titles - permission was denied.

Numerous requests for reprinting Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions were referred to AA. Once they have AA's approval, Al-Anon then will consider the request. Members requesting permission to publish entire CAL pamphlets or direct quotations from CAL on the Internet were informed that the Internet committee was in the process of establishing policy and at this time permission was only being granted for pieces approved by the Policy Committee in 1995.

#### Communication

*Inside Al-Anon Xtra* premiered with the August/September issue. With the inclusion of "Inside Al-Anon" in *The Forum*, this new newsletter was developed as a communication tool. Published six times a year, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* is mailed to all English speaking groups to keep them informed of important news from the WSO and the Al-Anon fellowship. There were mailing problems with the first issue, including a break in anonymity, but it is now believed that the problems have been worked out.

**Correspondence** - Throughout the year Al-Anon members shared their interest, concerns and ideas pertaining to Al-Anon literature. With the relocation, correspondence was backlogged and required an extensive effort on the part of the Fellowship Communication team to catch up. The goal is now to respond within 48 hours to all members' letters. Letters regarding the pamphlet *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians* and questions and comments about blending were the primary topics.

**Phone Calls** - Throughout the year, questions from Al-Anon members, area Literature Coordinators and the general public concerning literature were addressed. Questions pertaining to reprint authorization, the CAL process, correct styling and use of literature at meetings were the most common.

**Literature Coordinators** - Mailings to Literature Coordinators kept them informed on staff changes, literature news and development of new "Cal workshops."

#### Cal is for CAL!

Cal, a delightful new cartoon character, was formally introduced in person at the WSO open house as well as being featured in the November *Forum*. In preparation for the Regional Service Seminar in November, Fellowship Communication team members prepared a one page flyer entitled, "Cal's CAL Workshop on How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics." As the character Cal develops, it is our intent to create a series of workshops on different pieces of Al-Anon literature for use at Al-Anon/Alateen meetings.

#### Miscellaneous

##### Inside Al-Anon Index

An index of topics discussed in *Inside Al-Anon* was maintained at the WSO up until 1989. The Fellowship Communication Clerk completed a project to fully update this index. It has proven to be useful several times just in its developmental stages in providing research on topics such as use of the Lord's Prayer or the *One Day At a Time In Al-Anon* in meetings.

#### The Forum

##### THE FORUM MAGAZINE

The response to the "new" *Forum*, introduced in May 1996, has been very positive. In its new format, the magazine now includes "Inside Al-Anon," interviews with staff and other members, a new member's letter section called "Zip 23454" and "Talk to Each Other," a page providing a forum for members to share their questions, concerns, problems and successes with other readers. The Forum Coordinator continues to look for new and exciting ways to present *The Forum* to the fellowship.

##### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Connie D., Editorial Advisory Committee Chairperson

Caryn J., Director

Mary Lou M., Associate Director

Pat Q., Coordinator

To effect a smooth transition, permission was granted for members whose terms were expiring to remain on the committee and rotate off over the course of the year. Two members were replaced in July and two in October to complete this transition. The committee agreed to increase the number of sharings reviewed per quarter to increase the editor's stock of approved manuscripts and shorten the length of time between submission and printing.

New committee guidelines were drafted to clarify the committee's role. Its primary responsibility is as "the chief guarantor of the magazine's quality and that editorial content is consistent with Al-Anon philosophy." The committee reviews and grades sharings submitted by members, critiques previous issues and makes suggestions regarding reader surveys, promotional materials and timely topics for consideration.

##### STATUS OF PROJECTS

A survey of subscriptions to determine which of our subscription forms have generated the most effective subscription response was completed. A report was provided to all committee members.

*Forum* subscribers were asked to complete and mail to the WSO survey forms regarding the new design. An extensive report from the responding surveys regarding the changes to *The Forum* was provided to the Board and updated results to the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee. Minor changes were made in subsequent issues based on

members comments and suggestions.

Improvements are continually being made in processing the sharings submitted by members for consideration by the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee. A detailed guideline was developed on how sharings are processed for review by the committee and how sharings are filed both on computer as well as in manuscript review format.

A data base retrieval system was developed for those sending sharings to *The Forum*. All persons who submitted a sharing since 1982 are in the data base.

### NOTEWORTHY FEATURES

A local photographer was selected to provide feature photos for the magazine. Cover photos were selected for the November and December issues from his work. Additionally, the photographer is working on custom photos maintaining a spiritual (not religious) recovery tone. He was supplied with Al-Anon/Alateen books for additional ideas. His idea of photographing Alateen books with a skateboard was enthusiastically received. *The Forum* also now invites submissions of photography from Al-Anon members.

Design improvements made in the second half of the year include: increasing type size and use of shading modified for improved readability; using the Al-Anon logo to denote the end of a feature story; noting names of writers and where they are from at the beginning of feature stories (the reasoning is that when we share at meetings, we introduce ourselves first and then share our story.); including the states where writers of feature articles are from in the table of contents; expanding the calendar to two pages; moving the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions from the back cover to the inside front cover, publishing one legacy monthly and including the Twelve Concepts in the rotation.

Presentation changes: the back cover page now includes a photograph and one of our slogans, the Serenity Prayer, The Al-Anon Declaration, Declaration of Unity, or quote from conference approved literature (CAL); the logo used on the front of *The Forum* was reduced in size to enhance appreciation of the cover photo. Cal was introduced as a feature character; "Reflections" was reinstated as "Cal's Reflections" using quotes from Al-Anon CAL. Poetry is now accepted for the Alateen page only.

Guest editorials were written by retiring staff, relocating staff, a delegate, a trustee and a district representative. "We're All Ears" interviews included the WSO's new Executive Director and department directors as well as a humorous talk with Cal, Al-Anon's newest cartoon character.

The "Talk To Each Other" page included topics such as: Why has Al-Anon stopped growing?; Why is distribution of literature dwindling?; on line meetings; how to help a declining group and tolerance and acceptance of others' beliefs in Al-Anon. The greatest response was to a letter from a member from South Carolina who was experiencing racial discrimination. Sixty four responses were received and forwarded to the writer. Letters were received from New Zealand, Japan, Australia, British Columbia, Quebec and many U.S. states. Many encouraged her to seek out another meeting, to confront the group and/or to start a meeting of her own. Others spoke of discrimination they had experienced because of age, race, financial status, religion or sexual orientation. Referrals to "cliques" in Al-Anon were common. The love found in these responses was exceptional. Some of these letters will appear in the January, 1997 issue of *The Forum*.

### COMMUNICATIONS

Numerous complaints were received throughout the year regarding

renewal notices and other subscription errors. Changes were made early in the year to the renewal notices and efforts continue to resolve mailing/subscription problems. The Customer Services department by year-end has resolved the majority of the problems.

Mailings to area *Forum* Coordinators included a staff introduction letter, ideas for conducting a *Forum* writing workshop, and additional (new) subscription forms.

An EAP officer from the New York City Police department requested 500-700 copies of *The Forum* for training purposes at an upcoming event. 500 copies were sent in cooperation with Public Outreach.

### Strategic Planning and Goal Setting

A detailed monthly check-off sheet was created by team members to assure that all of the intricate parts of assembling a manuscript are completed prior to mailing the disk to the designer.

A new (local) designer was engaged and began working on the February 1997 issue.

All goals for subscription increases were exceeded substantially. Since January, subscriptions have increased by 10,000 copies, or 31 percent.

### ***CARRYING THE MESSAGE***

#### **A PLAN FOR INCREASING THE USE AND AVAILABILITY OF AL-ANON LITERATURE**

*Howland R., Chairperson*

*Nancy B., Trustee*

*Pat L., Trustee*

*Caryn J., Director*

*Mary Lou M., Associate Director*

*Pat Q., Forum Coordinator*

After several drafts, incorporating input from all committee members, the "Carrying the Message" plan was distributed to the Literature Committees for feedback and review. The plan is a "living document" and will continue to evolve. The intent is to lay a foundation of outreach to families and friends of alcoholics by assuring that they are aware of the recovery found in our written material. The focus of the plan is to increase the use and availability of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature within Al-Anon meetings, in outreach activities and for members with limited access.

## ***PUBLIC OUTREACH***

*Phyllis M., Director*

Following relocation to Virginia Beach and implementation of the new trial structure, the Public Information (PI), Cooperating with the Professional Community (CPC), and Institutions committees were combined into one service (Public Outreach) and subdivided into the Public Outreach, Outreach to Professionals Advisory and National Public Information Canada (NPIC) Committees with individual trustee chairs.

### ***PUBLIC OUTREACH***

#### **COMMITTEE**

*Margaret M., Chairperson Public Outreach Committee*

*Felix M., Chairperson Outreach to the Professionals Advisory Committee*

*Phyllis M., Director*

### STATUS OF PROJECTS

**Public Outreach Workplan and Vision Statement:** A departmental plan establishing long and short range goals was reviewed by the committees. In conjunction with the plan, the service team adopted "Attraction and Commitment" as its vision statement.

**Al-Anon May PI Birthday Month:** A leaflet with an annual calendar of outreach activities was distributed.

**October Institutions Month Pilot Project, Al-Anon Can Help Pamphlets:** A leaflet using the 1996 WSC theme, Leadership - A Special Trust and the pilot project was distributed. A questionnaire, Send Us Your Comments, was sent to participants.

**Mailings:** Mailing labels were obtained for Police Chiefs in UT and NC; Employee Assistance Professionals; Elementary School Principals; and Law Enforcement Officers.

**Health Fair Service Sheet:** In response to members' requests, an interim guide was prepared.

**Al-Anon and Alateen Membership Survey and 1996 Leaflet (S-29):** Delegates distributed surveys to three percent (488) of the Al-Anon groups and ten percent (160) of the Alateen groups, selected on a random basis. A final reportback and a summary of tabulated data were received from Wolf/Altschul/Callahan, Inc. Recommendations to enhance the Membership Survey leaflet and survey questionnaires were made by the committee.

**Press Releases:** The following were distributed to PI Coordinators: Senior Outreach; May Birthday; Relocation and 45th Anniversary.

**Check It Out Posters (M-55 and M-56):** The new posters were produced and distributed in English. Spanish and French translations were made at the end of the year.

**"Ask Yourself" Radio and TV Public Service Announcements (PSAs):** Production of the TV and radio PSAs was completed. Separate Canadian TV and radio PSAs were produced using the NPIC office address and 800 number to conform with Canadian broadcasting laws. Complimentary copies of the PSAs were distributed to 1500 radio and 350 TV stations in the USA; in Canada, to 10 TV stations and Radio Canada. A PSA Pilot Project was designed to track air play time by city, state/province for 26 weeks. Area PI Coordinators received complimentary TV PSAs. In addition, districts in five US areas were asked to form local focus groups and were offered a free copy of the TV PSA upon request.

**Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism:** Committee members reviewed the format of the book and agreed to forward to the Literature Committee the recommendation that the book not be revised. The committee further stated that the book in its current form is not a useful resource for professionals.

**Al-Anon/Alateen World Wide Web Site:** Phase One of an electronic presence on the Internet was approved by the Board of Trustees for a six-month trial basis. A graphic designer and secured host/server were selected. The site was developed from the list of materials authorized by the Board of Trustees for publication on the Internet. It was launched for the Open House on October 12, 1996. At year end, it had been accessed 4,010 times in the USA, Canada, and 28 countries outside of North America. Contents focus on potential newcomers and professionals. The Al-Anon and Alateen domains were registered. The website address is: <http://www.al-anon.alateen.org>.

**Alcoholism Can Tear A Family Apart Poster (M-32):** Ideas for modifying and updating the poster were developed by the committee. Use of the revised poster is also planned as the graphic art work for new exhibit booths.

**Al-Anon Speaks To You, The Professional (P-48):** After reviewing the content, it was the consensus of the Public Outreach and Advisory to Professionals Committees to print a one-year supply as an

interim measure to allow the committees time to develop alternatives.

**Military Outreach Project:** A long range goal of enhancing communication and outreach to the military began with the US Department of the Navy, Washington, DC. The Navy expressed an interest in a cooperative effort to carry Al-Anon's message. In preparation for the project, the committee reviewed the contents of the Military Packet (K-25) and made recommendations to Fellowship Communication. A special sleeve for military professionals is under consideration.

### NEWSLETTERS

**Al-Anon In Institutions, Winter, 1995-96:** The final issue was produced and distributed.

**Al-Anon Speaks Out, Winter, 1995-96 and Summer, 1996 Issues and Mailing List:** Two issues of the newsletter were produced and distributed. Following relocation, 25 professional categories were entered into the database for the development of targeted mailings. Since relocation, entry of over 3000 new subscribers has been completed.

### AD MATS

**National Wellness Directory:** A complimentary ad was published.

**National Student Assistance Magazine, August, 1996 Issue:** The poster, Alcoholism Can Tear A Family Apart, was published in the "Back To School" issue.

### COOPERATION WITH OUTSIDE ENTITIES

**Presentations were made at the following events:** University of Utah School on Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies, Salt Lake City, UT; Rutgers 1996 Summer School of Alcohol Studies, New Brunswick, NJ; National Association for Native American Children of Alcoholics, Orlando, FL; National Institute Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), Department of Health and Human Services, Bethesda, MD; and National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Cleveland, OH.

**Meetings with Staff:** NY Department of Corrections, Albany, NY; Jewish Alcohol and Chemically Dependent Foundation (JACS), NY, NY.

**Literature and Materials:** Children of Alcoholics Foundation (COA), NY, NY; American Association of Health Plans; and National Indian Child Welfare Association, Albuquerque, NM; and Department of Juvenile Justice, MD.

**Resource and Agency Directories:** Prevention Network of MI and National Runaway Switchboard.

**Getting In Touch Disk:** The National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) was sent a disk of information service listings for their on-line service along with 5,000 pieces of literature for distribution.

### COOPERATION WITH THE MEDIA

**Publications:** Notable resource listings and information were requested by *Woman's Day*; *The World Almanac*; *A Physicians Guide*; *Hazelden*; *Chicken Soup for the Soul*; 1997 Children's Magazine Market; the ND Senior Info-Line; and *Senior Scholastic Magazine*.

**Film:** Limiere Films requested posters for use in its movie, *Touch*.

**TV:** The Executive Director and Director met with a reporter and toured Channel 13 WVEC, Norfolk, VA. A literature display was sent to Viacom Productions, Inc. for filming of an episode in a medi-

cal center waiting room for The Center and Missamy Productions, Inc. for a USA Network film, *Hide and Seek: The Joanne Jensen Story*. Verification of the year that Al-Anon was founded, the first names and surname initials of our cofounders were requested by the producers of the quiz show *Jeopardy*. Lisa Brokaw, country western singer, produced a PSA about Al-Anon and Alateen. News Talk, a cablevision show for high school students, requested Alateen information.

**Radio:** A 20 minute interview was held by the Director of Membership Outreach and Voice of America for the Republic of Czechoslovakia. The Executive Director was interviewed by National Public Radio, NY, NY.

**Newspapers:** Clippings utilizing the senior outreach press release were sent by members. *The Globe*, Sioux City, IA, published an article about Al-Anon for senior citizens.

**Internet:** Various commercial and not-for-profit organizations requested information about the WSO website and permission to include Al-Anon/Alateen contact information and catalogs in their World Wide Web sites.

#### PARTICIPATION AT CONFERENCES

**Exhibits:** The booths were sent to 12 national conference/conventions in the USA. Due to their age and condition, two of the three booths became inoperable and approval was received to obtain table top and free standing booths as replacements. An interim graphic display was created with enlarged covers of books and pamphlets. A new graphic display has been proposed using the Alcoholism Can Tear A Family Apart revised poster graphic.

**Coordinators:** Prior to relocation, cover letters informing the coordinators about the implementation of the new structure, the new staff and change of address cards were sent.

#### PROJECTS

**CPC** - cooperation with PI Coordinators on the Fellowship PSA Project.

**Public Information** - Senior Outreach; May Birthday PI Month; Summer Outreach; Back to School and 45th Anniversary.

**Institutions** - Send Us Your Comments, Al-Anon Can Help Pamphlets; "Bridge to Hope Correctional Facilities Project;" and October Institutions Month Al-Anon Can Help Pamphlets Pilot Project. Conference Call: Fourteen Institutions Coordinators participated in a call focused on overcoming the barriers of fear, apathy, and lack of volunteers, the new WSO Public Outreach service, and the October Institutions Month Pilot Project.

#### COMMUNICATION

**Public Outreach Mailing Packets:** Contents of general, adult children, men, parents, and Alateen PI packet contents were evaluated. As a result, postage costs were decreased from \$1.05 to 32 cents per envelope and a savings in literature is being realized. Contents of packets for professionals was cut back and postage reduced from \$1.05 to 78 cents per packet.

**Public Outreach 800 Number:** 11,525 total calls were received in comparison to 7,372 calls for the previous year, representing an increase of 64%. A benefit of the new WSO departmental structure is that mailing of PI and CPC introductory materials to callers is occurring on the same day.

In the first and second quarters, there were a total of 4,187 calls. Following relocation, a database with daily recaps was set up for the following categories to quantify uses of the 800 numbers: PI; New-

comer; CPC; Members/Meeting Information/Literature Orders/*Forum*/etc.; Requests, Other Organizations; AA Inquiries.

In October, in cooperation with Group Services, an automated attendant for the 800 numbers was activated on a three-month trial basis as a management tool to expedite calls and maximize service. As a result, approximately 400 calls previously directed to Public Outreach for group meetings and miscellaneous information were redirected to the appropriate department.

As a result, there were marked declines in the number of members using the 800 numbers for purposes other than the intended use and a noticeable decrease in unrelated calls from the general public. Voice mail received after business hours was tallied separately to quantify the types of calls and hang-ups. A complete recap of calls is planned for 1997.

**Members Requests:** The Attracting and Cooperating (S-40) leaflet was sent to clarify the Eleventh Tradition with particular regard for use of group funds to announce meeting information in local newspapers. A member inquired about the availability of posters suitable for bus or subway display. Members also sought PI workshop formats and suggestions for newspaper articles.

#### NATIONAL PUBLIC INFORMATION CANADA (NPIC)

Margaret M., Chairperson

Phyllis M., Director

Georgette G., NPIC Office Manager

#### STATUS OF PROJECTS

**Public Outreach Workplan:** Outreach in Canada is enhanced by the workplan. The NPIC Office Manager is part of the Public Outreach Team and is included in goal planning. Weekly minutes from team meetings are provided along with biweekly briefings on service activities.

**"Ask Yourself" TV and Radio Public Service Announcements:** The new PSAs were produced in English with the NPIC Public Outreach 800 number and labeled with the NPIC address to conform to Canadian bylaws for broadcasting. An application for registration was submitted to the Telecaster Committee of Canada and a telecaster number was assigned to each TV PSA.

**Mailing List, National Defense:** A mailing list for future military packet mailings has been obtained in conjunction with the USA military outreach project.

#### PARTICIPATION AT CONFERENCES

**Exhibits:** Six displays featuring the exhibit booth and one take-one table of literature were provided at national conferences and an annual AA Convention in Quebec.

#### NEWSLETTER

**Al-Anon Speaks Out, Canadian Bulletin:** Four thousand copies of the 1996 issue were sent to PI Coordinators for distribution at local conferences and workshops. Sixty-two English and 28 French translation copies of the Domestic Violence Reprint were sent in response to an article announcing its availability. Forty-nine requests for information (introductory literature packet) were received. Text for the 1997 issue was compiled and includes a postage-paid return card offering a complimentary copy of *Al-Anon is for Adult Children of Alcoholics* and an order form for the book, *From Survival to Recovery*, along with a request for a continuing subscription.

#### MEDIA

**French TV Public Service Announcements:** The 1994 "Cocktail Party" and "Birthday Party" PSAs were translated and sent to Radio

Canada Headquarters in Montreal, Quebec, for a one-year TV and radio campaign. A reportback of dates and times of airplay is being provided.

**Laurentian Cable TV:** Fifty-two requests were received in response to an announcement showing the Three C's and offering a free copy of *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism*. The same announcement will also be included in the weekly TV Guide for one year.

#### AD MATS

**Children's Safety Guide of Canada:** A full page bilingual Alateen ad mat was produced; distribution was 150,000.

#### OTHER ACTIVITIES

153 English and 42 French literature Newcomer Kits were sent in response to telephone and mail inquiries. 11 packets were prepared for school projects. 198 calls were received on the 24-hour PI 800 number.

## MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

*Mary Ann K., Director*

### CONFERENCE

#### COMMITTEE

*Skip L., Chairperson*

*Pat S., Alternate Chairperson*

*Susan A., Associate Director, Conference*

The committee finalized plans for the 1996 World Service Conference, analyzed feedback from Conference attendees, and began plans for the 1997 World Service Conference.

#### MAILINGS TO CONFERENCE MEMBERS

During the first quarter, pertinent material for the 1996 World Service Conference was mailed. Subsequent mailings included material related to the 1997 World Service Conference as well as newsletters and new material. Public service announcements and copies of letters to coordinators were distributed.

#### CONFERENCE PREPARATION

From January through May, activities focused on coordinating and wrapping up the 1996 World Service Conference. Material was compiled for World Service Conference members and arrangements with the Stamford Hotel & Towers were finalized. The remainder of the year involved negotiations with the Sheraton Oceanfront Hotel and preparations for the 1997 WSC.

#### CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Over 3,000 complimentary copies of the Summary were sent to current delegates for distribution to area world service committees. More than 500 were sent to past delegates, past trustees and other WSO Conference members. Current delegates were sent a personal copy. Due to a printing error, a missing page (65a & 65b) was printed and distributed.

#### ELECTION ASSEMBLIES/PANEL 37 (1997-1999)

Panel 37 delegates were elected by their areas in the fall of 1996. After each delegate's name was received, a welcome letter was sent with pertinent material. AWSC forms were sent to outgoing delegates to complete at their election assemblies and mail to the WSO.

#### DELEGATE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Because of the new structure, the Conference Committee decided to change the name "standing" committees to "delegate" committees. New delegates' committee assignments will be based on past delegates' committee assignment, number of delegates from the same region on the committee, new delegate's preference and timeliness of the return of the form.

#### EQUALIZED EXPENSE FUND

The Executive Committee designated the 1997 Equalized Expense at \$900 US with subsequent Board approval. Full cost of attending the Conference is \$1200. As of December 15, 1996, payments have been received from half of the areas.

#### ASK IT BASKET (AIB)

Questions and answers from the 1996 World Service Conference were printed in the Conference Summary. Because of the time that is taken away from the Conference to answer Ask-It-Basket questions, the 1997 World Service Conference will follow a different procedure.

#### REGIONAL TRUSTEE (RT) PROCEDURES

A cover letter, voting procedures and resumes of RT candidates from US South Central, US Southwest and US Northwest were sent to all voting and nonvoting Conference members prior to the RT nomination session at the 1996 World Service Conference.

RT's elected were: Blanche M., US South Central; Ann H., US Northwest and Nancy B., US Southwest.

Material was distributed at the 1996 World Service Conference to area delegates in the Canada East, Canada Central and Canada West regions as these regions submitted candidates' names for nomination at the 1997 World Service Conference.

The RT candidates' names submitted are: **Canada East** - Catherine J., Bernice McL., alternate, Newfoundland/Labrador. There were no candidates from Quebec (E), Quebec (W) or Atlantic Provinces. **Canada Central** - Louise R., Manitoba and Tom C., Ontario (S). There was no candidate from Ontario (N). **Canada West** - Marjorie S., Saskatchewan. There were no candidates from Alberta/North West Territories or British Columbia/Yukon.

The following delegates were selected to participate in out of region 1997 RT nominations:

**Canada East** - Colleen R., Minnesota (N). Alternate: Penny R., Washington. **Canada West** - Madeline J., Mississippi. Alternate: Juanita C., Illinois (S). **Canada Central** - Ben R., Saskatchewan. Alternate: Cieni P., Puerto Rico.

The names of the voting trustees will be drawn at the January 1997 Board meeting. Each Conference member will be sent a set of resumes to be brought to the 1997 World Service Conference for insertion in their Conference Notebook.

#### 1997 WSC

**Theme** - Communication - Our Hope for the Future

**Dates** - April 13-17, 1997. By action of the Board of Trustees, the length of the Conference will continue to be five days.

**Opening Breakfast** - Sunday, April 13 at 7:30 a.m. A concluding breakfast will be served on Friday, April 18.

**Opening Session** - Sunday, April 13 at 8:30 a.m. in Cape Charles/Cape Hatteras (General Session Room).

**Visit to the WSO** - On Friday, April 18 at 10:30 a.m. trolleys will depart for the WSO and will return to the hotel after lunch.

**Three Minute Talk Theme** - Outgoing delegates were invited to present a three minute talk on the Conference theme: Communication - Our Hope for the Future. Outgoing delegates selected as spiritual speakers will be given the option of not presenting a three minute talk.

**Timely Topics/Agenda Items** - Conference members will submit their questions to the WSO prior to the Conference. Topics will be sorted in advance. Through a vote, Conference members will select four topics for open discussion. Remaining topics will either be sent to the Ask-It-Basket or addressed in workshops and reported back to the Conference.

**Meet the New Structure** - As a departure from standing committee presentations, the 1997 Conference will feature each department through an overview of the new structure. Additional sessions will be held in breakout rooms where Conference members can visit with staff and volunteers involved in the six departments and an interactive dialogue can take place.

**Taping** - Bud Smith and Russell Cook will record the World Service Conference. Audio tapes of the three minute and spiritual speakers' talks will be available to Conference members.

**New Conference Member Orientation** - A teleconference for new members is planned for March 8, 1997. An orientation meeting is scheduled for Saturday evening, April 12, at 5:00 in the Henry II Room.

**Overseas Representation** - A letter was sent to all GSOs inviting them to the World Service Conference. Mexico has shown an interest in attending.

**Delegate Committee Reportbacks** - will be brought to the WSO, compiled and mailed to members following the World Service Conference.

**Leadership Workshops** - will be held in response to Al-Anon's Five Year Plan.

**Complimentary Tapes** - will be given to the three minute and spiritual speakers.

**Conference Notebook** - (formerly Conference Brochure) Material mailed from the WSO prior to the Conference will not be duplicated in the Notebook. The material to be brought to the World Service Conference for inclusion in the Notebook will be stamped "FOR WSC NOTEBOOK."

**1998 WSC Site** - Site visits were made to eighteen hotels in the Hampton Roads area.

#### NEWSLETTER

*Area Highlights* is a compilation of area coordinators' reports, articles from WSO staff and delegates and excerpts from area newsletters. Delegates, trustees, district representatives, area coordinators, newsletter editors and area chairpersons receive the newsletter. Approximately 3000 newsletters are mailed quarterly with inserts.

#### ADMISSIONS/HANDBOOK

##### SUBCOMMITTEE

Mary A-T., Chairperson  
Susan A., Associate Director, Conference

A memo was sent to the Board to approve the seating of nonvoting members at the 1996 Conference including newly hired directors and associate directors with no voice nor vote. With delegate input, the committee has developed two new pamphlets for group and district representatives entitled, "Joys of Service." A chart in the Handbook was reviewed and revised, and definitions for "Emerging National Structures" and "Board of Trustees" were drafted for addition to the Handbook.

#### OFFICE PROCEDURES

Correspondence and telephone inquiries regarding area concerns were answered daily. The new Members Only database was updated with correct names and addresses of delegates, past delegates, past trustees and district representatives. Area newsletters were read and articles of interest were excerpted for *Area Highlights*.

#### 1998 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Ric B., Chairperson  
Mary Ann K., Coordinator

July 2-5, 1998

Theme: "Our Window of Hope"  
Salt Lake City, Utah

#### EVENTS

Al-Anon Parade and Language of Love Meeting will take place at Delta Center Friday night. Saturday night's big meeting at the Delta Center will be immediately followed by a dance at the Convention Center and Sunday morning's big meeting at the Delta Center will officially close the Convention. During the day on Friday and Saturday simultaneous workshops focusing on recovery and service will be held at the Convention Center, the Marriott and the Doubletree hotels. Thursday's events will consist of registration, hospitality, entertainment in the hospitality area and rap sessions in the evening for early arrivals.

#### HOST COMMITTEE

Glena C. and Roberta A., Host Committee Chairs, met with members of the Planning Committee during their visits to the city. At a fund raising dinner attended by 200 AA and Al-Anon members held on October 26th, the Executive Director was the Al-Anon speaker and a local AA member shared her experience.

#### CONTRACTS

To determine the information needed for registration including registration costs, housing and meeting space cost, the committee is working on proposed contracts with 31 hotels and one university; a destination management company for shuttle and tours; the Convention Center and Delta Center for meeting space; a registration company; a housing firm; and a decorator for signs, banners, carpet, staging, etc.

#### AA

AA members at our Al-Anon Convention will have the opportunity to attend meetings coordinated by the General Service Office in New York. AA will send three staff and seven members of their General Service Board. A pre-convention trip in 1997 will include the AA staff.

#### PLANNING COMMITTEE

Members are Ric B., Executive Director, Richard Keilly, Business Services Manager, Mary Ann K. and Carole K., recently retired staff and volunteer consultant. Recently Susan A. joined the committee as backup to the coordinator.

#### PRODUCTION

Letterhead was designed by our in-house graphic artist using a logo created for the event. The production department is working on a

schedule to accomplish all the print jobs necessary in 1997 to promote the convention.

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mary Ann K., Chairperson

### GOAL

This celebration is to highlight the 50th Anniversary of Al-Anon in ways that will include as many members as possible and increase public awareness of the long-term and worldwide nature of Al-Anon. In order to achieve this goal, another International Convention was considered by the Board at the 1995 April meeting which was open to delegates. In view of Al-Anon's International Convention and our participation at AA's Internationals, it was agreed that local and regional events held during the year (2001) would allow more members to join in the celebration.

### PLAN

Ideas were received from WSC delegates at the 1996 Conference and overseas structures were asked by mail for their ideas. The working theme, "50 Years of Passing It On" was considered along with other ideas. The committee has scheduled that an overall plan be written for events that should span the year 2001. The committee anticipates presenting this plan, including as many ideas as possible from the fellowship, to the Board of Trustees for approval in October 1997.

## INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

Margaret G., Chairperson

Marsha W., Associate Director, International

### IAGSM

The 1997 IAGSM will be October 16-19, 1997 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The equalized expense (the amount each GSO is responsible to pay) will increase from 40% to 45%. This increase is in accordance with the 1992 IAGSM motion to gradually increase the GSO portion. In keeping with delegates' wishes expressed at the 1994 IAGSM for more input on the agenda, topic items suggested by the delegates will be included. The delegates will tour WSO during regular working hours so they can meet staff and experience our new working environment.

### ADOPT A RUSSIAN GROUP

In those areas participating in this project from 1994-1996, letters were sent to the contacts thanking them and advising the amount of contributions made over the past two years by their areas. The response after the 1996 WSC was positive to continue this project for another two years. Four areas have elected to adopt additional groups. Group registration in the former Soviet Union totals 101.

### SERVICES

#### Translations

The following were sent to reviewers: Netherlands - *One Day at a Time*; Italy - *Alateen Talks Back on Higher Power*; Germany - *A Pebble in the Pond, Courage to Change, From Survival to Recovery, Alateen 4th Step Inventory*; Sweden - *Understanding Ourselves & Alcoholism, Sponsorship-What it's All About*.

#### Literature Requests

Material was sent in Arabic, Chinese, Czechoslovakian, Dutch, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Urdu and Pujami.

#### Mailings to GSOs and Delegates

Ten different mailings were sent with information about WSO, publications and the IAGSM for 1997.

## AL-ANON INTERNATIONALLY

### Australia

A member from Queensland expressed concern about buying property and the Sixth Tradition.

### Austria

A letter was received from a teenager who found our address as a result of his surfing the Internet. He wrote requesting literature about the program.

### Belgium(French)

The WSO informed this GSO that the original Alateen stories sent for publication did not fit our criteria for CAL and suggested printing in the structure's newsletter.

### Brazil

The delegate to the IAGSM thanked the WSO staff for helping their structure by sharing our experience, strength and hope and reported on a successful 1996 Conference. Another letter about the pamphlet, *Why is Al-Anon Anonymous?* and a statement in the bookmark "*Al-Anon Is and Is Not*" implied that Al-Anon itself is anonymous, confusing the fellowship with the individual members' anonymity. This concern was passed on to the Policy Committee.

### Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) (formerly USSR)

A mailing was sent to all groups encouraging them to look for ways to print literature and buy their own literature.

### Colombia

Within eight days of receiving the Spanish edition of the book *How Al-Anon Works*, 151 copies were sold. WSO's experience regarding the purpose and function of its Executive Committee was shared.

### Costa Rica

After meeting the Spanish Translation Service Coordinator at the International Convention in San Diego, a member serving at the national level asked about structuring their groups into districts.

### Estonia

The first group celebrated their 100th meeting.

### Finland

Plans have begun in Finland to celebrate Al-Anon's 50th Anniversary. Background and history were provided for the member undertaking the production of a commemorative booklet. In response to our requests for sharings from the international community for the new spirituality book, the IAGSM delegate sent a sharing from a member done as an interview by the delegate.

### France

A member expressed concern that our policy on AA members' serving beyond the group level restricts a large number of members from service positions.

### Germany

The GSO was asked to refrain from combining pamphlets and changing titles of CAL, which they did on the Alateen pamphlets, *Facts about Alateen* (P-41), *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (P-21) and *Operation Alateen* (P-30). It was suggested that when they see a need to rearrange and combine CAL, they send it to the WSO for possible consideration by the Literature Committee. A new group focusing on adult child issues requested guidelines about group structure. The Literature Coordinator requested an explanation on the difference in use in our literature between "problem drinker" and alcoholic.

### Ghana (West Africa)

We are receiving ongoing correspondence from this country requesting the purpose of the Al-Anon program. Ten letters of this nature were received in the third quarter. There is also interest expressed to start a group in this region.

### Guatemala

Guidelines for a General Service Structure were sent at the request of a member in Florida. She is acting as a courier for Guatemala. While Guatemala has been listed as a GSO, through correspondence we discovered they did not function as such until recently. Encouragement and additional material will be passed on to members through the Florida contact.



### **Hong Kong**

A team of translators is working on Chinese translation of assorted pamphlets in anticipation of the change in government in 1997.

### **Hungary/Czech Republic**

The Director of Membership Outreach met with an AA staff member who traveled to this area and requested Al-Anon material be sent to some of the contacts they made during the trip.

### **India**

Of the eight letters received during the third quarter, themes ranged from inquiring about the purpose of Al-Anon to seeking sharings of experience, strength, and hope.

### **Israel**

The WSO ordered for the first time, Hebrew *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and the new pamphlets produced by the Jerusalem group with the help of the WSO loan. The WSO Board agreed to a request to reduce the loan repayment terms from \$500 to \$300 a year.

### **Italy**

Through calls and correspondence an increase in Alateen activity at the national level is indicated. The Director of Membership Outreach attended the 20th Anniversary of Al-Anon in Italy, September 20-22. Nine sharings from members were sent for the new international spirituality book.

### **Japan**

A member sent a letter telling us that some groups are being denied registration by the GSO. The Associate Director International wrote back, with a carbon copy to the GSO, explaining our position is to encourage the GSOs to work with the groups. Also in answering a question of whether to purchase literature from us or the GSO, we suggested they buy from the GSO since this helps the structure financially and connects the groups to their national office.

### **Kenya (East Africa)**

A member requested a copy of the *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* translation in Swahili. Although not in book form, there is a translation available on disk. We received correspondence from an individual who wants to start a group in her home area.

### **Malta**

Registration total to four groups. Al-Anon membership to date in all the groups is approximately 30.

### **Mexico**

The question of Board reorganization and how the process would work, if the Conference demanded it was raised by the GSO prior to their February Conference. While the offer was made to have the Executive Director and Spanish Translation Services Coordinator attend the General Service Conference in February, the General Service Board of Mexico felt they could handle the situation. The information received after their Conference indicated that there is a new Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board. Board nominations went as planned with no reorganization and the new Executive Director gave a positive report on their Conference.

### **New Zealand**

The GSO expressed interest in the Regional Service Seminar for the first time by requesting guidelines mentioned in the June/July 1995 issue of *Inside Al-Anon*. The General Secretary from New Zealand requested copies of previous RSS agendas for guidance as they plan their agenda for an RSS in September of 1997.

### **Peru**

The newly formed intergroup asked about the most economical way to distribute literature and for ideas on the sale of literature.

### **Spain**

Questions were answered on procedures to select the Treasurer and Nominating Committee, and the suggestion was made to encourage the delegates to study the Twelve Concepts of Service.

### **Sweden**

The GSO sent a letter indicating they are planning to print the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for the first time.

### **Taiwan**

A member inquired about the Lone Member Services.

### **UK & Eire**

Al-Anon books and information were sent to the Irish AA member responsible for the PI work surrounding the 50th Anniversary of AA in England and Ireland. The UK and Eire's Conference voted to have at least two sponsors attend each Alateen meeting.

### **Venezuela**

A member wrote on behalf of 20 people planning to attend the 1998 International Convention.

## **FRENCH SERVICES (PFA)**

Alberte C., General Secretary

### **NEW MATERIAL COMPLETED**

*From Survival to Recovery* (B-21); Service Plan, 1996

### **UPDATED MATERIAL**

*Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (B-1); *One Day At A Time In Al-Anon* (B-6); *Alateen A Day At A Time* (B-10); *Courage To Change* (B-16); *Alcoholism, A Merry-Go-Round Named Denial* (P-3); *Freedom from Despair* (P-6); *Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7); *It's A Teenaged Affair* (P-10); *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-10); *To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic* (P-16); *1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-20); *What's "Drunk," Mama?* (P-44); *Al-Anon Is for Adult Children of Alcoholics* (P-52); *Dear Mom & Dad* (P-67); *Are You Concerned About...* (M-1); *Just for Today* (M-10); *Just for Today Bookmark* (M-12); *Just for Today - Alateen Bookmark* (M-13); *Serenity Prayer Card* (M-26); *Alcoholism Can Tear a Family Apart - Posters* (M-34); *Do You Need Alateen?* (S-1); *Detachment* (S-19); *Alateen, Is it for You?* (S-20); *Did You Grow Up With a Problem Drinker?* (S-25)

### **TRANSLATIONS**

*The Forum* (from Jan./Feb. 1996 to Aug. 1996); *Inside Al-Anon* (from Feb./Mar. 1996 to June/July 1996); *Al-Anon Speaks Out* - 1996; Appeal Letters; Various Letters for WSO.

### **PROJECTS IN PROGRESS**

*Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8) to be printed; *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) being revised; *Al-Anon Is For Men* (P-1) to be printed; *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17) to be printed; *What Do You Do...* (P-19) to be printed; *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians* (P-85) ready to print; *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship - An Unforgettable Adventure* (P-86) in translation; *The Forum* (Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. 1996) translated.

PFA closed its doors December 20, 1996. A transition board was elected. The new LDC for Montreal will open January 6, 1997. Nancy L. was hired as the French Language Services Coordinator in cooperation with the Director of Membership Outreach and the PFA translating team. Alberte introduced Nancy to both Quebec assemblies in September. Nancy trained in Montreal at PFA for three months before moving to Virginia Beach in January 1997.

## **SPANISH SERVICES**

Raquel K., Translation Services Manager

### **NEW MATERIAL COMPLETED**

*How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* was sent to all Spanish-speaking GSOs and specifically orders were filled for: Colombia - 2000 copies, Venezuela - 1000 copies, Mexico - 2000 copies, and Costa Rica - 1000; Al-Anon and Alateen TV PSAs and Radio Spot; *Dear Mom and Dad*; Catalogs of CAL were given to the Conference members at the Spanish luncheon; 1996 Al-Anon Family Group Service Plan on Leadership was sent to U.S. groups and overseas. *Al-Anon Speaks to You the Professional* was printed in Spain and our inventory purchased from them; *Al-Anon y Alateen en Accion*



changed and modeled after the English, now *Al-Anon y Alateen en Accion* will include *Inside Al-Anon*.

### UPDATED MATERIAL

**Minor Revisions:** Spanish price list; *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon*; *Alateen Just For Today*; *Al-Anon Just For Today*; *Al-Anon Is and Is Not*; *Are You Concerned About Someone's Drinking?*; *Let It Begin With Me*; *Facts About Alateen*.

### NEWSLETTERS

Three issues of *Inside Al-Anon & Al-Anon y Alateen en Accion*; *Al-Anon Speaks Out*; articles were submitted for *Area Highlights*.

### TRANSLATIONS

Letters to and from GSOs totaled 105; correspondence to and from individuals - 42; appeal letters - 3.

### PROFESSIONALS

There are 397 professionals listed in our resource file.

### PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Check It Out posters (SM-55 and SM-56) and flyer; *Al-Anon y Alateen en Accion*, December 1996, January/February/March 1997.

## REGIONAL SERVICE SEMINARS

### COMMITTEE

*Patricia A., Chairperson*  
*Mary Ann K., Director*

A new site selection process began at the 1996 World Service Conference when site decisions for the US Southeast, Canada Central and US Northwest Regional Service Seminars were made at the RSS breakout meetings.

The RSS Committee was informed that popular seminar sites require large meal package and room night commitments.

The RSS Committee discussed the purchase of meal packages and staying at the hotel as a necessary part of supporting the seminar and local host committees need this commitment from their membership in order to be considered as a possible RSS site.

Local host committees are beginning to open the Hospitality Room on Friday night only, as a way of reducing cost and of preventing competition between the hospitality room and the program and sale of meal packages.

It was agreed that a core set of agenda items were in place and different RSS chairs use either rap sessions, workshops or the General Session to carry these ideas to the seminar.

After discussion and research the committee decided to continue the current practice of only allowing tapers to sell recordings of Regional Service Seminars at the RSS in which they were produced. The decision to tape the seminar is left to the discretion of the RT.

Alateen services made a formal request to the committee to encourage regional trustees to incorporate Alateen into all RSS agendas.

Packets containing agendas, RSS guidelines, bid forms and other material were distributed to Canada East, US North Central and US Southwest area delegates at the 1996 World Service Conference in anticipation of the 1998 Regional Service Seminars.

The committee sent a recommendation to the Board of Trustees supporting the idea of holding one AIS/LDC workshop each year in

conjunction with an RSS. The US Northwest was chosen for the 1997 AIS/LDC workshop.

The committee began revising the RSS guidelines.

### 1996 REGIONAL SERVICE SEMINARS

#### US South Central

*Patricia S., Chairperson*  
*Mary Ann K., Coordinator*

Dates: June 14 - 16, 1996

Site: The Austin Hilton Hotel and Towers - Austin, Texas

Theme: Service - Deep in Our Hearts

Reportback: Doris S., Ric B., Sandra F., Felix M. and Mary Ann K. represented the WSO. There were 285 registrants and \$778.65 was collected for the relocation fund. Evaluations show that participants most enjoyed the sharing of service experiences and the WSO presentation, Understanding Change - New Structure.

#### Canada West

*Patricia A., Chairperson*  
*Mary Ann K., Coordinator*

Dates: November 1 - 3, 1996

Site: Saskatoon Inn - Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Theme: Service - Reap the Harvest

Reportback: Doris S., Ric B., Phyllis M., Margaret M. and Ann H. represented the World Service Office. There were 258 registrants and donations to the World Service Office totaling \$360.40 were collected. The local LDC sold \$1,115.80 worth of literature.

63% of those responding said that this was their first RSS. Many respondents stated that the seminar has motivated them into entering into service or into a new form of service.

## 1997 REGIONAL SERVICE SEMINARS

Package price includes Friday and Saturday nights housing, Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, and Sunday breakfast. A meals only package is also available.

#### US Southeast

*Felix M., Chairperson*  
*Mary Ann K., Coordinator*

Dates: March 14 - 16, 1997

Site: Holiday Inn, Hotel and Conference Center - Hampton, Virginia

Theme: Service - A Moving Experience

Single: \$181.36 Double: \$116.46 Triple: \$94.83 Quad: \$81.26

Meals only package: \$40.56

#### Canada Central

*Connie D., Chairperson*  
*Susan A., Coordinator*

Date: August 22 - 24, 1997

Site: Holiday Inn, Airport West - Winnipeg, Manitoba

Theme: Keys to Recovery

Single: \$235.95\* Double: \$148.21\* Triple: \$128.07 Quad: \$118.00\*

Meals only package: \$60.43\*

\* All prices in Canadian Funds.

**US Northwest**  
Ann H., Chairperson  
Mary Ann K., Coordinator

Date: September 26 - 28, 1997  
Site: Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel - Portland, Oregon  
Theme: Raining Service Opportunities

Single: \$245.90 Double: \$166.33 Triple: \$136.90 Quad: \$125.46

Meals only package: \$60.60

## **BUSINESS SERVICES**

**Richard Keilly, Director of Business Services**

### **BUDGET**

#### **COMMITTEE**

Don C., Chairperson  
Richard Keilly, Director of Business Services

The actions of the Budget Committee are reported to the Executive Committee or directly to the Board, depending on the matter. Those actions are reported under either the Executive or Board sections of this report.

In addition to monthly review of the financial statement and ongoing review and planning of the appeal letters, the committee addressed financial implications of matters going to the Executive Committee, including Project Approvals for *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship - An Unforgettable Adventure*, *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians* and new Al-Anon and Alateen posters.

The committee began a new revision of *The Seventh Tradition* pamphlet.

In addition, the committee clarified the policy regarding bequests: individuals cannot leave gifts after their deaths which exceed \$100,000 regardless of whether in a lump sum or as a series of gifts from a trust; the appeal letter; possible revisions to the proposed IAGSM financial guidelines; problems relating to the relocation and their impact on processing and mailing orders.

After considerable discussion, the committee recommended to the Board that the Conference motion to reprint *Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions - Illustrated*, selling the pamphlet at the potential price of \$2.50, is not financially feasible. The committee felt that the pamphlet would not sell at this price.

The equalized expenses remained the same for the 1997 World Service Conference (\$900.00 US; total cost \$1,200.00 US.) Normally this motion would go directly from Budget to the Board in July, but due to time constraints in advising the delegates, it was presented to the Executive Committee in September.

Authorization was granted to transfer from the Reserve Fund to the General Fund up to \$400,000.00, as necessary, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board and the Treasurer.

The new Alateen book, *Courage To Be Me*, will sell for \$9.00.

The committee met with each Director in the development of the 1997 Preliminary Budget. The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (RPM) Budget was also reviewed. In connection with RPM, a motion carried to recommend to the Board the creation

of a separate building fund escrow account to provide for estimated future capital expenditures under the control of the RPM.

Letters to both GRs and DRs in conjunction with the March 1997 appeal letter were reviewed.

## **PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT**

Janet Lucci, Personnel Manager

### **SALARY INCREASES**

Cost of living bonuses were paid the existing staff if the employee was employed on December 31, 1995. Some new positions were evaluated after a trial period and adjustments made based upon re-evaluation of job requirements and performance.

### **PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL**

A revised copy was distributed to all staff, the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee.

### **MEMORANDUM SERIES**

All staff received ongoing memoranda keeping them apprised of job vacancies, new staff, holiday schedules, co-worker information and changes in office procedures.

### **HOLIDAYS/OFFICE EVENTS**

The Board of Trustees held a farewell party for all New York staff in January. Friends were able to say final good-byes as this was the last meeting of the Board in New York.

In March, one of the employees planned an unusual St. Patrick's Day celebration. In addition to the standard fare of green bagels and Irish soda bread, other homemade Irish treats were present. During the celebration, the employee played her guitar and recited original poetry alluding to our co-founder, Lois, and the many gifts that Al-Anon has brought. At the end of the celebration, few members had dry eyes.

After relocating to Virginia Beach, the Executive Director served juice, coffee and pastries to the beginning staff in Virginia Beach at the end of May. The staff was treated to a pizza party and an ice cream social to celebrate the various stages of our time in Virginia Beach. A final holiday party was held in mid December with the World Service Office providing the entrées and the staff bringing the desserts and appetizers of their choice.

### **STYLE SHEET**

The WSO's Style Sheet was updated in 1996. The Fellowship Communication Department revised the Style Sheet consistent with general use and our trial structure. Trends to decrease the use of capitalization and provide a consistent system for titles were continued.

## **OFFICE OPERATIONS**

### **RECEPTION**

The Virginia Beach resort area brought many visitors to the WSO this summer and 65 tours were given to members and their guests. Tours are offered each afternoon at 2:00 PM by the receptionist. In keeping with a longstanding practice since the early days of the WSO, visitors are asked to sign the WSO guest book.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

From January to May our core of volunteers in New York continued to provide excellent service. A number of beginners packets were prepared in advance in the anticipation of the slow volunteer turnout after the move to Virginia Beach.

Many visitors to the World Service Office during the summer did provide volunteer help including some Alateens who were on summer break. As fall began, the number of volunteers dwindled sharply. A flyer was sent to the local groups.

In November, it was decided to redesign the administrative clerk job to a volunteer recruiter/administrative assistant. This person will be responsible for recruiting, supervising and rewarding volunteers. Our first volunteer work day on Saturday was planned for January, 1997. The volunteer recruiter/administrative assistant is to begin her duties after January 3, 1997.

Volunteers continue to be a problem. Members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee had also volunteered their time when not engaged in meetings in order to pick up a portion of the slack. As a result of volunteers not being available, outside mailing houses have been used for collating, sorting and in some cases mailing publications that were routinely mailed by the World Service Office.

### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Sandra F. was recertified as a Certified Account Executive (CAE) through January 1, 1999. The Board congratulated Claire R. on her certification as a Certified Account Executive (CAE) in April.

Staff attended a variety of seminars: in New York - No Nonsense Negotiations Skills; Small Meetings and Resorts Show, 1996; NYSAE workshop - What Do You Want to be When You Grow Up?; Introduction to Windows and Advanced Windows; several staff participated in "We Love New York Day" sponsored by NYSAE and attended morning educational programs and exhibit booths in the afternoon. All staff was given training on the new word processing program for the office, "Microsoft Word." Staff who were not relocating were also given the opportunity to learn Excel, a program similar to Lotus. Relocating data entry clerks were given beginning training on the Members Only program.

After relocation, the majority of staff development training centered around learning the Members Only program and further orientation to the Microsoft Word processing program. Several staff members attended advanced Microsoft Word programs. New staff members were sent to Beginning Microsoft Word orientation as well. With the difficulties experienced with the actual Members Only software and its orientation to the Great Plains Dynamics accounting software, the training programs for the Director of Business Services and the comptroller were delayed until the software is in place. Seminars on the accounting software will be provided in early 1997.

### PUBLICATIONS

Steve Raiford, Publications Manager

In the first quarter, several new items were printed: *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship: An Unforgettable Adventure*; new PI posters (M-55/Al-Anon and M-56/Alateen); and new Spanish SB-22 *How Al-Anon Works*; Spanish P-67 *Dear Mom & Dad*; Getting Started catalog flyers for use in K-10/Newcomer Kits; P-86/S-51 announcement order blanks for *Guide to Alateen Sponsorship*; S-23 Jan-June 1996 *Getting in Touch With Al-Anon/Alateen*; 1996 Al-Anon surveys in English, French and Spanish; March appeal letters; letter for seniors. Many items, such as pamphlets, Conference brochure materials, guidelines, and newsletters were reprinted.

In the restructuring of the WSO, the Production Department was renamed the Publications Department with the goal of providing more publication services in-house, thus resulting in considerable cost savings. The new Publications Manager was trained in New York beginning May 6, 1996 and a graphic designer was hired June 3, 1996. A

Macintosh Power Mac system including a color scanner and printer was purchased. Several publications were redesigned and updated such as the structure charts, *Area Highlights*, *Al-Anon Speaks Out*, *Fact Sheet for Professionals*, the Russian ODAT, and the Spanish *Detachment*. The former Administrative Assistant is now the Junior Publications Coordinator and is responsible for publications trafficking as well as internal reprint jobs. The Offset Department is now a part of the Publications Department and a contract offset press person was hired for six months as a transition person. Production delays were encountered as a result of the move to Virginia Beach; the presses were the last equipment moved from New York and adjustments and repairs were needed after the move due to the age of the machines and damage which occurred during the move.

During the third quarter, two new offset press operators were hired. Key publications worked on included the newly-designed *Area Highlights*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, *Alateen Talk*, and the 1996 WSC Summary. The Publications Department worked with Public Outreach on the PSAs, and Fellowship Communication on *Courage To Be Me - Living with Alcoholism* and TWELVE/TWELVE (working title). A photographer was located to work with Fellowship Communication for *The Forum*. Professional relationships were formed with a local mailing house for bulk mailings and a local printer for pre-press plating. A local paper company is being contacted to purchase bulk quantities of papers frequently used in publications to maintain prices rather than buying paper, as needed, at fluctuating costs.

Two setbacks occurred with the loss of the graphic designer and the Publications Manager. A new Publications Manager was hired on November 25, 1996. A new graphic designer joined the staff on October 23, 1996.

Starting in late November, a comprehensive production report was established in order to identify the current status of each job in production. Additional information such as due dates, quantities, and the status of proofs is also reflected on the report.

Specific duties within the Publications Department were reviewed and tasks assigned. The Manager is responsible for vendor negotiation, the junior publications coordinator is responsible for the coordination of in-house print jobs, and the graphic designer is responsible for the timely completion and correction of client proofs.

The print shop is experiencing a serious backlog of printing and bindery. A study has been undertaken to identify the capacity of the print shop relative to staffing levels and equipment. Once the capacity has been identified, it will be matched to the current workload requirement. If it is determined that the workload requirement exceeds capacity, options will be considered with the ultimate goal being the timely production of cost-effective printing to meet our customer service needs.

### TECHNOLOGY

Chris Stoll, Technological Services Coordinator

#### COMPUTER/TELEPHONE

While working closely with consultants to determine hardware and software needs for both the telephone system and computer system, the telephone system was purchased from Executone and a network for the computer was established.

A customized version of the Members Only software was purchased in order to allow for combined member/group records files in conjunction with the order entry and subscription databases. While considerable time was spent with the consultant and designer, major problems consumed large portions of our time during the year. The

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Technological Services Manager worked closely with the designer to achieve the portions of the contract originally entered into and to implement the needed corrections in the software to achieve our goals. As a result of two programming errors and a misunderstanding as to how Al-Anon works, anonymity was broken on two separate occasions. A "checks" system has been implemented using Al-Anon members to insure that these breaches will not continue.

At the end of the year the order entry, inventory and link to the Great Plains Dynamics accounting package have not been satisfactorily completed. It is believed that these matters can be fully implemented by early 1997. As a result of the computer errors, there were serious problems in shipping duplicate orders, orders not being shipped at all, erroneous billing, and duplicate or non-existent *Forum* subscriptions being handled. As we approach 1997, *Forum* subscriptions and contributions are up-to-date. We continue to receive some complaints regarding persons who purchased *Forum* subscriptions in early 1996 who, as a result of the data conversion from New York, did not receive their *Forums*. These subscriptions are being updated and letters of apology sent.

A number of problems with the 800 numbers began soon after relocation. The long distance carrier failed to transfer the 800 numbers for several days resulting in calls not being answered in New York nor being transferred to Virginia Beach. Additional problems were identified during early July and August. A automated attendant system was approved by the Executive Committee. This has increased the ability to provide additional service to the membership and to route calls that were not designed for the 800 number system to the appropriate parties, i.e., calls for AA; calls for other twelve step programs; and complaints about customer service or other fellowship concerns. A new long distance carrier was retained in late 1996 which will afford further cost savings and provide the staff with increased technological advances to better communicate to the fellowship.

## APPENDIX

### STAFF

January - April, 1996

**Myrna H.**, Executive Director  
**Sandra F.**, Deputy Executive Director  
**Ric B.**, Executive Director in Training  
**Bonnie C.**, Alateen Administrator  
**Ellen D.**, Cooperating With the Professional Community Administrator (CPC)  
**Geri H.**, Literature Administrator  
**Claire R.**, Institutions Administrator  
**Mary Ann K.**, International Coordination Administrator  
**Carole K.**, Public Information Administrator (PI)  
**Rita McC.**, Conference Administrator  
**Fran M.**, Forum Administrator  
**\*Richard Keilly**, Business Manager  
**Alberte C.**, General Secretary, Publications Francaises PFA, Inc.  
**Georgette G.**, Office Manager, National Public Information Canada NPIC

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**1998 International Convention** - Myrna H., Chairperson; Mary Ann K., Coordinator; Carole K., Co-Coordinator  
**Admissions/Handbook** - Helen R., Chairperson; Rita McC., Administrator  
**Alateen** - Mary A.T., Chairperson; Bonnie C., Administrator  
**Archives** - Bill S., Chairperson; Virginia A., Coordinator  
**Board of Trustees** - Doris S., Chairperson;  
**Budget** - Don C., Chairperson; \*Richard Keilly, Business Manager  
**Conference** - Skip L., Chairperson; Rita McC., Administrator  
**Cooperating with the Professional Community** - Felix M., Chairperson; Ellen D., Administrator  
**Executive** - Patricia B., Chairperson  
**The Forum** - Connie D., Chairperson; Fran M., Administrator  
**Inside Al-Anon** - Pat B., Chairperson; Sandra F., Deputy Executive Director  
**Institutions** - Don H., Chairperson; Claire R., Administrator  
**International Coordination** - Margaret G. Chairperson; Mary Ann K., Administrator  
**Literature** - Pat L., Chairperson; Geri H., Administrator  
**Long Range Study Panel** - Marion W., Chairperson; Sandra F., Deputy Executive Director  
**NPIC** - Patricia A., Chairperson; Ellen D., Administrator  
**Nominating** - Larry A., Chairperson; Myrna H., Executive Director  
**Policy** - Pat S., Chairperson; Sandra F., Deputy Executive Director  
**Public Information** - Marion W., Chairperson, Carole K., Administrator  
**Publications** - Gerry V., Chairperson; \*Richard Keilly, Business Manager; Geri H., Administrator; Fran M., Administrator  
**RSS** - Pat S., Chairperson; Carole K., Administrator  
**Relocation** - John B., Chairperson; \*Richard Keilly, Business Manager

\*non-member

### STAFF

May - December, 1996

**Ric B.**, Executive Director  
**Fran T.**, Administrative Coordinator  
**Sandra F.**, Director Group Services  
**Evalynn N.**, Associate Director, Alateen  
**Joe T.**, Assistant, Alateen, Adult Children  
**Jessica G.**, Assistant, Institutions, Lone Members  
**Barbara M.**, Archives Coordinator  
**\*Sheylah Alcide.**, Group Records Coordinator  
**Caryn J.**, Director Fellowship Communication  
**Mary Lou M.**, Associate Director, Literature  
**Pat Q.**, Forum Coordinator  
**Phyllis M.**, Director Public Outreach  
**Claire R.**, Associate Director, Public Outreach  
**Florence C.**, Assistant, Public Outreach  
**Mary Ann K.**, Director Membership Outreach  
**Susan A.**, Associate Director, Conference  
**Marsha W.**, Associate Director, International  
**Raquel K.**, Translation Services Manager  
**Georgette G., Alberte C., Nancy L.**, Language Services Coordinator  
**\*Steve Raiford**, Publications Manager  
**\*Richard Keilly**, Director Business Services  
**\*Susan Taylor**, Comptroller  
**\*Chris Stoll**, Technology Coordinator  
**Jayne D.**, Customer Service Manager  
**\*Janet Lucci**, Personnel Manager  
**\*Carlos Delgado**, Warehouse Manager

### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

**50th Anniversary** - Mary Ann K., Chairperson  
**1998 International Convention** - Ric B., Chairperson; Mary Ann K., Coordinator  
**Admissions/Handbook Subcommittee** - Mary A-T., Chairperson; Susan A., Associate Director, Conference  
**Alateen Advisory** - Betty B., Chairperson; Evalynn N., Associate Director, Alateen  
**Archives Advisory** - Lorill W., Chairperson  
**Budget** - Don C., Chairperson; \*Richard Keilly, Director Business Services  
**Board of Trustees** - Doris S., Chairperson;  
**Conference** - Skip L., Chairperson; Pat S., Alternate Chairperson; Susan A., Associate Director, Conference  
**Executive** - Patricia B., Chairperson  
**Forum Editorial Advisory** - Connie D., Chairperson; Caryn J., Director Fellowship Communication; Mary Lou M., Associate Director, Literature; Pat Q., Forum Coordinator  
**Group Services** - Ann H., Chairperson; Sandra F., Director Group Services  
**International Coordination** - Margaret G., Chairperson; Marsha W., Associate Director, International  
**Literature I** - Pat L., Chairperson; Mary Lou M., Associate Director, Literature  
**Literature II** - Nancy B., Chairperson; Caryn J., Director Fellowship Communication  
**Long Range Study Panel** - Marion W., Chairperson; Sandra F., Secretary  
**National Public Information Canada (NPIC)** - Margaret M., Chairperson; Phyllis M., Director Public Outreach; Claire R., Associate Director Public Outreach; Georgette G., NPIC Office Manager  
**Nominating** - Larry A., Chairperson; Ric B., Executive Director  
**Outreach to Professionals Advisory** - Felix M., Chairperson; Phyllis M., Director Public Outreach; Florence C., Assistant to the Director of Public Outreach  
**Policy** - Helen R., Chairperson; Ric B., Executive Director  
**Public Outreach** - Margaret M., Chairperson; Phyllis M., Director Public Outreach; Claire R., Associate Director Public Outreach  
**Regional Service Seminars** - Patricia A., Chairperson; Mary Ann K., Director Membership Outreach

\*non-member

