

Al-Anon Family Groups
1998 World Service Conference
Inventory — Searching for Progress & Growth
April 19-23, 1998

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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 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."



CONFERENCE THEME:

Pat S.,
Conference Chairperson,
Executive Committee Member

Al-Anon's Declarations of Unity

"Each member of the
fellowship is a significant part
of a great circle of hope.
While respecting each other's
individuality, our common
welfare must come first. Our
recovery depends on our
mutual need and an
atmosphere of trust."

(Unanimous motion,
1984 World Service Conference)

Inventory— Searching for Progress and Growth

The 38th annual World Service Conference (WSC) was called to order by Conference Chairperson Pat. S. She extended greetings to returning Conference members and to Panel 38 members attending their first Conference.

The Admissions/Handbook Committee presented the first motion of the 1998 WSC, requesting the following persons be seated at the 1998 World Service Conference with voice, but no vote:

John B., Chairperson, Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), Al-Anon member

Richard Keilly, Director of Business Services, non-member

Hilda Maria B., Representative from Mexico, Al-Anon member

Carole P., NPIC Office Manager, Al-Anon member (April 19 and 20)

Patrick Q., WSO Forum Coordinator, Al-Anon member, (April 22 and 23)

By a show of hands, the motion carried.

Note: Due to health problems John B., was unable to attend the Conference.

Use of cameras at the WSC was the next order of business. Members concurred by consensus to

permit still camera picture-taking during the General Sessions of the Conference. Video cameras may not be used at any time during the Conference or at the World Service Office.

Voting procedures for the 1998 Conference were discussed, and by a show of hands it was decided that the Conference will vote on subsequent motions by closed ballot. Additionally, members concurred that 2/3 of the vote would be substantial unanimity for decisions.

Helen R., Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, gave a warm welcome to all Conference members and Hilda B., on behalf of the Board of Trustees. Helen went on to state, "For this Conference we will take an inventory based on the Twelve Concepts of Service. Actions will be taken here that will affect Al-Anon. Our program is dependent on us doing our service. We are not alone, we have a Higher Power. Let's keep our Declaration of Unity in our minds and hearts. Each member is a significant part of a great circle of hope. Our common welfare must come first. We must trust in the process."

Helen then read the Twelve Traditions.

After the first roll call was made, as well as pertinent announcements for the week, the Conference began with an open forum, "clearing the air," session.

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Dolores T., NM,
Chairperson

Marie D., ME,
Reporter

Preceding the official opening of the Conference, delegates met to discuss the successes and concerns of their areas. The meeting was opened with the Serenity Prayer. A history of the Sharing Area Highlights session was reviewed.

Shared successes were: redistricting has resulted in more participation at area assemblies; profitable fundraising activities included a birthday party and a quilt raffle; the successful opening of an area central office and literature distribution center on a trial basis with many volunteers serving; enthusiasm about adopting a Russian group; 100% representation of districts at assemblies; the creation of area guidelines for public outreach; a diversity day held to reach out to all cultures; establishment of an area-wide 800 public outreach number; successful coordinator activities; use of a bell curve presentation evolved into a "getting to know you" (others in service) session at the assembly; outreach to military bases; successful literature distribution centers; inviting WSO staff to attend area assemblies and the positive

results; successful prison meetings; the development of an area history book; an adult children coordinator has increased participation from Al-Anon adult children groups.

Several areas spoke of increasing their outreach by either the establishment of Internet committees or development of a web page or beginning the process of considering an area web site.

Two areas shared about the success of their first Alateen conventions, one without an area Alateen Coordinator; another shared about the area coordinator having a booth at a high school to answer teens' questions. Alateen sponsorship get-togethers have resulted in new participation. Others shared about doing service workshops on guidelines for Alateen and Al-Anon accountability.

Enthusiasm for the International Convention included areas sharing how many area members would be attending and local activities surrounding the creation of love gifts.

As members shared their successes the chair-

person also asked for the experience, strength, and hope of others in solving problems. Literature distribution centers in some areas are struggling and members asked for help in solving ensuing problems. Several areas spoke of using the Service Plan as a guide for conducting area inventories. The need for and use of long-timers in service remains in several

areas. Delegates with Spanish- and French-speaking groups shared bilingual concerns.

In summary, the successes were shared with enthusiasm and identified problems were addressed openly and with concern. Following the sharing session the chairperson and reporter for the 1999 Sharing Area Highlights session were selected by those in attendance.

OPEN FORUM

This was an opportunity for the delegates to share their thoughts and concerns from the 1997 World Service Conference or present new issues. All those wishing to speak were encouraged to do so. No one would be criticized or judged for what they needed to state. Everyone had an opportunity to speak and, since there was no time keeper, the moderator requested that members keep their comments brief.

The first member sharing was concerned about having the time to get all business completed so she could feel like she accomplished something at the Conference. One member was concerned that we aren't doing enough Twelfth Step work by removing the use of Public Outreach booths at conventions from the budget. It was brought to everyone's attention that in the past many potential members were referred by the professional community. Institutions are not sending as many people to Al-Anon now and perhaps we should focus on getting people to meetings. This area felt there is too much emphasis on book sales for support instead of members encouraging others to come to group meetings.

The use of materials other than Conference Approved Literature remained a concern in one area. One member told of someone bringing "Al-Anon-authorized" Braille materials to a meeting that explained how Al-Anons can get AAs to do what they want. After someone wrote to WSO about this the only thing done was a disclaimer was sent to the Braille organization. The delegate asked for more to be done to protect newcomers from receiving incorrect information.

Canadian members expressed concern about having only two regional trustees in Canada and the departure of a long-time employee was questioned. Groups were disturbed by the discontinuance of translating *The Forum* in French.

One member shared a concern that one district of 16 groups had five that did not receive the triannual appeal. Concern was expressed about how this was affecting our finances.

Several members had concerns about the popularity of Internet meetings. Questions were

raised about our copyright policies. Clarification was sought regarding the copying of literature on the Internet. Has this been sanctioned by WSO? Did this affect literature sales and donations? Did on-line meetings attract people to go to face-to-face meetings? What will happen to the fellowship if everyone begins using Internet meetings? It was requested that the WSO acquire e-mail capabilities, as it was seen as the way of the future and would certainly make things go a lot quicker.

Someone was concerned that group records weren't getting updated regularly, and that this would affect the potential success of the triannual appeals.

Getting literature orders in a reasonable amount of time was also brought up. At one time timeliness had improved but it appeared to one area that things have gotten lax again. More than one person mentioned getting service literature in a timely fashion, but sometimes received incorrect items. Group binders had copies of the Steps and Traditions, but not the Concepts of Service.

The issue was raised regarding Alateens having voice but no vote at Conference. It was said we are all women, men, wives, fathers, etc., not teenagers, and they should have vote to be adequately heard.

There is nothing in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* about the group representative (GR) serving as an alternate for more than one group; in one area a district has one GR serving as an alternate for three groups.

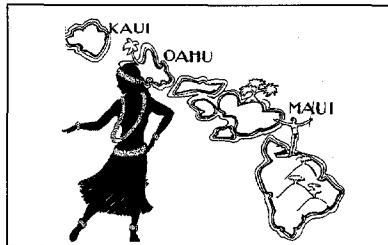
LDCs and AISs have no definite guidelines about how things are done. It was suggested that guidelines would eliminate a lot of confusion and solve a lot of problems.

Our professional resource booklet proposal suggests that professionals refer clients dealing with drug and alcohol problems to Al-Anon. Al-Anon isn't about drugs, it is about alcohol.

Finally one member asked why there are no audio cassettes of the books. There have been many inquiries about them and yet they have never been offered.

Ann H.,
Moderator, Trustee

ICE BREAKER



Sunday Evening

At the end of the first full day of business, Conference members were treated to a festive evening of games, dancing and dessert with a luau theme. This annual event helps Conference members get to know each other better before continuing the week of hard work and dedication. All delegates, WSO staff, and

volunteers were invited to play a "human being scavenger hunt," challenging them to work in teams to match other members with different life experiences. Following the game, line dancing instructions were offered and many joined in the fast-paced fun.

APPROVAL OF THE 1997 ANNUAL REPORT

Ric B.,
Executive Director

Delegates had previously submitted questions on the annual report. Those questions were answered, and delegates were invited to ask more questions and get clarifications on the report.

Someone wanted the annual report edited because new group kits are now being called binders. The question was raised about the per-

centage of donations. If they have increased over 19%, how does this effect the 30%-70% split between donations and literature sales? Donations increased, but the percentage of donations and literature sales remains roughly the same.

A vote was taken and the 1997 annual report was approved as amended.

DELEGATE COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Susan A.,
Associate Director, Conference

Delegates from each panel, trustees, at-large members, and staff members comprise the delegate committees that meet during the Conference. Many factors determine how a delegate is placed on a committee such as the immediate past delegate's committee assignment, the number of delegates from each region assigned to the committee, the committee requested by the new delegate, and timeliness of the request. Below are the delegate committee assignments:

COMMITTEE	PANEL 36 (1996-1998)		PANEL 37 (1997-1999)		PANEL 38 (1998-2000)	
Admissions/ Handbook	Annie A.	UT	Roberta V.	FL (S)	Dennis G.	CO
	Betty W.	NF/LB	Cheryl C.	MN (S)	Linda S.	GA
	Pat D.	LA	Geri Lea H. ..	MI	Susia M.	MS
			Janine L.	RI	Penny H.	MT
Conference Committee on Trustees	Bob B.	ID	Willie W.	CA (S)	Sharon S.	WI
	Judy D.	WY	Lise M.	PQ (W)	Victoria A.-H.	VT
	Jan R.	AR	Bonnie M.-C.	TX (E)	Linda B.	NC
			Mary T.	IN		
			Lyn D.	TN		
Group Services	Bobby S.	SC	Cathy C.	CA (N)	Trudy C.	PQ (E)
	Donna V.	IA	Bernice L.	MB	Sandy F.	OK
	Juanita C.	IL (S)	Wendy G.	KY	Tim S.	NJ
	Marjorie L.	NH	Leola T.	MD/DC	Cindy H.	MA
Literature I	Joan V.	CT	Dee R.	FL (N)	Paula C.	WV
	Marie D.	ME	Deb R.	PA	Cindy L.	AP
	Loretta F.	SD	La Vaughn R.	NY (N)	Bunny G.	OR
	Douglas J.	NV	Lynda E.	OH		
Literature II	Pamela H.	NY (S)	Susan N.	DE	Dora H.	AL
	Dolores T.	NM	Sheri A.	TX (W)	Lana N.	ND
	Ben R.	SK	Ruth H.	ON (S)	Janet K.	BC/YT
	Valerie B.	AK			Nancy K.	WA

COMMITTEE

PANEL 36 (1996-1998)

PANEL 37 (1997-1999)

PANEL 38 (1998-2000)

Public
OutreachCieni P. PR
Marg St. G. NE
Lucy A. ON (N)
Mary Paula H. MODorena S. IL (N)
Keo O'R. KS
Brigida C. HISherri S. VA
Mary R. AB/NT
Pam B. AZ
Caroline P. MN (N)

DELEGATE MEMBER COMMITTEE REPORTBACKS

Admissions Handbook Committee

Clarifying the composition of Conference as consisting of two-thirds delegates and one-third staff and volunteers was one of the topics of discussion. Some of the committee members felt that the proposed language was confusing and should be simplified, that there was too much information on the two-thirds/one-third ratio. The question of whether or not the Handbook was the best place for this information was also discussed. Since the Handbook is also used by other countries, the committee decided that the information was best communicated by remaining in the Handbook, but being clarified by spelling out the ratio.

The next item on the agenda was on page 115, "How the Conference is Financed." The main point of this paragraph is to stress that the Conference has given the WSO the responsibility of appealing to the members, not the groups, for support of their services. So the committee proposed changing the wording from "groups" to "members."

The "Joy of Service" leaflet was discussed. The committee reviewed the current draft which has been approved by the Executive Committee and Policy reviewers. Each

Conference member will receive an advance copy of this new leaflet in May or early June.

The role that Concepts Ten and Eleven play in the committee was the next topic on the agenda. The basic consensus was that these Concepts of Service protect against double-headed management, provide checks and balances, and allow the committees to act as filters for the Board.

A question was brought to the committee regarding whether criteria for setting up and registering LDCs should be included in the Handbook. Since there are no criteria listed in the Handbook for registering groups, the committee felt this was not the place for having criteria for LDC registration, and suggested this be referred back to the Policy Committee.

The Conference approved the committee's three motions for wording changes to the Handbook section of the 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. In addition to the sections on composition of the Conference and "How the Conference is Financed," a change was made to clarify the recommended financing of DR expenses.

Mary A-T.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Susan A.,
Associate Director, Conference



Conference Committee on Trustees

Since 1984, the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) has been involved in aiding the Nominating Committee and the trustees "...in discharging their prime obligation to see that all vacancies... are properly filled with those of the greatest possible competence, stability, and industry;" (1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 184). In the description of the Conference Committee on Trustees, the composition is no more than nine voting members (eleven during the trial period of the new structure).

The CCT's evaluation process of candidates for trustee-at-large and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management has evolved over the years to include a predetermined time line for all activities of the committee. Resumes are received by the Executive Director by August 15th and forwarded to the delegate committee members on or before September 1st. It is suggested that the delegates of the areas in

which the candidates reside be contacted for any information or concerns the delegate CCT members may have. The CCT and Nominating Committee members are thus empowered to make informed decisions. Using a ten-point ranking system for candidates, resumes are scored on service experience, personal history, personality traits and principles, special/unique skills and talents, and the reasons each candidate wants to serve. Evaluating our fellow members is most difficult but necessary, if the CCT is to aid the success of our Board of Trustees providing the services the Conference and the fellowship expects.

This past year the CCT evaluated the resumes of six candidates for the Executive Committee for Real Property Management and nine for trustee-at-large. The CCT was informed after the October Board meeting of the candidates selected to be interviewed at the January Board meeting. A letter was sent to all committee members

Jan R., AR,
Chairperson

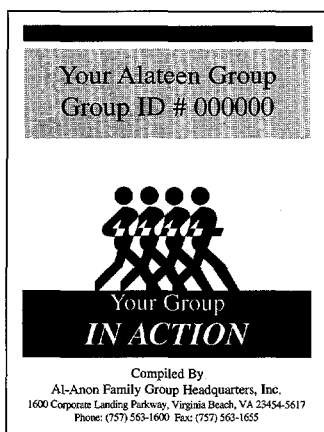
Ric B.
Executive Director

with the above information, indicating the option of filing a minority appeal for any candidate selected whom the CCT disapproved. None were filed. On page 141 of our 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* it explains "The Board elects its own successors, with nominees subject to the approval of the

Conference or a committee thereof." The Conference will have the opportunity to give traditional approval of the three trustee-at-large and one Executive Committee on Real Property Management selections our Board has made. Immediately following the closing session of the Conference, the Board will elect its successors.

Felix M.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Sandra F.,
Director, Group Services



Alateen new group binder

Group Services Committee

Richard M., a member of the Alateen Advisory Committee attended and offered input from an Alateen point of view.

The Group Services Assistant has been assigned communication concerning electronic meetings. Fourteen are now listed with the WSO.

The Director of Group Services reported the following during the 1st quarter of 1998:

Alateen groups that registered after February 1, 1998 received the new group binder. Institution groups will get a copy with an additional insert with material required for their special needs. LDCs were sent one complimentary sample copy for demonstration/display purposes.

The Archives display was completed. Consideration is underway to make the components available for purchase for areas to produce similar displays.

There have been increased requests for servicing the hearing impaired.

The Group Records Registration/Update form was revised based on recommendations of the committee during the October 1997 conference call meeting.

The contents of the New Group Binder now include a copy of the Twelve Concepts of Service.

During the committee meeting, the Group

Records Coordinator reported that the problem of "missing groups" on the printout has been rectified. The areas will now be able to receive their printouts on disc in a Microsoft Word format. Plans are to have an e-mail address for group records in the future. A decision was reached by the committee to recommend that the WSO send a maximum of two printouts per year. This will give both the area and the WSO sufficient time to input necessary changes. Solutions to other problems in Groups Records should be implemented one at a time to evaluate the effectiveness of each. There was a consensus to recommend to the Executive Committee that area Group Record Coordinators be recognized as part of Group Services.

The committee discussed whether groups holding more than one meeting should register separately and decided no action is required.

Although there was a general agreement that groups should be encouraged to register immediately rather than wait to see if they are viable, it remains up to the autonomy of the area.

Several suggestions were offered on ways to support Alateen Conferences.

A final draft of the guideline, "How to Start an Al-Anon Group," was presented to the committee and approved with minor revisions.

The committee will discuss serving adult children groups at a later date.

Howdy R.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Mary Lou M.,
Associate Director, Fellowship
Communication

Literature Committee I

We have received over 300 sharings for ALATEEN EVERY DAY (working title) and have reviewed the first fifty. They are wonderful. We are revising the *Why CAL?* pamphlet to better focus it for the newcomer. We received a letter from the author of a story in *How Al-Anon Works* stating that the story in the book contained some content he had not written. It was decided, after apologizing to him, to remove that story from the book and replace it with another at the next printing.

The two men's pamphlets have been revised and the final drafts are in preparation for final committee review. The sponsorship brochure has grown into a very extensive rewrite to better focus on its purpose and be more effective.

During the last year, all areas participated in reviewing 49 pieces of recovery CAL for Phase One of the Literature Inventory. In the coming year, 19 pieces of recovery and service CAL will be reviewed by the areas. The next year we will begin inventorying all CAL books. We are continuing to review what to work on and what priority to give each task. This is a massive job that will take several years to complete.

**HELP
WANTED!**



Calling all Alateens!

Literature Committee II

The book *Having Had A Spiritual Awakening...* has completed the CAL process and will be available at the 1998 International Convention. A recommendation has been submitted to the Board for approval of a partial printing of *Courage To Change* in soft cover.

Minor revisions of the pamphlet *This is Al-Anon* are complete. The Executive Director rejected the newcomer brochure in its proposed format. No further action will be taken until the CAL inventory process is completed.

A proposal was considered to reprint the original edition of *Al-Anon Family Groups*. After discussion on the Conference floor, a motion was carried to return to the original edition at the next printing of the book. Footnotes and a preface will introduce the changes and its archival, historical value to our program.

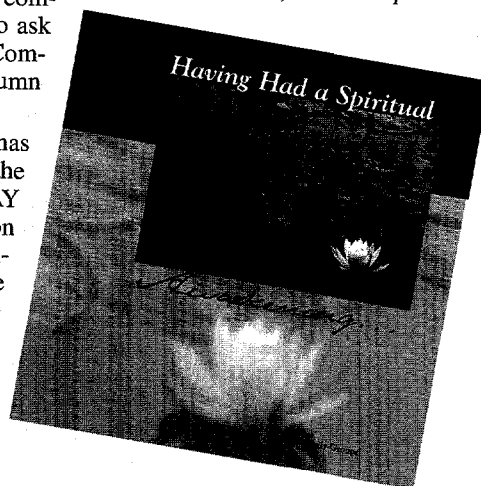
We began our literature inventory review of *Blueprint for Progress*. We unanimously concurred with the Public Outreach Committee

and Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee to recommend to the Conference the creation of a resource booklet for professionals. We also considered a request to create a pamphlet for long-timers. The committee concurred by consensus to ask the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee to consider a feature column by long-time members.

An Al-Anon member/writer has been contracted to begin editing the sharings for *RECOVERY TODAY* (working title), the new Al-Anon daily reader in conceptual development for adult children. We have received over 400 sharings in less than one year.

Blanche M.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Caryn J.,
Director, Fellowship Communication



Public Outreach Committee

In January 1998, the WSO's automated attendant telephone system began redirecting the 800 number calls. The Public Outreach Department is now receiving only professional and media calls. Group Services handles all meeting information calls. In the last six months, 789 professional packets have been mailed out. There has been a 63% increase in requests for information from mail-in coupons attached to the *Fact Sheet for Professionals*. An average of two calls per day are generated from this leaflet. The number one request from professionals is for current local meeting lists. Additionally, electronic post card responses for information average one per day.

We continue to enhance our web site. We have added an on-line version of *Al-Anon Speaks Out* to the professional section of the site. The Spanish section is being expanded and a French section is being created.

The full Public Outreach Committee viewed the new "Tornado" PSA and were introduced to the many facets of a PSA campaign. In addition to the new "Tornado" poster, we have created an ad slick for coordinators, advance order forms in three languages and revised the "Be Our Eyes and Ears" coupon in three languages. The fellowship will be informed by articles in the April *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* and spring *Area Highlights* along with an area Public

Information Coordinator mailing and a press release.

In an effort to consolidate Public Outreach service materials, the full standing committee approved drafts of the combined Mental Health and Correctional Facilities pamphlets. Proposed titles were discussed.

The committee voted to recommend discontinuance of four posters: "Is Alcohol A Problem In Your Family?", Door Poster, Flower Poster, and Giraffe Poster, because they meet the criteria for discontinuance.

An update on the military outreach projects in the US and Canada was presented. The focus in the US will be the Air Force. A meeting with top US Air Force officials was held and data for our initial mailing is expected. In Canada, the counseling and treatment facilities are consolidated into one program for the three

branches of the military. An introductory letter and professional packet of information were sent to all participating Canadian military treatment centers. Canadian CPC Coordinators will be receiving information for encouraging local follow-up.

The revised Media Kit (K-19) and new Canadian version (K-19c) were made available for general distribution. Delegates and PI Coordinators received sample copies with the biannual Public Outreach mailing to area CPC, PI and Institutions Coordinators.

Doris S.,
Chairperson,

Executive Committee Member

Phyllis M.,
Director, Public Outreach



Don C.,
Trustee, Treasurer

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

Treasurer's Report

Income from operations totaled \$4,020,257 in 1997. Expenses for the year were \$3,653,005. The General Fund earned \$367,252.

Literature sales were about \$8,700 less than expected. Sales of several books and other literature were far below projections—primarily, *How Al-Anon Works* and *Courage to Change. Paths to Recovery*, however, far exceeded expectations, it was \$169,000 over budget.

Contribution receipts were \$923,979. *Forum* subscription income totaled \$330,300. French *Forum* sales totaled \$6,300 and investment income totaled \$4,350.

Operating expenses of \$3,653,005 were less than expected, as significantly lower costs were incurred for occupancy, postage, committee meetings, outreach activities and printing. Costs were slightly higher than expected for stationary, office supplies and miscellaneous expenses.

The Reserve Fund had income of \$956,670

in 1997 and at year-end had a balance of \$4,009,526 after recording investments at market value.

As of December 31, 1997 our World Service Office had total assets of \$9,847,340 and liabilities of \$3,647,113 leaving a balance of \$6,200,227 distributed between three funds—General, Reserve and Building.

Conference members asked more specific questions about the Treasurer's report including valuation and management of the Reserve Fund and how it is projected to perform in the coming year. Discussion on retirement benefits included information on its management and increased contributions by WSO in 1997, based on the large number of new employees at the WSO completing their first year of service. Significant reductions in salaries and occupancy costs were noted.

A motion to approve the 1997 Audited Financial report was carried.

1998 BUDGET

Don C.,
Trustee, Treasurer

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

The 1998 budget anticipates that expenses of \$3,831,000 will equal income for the year.

Income

We expect a continued decline in the amount of literature sold. An April 1 book price increase should generate about \$125,000 in income and the introduction of our new book, *Having Had a Spiritual Awakening...*, will offset part of the expected decline in other literature sales.

Forum subscription income of \$311,000 is

\$19,300 less than in 1997. We expect an average monthly mailing of 35,000 copies and minimal income from a July 1 price increase. Income of \$6,000 is expected from French *Forum* subscriptions. Interest earned should improve to \$10,000 from \$4,000 in 1997. Contributions of \$928,000 are a slight increase over 1997 receipts.

Expense

Overall expense should be 4.9% higher than in 1997. Labor costs of \$2,218,000 comprise about 58% of the expense budget and are expected to rise by \$133,400 (6.4%) in 1998. The WSO will employ a full time staff of 56 people.

Most expenses should remain at 1997 levels; some exceptions include higher postage and printing due to the printing and groupwide mailing of revised *Service Manuals*. *Forum* printing costs will decline due to in-house magazine design and an expected mid-year change of printers. The cost of printing and mailing the French *Forum* will be higher with a full year's printing of the magazine and two issues of the newsletter version.

The budget includes \$91,000 for the current PSA campaign and excludes CPC exhibits because of budget constraints and Regional Service Seminars.

Several members expressed concerns about the increase in book prices. One delegate reported that a group stopped donating to the WSO because they felt the increase was not necessary, and the group wondered if WSO was using its money wisely. With discussion, members shared that, through the wisdom of the Concepts of Service, the Board of Trustees was charged with making this and other important financial decisions, and that trust in their wisdom was needed.

Other questions about the budget were answered by the Treasurer. One question pertained to the timing of the budget in comparison to the Conference. It was pointed out that the WSO was already operating four months into the 1998 fiscal year. It was explained that the structure of the WSO would make it impossible to change the fiscal year. The Budget Committee meets several times during the year

(continued on page 11)

1998 World Service Conference Summary

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.
1998 BUDGET

SCHEDULE 1

	<u>1997</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
<u>Literature Sales</u>			
Courage to Change	\$ 700,000	\$ 656,000	\$ 656,000
Courage to Change - large print	73,000	67,200	69,000
One Day at a Time	360,000	338,700	320,000
One Day at a Time - large print	30,000	31,300	32,000
Paths to Recovery	410,000	609,000	300,000
How Al-Anon Works	320,000	268,600	235,000
Courage To Be Me	145,000	133,000	76,000
Having Had a Spiritual Awakening	-	-	240,000
From Survival to Recovery	95,000	85,300	74,000
As We Understood	42,000	43,500	43,000
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions	105,000	88,400	77,000
Alateen - a day at a time	72,000	66,400	67,000
In All Our Affairs	45,000	48,900	48,000
Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage	46,000	45,800	47,000
Alateen - Hope for the Children	21,000	16,500	16,000
Lois Remembers	12,000	13,700	16,000
Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism	23,000	20,800	17,000
Al-Anon Family Groups	15,000	12,500	11,000
Forum Favorites - Volumes 1 - 4	15,000	15,600	13,000
French Literature	100,000	66,100	65,000
Other Literature	<u>1,040,000</u>	<u>952,900</u>	<u>935,000</u>
<u>Income from Publications</u>	<u>3,669,000</u>	<u>3,581,000</u>	<u>3,357,000</u>
<u>Cost of Literature Distributed</u>			
Courage to Change	175,000	130,600	125,000
Courage to Change - large print	14,000	11,500	12,000
One Day at a Time	108,000	89,500	80,000
One Day at a Time - large print	10,000	10,600	12,000
Paths to Recovery	91,000	112,800	66,000
How Al-Anon Works	84,000	55,700	54,000
Courage To Be Me	56,000	39,700	23,000
Having Had a Spiritual Awakening	-	-	53,000
From Survival to Recovery	16,000	14,100	13,000
As We Understood	10,000	9,500	10,000
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions	21,000	20,700	18,000
Alateen - a day at a time	26,000	20,300	20,000
In All Our Affairs	9,000	8,100	7,000
Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage	6,000	5,500	6,000
Alateen - Hope for the Children	5,000	3,200	3,000
Lois Remembers	3,000	2,400	3,000
Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism	5,000	4,000	3,000
Al-Anon Family Groups	3,000	2,200	2,000
Forum Favorites - Volumes I - IV	4,000	6,700	2,000
French Literature	20,000	17,400	16,000
Other Literature	<u>281,000</u>	<u>261,200</u>	<u>253,000</u>
<u>Cost of Literature</u>	<u>947,000</u>	<u>825,700</u>	<u>781,000</u>
Gross Profit from Literature Sales	2,722,000	2,755,300	2,576,000
Forum Subscriptions	345,000	330,300	311,000
Forum Subscriptions - French	5,000	6,300	6,000
Interest Earned	10,000	4,400	10,000
Contributions	780,000	924,000	928,000
1998 International Convention	-	-	0
<u>Total Income</u>	<u>3,862,000</u>	<u>4,020,300</u>	<u>3,831,000</u>
<u>Less: Expense (Schedule 1A)</u>	<u>3,862,000</u>	<u>3,653,000</u>	<u>3,831,000</u>
<u>Excess of Income - General Fund</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 367,300</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.
1998 BUDGET

SCHEDULE 1A

	1997 Budget	1997 Actual	1998 Budget
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries (includes Temp Help)	\$ 1,630,000	\$ 1,584,800	\$ 1,660,000
Payroll Taxes	140,000	140,900	140,000
Employee Benefits	<u>320,000</u>	<u>358,900</u>	<u>418,000</u>
Total Labor Costs	2,090,000	2,084,600	2,218,000
Building Occupancy	350,000	322,200	335,000
Packing & Shipping (Net)	8,000	(3,800)	3,000
Postage - Forum	136,000	112,300	114,000
- French Forum	15,000	3,500	11,000
- other	175,000	137,700	155,000
Telephone - office	45,000	48,700	48,000
- 800 #'s	30,000	16,800	18,000
Stationery & Office Supplies	120,000	124,900	120,000
Office Services & Expenses	36,000	29,300	40,000
Outreach Activities	32,000	8,200	14,000
Repairs & Maintenance	25,000	21,200	20,000
Travel & Meetings - Committees	128,000	108,500	110,000
- Office	20,000	7,400	14,000
Legal & Audit	25,000	37,300	35,000
Printing - Forum	150,000	136,700	110,000
- French Forum	24,000	11,400	28,000
- Conference Summary	16,000	13,400	14,000
- Other	24,000	22,300	35,000
CPC Exhibits	21,000	20,400	-
Direct Conference Costs (Net)	62,000	63,200	70,000
French Literature Service	23,000	21,700	20,000
Canadian Public Information	36,000	37,800	36,000
Regional Service Seminars	20,000	14,100	-
In-Office Volunteers	15,000	9,500	9,000
Insurance	14,000	12,500	14,000
Internet	8,000	5,000	4,000
Miscellaneous	<u>22,000</u>	<u>26,100</u>	<u>15,000</u>
<u>Total Operating Expense</u>	<u>3,670,000</u>	<u>3,452,900</u>	<u>3,610,000</u>
<u>Non-Operating Expense</u>			
Relocation expense (net)	-	5,700	-
International Al-Anon General Service	45,000	36,500	-
PSA/PI Campaign	30,000	37,900	91,000
Depreciation & Amortization (Excl. Bld.)	<u>117,000</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>130,000</u>
<u>Total Non-Operating Expense</u>	<u>192,000</u>	<u>200,100</u>	<u>221,000</u>
<u>Total Expense (Schedule 1)</u>	<u>\$ 3,862,000</u>	<u>\$ 3,653,000</u>	<u>\$ 3,831,000</u>

to develop the budget and the Board gives it initial approval in January. This preliminary

budget is in effect. If Conference chooses to not accept the budget, changes can be made.

DIRECTORS' PRESENTATION

"Service Sponsorship—Working Smarter, Not Harder"

Last year for the first time, the WSO directors asked the Conference Committee to present to the Conference an issue they felt was important and which required input from Conference members. Each Conference member received a reportback of the 1997 directors' presentation along with a questionnaire asking for additional feedback. This information will be used to clarify suggestions with diverse opinions.

This year the directors concurred that support from the area trusted servants and the fellowship is essential to carry out our primary purpose—helping families and friends of alcoholics. The role of the WSO is to assist the areas. This year's presentation was titled, "Service Sponsorship — Working Smarter, Not Harder."

The Executive Director began the presentation by reading Concept Nine, and playing a few lines from a '50s song.

He then reported that Al-Anon's beginning in 1951 involved not one person, but two people. It was Lois reaching out for help to Anne, and Anne reaching back to Lois that gave us the foundation of our program. The two typed, on one typewriter, the 87 letters sent out to groups that tried to register with AA as "Family Groups." They hand-wrote or typed all correspondence. In 1952 they said, "We had to move from Stepping Stones to New York City in order to get more volunteers." Our pioneers were willing to change and they felt that change did not violate our principles or put our Traditions at risk; Lois and Anne embraced change.

Pausing, the Conference was treated to a few lines from a current song, musically illustrating that times have changed. The WSO, many of the areas, and several groups have less resources, both financial and human, and yet our membership is more diverse and frequently more demanding. We ask for more, we want to do more, and yet we have less money and fewer people to carry out the work.

If we continued to work with a single typewriter it would be impossible for the WSO to correspond with the over 31,000 groups that we have. If we continue to isolate ourselves without adding e-mail we would soon be unable to keep that message going forward. Between 1951 and 1955, we had two or three pamphlets and one book. Now there are over

200 pamphlets and books and the fellowship is asking for more. At the same time, some members are saying, "enough." In the 1950s many of our members were at home. Today almost all of us work outside the home.

In looking at the challenges of changes within our fellowship, and understanding our need to adapt and move forward, the directors presented some ideas for "Service Sponsorship—Working Smarter Not Harder."

Sandra F., Director of Group Services, offered that, in terms of "Working Smarter, not Harder" and getting back to basics, it all starts with the group. What are the habits of highly effective, healthy Al-Anon and Alateen groups? They have planned meetings, they use CAL, they have a GR, they have an active core of members, they are involved with their district, they take a periodic inventory, and, if an Alateen group, they have two sponsors and are connected to an Al-Anon group.

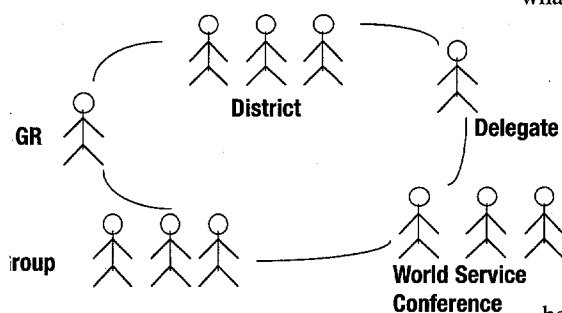
On the other hand, these signs point to a much needed group checkup: The group has no GR, group positions are not filled, one member knows everything, they are not involved in their district, they probably have had the same chairperson for years, probably have had no business meetings for months, and work on the premise that the way it was is the way it always has to be.

Everyone can picture "healthy groups" and groups that need a "check-up." We might ask the groups in our areas to take the health quiz, and ask a *healthy* group to help a group that needs help with a *booster shot* through service sponsorship.

The WSO practices service sponsorship when we partner with the area. Areas can partner with each other. The WSO gets the least return mail from areas with Group Records Coordinators (22 in all); information services are constantly upgrading their services through technology. Some have web sites with meetings posted. Some AISs have members using beepers to provide 24 hour service. One has an automated meeting list on the phone lines. One area archives is scanning documents for preservation and easy retrieval. One way to "Work Smarter, Not Harder" is through technology.

The Group Services Department of the WSO strives to be "information central" for our services and our groups. We often "partner" with each other and in just one brainstorming ses-

Ric B.,
Executive Director



sion Group Records staff was able to cut its time in answering the toll free meeting line in half by changing the greeting given on the phone. Instead of saying, "Al-Anon, how can I help you?", we say, "Al-Anon meeting line, what city and state?"

Group Services is working together to provide the tools to help you "Work Smarter, Not Harder" through finding service sponsors and through creating healthy and highly effective groups.

Phyllis M., Director of Public Outreach, explained that the Public Outreach team slogan is "attraction and commitment." We believe that attraction is the hope that Al-Anon/Alateen gives to the general public. This is one component of the heart of Al-Anon. Once people come to Al-Anon/Alateen, they stay because they become committed to joy. When we walk into a room for the first time many of us say, "I want what they have." It's the joy of believing you can be loved and love other people. This is the heart of Al-Anon. It's our "attraction and commitment." We work through our PSAs; we attract people to the hope and then we hope the message is strong enough that they will make a commitment to pick up the phone and come to a meeting. Once we are in meetings, we make this commitment. We want this joy and this happiness, our recovery begins. In order to sustain it, we become involved in another level of Al-Anon service.

We believe it takes more courage or experience to be a service sponsor. Look at someone and say "I think we can do this together, let's try it." Through that experience or courage, those two members reach out to two more members. It's all about letting it begin with me. That is the beginning, the reaching out to touch 31,000 groups.

When we do it with someone else, there's a new hope, a new joy, a new commitment and a new attraction. Many say our strength is with the newcomer. Their presence sustains our joy and hope. Nothing gives us greater joy than seeing a newcomer, about three meetings later, as faces relax and eyes sparkle. That is the hope. It's wonderful to watch. That's what sustains us because that's what protects our heart.

Professionals also need to hear our message. Many times professionals are overworked and underpaid and yet they really do care. They want to give their clients or patients hope and joy, they want to give recovery. Together we can make a difference. That's the bottom line. It's hard sometimes to make it alone, but with somebody else we really, truly can make a difference.

The power is in the groups, not in the WSO. We have six people in Public Outreach, there's 31,000 groups, maybe the potential of one mil-

lion people throughout the world that need people to carry the message. We need your help.

Mary Ann K., Director of Membership Outreach, began by saying that in looking over our history in the US and Canada as well as in other countries, we can see that when an area or country has a strong structure there is less conflict in service, more members are involved, and there is more joy in working in service. There is the secret, there is the key. It is structure. Are you disappointed that the answer is as simple as "structure"? (Mary Ann demonstrated by using a group of toy stick people). Everything starts with the group. We have to have structure. This is the group representative (GR) who needs to rotate (as she whirls the stick figure over her head). Why? Because the literature tells us there is no such thing as dominance in Al-Anon. The GR gets elected and connected to group. (she attaches other stick people to the GR). The GR goes to district meetings where district people look like other members but are gathered for a different purpose. The key is also joining together. Out of these people comes the delegate who rotates (again whirling it over her head) because we don't have any dominance. It would destroy Al-Anon. Then they come together with some swinging people (more stick people added to the group) who are the Conference members.

The structure, doesn't always look pretty. But the structure rests on our shoulders. The shoulders of every GR, every DR, all the way down the line. Our *1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* states on p. 169, "our service structure rests on the dedication and ability of thousands of GRs and DRs and delegates." What if we had no structure? What happens? (All the stick people fall apart). With colored clay Mary Ann demonstrated what happens to General Service Offices when there isn't any structure and in areas where structure isn't understood. What happens when people don't know where their jobs start and they get into other's business, or when there are no job descriptions, no boundaries? There is no fun.

Caryn J., Director of Fellowship Communication, asked, "What can we do to 'Work Smarter, Not Harder'?" The first word of the First Step is *we*. It says we don't have to do any job alone. We've been there, done that. Service sponsors share experience, strength and hope in service. It says in *Paths to Recovery* on page 257, "a service sponsor is someone who has had experience in service work, and can help understand the Twelve Concepts of Service, the links of service arms, and the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*." A service sponsor is someone whom we admire in service, and someone who is willing to share.

The members of the Conference are in many ways our service sponsors. Members provide

us with ideas that we pass on through letters, coordinator mailings, service tools and newsletters. Some solutions to challenges at the WSO have been simple suggestions from members. By producing a simple sharing sheet we receive sharings from the fellowship, where before we begged for sharings and got nothing. By providing guidelines for writing workshops, people who have never participated before are sharing wonderful words of wisdom. By providing coordinators specific activities with suggested outlines, we hear they are more comfortable helping the area and the WSO to carry message.

The whole key to service sponsorship is passing it on. If you are a member of an outgoing panel, be a service sponsor by encouraging area officers and coordinators to meet with their successors. Ask them to pass on the last coordinator mailings from WSO to the new ones so they can be informed. Ask past trusted servants to share their experience, strength and hope.

Buy a book or subscription to *The Forum* when you can afford it and donate it to a library or school, or give it to newer member who can't afford it. Ask your DR to share *Area Highlights* with group representatives.

LDCs provide avenues of distribution that help the WSO. Instead of shipping to individuals, we ship to LDCs in larger shipments. LDCs in turn ship in smaller numbers, using service volunteers, saving time and money. No one person in Al-Anon is expected to do it alone. We are Al-Anon, therefore the word *we* is an operative word. We share, we learn, we grow, we give service, we give back that which we have been given by getting involved. The job exists after we have served our term, so passing it on helps the next person do it just a wee bit better.

So remember, service sponsorship is sharing our service experience, strength, and hope.

Richard Keilly, non-member, Director of Business Services, offered some ideas for increasing contributions to the district, AIS, area and to the WSO. We know that the treasurer should pay the groups' expenses, so:

1. Why not consider contributions to the district, AIS, area and WSO an expense?
2. Work out a financial program for the group, adding if necessary to the voluntary contributions at meetings by having fundraising events. Plan how funds will be budgeted for the purchase of literature, refreshments, contributions to the WSO, the assembly, the district, and the AIS/intergroup. Some groups may even take additional collections for special local projects within the district or area.
3. Surplus funds derived from conventions

can be contributed to the area treasury and WSO.

4. Contribute regularly to the WSO to cover expenses for worldwide services.
5. The expenses of the assembly for the individual group will be less if all groups contribute. If every group makes an attempt to accumulate funds throughout the year, the expense burden will be fairly shared by all groups in the area.
6. When we drop money in the meeting basket, its usefulness is not as obvious as when we talk to newcomers. There is no romance in paying the landlord. When each member can show how much the service dollar really buys in terms of helping families find Al-Anon, contributions are willing and generous.
7. The cost of our world services is small in relation to the size of our fellowship.
8. It is firmly believed that, as the groups understand the situation more clearly (meaning that group contributions pay for only a portion of the WSO expenses) their contributions will continue to increase.

Actually all of these ideas can be found in the 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* on pages 36, 41, 66, 69, 118, and 194. The last three were written in 1969. So concerns about self-support are virtually unchanged over the years.

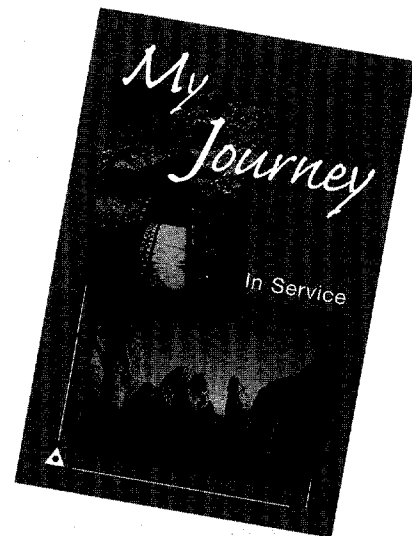
Richard shared that at a church service recently, they asked for contributions in a way that was very acceptable. What they said was, "Now it's time to pass the basket. If you are a guest, you are just that, and should feel no obligation to contribute. If you feel like contributing, please do so. However, our regular members believe in what we are doing and support us."

That sounds like it would apply to Al-Anon. Everyone here believes in the program.

Following the directors' presentations, all Conference members then met with assigned temporary Conference service sponsors. Each service sponsor was to assist the sponsee with new ideas or support on something that they would like to improve in their area. After 10 minutes, service sponsees were asked to come to the microphone and share what they had learned. Many insightful ideas were shared in a short time.

Conference members were then asked to reverse roles in the coming days by meeting with their assigned service sponsor or sponsee.

The ultimate goal of this workshop was to show how easy it was to discuss what is going well and what needs improvement in area service work. Each Conference member was asked to take this model back to their areas, duplicating the concept of service sponsorship.



M-58 My Journey in Service

Area officers and coordinators, district representatives, and group representatives each seeking a service sponsor may find that their service burdens are manageable and easily

shared with others. Conference members were asked to consider using the new service journal "My Journey in Service" as a tool in this process.

BOARD OF TRUSTEE REPORTS

During the Conference, an open Board of Trustees meeting was held on Wednesday evening. All Conference members were welcome to attend.

Throughout the week, the many Board committees provide reports and presentations to the Conference. They are presented here in alpha-

betical order rather than in the order of their presentation.

At the conclusion of the Conference, the Board of Trustees held their Annual Board meeting. This session was also open for all Conference members to observe.

Pat S.,

*Conference Chairperson,
Executive Committee Member*

Susan A.,

Associate Director, Conference

1999 Conference Site

Since the end of the 1997 World Service Conference, the search has been on for a location for the 1999 Conference. Five hotels in the New York City metropolitan area were sent proposals. Because of past experience with some of the hotels and because of traveling expenses, only two hotels required a site visit. An effort was made to find a location that would fit our meeting room space and budgetary needs. A proposal has been made to hold the 1999 World Service Conference at a

hotel in Stamford, Connecticut, April 25-29, 1999. Hotel meeting and sleeping space is more costly in the New York City area and the Board is requesting that anyone who is able to share a room, talk it over with each other and plan to do so. We will charter buses so that any Conference members and their guests may visit Stepping Stones. Conference members who bring a guest may be charged for additional costs in order to stay within our budget.

Mary Anne K.,

Chairperson

Margaret G.,

Trustee, Board Liason

50th Anniversary Ad hoc Committee

The committee will give the Conference a written report and plan next year that can be reviewed, taken home and put into action. Here is an update on what is under discussion:

- We have created criteria for the events that will be printed in our anniversary calendar. This will be a saleable item for that year. Al-Anon's history will be in this publication. We are giving con-



sideration to printing the calendar in Spanish and French.

- At the 1998 International Convention in Salt Lake City, the last thing we will mention is the 50th anniversary celebration in 2001.

- We are still discussing how the WSO will celebrate the 50th anniversary.

The theme will be, "50 Years of Passing It On".

Financial Inventory

Let's start by agreeing that figures can be complicated and, at times, misleading. We will try to simplify our presentation and show the direction that Al-Anon is headed in financial terms. A single year is the standard method for measuring results. Our presentation deals with trends. For purposes of determining trends in Al-Anon financial health, our discussion will be based on the eight-year period from 1990 through 1997.

Al-Anon appears to have peaked in terms of growth measured in financial terms—revenue from literature sales, contributions, and subscriptions. Each of these categories has recorded substantial declines during this period. Will

we continue the downward trend? If the answer is yes, then what must be done to insure that we continue to service our membership at current levels? Other questions to be asked are: Can the current trend be reversed? Can we stabilize the current group/income levels? What measures must be taken? Finally, are there factors outside all our efforts which indicate that a further decline is possible?

All current trends and projections indicate a continued decline in our financial health. Between 1990 and 1997 we published five new books and included the sale of French literature in our income, yet sales have fallen by 16%. Literature sales in 1990 were \$4,288,000

Don C.,

Trustee, Treasurer

Richard Keilly

*(non-member), Director of
Business Services*

and by 1997 had declined to \$3,581,000. This includes a full year's sales of our two newest books, *Paths to Recovery* and *Courage To Be Me* and, for the first time, sales of French literature. If we eliminated the effects of these new additions, the decline in sales from 1990-1997 would be 35%.

What does the decline mean? If we assume that virtually every member has at least one daily reader then it follows that the number of new members has declined.

Forum subscriptions can be another method of assessing our situation. At the end of 1990 we were distributing about 63,000 copies of the magazine, and at the end of 1997 only about 35,000 copies were mailed each month. If newcomers are a significant source of new subscriptions then this reinforces the assumption that there must be fewer new members.

Contributions also seem to have declined when adjusted for inflation. In 1990 the average group contribution was \$46.65 and, adjusted for inflation, it was \$37.41 in 1997.

The total number of groups in the US and Canada (Al-Anon and Alateen) declined steadily from 1990-1995 and has risen in 1996 and 1997.

We have not idly sat watching as these declines occurred. We continue to reach out to those in need. We have reduced costs by cutting staff and overhead expenses. We have increased the price of some of our books to insure adequate funds.

Now, what can we do so that we can effectively carry the message into next century? Unless we find some workable solutions, the only avenue left will be a severe reduction in

services. That is not a solution. We can best serve our members and potential members by being financially healthy. To reach that goal we must seek financial help from the entire fellowship.

Conference members' input is essential and we trust that the discussion, of this matter will lead to solutions. Members received handouts and copies of the charts used in the discussion.

Conference members shared that this type of information was invaluable to them in explaining to their areas the financial concerns of Al-Anon. During the discussion Conference members asked for a report on the contributions broken out by area as well as updated statistics on annual receipts per group and WSO expenses per group. All three reports were provided later in the week. Suggestions included: on-going efforts to break the "buck barrier" with individual member contributions at the group level; contributing even when one is unable to attend a home group meeting; making a personal contribution on a regular basis, much like paying bills monthly or quarterly; explaining the purpose of the appeal letters and why the envelope is passed around separately from the basket; the effect decreased contributions have on the unity of Al-Anon; writing a check to the WSO is tax-deductible in the US; there is a request to secure tax-exempt status in Canada; we believe that the move to Virginia has saved Al-Anon financially; encouraging the use of books other than the *One Day at a Time* (ODAT) at meetings; and the quality use of funds such as with our new public service announcements. The session ended with a sincere expression of appreciation for all of the support given to this difficult presentation.

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee

The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee consists of members from Ohio, Alberta, Arizona, New Jersey and Georgia. They meet every three months and review 200 manuscripts each time.

Subscriptions statistics show a decline from January 1997 to May 1998 from 41,025 subscribers to 35,424.

To save money and increase circulation, several changes were made in 1997. We brought the design of *The Forum* in-house, saving approximately \$1,900 per month. In March we began using members' photos and introduced puzzles for the first time. *Forum* "writing workshop" guidelines were printed in the April '97 issue. These guidelines were mailed to coordinators and we have already seen good results from these workshops.

During October, November and December, we offered holiday gift subscriptions—buy one at the regular price of \$9.00 and up to four more for just \$7.00 each.

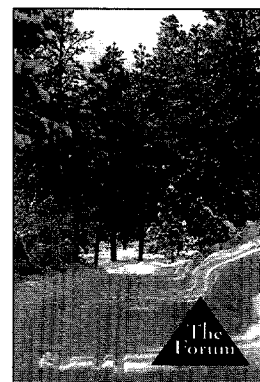
We brought back "Stoppers" with a new

look. We have updated Forum Coordinator guidelines in cooperation with Group Services (the department who coordinates all guidelines).

At the March 1997 Regional Service Seminar in Hampton, Virginia, six area Forum Coordinators challenged each other to increase *Forum* subscriptions. The coordinators returned to their areas full of enthusiasm for the challenge and *The Forum*. Members in their area responded and the contest was off and running. As *Forum* subscriptions declined in 1997 overall, Delaware was declared the winner of the challenge for maintaining its subscription base. Congratulations to all participants in the 1997 Forum Challenge—you are all winners.

In 1998 we have continued our efforts to increase subscriptions to *The Forum*. We offered a "bakers dozen" for January, February and March (13 for the price of twelve). We mailed lost subscribers a humorous questionnaire/invitation to re-subscribe. And we began mailing second renewal notices separately

Marion W.,
Trustee, Chairperson



The Forum
1998 February Cover

Margaret G.
Trustee, Chairperson

Marsha W.,
Associate Director, International



IAGSM logo

from the magazine, with a personal letter inviting members to re-subscribe.

"Talk To Each Other" has generated much correspondence that has been forwarded to the writers and, if we have permission, reviewed

for publication in *The Forum*.

We are pleased with the increase in sharings after sending out appeals to Alateen members and their sponsors, sharings for "The Lighter Side," and about our three legacies.

International Coordination Committee

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) centered their presentation around the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) held in Virginia Beach, VA in 1997. Margaret G. began the presentation with a personal anecdote. Conference members were shown a slide presentation by Marsha W. that captured the feeling and spirit of the meeting held October 16-19 in Virginia Beach. To give Conference members a further sense of the meeting, Margaret introduced other ICC members who gave highlights on four of the many topics discussed during the IAGSM.

Helen R., who was the US representative at the IAGSM, reported there was a lively discussion about the Internet. She explained that many of the delegates to the IAGSM indicated they had previously accessed the WSO Home Page on the web. The web site was shown, and it was noted that the site is truly international in scope. Within the first month of operation, the site was visited by individuals from 21 countries outside the US and Canada, including Sweden, Mexico, the UK and Austria. To date, the site has been visited by people in at least 40 countries, including Germany, Norway, Belgium, Korea and Iceland.

There was also discussion about the possibility of all GSOs uniting on one web address allowing each one to be represented. This would allow the structures to cooperate like never before. Some GSOs have already created home pages and were encouraged to hyperlink (connect) to the WSO's home page. Another suggestion was to join the WSO home page which would be less expensive for each GSO, provide a consistent format for each structure, and have the presentation of official Al-Anon/Alateen material on the web. GSOs could contribute to the design via e-mail, and it would give those interested countries cost-effective web space.

The WSO is investigating whether an international page would be feasible. It would then be left to each structure to decide to participate or not. The primary purpose of the Internet home page was, and continues to be, to reach out to newcomers and professionals.

Margaret M., representative for Canada at the IAGSM, gave her reportback on Alateen by reading the Delegate from UK and Eire's presentation given at the IAGSM. In 1964 the first Alateen group was formed in the UK. Groups

peaked at 18% of Al-Anon groups in 1986, and had dropped to 9% by 1996. Most Alateen sponsors are loyal and enthusiastic. Yet occasionally some sponsors are not suitable. Due to some serious problems at a convention in 1987, AFG in UK and Eire has produced a responsibility statement to detail their legal responsibility for Alateen members. Their policies concerning Alateen sponsors differ from that of the World Service Conference. In UK and Eire, AA members and dual members may no longer sponsor or assist Alateen groups. The AA GSO in the UK and Eire asked Al-Anon there to remove any mention of AA involvement in Alateen from the Al-Anon manual. After much discussion, the UK and Eire Al-Anon conference agreed to do so.

At their 1996 conference, the policy was amended to state that two Al-Anon sponsors must be present at all Alateen meetings. Procedures were discussed for the appointment of Alateen sponsors and registration of Alateen groups. There was much dissension. Members were concerned that no one would be willing to go through a screening process and this would kill off Alateen. After extensive debate, it was accepted that there is no option other than to take action. It is Al-Anon's responsibility to protect both Alateen members and Alateen sponsors.

In September 1997 the UK and Eire conference approved a screening procedure for all existing and prospective sponsors. They will keep a register of existing and prospective sponsors at the GSO.

After an initial set back when the system was first implemented, there is hope that the number of Alateen groups will grow again. Many members have now intimated they would be willing to be screened for a position as Alateen sponsor.

Mary C., International Coordination Committee member, expressed her gratitude for having the privilege to meet delegates from the General Service Offices around the world and hearing them share their experiences and appreciation for the Twelve Concepts of Service.

Sharing comments made by different delegates during the IAGSM, she relayed that, in Brazil, the Concepts enabled them to build a strong structure. They continue using the Concepts to solve problems that keep coming

up, and shared an appreciation that service based on the Concepts became a part of their recovery without even realizing it. The delegate from Italy believes they have gained better confidence to serve from studying and understanding the Concepts.

Mexico feels strongly that relying on the Concepts provides an assurance for the future. New Zealand suggested they would like more literature about the Concepts of Service because they are a great source of harmony.

Others shared that by struggling to have the Concepts as part of their group study, members came to understand how they apply to their family life. Most delegates agreed the Concepts have to be universal.

Their openness and willingness to learn from each other how the Concepts have helped solve problems was helpful and reassuring. The discussion gave everyone a sense of togetherness, equality, and unity of purpose.

Mary Anne K., ICC member, explained in her presentation that some IAGSM delegates wanted to include delegates from around the world at the WSC with voice and vote. They felt this way the Conference could live up to its name "World Service Conference." Many were

concerned it would be impractical for one body to make decisions for everyone around the world. This would interfere with autonomy. Therefore it was concluded that perhaps the name of the Conference was the real problem. Perhaps leaving out the word "World" would be more acceptable.

Research concluded that the name World Service Conference was decided upon because our pioneers envisioned that different countries would be areas of the World Service Conference. This proved impractical and General Service Offices evolved around the world giving service to groups and members in their countries.

While the delegates did not ask for any change, as Conference members, we should be aware and sensitive to how others see the WSC. Our responsibility is to be faithful to the Concepts in all our deliberations.

Margaret G. concluded that participating in the IAGSM was a wonderful opportunity. She too expressed her gratitude for this meeting and the benefits we all gain because of the existence of the IAGSM. The next meeting, in 2000, will be hosted by Germany in the city of Essen.

Internet Ad-hoc Committee

The members of the committee are: Claire R., Marsha W., Marjorie S., Helen R. and Larry A. The committee has also included Mary Ann K., Phyllis M., John B. and Lorill W., who have rotated to other service. We wanted you to know who they are because they have done something hard and done it swiftly by Al-Anon standards. In October 1995, the Policy Committee passed a motion to recommend to the Board a three-year pilot project to list on-line meetings as "electronic meetings" with the eventual goal of full registration. Guidelines would be produced with on-line meeting members' input. That was two-and-a-half years ago. In that time they have taken a concept, requested input from the fellowship, done research and produced the document you have. The Guidelines for Electronic Meetings are completed. The committee, using letters received from members (both from on-line meetings and those who weren't on-line) and surveys, produced a rough draft at Conference time last year. Some of the letters were only short notes and some were papers that explored the subject in-depth.

In July 1997 the committee requested that the Executive Director research how we could allow our Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to be used by on-line Al-Anon meetings and still protect our copyrights and our ability to sell literature. After three letters from the copyright lawyer, three meetings and much revising, the committee and the Board believe

that we have done that.

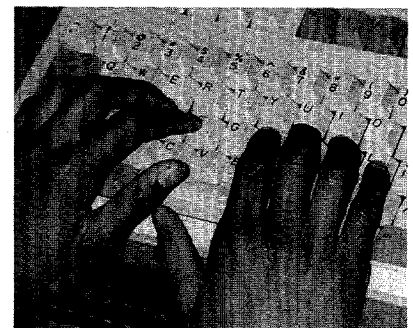
Reading from the guidelines under "Use of Al-Anon/Alateen Literature, *The Forum*, Meeting Format and Service Materials On-line":

"Each year and for that year only chat room and e-mail meetings listed with the WSO may request permission from Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., to use the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, suggested welcome, suggested closing, and short excerpts (maximum one paragraph) from CAL in their meetings. As it is suggested that daily readers not be used in face to face meetings, we do not grant permission to quote from these in on-line meetings. Permission to quote from other CAL is granted with the stated conditions and can be revoked if these conditions are not met.

"Members participating in chat room or e-mail meetings that have received the permission described above, may use up to one paragraph from CAL in either the meeting opening or as a part of their sharing.

"Excerpts may not be altered, printed or archived for later combination with other sharings or excerpts. They may not be included or published on any web site or posting, may not be made available to any person or web site other than at and for that particular meeting and should be treated like a personal, private communication of each participant in the meeting.

Larry A.,
Trustee, Chairperson



There are 16 on-line meetings listed with the WSO.

"Because not all authors of *The Forum* articles give permission to have their sharings used on the Internet, articles from *The Forum* may be used only if they are those listed in the magazine as available for use on the Internet."

The committee and the Board are trying to encourage on-line meetings to be as close to face-to-face meetings as possible. These limitations are necessary because quotes posted on the Internet might be considered printed material and doing so without restriction would endanger both our copyright and our ability to sell literature. The more we allow the greater the danger. The fellowship depends upon literature sales for 77% of our income. Given this fact, the very life of our fellowship could depend upon the adherence to these guidelines.

What you have is the final text for the guidelines but not their final form. The process of approval by the Policy Committee, the copyright attorney and Board approval was completed only last Saturday. They will be printed in our guideline format before they are made available. We expect to have that and the licensing letter done, and to be ready to begin giving permission to excerpt, by the June Executive Committee meeting.

The committee now has two major tasks. The first is to complete, if possible, the goal of the original motion, to bring on-line meetings to full registration. The other is to begin the process of compiling guidelines for other service entities who wish to construct World Wide Web sites.

Earlier in the week the concerns of some members about on-line meetings were noted. Let's take a minute to address their concerns. If

the fellowship through the WSO ignores the on-line meetings, two things will happen: First, we'll miss an opportunity to reach thousands of potential new members, or those who have left and may decide to return. Second, our message may be distorted by those who will do it anyway without any guidance.

The guidelines emphasize the need to attend face-to-face Al-Anon meetings. We do this for the warmth and fellowship there and to stop isolating ourselves. At this time no one has permission to post any CAL on the Internet. It is happening without permission, both because people don't understand that it isn't acceptable, and because some people will do it even though they know they shouldn't, just as in face-to-face meetings. For who choose not to cooperate, the WSO will pursue legal and practical means. For the former, the guidelines will provide the guidance needed to let them know what is acceptable.

The on-line meetings have found ways to follow the Seventh Tradition. These are listed in the guidelines. Some have contributed a great deal of money to the WSO in the last year.

As with anything we do, it takes time to figure out the best way to proceed. The guidelines are a start and will probably need to be revised as we continue to learn. It is interesting that some who were critical of on-line Al-Anon are now members of on-line meetings.

Remember that, while the media covers the bad things that happen on the Internet because the bad things get noticed, there are millions of people using the Internet for productive helpful things.

Nancy B.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Sandra F.,
Director, Group Services

Long Range Study Panel

Nancy reported that the 1998 Al-Anon Family Groups' Service Plan, titled "The Year of Improving our Physical, Mental and Spiritual Health," continued using the inventory format. The area fellowship focus groups (FFGs) worked on goal #5 of the Five Year Plan: Establish the name "Al-Anon" as the best known resource for relatives and friends of alcoholics.

The FFGs are a replication of the Long Range Study Panel at the area level. What the FFGs actually seek is a "bubbling up" of ideas to be used at the area level. Their role is to encourage "synergy" by brainstorming in their areas. "Synergy" is the concept that, when we get together and share our ideas, the sum of our ideas is greater than anyone's individually. The WSO serves as a clearinghouse of these ideas through compiling the Five Year Plan written report given to all Conference members, that includes a summarization of the ideas of the area FFGs.

The LRSP asked itself "What is the Long

Range Study Panel?" and realized it was taking its own inventory as a committee of the Board. They realized that the mission statement found in the Five Year Plan was actually a job description. While other committees turn out "products," the purpose of the LRSP is brainstorming and visioning. The Panel's process was described as:

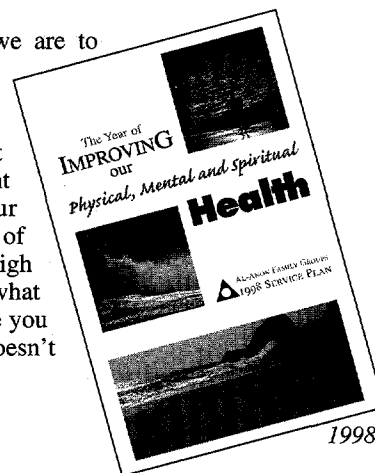
- We are limitless and have no boundaries on what we can dream up.
- We experiment with options and "sneak up" on alternatives.
- We encourage the establishment and maintenance of a future orientation (developing a shared understanding of the need for change utilizing shared beliefs and visions).
- We generate ideas that build on the Al-Anon capacity to hold to a persistent focus and constant direction (our primary purpose of carrying the message).
- We are change agents that do high-impact planning.

- We act strategically: foster collaboration, innovation and flexibility and provide on-going support.

The trick of our brainstorming is to hold onto what we've got that's good and work on what needs to be done at the same time. We must decide what projects to keep, what to change, and what to give away.

It is so easy to dream up ideas, begin projects, and monitor them year after year. Suddenly, we are so busy "doing" that we are not fulfilling our primary job description of planning.

How do we get from where we are to where we're going to be, if we don't dream? We have to be open to change and explore every opportunity that may help us meet our primary purpose. For different results, we need to change our habits. It's our job to break free of these habits. So the LRSP is "high impact planning," finding out what works and what doesn't. We invite you to find what works and what doesn't work in your areas.



1998 Service Plan

Bell Curve— Creativity Team Update

At the 1997 WSC, there was a Bell Curve Creativity Session in which Conference members explored ways to communicate the information derived from the Bell Curve Presentations at the 1996 and 1997 WSCs. Members were asked to take these ideas back to their areas and implement them. In early 1998, each team was asked to submit a brief report to their team captains who provided reportbacks at the 1998 Conference.

Area delegates then reported the following:

Bell Curve sessions were held at districts, workshops and assemblies. The sessions surrounded the topics of: more GR participation; increasing contributions at the district, area,

and WSO levels; increasing Alateen sponsorship; increasing *Forum* subscriptions; and how to get more members involved. The delegates also reported that there is a need to continue to raise awareness to support group growth; it is important to determine what is meant by "self-supporting;" brainstorming sessions were held at district meetings; there is a need to reach out to all cultures; we need to improve communication; and that in order for there to be growth, an attitude is needed of "Let It Begin with Me;" encourage participation and commitment by example. It was also suggested to use the AFG Service Plan inventory sheets as a tool to foster growth.

Nominating Committee

Betty thanked the Nominating Committee and the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) for their love and dedication in the selection of the nominated trusted servants, and for their conscientious and prompt return of the candidate evaluations. She felt that the committee was guided by its Higher Power in choosing an excellent slate of candidates to serve the fellowship for trustee-at-large, Board officers and Executive Committee for Real Property Management positions.

The guidelines for the Board of Trustees state, "After the election, a regional trustee's concern, as that of other Board members, is the fellowship as a whole. A regional trustee does not represent a region, but brings an overall viewpoint from the membership of the region." Candidates for RT are selected by their areas who forward their resumes to the WSO via the delegate by January 1. At the WSC, an RT nominating committee selects a nominee by closed ballot. This year, the Nominating Committees for Regional Trustee consist of the regions' delegates, three trustees (drawn by lot) and three out-of-region delegates, also drawn by lot. The nominees are given traditional

approval by the Conference as a whole and are elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting on Friday.

Trustee-at-large resumes are solicited from the fellowship at-large after the WSC. They are submitted to the WSO by August 15th of that year. Resumes are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. The CCT chair tallies scores and rankings from CCT and sends a report to the Executive Director. At its October meeting, the Nominating Committee uses the CCT input and its own scores and rankings to select a slate of six people to be invited to the January Board meeting for introduction to the Board. After a dinner interview, each candidate gives a ten minute talk about their background and service experience. Using this information, the Board nominates three candidates at its January meeting. The WSC is being asked to give traditional approval to these nominees and they will be elected Friday at the Board's Annual Meeting.

Motion Five of the 1995 WSC created a trial amendment to the Bylaws—Article XII to create an Executive Committee for Real Property Management. This committee, consisting of

Betty B.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Ric B.,
Executive Director

the WSO Treasurer, the Director of Business Services and three at-large members, is designed to keep management of our headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of Al-Anon. Each at-large member serves a three-year term and the chairperson is seated at the WSC with voice only. The nominating process is the same as for trustee-at-large. Resumes are solicited by August 15 and sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. A nominee is selected at the January Board meeting to be presented to the WSC for traditional approval and elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting.

Conference members were then asked to vote providing traditional approval for the nominees for trustee-at-large, regional trustees, at-large member of the ECRPM, and the Board officers.

The slate for trustee-at-large given traditional approval by the 1998 Conference was:

Helen R., second three-year term
Margaret G., second three-year term
Peggy S., first three-year term.

Margaret M.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Phyllis M.,
Director, Public Outreach

NPIC Reportback

Two reports were given by Carole P., Public Outreach Service Manager for Canada. The first report was a special presentation on national trends and Al-Anon/Alateen growth in Canada. Delegates were informed that the number of groups in Canada has not changed in the last five years. However, 16.8% (5,040,000) of Canada's population of 30 million people are affected by alcoholism. The challenge is for the existing 2,216 Al-Anon/Alateen groups to attract and help these potential newcomers.

The next portion consisted of an update on current and proposed Public Outreach projects for Canada. These included the PSAs and military and corporate outreach projects.

Phyllis M.,
Director, Public Outreach

PSA Campaign

The development of a public service announcement (PSA) is truly a team process. The Public Outreach staff of WSO works from that premise. The initial surveys conducted by the vendor, who distributes the PSAs, indicated to us that all the broadcasting companies they had surveyed said they recognized the name Al-Anon. Yet all said they had never seen an Al-Anon PSA. We used to distribute the PSAs from the WSO, through the groups, districts, and area, but there weren't any measuring tools. We now use a national distributor and the benefits are two-fold. First, we know we get the

The slate of Board of Trustees officers given traditional approval was:

Helen R., Chairperson
Margaret M., Vice-Chairperson
Don C., Treasurer

Traditional approval was given for an at-large member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management:

Pebble B., three year term

The Conference members were informed of the nominees to the Executive Committee for 1998-99:

Doris S., second one-year term,
 Chairperson

Pat S., third one-year term

Marion W., first one-year term.

Sandra F. is the administrative staff member, serving the first year of a two-year term.

Helen W. was elected chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property management

Congratulations were extended to all nominees.

Delegates were informed of the development of a First Nations outreach project and gave their input.

A compilation of area responses to the 1997 Public Information in Canada Questionnaire submitted by delegates was distributed. The report was divided into four categories: services within NPIC's scope and purpose; services requested by members which are not within NPIC's scope and purpose; services NPIC hopes to provide; and comments.

Although NPIC is already providing many of the requested services, continued clarification of NPIC's national public outreach purpose is essential.

PSAs to the stations. Second, we have measuring tools that let us know what transpires with those PSAs—your investment. With the national distributor, we distribute to a small segment of TV and radio and ask the members to help us with others. Distributed between 1996 and December 1998, were "Ask Yourself," "Cocktail Party," and "Fear and Anger." The new PSA, "Tornado," will be distributed later this year.

Between the summer of 1996 and September of 1998, 8500 copies of our PSAs, including "Tornado," will have been distributed to TV

and radio stations in the US and Canada. TV PSAs distributed in the US now are encoded with a measuring tool (sigma). We receive reports listing the time of day, state, and call letters of the TV stations airing the PSA. In Canada, the technology is not available to track with sigma, so the following information is based on the sigma report in the US. "Cocktail Party" and "Ask Yourself" have aired 15,868 times ("Fear and Anger" was just released so there is no sigma report yet). A conservative estimate of what each airplay would cost us is \$518.00, which is the equivalent of a 9.2 million dollar return on our initial investment of \$38,199 for these two PSAs. That doesn't include the return received for radio and TV in Canada.

We know that 36-37% of airplay is in the top 50 markets. And 61-64% of the spots are played during the day or in prime time.

Regional Service Seminar (RSS) update

The WSO will accept credit cards for RSS registration in 1999.

Sites chosen at Conference should be referred to as a "tentative" or "proposed" sites until the regional trustee performs the walk-through of the site and WSO signs the contract. This insures the WSO has room for negotiation.

Ideas were discussed on how to simultaneously translate the Canada East RSS into French using volunteer translators and only raise the price \$10.00 per registrant. Whether

We do have one way to track from Canada. *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* included a coupon asking members to be our "Eyes and Ears." Members were asked to photocopy the coupon, so that when they saw a PSA, they could return the coupon. We have received excellent response from Canada. We're very pleased with both the "Eyes and Ears" campaign and the sigma report.

When we air a PSA we are attracting newcomers as well as professionals, which gives us credibility. It also speaks to the Al-Anon "drop-out" who may think, "I should try it again."

The PSAs are available in: English for US, English for Canada, French, and Spanish; and in three lengths.

Conference members were treated to the unveiling of the new PSA, "Tornado," and the new "Tornado" four-color poster in English, French and Spanish.

or not the US Southeast will be simultaneously translated into Spanish will be discussed at the RSS breakout.

The bid sheet was changed to make it easier to use and the process has changed to include the delegates. Delegates will preview their area's bids and only send them on to the WSO if they are complete.

In 1999, an AIS/LDC Workshop will be held in conjunction with the US North Central Regional Service Seminar.

World Wide Web Site

The WSO web site continues to grow and reach out to our members and potential members in new ways. Many are finding our web site through hyperlinks from other sites. Homebound persons are finding Al-Anon in greater numbers. The Conference members were given a "tour" through the WSO site.

We continue to adjust to technology and in doing so are adding new features and fine tuning those we have. We have created Spanish and French sections based on our English version. Not every item in English has been translated, thus neither section will be exact replications. Some new features are soon to be added. The English and French professional electronic post card was added last fall and professionals now have the ability to ask for Al-Anon information directly.

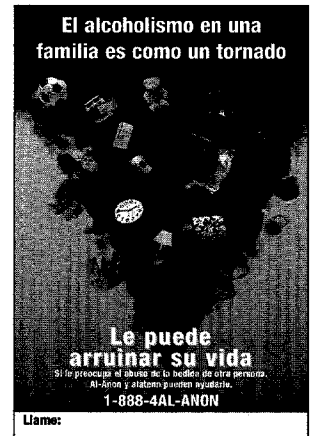
Al-Anon Speaks Out, our newsletter for professionals, has been added. Over time, professionals will read it here which will reduce our postage and printing costs. The 1998 International Convention registration form and sup-

porting information were easily located as well as our literature catalog. Visitors to the site will be able to view the new "Tornado" PSA in September.

We can now accept credit card orders online. Please emphasize that it is essential that we get the phone number of the person ordering.

The Conference voted to support a Five Year Plan including exploration of new uses of technology. The result has been our management staff having the courage to take risks and work with us as we reach out internationally to those still affected by the disease of alcoholism.

Finally, Conference members were reminded of the list of approved materials that can be put on their area/district/AIS sites. Conference Approved Literature is not approved. Permission to use material other than on the list is secured through the Fellowship Communication department. A Conference member suggested that as we revise literature, our web site address be included.



SM-61 "TORNADO" poster in Spanish, also available in French and English.

Ann H.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Mary Ann K.,
Director, Membership Outreach

Phyllis M.,
Director, Public Outreach

Claire R.,
Associate Director, Public Outreach



WSO TRIAL STRUCTURE BREAKOUTS

Each of five departments at the WSO held presentations on their departments under the trial structure. Delegates made the rounds and after viewing each presentation were invited to ask questions.

Fellowship Communication did a skit and then showed posters depicting their goals with the new structure that included: "Keep it Simple, Keep it Al-Anon, Read CAL and *The Forum*" before opening the floor for questions.

Group Services chose a slide presentation. Using the image of a puzzle, it was explained that this department worked like putting the pieces of a puzzle together because of the many areas they cover. These areas include archives, group records, Alateen, members with special needs and information services.

Membership Outreach used music in a unique presentation including familiar tunes with new wording to describe the work of the Regional Service Seminars, International

Coordination, the 50th Anniversary and the Conference. Streamers coming from an umbrella in the middle of the room represented the different services under this department. Streamers included translation services which was easy to sing about in Spanish, but French Services needs work before the WSO can sing about it.

Business Services set up a panel of department members to explain their trial structure then invited delegates to voice their concerns and ask questions of staff from shipping, technological services, publications, customer service and personnel.

Public Outreach used an easel to show how the three services, Institutions, Cooperating with the Professional Community, and Public Information have functioned during the three year trial period. Individual department members spoke in-depth about how the trial structure affected the department before asking for questions from the delegates.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION REPORT

Ric B.,
Chairperson

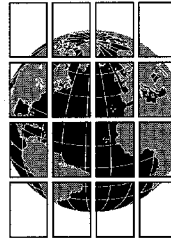
Mary Ann K.,
Coordinator

Susan A.,
Co-coordinator

Carole K.,
Volunteer Consultant

The presentation began with a parade of staff and trustees representing various states and countries in familiar costumes. This was a taste of the grand "Language of Love" parade which will officially open the 1998 International Convention July 2-5 in Salt Lake City. The host committee is working overtime to welcome the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

This is our first convention independent from AA, and registration is 3,500 at this point. We expect some last minute and on-site registrations. Pre-registration will end May 15, 1998. Because registration has not been as high as initially planned, staff is working on consolidating meetings and cutting expenses. For example, the Pioneer luncheon will be held at



the Marriot Hotel instead of the Convention Center, hospitality has been moved to the ballroom and it has been decided not to have simultaneous translations because requests do not warrant it. AA is cooperating by putting an article about our Convention in their newsletter *Box 459* and they will have workshops from 9:00 a.m to 5:00 p.m. on Friday and Saturday in the Doubletree Hotel.

Attendance at this convention is more than saying good things about each other or extending good wishes. It means revealing that our whole lives, the positive and negative, all that has happened, has brought us to this moment. Anyone can party but coming through a struggle is cause to celebrate.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Margaret M.,
Trustee, Chairperson

Ric B.,
Executive Director

The Policy Committee presented four motions for changes to the Policy Digest section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The first change was to the section "Membership and Groups" regarding Alateen membership. The wording change was proposed to clarify that Alateen is for all young people who are ready to participate in a shared learning experience. For several years, the subject of preteen members in Alateen had been discussed and explored. The new wording is more inclusive of all age groups, reflecting

current policy. After discussion, the Conference approved the motion.

The second motion was with regard to convention chairpersons and their role on their area world service committee. The matter was addressed when it came to light that there was conflicting information in two different places in the *Service Manual*. The new wording is consistent with that in the Handbook section. This motion was approved.

The third Policy motion was an update to *The Forum* section, again making the language

consistent with current policy, indicating that time-sensitive sections of the magazine are reviewed and edited by the *Forum* staff. The motion carried.

Finally, a motion was presented for a change in the Finances section, authorizing a change from triannual to quarterly appeal letters. It is hoped that this change will make the appeal letters more compatible with members' and groups' bookkeeping. The Conference approved the change.

As in the previous two years, an open Policy Committee meeting was held which all Conference members were invited to observe. The topic was based on a letter from a member who wrote to the Policy Committee suggesting language changes to amend the section on "Choosing a Group's Name" (page 63), and adding a section on "Special Interest Groups."

Members of Al-Anon adult children of alcoholics groups tend to use initials, calling themselves ACOA. This is of some concern because there are other groups not affiliated with Al-Anon that call themselves ACOA. The discussion centered on Al-Anon adult children groups using their full name, not initials.

The first issue discussed was how such groups are now registered with the WSO. Using initials implies affiliation with an outside entity and implies limited access. Regardless of how they register (some groups register under one name and call themselves another), the WSO spells out the name of all groups. When groups try to register as exclusive to a certain portion of the population, the WSO informs them that they cannot be registered.

There are AA groups that are exclusive, because some want to remain anonymous, e.g. celebrity groups. In California there are quite a few groups like this. However, special interest groups are different from limited access

groups. Limited access means there's limited physical access to those groups (military facilities, institutions, employees in corporations who may meet at lunch). We register them, and call them a "limited access" group.

Special interest or "special focus" groups were described by members at the International Al-Anon General Service Meeting (IAGSM). These terms could cause confusion within the fellowship. The same is true for Al-Anon adult children groups—the focus may be on adult children, but they are still Al-Anon meetings. They use Conference Approved Literature and follow the Steps and Traditions.

Deciding where to put a new paragraph came under discussion. Some possibilities raised were, a new heading "Special Interest Groups," or before "Choosing a Group's Name."

The Traditions say anyone can go to any meeting. Having group names indicating a specific segment of the population suggests affiliation of special interest. We need to welcome everyone.

There are two types of Al-Anon groups—Al-Anon and Alateen. Anyone should be able to go to any meeting at any time. If we're going to do this, we need the disclaimer, "We are all Al-Anon members" and keep our focus on that. It is important to make sure the special interest groups aren't so special that they are exclusive. Meetings are open to any Al-Anon member, period.

One member suggested the need for ad hoc committees to discuss this issue further. One ad hoc could discuss the naming of groups and affiliation and the other could focus on special interest groups.

After additional discussion, members agreed that there were two separate issues "Special Interest Groups" and "Choosing a group's name." Ad hoc committees were formed.

REGIONAL TRUSTEE SELECTION REPORT

At the 1999 Conference, regional trustees will be nominated from US Northwest, US Southwest and US South Central regions. This process began during Conference week at the Regional Service Seminar breakouts when regional trustees distributed packets to all the delegates from these three regions.

Regional trustees act as liaisons to this nominating process in three ways: by keeping informed of the dates of the area assemblies in their regions; by following up with the delegates in these areas; and by encouraging delegates to nominate candidates.

Immediately following the selection of a candidate at the area assembly, delegates send

the nominating information, or notification that there is not a candidate, to the WSO by January 1, 1999. Failure to meet this deadline constitutes forfeiture.

In June, following the Conference, each area chairperson receives a back-up packet identical to the one distributed to the delegates to alert them of the procedure for nominating a regional trustee and to pass on information to their group representatives.

After January 1999, when all resumes have been received, the profiles of the nominees are mailed to Conference members.

We look forward to working with the areas in the 1999 nominating regions and encourage

Helen R.,
Board Chairperson

Susan A.,
Associate Director, Conference

all areas to submit a name for regional trustee and, whenever possible, an alternate.

Three members of the Board of Trustees plus two alternates will be selected for each region at the January 1999 Board meeting.

The following WSC second and third year delegates were selected by lot from outside the regions to participate in the 1999 regional trustee elections for the US Northwest, US Southwest and US South Central regions.

US Northwest	US Southwest	US South Central
Dennis G., CO	Tim S., NJ	Brigida C., HI
Susia M., MS	Linda B., NC	Lynda E., OH
Cindy H., MA	Paula C., WV	Wendy G., KY
Alternates		
Dorena S., IL (S)	Sandy F., OK	Mary T., IN
Dora H., AL	Dora H., AL	Dee R., FL (N)

LEADERSHIP INVENTORY WORKSHOP

To the tune "Old Time Rock 'N' Roll," Conference Committee members lined up at the microphones dressed as attendees of a previous WSC. "Bill W." spoke at the opening of the first Conference in 1961 saying "Each one of these yearly meetings, be they dull, be they controversial, is really an insurance policy which can guarantee the future unity and functioning of your society." Next, after fast forwarding to 1967, "Lois W." took center stage and a discussion about voting to adopt Al-Anon's first Conference Charter commenced. Delegates shared their opinions: "Al-Anon needs to go slowly." "I suggest it be postponed." "I feel we should pass the Charter and we can modify it as necessary." "A permanent Conference should have permanent guidelines." "Only 13 states wrote the Constitution." On and on it went. Some members expressed strong feelings responding to each other, and emotions ran high. There was some confusion about what would actually happen if the vote passed and what exactly they were to vote on. After several clarifications a "vote" was taken and the first World Service Conference Charter was adopted.

The 1998 WSC delighted in the reenactment of discussion 30 years ago that so closely resembled the present. The more things change, the more they stay the same.

With that introduction, the Conference members attended breakout sessions to inventory the Conference. Using the 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* and personal experience, questions relating to the Twelve Concepts of Service were considered by the groups. Later each provided a reportback with their thoughts to the Conference as summarized below in Concept order (when possible):

Concept I. The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs

to the Al-Anon groups.

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

Concept XI. The World Service Office is composed of standing committees, executives and staff members.

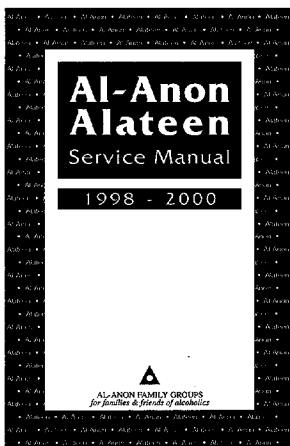
How does the Conference reflect the groups it serves?

Delegates represent their groups by listening to the voice of the members and by getting input on issues from group representatives. Conversely, information is transmitted to groups by the delegate and then the groups respond to their delegates. Our Conference tries to make sure all service arms (worldwide) are represented. Proposed issues at Conference are for the groups to consider. Getting everyone to participate and feel they are a part of the process is needed. Conference is an exchange of information and a larger group conscience. The Conference reflects the groups it serves by remembering our concern is our respective groups. Giving conceptual approval for pieces of literature gives groups the ultimate authority.

Concept III. The Right of Decision makes effective leadership possible.

How do Conference members make the distinction between being trusted servants or messengers?

When we are messengers, we are carrying information to or from our areas or the Conference to pass on. When we are trusted servants, we are making decisions. As trusted servants, we can become better informed for the worldwide fellowship. We are trusted both ways. In our area, we are trusted to have good leadership. At Conference, we are trusted to



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hear all views, make our best decisions, and bring back what is important.

Delegates are the world servants of Al-Anon as a whole. A delegate, in order to maintain trust, needs to do his homework, study Conference communications, and be properly informed to make decisions. A delegate who cannot act according to his own conscience on a final Conference vote would be not a trusted servant.

The messenger brings information to the Conference. During Conference, we are trusted servants. We then become messengers when we return to our areas. There are some decisions that we need time to think over. Sometimes we go back to our areas to reason things out. Trusted servants bring news back with explanations as to how decisions were made.

Concept IV. Participation is the key to harmony.

How do we develop an atmosphere for encouraging all to participate in our "open discussions" regardless of pro or con?

Advance preparation will result in an informed decision on motions; set guidelines at the beginning of Conference. Perhaps standing committees could provide information ahead of time to the Conference. One workshop suggested that the Conference committees meet on Sunday and motions be read on Monday, giving voters more time to consider motions. Others requested: spiritual reflection at the start each of day, more spiritual breaks during the day, staying focused. We need encouragement from our areas and each other. Conference sponsors should encourage sponsors to go to the microphone and share. Civility, respect, love, and unity with openness are essential. Respect another person's opinion. Put principles above personalities. Stop everything else when voting. Get everyone to participate and feel *part of not apart from*.

Concept V. The Rights of Appeal and Petition protect minorities and assure that they be heard.

How does expressing a minority opinion help in reaching a group conscience?

It provides equality and respect and helps clarify the source of new ideas; releases the fear of expressing feelings; gives more information to understand intent and make decisions. The minority gives a broader vision with new suggestions not previously considered that will make for greater progress. It balances areas and regions, creates more respect and openness, and helps to avoid tyranny. We must not forget that the majority also has a responsibility to be heard.

Concept VI. The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the trustees.

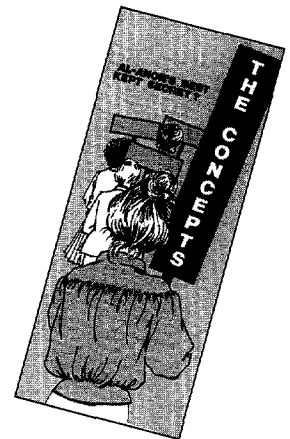
What responsibilities does the Board have to the Conference?

What responsibilities does the Conference have to the Board?

The Board is responsible for communicating, formulating and executing policy.

The Board has legal responsibility and financial responsibility. It is the Board's responsibility to follow through with the Conference actions whenever possible, educate the Conference about its administrative responsibilities, and clarify delegates' duties as well as Board duties.

The Conference acknowledges the right of decision. We must trust the process and keep the Board accountable. Conference must stay informed, be prepared, ask questions, voice concerns, and give suggestions. The Board is responsible for the financial and policy well-being of the fellowship. Finally, the Board is charged with upholding and applying the Twelve Traditions.



*P-57 Al-Anon's Best Kept Secret?
The Concepts*

Concept VII. The trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.

In what ways are the roles of Conference members alike and what ways are they different?

All members are special with something to offer. We all have the same goal: to work for the whole of Al-Anon. Maintaining the ratio of two-thirds delegates to one-third staff and WSO volunteers insures that our members are our primary concern and gives us a system of checks and balances. Some of the differences cited included: Trustees bring information from the WSO and have a responsibility to listen to the delegates. Delegates can be too caught up in "nit-picky" things. Staff members wear two hats, as members of Al-Anon and WSO employees, and have to balance both. A delegate brings the group conscience to the Conference. The Board speaks for the corporation and has legal responsibilities. WSO staff implements Board and Conference directions and is a resource for all members. The Conference has the ultimate authority.

Some of the similarities recounted were: delegates, trustees and staff all have voice and vote; all want what's best for Al-Anon; the Conference is a democratic process with a spiritual component preserving and retaining our Traditions; all voting members are Al-Anon members.

Concept IX. Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership.

What are the characteristics of good personal leadership at the Conference?

Clarification was given on what was meant by "personal." Some discussion included leading by example, sharing with others, and keeping the focus on oneself.

Vision is not just to look at the future but to look back at the past. A leader without vision might as well stay home in the closet. Leaders set goals. A leader must have an open mind and a willingness to take risks. Leaders communicate ideals, integrity, honesty, and must maintain a vital balance between being aggressive and assertive. Prayer helps keep the balance.

Leaders are often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long, continued criticism.

We must listen carefully to our critics and weigh whether or not there is truth in what they say. We are responsible to listen and to take care of ourselves. Good leaders do not become part of the problem.

Concept X. Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.

Discuss three carefully defined service authorities and their scope so that double-headed management is avoided.

Sometimes discussions arise due to confusion about roles and responsibilities. It helps to clarify what specific jobs are. We must remember in service work, whose responsibility it is and not take on inappropriate responsibility. It was shared that we need to recognize where our authority is i.e., the delegate votes at AWSC but not at assembly. Our groups send us to the WSO to make decisions, not necessarily to take back an idea for a decision. Guidelines have been defined from experience of past problems. The key is to carefully define service authority. Multiple roles discourage the right of participation.

The principle of ultimate authority runs throughout our entire structure. This is necessary because all of our service affairs and activities must be directed to the point where final responsibilities rest. Concept Ten defines where our responsibility ends and where another person's begins. Concept Eleven defines the scope of the WSO. The WSO must have Conference approval or traditional approval before policy can be changed or before a CAL project is initiated. The Conference needs to be willing to carry the message back.

None of the service committees are executive in nature. The committees report to the Board. Each service arm needs to remain informed. All of this is implied in Tradition Two. Only by means of careful definition and mutual respect can we maintain harmony.

Concept XII. The spiritual foundation for Al-Anon's world service is contained in the General Warranties of the Conference, Article 12 of the Charter.

How is the spiritual foundation of the Conference demonstrated?

Warranty One is often misread. On page 192 of the *Service Manual* it states, "All the Warranties counsel prudence... prudence in personal relations, prudence in money matters, and prudence in our contacts with the world around us." What's important is love, dedication, and respect for each other and the program; to consider what is good for Al-Anon as a whole; "Working Smarter, Not Harder"; having fun; sponsorship; unconditional acceptance of the people and the process; humility, trust and rotation of service; remembering that we are all equal.

We personalize the Concepts of Service and Warranties. We know that being consistently firm is everyone's responsibility. We remember that the Conference has its own Higher Power.

The Conference body as a whole is concerned with Al-Anon's primary purpose.

Is the Conference living up to the principles of these Concepts of Service? How can we improve?

Summary of responses:

It was unanimously agreed that the Conference is living up to the principles of the Concepts of Service. The workshops offered the following suggestions for continued improvement.

Sometimes there is confusion, especially with our new structure. To improve the flow of information we could have orientation for the entire Conference every year with a "Dick and Jane" explanation of how to do motions, time limits and exceptions. Be sure to mention at the beginning that the focus is *worldwide* Al-Anon and we are sent here to make decisions for all Al-Anon. Keep in mind the consequences of our actions. Delegates have the responsibility to the Conference to let the WSO know what we need or want changed. We could spend more time on timely topics discussions to get more input and extend time for reportbacks.

Have monitors in workshops to limit discussions on each topic. Use only topics that get the highest number of votes in order to have more thorough discussions. Send delegates where their questions were sent. Acknowledge people more; take time to thank people for the service they do. When we do an inventory we get better because we start studying how to make things better and we get a greater sense of what we are supposed to be doing. It brings about greater clarity. *Paths to Recovery* has helped us to study the Concepts of Service. We need to keep the Concepts of Service interesting before

there is a service conflict. We need to care enough to listen to each other during inventory. There is a process which works through checks and balances in our structure. It works when we consider Al-Anon as a whole.

Members need to take voting more seriously and stay seated during all votes. We could break before the vote. Voting should be more orderly. Service sponsors and others should help new members to learn how to get their point across so they are understood. Have a

cheering committee to keep people awake. Have three minute massages. Establish definite guidelines using the two minute timer, with exceptions (allow people to go to the microphone more often to ask/answer questions); Conference members can be prompt, remain seated and limit unnecessary talking. People giving money to WSO and announcing amounts is tacky and some would like it stopped. Money should be given anonymously. Are love gifts necessary?

MEXICO'S REPRESENTATIVE SHARING

Hi, I am Hilda, a member of an alcoholic family and I come from Mexico City.

Today I have the opportunity to participate again in the World Service Conference which is satisfying and also a great responsibility. Last year at the 37th WSC I shared with you the work being done at the different permanent committees that we have in our office. The International Coordination Committee is the one that has been initiated lately and I am honored to be its chairperson.

According to the ICC guide, "...in a world besieged with rapid change, the ICC strives to perpetuate worldwide unity..." This committee developed a plan for Mexico to bring the message to Cuba. The task given to the ICC is to help give assistance to the growing Al-Anon program in Cuba.

Our story begins in November 1995 when two members of our General Service Office went to La Habana to look for a person who would be willing to take responsibility for the Al-Anon seed they were bringing, to make sure it would land on fertile ground and to find someone who would be willing to continue working in the future with some other members of our GSO in Mexico City.

Our Higher Power is in charge so the responsibility fell on Sister Martha L., who after hearing the Al-Anon message identified herself as a member of an alcoholic family. So, Chela and Elvia, my Mexican co-workers left all the literature with Sister Martha L. in La Habana with the firm idea to keep in touch.

Then, Sister Martha thought she needed help from other people and talked to Sister Nora V. in Santiago de Cuba. Nora was also interested as she too had alcoholic family members. Between both of them they started a plan pretty much limited, because of the Cuban situation, but with a lot of love.

At the beginning of 1997, the GSO in Mexico City got an invitation to attend the First National Meeting of Al-Anon, which was held November 4, 5, and 6 in Santiago de Cuba.

My Higher Power had been very busy with

me last year: First, sending me to the 37th WSC, and the rest of the year visiting the different areas of my region and once more my Higher Power took care of me. At the Board meeting I was assigned to go to the first Al-Anon business meeting in Cuba.

Elvia who was there in 1995, was supposed to go as a volunteer together with me but when the time came she was not well and could not travel, so I found myself on a plane flying alone with the only ONE who could help me on this commitment—my Higher Power—and my good will to see this first meeting through which meant so much to the Cuban people.

Before taking this trip I went through many uncertain situations and once again I applied the slogan "Let Go and Let God." I applied it like I have never done it before. How exciting to go to a country that I had heard a lot about but I had never thought of going to because of its difficult situation, even though it is really near my birthplace. And now, I was on my way.

The 4th of November at 3:30 PM the opening began and the first speaker was Ernesto U., a doctor in psychology, who talked for an hour and a half about the consequences of alcoholism in the family, how the group is the support of our recovery and only by taking care of our spiritual life can we transmit support to the sick person. There was also a discussion about the 36 principles and what we learn from them, the organization and finally the Seventh Tradition.

The Central office of Al-Anon in Cuba was established and duties were assigned as follows:

Hilda B.,
Representative from Mexico



OFICINA CENTRAL DE AL-ANON EN CUBA

La Habana
(Martha L.)

Santiago de Cuba
(Nora V.)

Regla
(Mercedes)

Cerro
(Lucy)

Matanzas
Santa Clara
(Elina)

Tunas-Holguin
Bayamo
(Mary)

El Cobre, El Cristo
Guantanamo
(Dolores)

These people named would make up their own teams so they would not work alone and in turn would report to Martha and Nora about their meetings, plans and ideas according to their needs.

If the experiences prior to the meeting caused great emotion in me, what I experienced on this last day of the first meeting was something wonderful starting with the evaluation of the event and the discussion to hold a second meeting in the month of November 1998 at the same place as this one—in El Cobre, Santiago de Cuba.

What a surprise when they said good-by to me with the “Mañanitas Mexicanas” (an emotive popular Mexican song) and then with the “Guantanamera” tune with new verses. By this time my emotion converted into a torrent of tears that would flow without control on my face as all these wonderful people sang about the first meeting and the program that was helping them. It is something I will never forget in my life!

One of the verses with to the tune of “Guantanamera” was:

What peaceful days,
the ones I experienced at El Cobre,
Recovering my life,
Reaffirming further my faith.

Guantanamera, guajira,....

In this group one can see
a true brothership
simple, honest people,
joined by pain,
hurt by alcohol
that affected their lives,
and here we create...

I will be grateful to my Higher Power because thanks to the painful experiences I lived through for many years with my husband sick with alcoholism, I did not expect to get all these presents from Him through a program and its service.

Then, after this we left El Cobre but not before I visited a sanctuary. We took a bus to Santiago de Cuba where I was invited to go to an AA meeting that night.

And once again, that Higher Power that loves me, no doubt, gave me a sunny drizzle as a good-bye from such a beautiful place and showed me a glorious rainbow resting comfortably on a green mountain, a sight as complete as I have never seen it before and all I could say is “Thank you God.” Cuba, I leave you my heart.

WSC CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

WSC chosen agenda items provide an opportunity for Conference members to suggest and select topics as agenda items for discussion by the Conference as a whole. Conference members choose the most important topics for discussion at the four Open Discussion sessions. During the Open Discussion sessions, someone other than the person who submitted the topic is chosen to

moderate the discussion by drawing names from a hat.

When topics can be answered through the Ask-It-Basket process, they are submitted to the Ask-It-Basket Committee composed of Conference members. This committee meets at the Conference to work on the answers to questions submitted in advance.

Sherri S., VA
Moderator

OPEN DISCUSSION 1 Conference Motions

There were four questions that were similar in nature and concurrently discussed in this discussion. Motions that come to the World Service Conference are often discussed and voted on within a short time frame. The questions were based on whether we are rushing decision-making. Is it necessary for us to take the motions back to the members for discussion prior to decisions? Can motions be delayed at least one day during the Conference so members can clearly think about the vote? Can the WSO change anything without the WSC's approval?

When making our biggest decision, moving

to Virginia, it was taken back to the groups and they discussed it for months, then the areas trusted their delegate to bring their opinions to the WSC. We are here as trusted servants. If you take the business out of this room, you have taken our job away. We would all be losers if we couldn't share in the spiritual process of an Al-Anon Conference. The Al-Anon program rests on mutual trust in God, Al-Anon, and each other. Part of the “informed group conscience” is the background material presented at the Conference.

It is our responsibility to become informed and to rely on other trusted servants to inform

us. This is an opportunity to participate in the links of service. If we do the footwork, study the Traditions and Concepts of Service, we are building the foundation to change things. Once made, we must trust that it is a God-made decision.

Sometimes when a motion is made, we have

immediate opinions. After hearing others talk, receiving more information and with more time to consider, those opinions may change. It is imperative we give special consideration to have all information before the motion considered is on the floor of the Conference.

OPEN DISCUSSION II

Attracting active service members

Six questions were addressed by Conference members pertaining to getting more members involved in service work at a group level, getting members to assemblies, attracting active district representatives to attend area world service committee meetings and finally how to better use the Concepts of Service as part of personal recovery in Al-Anon.

Many members said it was the example of others that encouraged them to get involved in service. "We had a very lovely lady for our first delegate and she set an example. She is full of serenity. She sits at meetings watching everything, giving love and support." "At my first assembly, a woman looked at me and said, 'you seem like you're lost.' She sat beside me and was there with me for my first district meeting, first assembly—every step of the way." "When I first came into Al-Anon, a woman explained to me the benefits of service and what the group expects. She had been in

the group over 30 years and she inspired me to get involved in service. She still goes to assemblies and is active in our group."

Some explained how simple words got them interested in service. Hearing from people, "you won't get well unless you get involved in service outside your group"; "You have created a new experience"; or "You did a good job" gives invaluable support and acceptance.

On the lighter side, members suggested providing food and having fun; just be willing and they will come.

Members then offered ideas for getting people more involved: Remind them of their job description and get back to the suggested program; take people's hands and encourage them to share; talk about the benefits received through Al-Anon service. One delegate suggested calling it Twelfth Step work, not service work. Using CAL at meetings is always good.

Lana N., ND

Moderator

OPEN DISCUSSION III

Protecting Alateen members and their sponsors

In this discussion Conference members considered if we are doing enough to protect our Alateen members and sponsors from inappropriate situations.

Many identified that problems about Alateen sponsors simply reflect: a lack of knowledge about the "rules" of sponsorship; inexperience in the Al-Anon program; lack of support; burnout; and/or all of the above. New Alateen sponsors are sent out to sink or swim, most times not knowing who to approach when they do have questions. What is Al-Anon's responsibility to provide some type of preparation for new sponsors and maintenance for established sponsors?

Many Conference members are current or former Alateen sponsors and some have children that are Alateen members. They shared their concerns about Alateen providing a safe place for the children.

This was a very emotional discussion as members began describing various incidents of potentially dangerous situations in Alateen. One delegate unknowingly co-sponsored a group with a convicted child molester. One

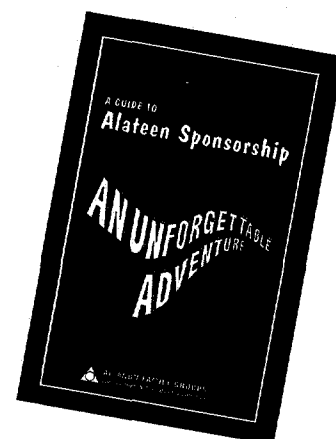
group had an occasion where an Alateen molested a younger member after a meeting. Yet another delegate warned of the dangers to sponsors; he had been accused of inappropriate behavior by an Alateen, saying, "if it happened to me, it could happen to any of us."

Several delegates agreed that part of the problem was children who are unable to identify what is unacceptable as well as sponsors unwilling to talk about it. This lack of communication was described as "an elephant in the living room." Not all parents tell their children how to handle situations. Young people need to understand that they have to speak up, if any of these things happen. It is very difficult to ever say anything about it. We need to tell them to talk about inappropriate behavior and touching. Everyone was reminded that Alateens can decide what is acceptable sponsor behavior.

The legal responsibilities were addressed by a delegate: "Our area got a legal opinion about our obligation to supply a safe environment for the kids. We are required to report any thought of abuse or improper contact. It is 'guilty until proven innocent.' We need to look at this seri-

Annie A., UT

Moderator



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ously because we could become liable legally and financially." We have to educate or be open to lawsuits.

We need to start at the beginning and provide information. Don't let these things happen. We must provide a safe environment for the children.

There was much discussion on possible solutions. Someone shared that having a district Alateen coordinator help the area coordinator has been successful in her area. Having someone invite people considering sponsorship to interact with experienced sponsors has been really successful. It keeps information flowing between sponsors with problems. Alateen sponsors need a resource to keep in touch. One group has an area coordinator and Alateen liaison.

The Alateen Advisory Committee is developing guidelines for the safety of sponsors and Alateens. Get together to work with people interested in becoming a sponsor in your home district. Another member talked about the book on sponsorship. "It is excellent, we are giving them as gifts to new sponsors." "I see what an Al-Anon group sponsoring an Alateen group can do. Not just one or two people for a whole area. A lot of people are afraid."

It was suggested areas have an open forum with all members to get input on how to develop guidelines in the area.

Openness is part of what we do in Al-Anon. We need to be open and honest about these concerns. If we aren't, institutions aren't going to be available very long and people are going to really need us. I hope we can be ready with guidelines for Al-Anon meetings on how to sponsor Alateen. We have no guidelines other than to show up for meetings.

The question of keeping Alateen meetings up and running was discussed by a few Conference members. We are aware of the need for members and groups to support Alateen. Al-Anon adult children are asking Alateens to share a meeting with them.

We are trying to get support and become more knowledgeable. One group has a 13 year old Alateen with no Alateen meeting that goes to Al-Anon. They had a group conscience trying to keep her from attending. The group representative says she does well but her teacher, also a member of the group, doesn't want her there. Another tried to start a meeting and had one Alateen come only once.

A former sponsor shared the problem of keeping Alateen meetings going. She left her home district two years ago. When she left, they had five Alateen groups and eight sponsors. When she recently visited that district, there was one Alateen group left. This disease allows us to let someone else do the job. We become unconnected. Our children are too important. Where does our responsibility begin? Some areas don't use assistance from AA. A delegate reminded Conference members about dual members and Alateen sponsorship. Dual members are mentioned as sponsors on page 62 of the *1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. AA members can assist at an Alateen meeting if there is also an Al-Anon member sponsor.

Kids today have burdens that we didn't have. There are lots of kids dealing with alcohol themselves. Younger members of adult children groups can make good Alateen sponsors. These are complicated issues to deal with but if we don't talk about them we can get as sick as the secrets we keep.

Roberta V., FL (S)
Moderator

OPEN DISCUSSION IV Breaking the "buck barrier"

The final open discussion pertained to the recent increase in the price of literature and a related issue of getting over the "buck barrier" in member contributions at the group level.

The Seventh Tradition states that we must be fully self-supporting. The sale of books is sometimes not considered a contribution, but it is a voluntary contribution. Book sales are helping us follow that Tradition. It was easy to think negatively about the Board of Trustee's letter about increasing the price of some books one dollar. But every business raises prices to be profitable and AFG is an organization whose main product is literature. Literature sales are our hope for the future.

The books provide a prudent reserve for health and sanity. When areas request literature, it has to be written, edited, and published. All these things cost money. If we request it,

we need to buy it. Some areas complain that literature is expensive but we aren't using it enough in meetings. Read from different books at meetings to generate interest in them.

We need to increase the amount of donations we put in the basket. It was pointed out that we rely heavily on book sales. It was noted that AA receives about 50% of its money from donations and has only recently increased the price of their Big Book. What can be done to change our thinking? Our contributions?

An area, group, or individual doesn't have to be rich to be in Al-Anon. But setting an example by putting more in the basket may encourage others to do so. One effective way to increase amounts is birthday money. Once a year put in a dollar for each year in Al-Anon recovery and tell your group what you are doing.



Al-Anon is self supporting.

Actually, in comparison to other things we do for ourselves, Al-Anon is a real bargain. Carrying the message and practicing Tradition Seven is a way of being good to yourself.

AGENDA ITEMS WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

Other questions submitted by area delegates that were not chosen for floor discussion were then discussed in break out groups. Each group selected a reporter who in turn gave the Conference members' responses. The questions receiving only a few votes were passed on to the Ask-It-Basket Committee and those responses are elsewhere in this summary.

Workshop 1

This group discussed the distribution of the Al-Anon PSAs. Concern had been expressed that the project was not well thought out and was taking away the groups' responsibility. It was stated that the Board had spent numerous hours on this issue and their decision must be trusted. Communication seems to be the key: only about 1/5 of the radio and TV stations were contacted and help from groups and members is needed to contact other stations and to help track the airplays.

Workshop 1 also discussed Alateen meetings in schools. Education of school personnel will usually eliminate problems and once the staff knows the meeting is on the right track, they will usually feel comfortable to leave the meetings alone.

Keeping long-time members involved was another topic. The workshop suggested asking them for help, using past delegates in advisory positions, offering to drive them or to pair them up with new GRs. It is important to use them but not put them in the role of "expert."

The name "World Service Conference" was discussed, as the members are from only the US and Canada. It was felt that changing the Conference structure was not feasible. Other countries are invited to participate with voice and no vote.

The workshop also discussed self-care at the WSC. Suggestions included moving around, napping, wearing support hose. The Conference has gone from six to five to four and back to five days in length.

Workshop 2

Several issues relating to Alateen were discussed. The first topic was Alateen conferences and their relationship to the areas. It was suggested that Alateens be involved in conference planning, in assemblies and in Al-Anon conventions as well. Sponsors need support and the experience of others to draw from. The group also discussed the participation of Alateens in Al-Anon meetings. It was felt that any member should be able to attend any Al-Anon meeting. Young children can utilize *What's "Drunk" Mama?* as a coloring activity in a meeting. Groups can also consider offering babysitting if appropriate. Alateens are represented at WSC through their delegates; there is an Alateen Advisory Committee with Alateen

members.

Our declining membership was the next topic. "Let It Begin With Me" was the response. We must all make a commitment to participate in our meetings and in carrying the message outside of our fellowship. With regard to "group conscience," members suggested chairing a meeting on the topic and studying the Traditions and Concepts for guidance.

The matter of dual members in Al-Anon was addressed. Those present felt that members of AA should focus on AA service and the Al-Anon service they can do, not what they can't. Some Al-Anon members have trust issues with alcoholics, and dual members' participation can be unsettling for some members.

Workshop 3

The composition of the World Service Conference, one delegate per area, was dis-

cussed. This representation is based on demographics rather than population or number of

groups. This protects the principle of anonymity, as the number of members of each group is not known.

Al-Anon involvement with Alateen was the next topic. It is important that sponsors be involved with Al-Anon; one suggestion is that Al-Anon groups adopt Alateen groups, sharing the responsibility with the sponsors. Alateen sponsor meetings with area coordinators have proved beneficial.

The topic of meeting closings was discussed. A concern had been expressed about the use of the Al-Anon Declaration. It was stated that the closing of meetings is a matter of group autonomy: *"It is suggested that groups close in a manner that is agreeable to the group conscience."* (Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, page 56)

Workshop 4

On the matter of LDCs, the group felt that they have not "gotten out of hand." LDCs provide membership convenience. Some areas have to mark up the prices to cover the shipping costs and exchange rate. The 45 day credit for orders was changed due to some LDCs stretching it to 60 days and to alert WSO to potential financial difficulty. WSO will send a shipment the most cost-effective way, but will ship any way requested if the LDC is willing to bear the cost.

Extending the hours for the WSO 800 number would require additional staffing which is not feasible due to budget constraints. After business hours, calls are referred to local AIS numbers.

With regard to strengthening Alateen groups while maintaining appropriate behavior, the workshop felt that a lot depends on the group sponsor and that a group conscience would be

With regard to rules about qualifications for service positions, members shared that they see the *Service Manual* not as a book of rules, but as a suggested framework that can be adapted to fit area needs. It was asked how trust in a meeting can be regained when lost. Suggestions included taking an inventory, providing sponsorship, and making amends. A period of time doing it "right" gives a group time to heal; hold to the principles of the program.

Another concern was the amount of paper sent to the groups and coordinators. Those present felt that the amount of mail sent to groups was not excessive; the mailings are provide a means of communication from the WSO. It was felt that having delegates distribute coordinator mailings would result in increased postage costs.

appropriate. On the effective use of CAL in meetings, suggestions included that groups: utilize all of our literature as resources; hold meetings on "my favorite CAL"; read a paragraph and comment; write quotes from literature on pieces of paper and hand out; use *The Forum* at meetings.

The group discussed the relationship between Al-Anon and AA. In some areas, the AAs are more cooperative than others; some have AA/Al-Anon family weekends and participate in each other's conventions. WSO cooperates with the AA GSO.

Another question asked if the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service are only suggested, or are they the backbone of our program. Members felt that they are the backbone of our program. It is not within group autonomy to change the wording of our legacies.

Workshop 5

It was asked if we could somehow link or unite adult children AFGs and Alateen. We ARE linked: Alateen is part of Al-Anon. The connections could be strengthened by Al-Anon groups sponsoring Alateen groups. Al-Anon adult children can make good sponsors.

Concern was expressed with unregistered groups being listed in local meeting schedules. It was felt that this is a matter of local autonomy for the AIS. As concerned Al-Anon members, we can inform these groups of the benefits of registration.

This group also discussed the matter of the role of our three legacies; it was stated that they are the "suggested backbone" of our pro-

gram. One member shared: "The Steps are for me, the Traditions are to protect the program FROM me, and the Concepts serve to hold it all together."

Twelfth Step work was discussed. Although the traditional kitchen visit may be uncommon today, AISs, institutions meetings, beginners' meetings and on-line meetings are examples of the Twelfth Step in action.

With regard to area elections and the qualifications for a member who moved from another area, this is a matter of area autonomy. Some require service within the area, others allow members to stand based on their out-of-area experience.

Workshop 6

Support for floundering groups was the first topic of discussion. We can support groups by showing up, one group adopting another, holding a group conscience, varying the meeting format, and by holding a group office. We can welcome newcomers and focus on the solutions, not the problems. Long-time members need our support as well through sponsorship and welcome. We can stress that the answers are in the Steps and use only CAL at meetings.

"What can be done about Al-Anon 'gurus'?" There are many ways to work the program, and all have the right to attend our meetings. We can lead by example and living the program.

The appeal of unsanctioned "joint AA/Al-Anon" meetings seems to be that they encourage socialization, support marriages, and couples. We can share that combined meet-

ings or groups are not recognized in AA or Al-Anon, according to the Traditions of both fellowships.

Concern about finances was another topic. The WSO is frugal in purchasing paper and ink for printing items in house. On occasion, a heavier paper or colored ink will be used for durability and a professional look. We need to clear up misconceptions about where our donations go and explain our appeal letter process.

How Al-Anon can more effectively reach out to families, especially children, was discussed. We can educate our members on service opportunities and do more public outreach to professionals. Parents can share how Al-Anon has helped them in parenting. Al-Anon groups can "parent" an Alateen group and support and train sponsors.

CLOSING SESSION

Everyone at the 1998 Conference contributed in their own special way and attending Conference is a special gift that only a few get to receive. The closing ceremony is both a happy and sad occasion. Emotions ran high as members were invited to express how they felt about the 1998 World Service Conference. The following are excerpts from the many who shared:

Doris S.,
Moderator

Executive Committee Member

"Thanks to all of you for being here, for being a part of my life, and for teaching me much. In the last three years I have had the opportunity to observe the new delegates and they will serve our fellowship well. No one can ever take this experience away from me."

"This is my last Conference. It could be sad, but the gratitude I have outweighs it. What a miracle to observe Al-Anon at this level. I've had the opportunity to grow with a hardworking staff, other members, and all delegates. The greatest gift I have received is the love. Thank you for an unforgettable adventure."

"I want to thank all of you for allowing me to be here and giving me the special attention you have, and for showing me that I can do things I didn't think I could. I wish every member could have this experience. I can take mine back too. It has certainly been wonderful. Thank you."

"I went home from my first WSC and couldn't get faces out my mind. I went to a friend and said, 'this is nuts.' She said, 'You're just letting them walk within your soul.' I hope you see my face in your minds when you leave here. Thanks for being in my soul."

"The last three years I spent very little time at the microphone. I have grown a lot. I have

learned to listen. I am leaving only in body, spiritually I will be at every Conference. You have touched my life in a special way. Continue to walk this walk."

"I'm not saying good-bye, I will be here next year. I've grown a lot in the program. I came in with a big stone on my shoulder. The people in my area tell me I have changed."

"See you in Utah. This is not 'good-bye' just, 'till I see you again.'"

"In saying, 'so long' I'm not microphone friendly, so I'll just ask you give it up one more time, I'M EXCITED!"

"If one day, in the future, you see me in an airport, call me and I'll say my hut is open for you all."

"One thing I have learned how to do is speak. It has been a real effort for me but it's my responsibility to speak. I wanted to sound lady-like. It's not as bad as I thought. This has been a wonderful experience. I love you all."

"You've touched me and you walked with me through three years of fear. First, it was terrifying to meet people who looked so put together. I have truly been blessed. There is

such a feeling of love and unity as a result of the WSO being so open, the Board of Trustees being there and helping and having people walk down the halls and give me hugs. With that in mind, I'm taking your faces with me. You have definitely touched my soul."

"You have made me well in so many different ways. I have not been verbal at Conference but I did my very best. You have touched me in so many ways. Those who stood with me are more qualified than myself but I know today, because of your love, it was right. I wish you all the best. God bless."

"My first year here everyone told me it would change my life. I wanted that burning bush. Little by little you have changed my life and touched me in ways you don't even know. It meant a lot. I want to thank the WSO staff for your planning, the Conference Chairperson for a great job, and all the volunteers and WSO staff. You have totally boggled my mind. In my office we serve one county and for the population the WSO serves, you are incredible. Saying good-bye is easier for me, I will see a lot of you in a short amount of time. Thank you all for supporting and tolerating me. I'm excited."

"There are four things on my agenda I haven't talked about. We lost a great panel last year but panel 38 is awesome. The Conference last year was the best and I knew there would never be a better one in the world, I am at the best one today! I'm really excited about going to Salt Lake City."

"Thanks for the memories."

"Al-Anon has given me lot—to be able to stand in front of people and speak. My bladder is close to my eyes—I cry often. When I came here, I was a few pounds lighter. I would like to leave them here! It's been a real great opportunity to serve and I hope to see you real soon."

"Thanks first to the WSO. I was eager to meet some people from there and I'm very happy. I'm going home more at ease. You had answers and when you didn't, you told me. I respect that. Thank you trustees, you are so beautiful. To all the delegates—you taught me many good things: how you can grow by being a delegate, doing the work you get to do, and confidence. That is a miracle."

"Thank you, WSO staff. You're great to make this so special. And such good food. It's been a wonderful place. Thank you to the board and delegates. Each of you has touched my heart in a special way—the way you

already love me. I thought you said it just to say it but you mean it."

"Fourteen years ago the Mexico delegate stood on the floor and said, 'Please make a PSA.' It has been remarkable to see it come to pass. When we were planning our International Parade, it hit me, 'What kind of costume should I wear?' I have lived all over the country. It came to me when I put on my roller blades. My head and heart are where my feet are and I'm in Virginia. I don't say, 'I'm excited!' I am though—everything in Al-Anon excites me."

"Thank you for loving me back to life so I could be free to say 'thank you'; there was a time when I couldn't do that. I never let you see that I felt anything. There are no words to describe this experience. It's like trying to describe my Higher Power. You have been a wonderful addition to my life journey. I have filled my heart with each of you."

"I'm grateful to be here. Thank all of you for having a good reason to go to Al-Anon and for being here. I have felt the love of every meeting inside and outside this room."

"Last year was my first Conference. I came as a new staff member and was scared spitless. One experienced staff member took me under her wing. I don't recall making a fool of myself last year and I haven't been allowed to this year. Finding a balance between being a member and a paid employee of the organization that saved you is difficult. I know how to get back to basics and to just be me. Thank you for being here."

"I didn't think I could ever have a better experience than I did last year, this has been amazing. I have never seen a group of such dedicated individuals unless they were choir directors. You guys have remarkable abilities, giving love, wisdom, and patience. I'm in awe. I feel absolutely blessed. I want to get up everyday go to meetings. It's so wonderful to have those feelings in your heart."

"Six and one half years ago my life fell apart and I fell into service at the same time. It has been an incredible journey really. I feel blessed. Al-Anon was there when I needed it. I am so grateful to have made new friends and will continue to make them. I can't thank one person—thank you all."

"This is the best Conference I've been to in seven years. It is all the things I dreamed this Conference would be, could be. I watched in action a lot of spiritual respect. What has

touched me the most are the kind words I can take back to our staff. Affirmations are just so meaningful. You to let us know when we do something well and let us have your ideas to benefit from. Thanks to all."

"For WSO staff, trustees and volunteers, I can't imagine how you remember everyone's name. Thank you, you gave me new ideas with more enthusiasm. Something different might come from this, my last Conference."

"You never know what impact you have on someone's life. Thanks. Mostly because of work I'm always behind and I call the WSO at the last minute something is due. I am never told, 'you ought to know how to do this.' I was an Alateen sponsor and one thing we say at the end of our meetings is, 'the friends you meet in Alateen are special.' Panel 36 and 38 just remember, the friends you meet at WSC are special."

"I look forward to the next two years. You have been an inspiration. Y'all think one member is quiet but I am continually surprised at her quick wit. She runs a strict Nominating Committee and keeps us in line. To those leaving, good-bye, we will miss you. A special good-bye to my roommate. I'll miss all of you and your spirit."

"My Higher Power put me in this position of service and carried me through. I felt it was my job to find others to replace me in service. The staff has forced me to accept love. On top of that, I've had a lot of opportunities to dress like a fool. Thank you all for a wonderful six years."

"I want to express gratitude for God-given gifts—you are them. I am grateful I learned to laugh from my heart and cry from my soul. Two years ago I said I would never be caught dead at an International and I'M SO EXCITED!!"

"I can't tell you what a privilege it has been representing Kentucky. I keep thinking about what I shared with someone earlier. We support Al-Anon because we believe in it, take pride in it. I think of the way those who have gone before lead by example. When I was having a rough time, they came out and sat next to me. I had the opportunity to spend time with staff and volunteers, you are wonderful. Thank you."

"I can't leave without saying thanks to everybody. I have made good friends. This has been a great experience. We might host the RSS next year, our Executive Director may

come. We have a tradition with a cod fish. While we have a moratorium on catching them I might find one just for him. I hope to see some eastern Canadians and those close to the border visit. Thank you everyone for the last three years."

"Even though most of you didn't hear my voice at the workshops, be sure what I saw and listened to will help my organization in Mexico. I enjoyed every day and will share this experience with my group and my area. I love you all. God bless you. This is not goodbye, *vaya con Dios!*"

"When I came to this program you accepted me as I was. You knew I was in pain and you welcomed me. Thanks to all."

"I feel like I have been a productive trustee these past two years. Every Board member has been so good to me. I went to my first Conference in 1976 and had my first spiritual awakening at that Conference. I've had a spiritual awakening at this Conference."

"I love all of you. This is a wonderful experience being here. At my first service seminar I recall thinking, 'when I grow up, I want to be a delegate.' The grace of my Higher Power gave me the confidence to stand here. I wanted to be here for a long time. You love me exactly as I am. Thank you all very much."

"The love of so many Al-Anons and prayers have made it possible for me to be here and I want to thank all of you for a mountain top experience. I love each one of you. I want to say I'm going to miss those leaving but I get to see one at home. She is an inspiration and I'm going to miss her here. I mainly wanted to say thanks for this wonderful experience."

"I'm so grateful for the staff and the Panel 36 delegates. My sponsor called to give me support and love. I voted and I voted and I counted ballots and I counted ballots."

"At my first Al-Anon meeting 10 years ago, I was looking for something—the love, openness—thank you."

"I have a secret feeling that I am a miracle. We are all miracles. Each of us has defied death to be here. In nature when a flower is under stress, its first effort is to bloom—we do that too."

"Miracle is the word for me. I came to Conference doubtful and angry with resentment on my side. I'm leaving full of love, faith,

hope and laughter. I've had fun, I went overboard, but I laughed. Thank you."

"I wasn't going to come. My emotions have been up and down for a month. I'm so glad I got here. I got good advice and was told it would be a lot of work and I would be very tired. No one told me about the love in this room."

"I didn't have my (speaking) voice at this Conference. The next one will be my last one. Can I have four minutes at the microphone to make up for it?"

"We haven't thanked our Conference reporter and the tapers; both have done an awesome job for the first time"

"My favorite meeting isn't a group—it's the meeting in your pocket. Please thank people who share stories, photographs, and Al-Anon events for *The Forum*. So many stories have been read this year. Last, if you have spare fifteen or 20 minutes, I know 35,000 people who would love to hear from you."

"Thank you for the love and confidence you have given me to feel a part of this. You have given me strength. Thanks for giving us the answers to our questions so quickly. Thanks for allowing me to have fun, wear a hula skirt, a wig and be another person."

"I have found the secret to not saying goodbye. Stay in service and our paths will cross everywhere."

CLOSING-PANEL 36 SKIT

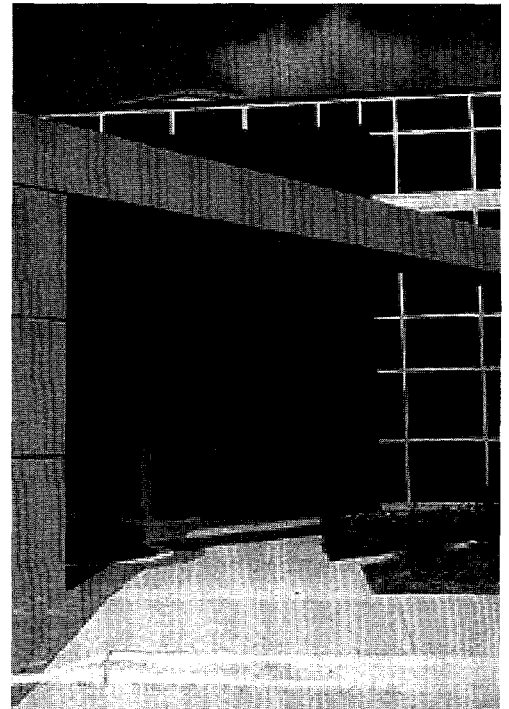
Pat S.,
*Conference Chairperson,
Executive Committee Member*

Pat S., Conference Chairperson, and Ric B., Executive Director, presented scrolls to all Panel 36 delegates, celebrating their participation at the World Service Conference. With that completed, Pat S. officially closed the 1998 World Service Conference.

After many days of arduous, though successful, business, Conference members were looking forward to the opportunity to relax, laugh, and enjoy a good time. The skit performed in two parts by Panel 36 provided all of that and more. They chose to depict with music—song titles and/or lyrics—the familiar phases that an Al-Anon experiences.

Part two of the skit was a hilarious reenactment of the PSA everyone viewed earlier at the Conference. One member acting as the radio announcer was interrupted by the emergency broadcast system, due to an approaching tornado. There were three versions presented by bilingual members in English, French and Spanish—just like the new PSA.

The Conference members concluded the celebration with many hugs and farewell wishes.



Following the Conference, 1998 Conference members and their guests toured the WSO and were treated to a buffet luncheon.

SPIRITUAL SHARINGS

Helen R., Trustee Chairperson of the Board

As I stand here tonight to tell you about my life, I realize I would much rather be listening to one of you speak. There is a quote from *Courage to Change* that says, "I have certain responsibilities to others: to extend a welcome to newcomers; to be of service; to recognize that others have a right to their own lives; to listen, not just with my ears but also with my heart; and to share my joy as well as my sorrow." The last part of the quote is often the most difficult for me, but tonight I hope that I share with you my joy, as well as my sorrow, that brought me to this program and keeps me coming back.

I was born into a fairly well-to-do family where someone's drinking gave me a problem. I had two beautiful, bright sisters who were much older than I and four years later my brother was born mentally retarded. I had the overwhelming anxiety and guilt that *Understanding Ourselves* talks about. I thought my parents didn't care about the house or their health. My mother didn't cook, clean or sew, but she drank vodka from the time she got up till she went to bed at night. My father was a well-respected physician by day and a drunk by night. Once a week the bootlegger drove up to our house and brought cases of whiskey into our basement. I wondered if anyone else lived like this, but I knew they didn't so I covered up by making up stories and pretending I lived in a world that didn't exist. I was certain that I was at fault. I was not smart enough, I was not cute and I had no social skills. There must be something I did or did not do that caused my parents to drink! I poured out liquor. I hid bottles. I was quiet. I didn't get in trouble. I took care of my brother—but nothing worked. Alcoholism lived in our house.

My obsession with their drinking moved to denial and this is how I lived, really just existed, for about 25 years—just like the monkeys. "See no drinking, hear no drinking, speak no drinking." I was afraid to leave home and I didn't want to stay there any longer. I had begun "Looking for love in all the wrong places" so I thought a change of scenery would help. This change only made me more aware of the fact that I couldn't cope with reality—perhaps a husband would make things better! I had broken an engagement before going away to college, so I called him and said I was ready to get married. He said, "Great!" He rode the train from Iowa, where he was in graduate school, to Batesville, Mississippi where I picked him up in my little green Nash Rambler. We went across the state line into Alabama, got married, drove back and spent the night in the Batesville Motel. I put him on the train the next morning and off he went back to Iowa and I went back to the dormitory. The next morning I 'came to' and knew we had made terrible mistake—this would embarrass my family, it was not part of the Southern rules of culture. Once again I called him in Iowa and said "we can't have done this. We must get engaged and get married that coming summer." He said, "Okay." (Do you wonder why I had difficulty with powerlessness when I got here?) We were "married" the 28th of August, 1965, in the First Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi, with 12 bridesmaids, 12 groomsmen and two flower girls! Needless to say, this marriage did not last. It lasted long enough for me to try to fix it by having a baby. By the time that precious boy was nine months old we were divorced and I was back living in Jackson in my parents' house. This gave new meaning to the phrase, "from the frying pan into the fire."

After a few years of struggling to live on my own, I met an older man who needed me. More honestly, I can say today that I needed him. We were married six months later and I always wondered if I was a bigamist. I was married in Alabama, married in Mississippi, divorced in Arkansas and married again in Mississippi. Did I need two divorces? I never was sure. Of course I never mentioned this to anyone. My wonderful new husband had two children, ages ten and

twelve when I married him, and I was going to make this a wonderful family. I was writing the script but I forgot to give copies to the players! The first time I saw him drunk, I said that I didn't "do" drunk (whatever that means). He said he wouldn't do it again and he continued to drink on a daily basis. Alcoholism lived in our house. Also, my husband's 12 year old daughter came to live with us. I hear your stories about peering through the blinds waiting for them to come home, driving around late at night looking for them, but I was fortunate (or so he told me) because he stayed at home to drink. I learned to make martinis and would take them to him while he soaked in the bathtub! I learned to keep the children quiet so he could sit in his chair, drink and fondle the clicker. We had a child of our own so now we had mine, his and ours—surely this would make ours a model home of health and happiness! The only way I coped was by sinking further and further into fairytales, dreams and denial. Many nights I planned his funeral and I must tell you I was such a lovely, grief-stricken widow—appearances were everything! I felt the release of all the responsibility and was free at last, but then the guilt would set in. How could I feel this way about this poor sweet man?

Around and around I would go inside with the guilt, fear, freedom, and back to guilt until I was but a shell of a person. We went through all the scenes of drinking only beer, drinking only wine, drinking only after 5:00 PM, and on and on until finally late one night Louis said he was an alcoholic and called Alcoholics Anonymous. He got the answering service and they never called him back. This started my first resentment against AA. This sent Louis to the doctor who prescribed little yellow pills so he wouldn't have to drink. We continued to live in this craziness for several more years.

I had held this family together with my gentleness, kindness, and mostly my denial for about 16 years. I was just about at the breaking point! Our son came home drunk one night, as many teenagers do, and I went berserk! I had never raised my hand nor my voice at any of our children prior to this time and I saw myself standing over this well-developed young man, hitting him upside the head and screaming at him! It was a moment of clarity when I knew something was terribly wrong with me. I had suppressed my anger for all those years and turned it on myself. I had been unable to eat normally for about three years; I was running marathons and running from reality. I was mentally and physically at my bottom. A friend had been asking me to go to Al-Anon with her for several years but I was afraid if I went it would be admitting that there had been an alcohol problem with my father and mother. By this time, my mother was dead and I had put my dad in treatment twice and he was going to AA, but I was still afraid. I know today this makes no sense but I also know this is how I felt. I was working on my second resentment against AA. My dad kept going to meetings, talking about how wonderful it was, but he kept drinking! What did those AA people do at all those meetings? Why didn't they keep Daddy sober like they were "supposed" to? Didn't they know he was still drinking? How in the world was Al-Anon going to help me?

Pain won out over intellect and I went to my first Al-Anon meeting in great despair, unable to believe in the possibility of change and yet unable to go on as before. I felt unwanted, unloved, and alone. You reached out to me the minute I walked in the doors and you gave me hope. I came for myself because I no longer wanted to live as before and I knew that my life was unmanageable. I sat in that room and soaked up the love and peace for many months before I opened my mouth. You asked me no questions like "Who are you?" "Where do you live?" "Who were your parents?" You just put your arms around me and held me and told me to Keep Coming Back. I

was so afraid I wouldn't fit in and afraid you wouldn't like me and you wouldn't accept me. You told me the only requirement for membership was that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend and you didn't want to know anything about "them," you wanted to know about me!

Rigorous honesty was the key to seeing my situation and opening the doors to recovering and finding the solutions. When I walked through the doors to my first meeting, had my life depended on my honesty, I would have died. Slowly I came to understand the quality of my life depended on that honesty with myself. I found the next step in my personal growth was learning that though this recovery required honesty with myself—I needed to give others gentle honesty. God did not die and leave me in charge (I really thought that he had). I learned that struggles are an opportunity to grow and I often had no answer for myself in those struggles. So what made me presume I had answers for anyone else? Instead of constantly offering my opinion, I learned to wait and be silent. I didn't learn this easily or quickly. In fact, my sponsor suggested that I put my tongue between my teeth and bite down every time I wanted to offer opinions or solutions to someone else, and if that didn't work to take my body to my closet! My first two years in the program I spent a lot of time in my closet! Gentle honesty became my ability to share the experience, strength, and hope of the program and to let go of my expectations of others.

It was about this time that my husband went to his first AA meeting and I was thrilled! Perhaps not for the reasons you are thinking. I was thrilled that he was someone else's responsibility! He was going to those meetings every day, most days twice a day, and our house was totally different. I had one of those spiritual experiences when I realized that I had turned my will and my life over to God's care but somehow I had held on to the care of others. I wasn't quite sure yet that God could take care of them as well as I was doing. My sponsor helped me to see that I wasn't doing such a great job and I might try letting go just One Day at a Time so that my family could have the dignity of having their own relationship with their own Higher Power. My relationships were distorted by an unbalanced dependence, excessive demands, and expectations. When I began to practice letting go, I must tell you that, at first, my family was not delighted! This was definitely new behavior and I was no longer taking responsibility for their problems. Giving others their freedom gave me my freedom. I now have a partner for a husband instead of a child and I can be a partner instead of a manager. I now know love, the kind of love that does not possess others but waits and listens. I experienced the pain of a broken relationship that lasted for many years with one of my stepchildren and our grandchildren. I wanted to 'understand' and I wanted to know what the outcome would be, and you told me to accept what is. You reminded me again that powerless is not helpless and that the only person I could change was myself. You showed me how to put myself and others in God's hands on a daily basis. In order to keep from picking up the phone, I spent a lot of time praying the Serenity Prayer, talking to my sponsor, and working with others. One day as I was gripping the arms of my chair and saying the Serenity Prayer, I realized what I was praying for—serenity, courage, and wisdom—and I stopped right there and let that sink in—serenity, courage, and wisdom. Those were available for me no matter what my circumstances. From that moment on, I began keeping my life real simple and trusting God with the results. Nothing changed in the relationship with my stepdaughter and our grandchildren, but I did change. That was what you knew would happen all along.

I don't believe any of us in our family would go back to the way things were, but change was slow and difficult at first. In fact, if I'm honest, change is still slow and difficult. We had a major change five years ago when we retired and moved from one state to another. I

had never lived in another city much less another state and I was almost 50 years old. It was an adventure and something we had talked about for a long time. I never considered the pain that would come from leaving my sponsor, my home group, my family, and lifelong friends. I was given another wonderful growth opportunity! So many miracles have happened in my life since the move. We live in the country where the deer and antelope feed in our yard every afternoon. I can see no houses from my deck but can watch the sun rise on one side and set on the other. There are no street lights and at night the sky and the stars are awesome! There are many other miracles that at first I thought were terrible problems. No one reached out to me at meetings so I got to extend my hand first. There was no Al-Anon meeting that used Al-Anon literature when I moved here so I got to start a new meeting. There were no old-timers to rely on, so I got to be sustained by prayer, by the literature, and be the old-timer myself. All the workshops and conventions were hours away so I got to put lots of miles on my car and take newcomers with me.

1997 was a year of major change once again. Perhaps in the 'sunset' of our lives all changes are major. My husband was ill and had several surgeries and a number of complications. He was in and out of the hospital and in a hospital bed in our living room for about three months. I wish I could tell you that I handled all the changes with complete peace and serenity. However, that was not so. There were days that I screamed at God, screamed at my sponsor over the phone, and even a few times when I was definitely not nice to the doctors or nurses. I became as obsessed with Louis' health as I had been with alcoholism. I felt totally responsible for his recovery. Where have I heard that before? Fear became my major emotion. Once again I was given an opportunity to rely on the principles of this program on a minute by minute basis. I gave myself time to accept the situation before I acted. More options appeared each time I did so. Acceptance did not mean that I liked what was going on but that I realized that reality is reality. I began to write a list of the things that were my responsibility each day and then do them. I went back to my 'simple' life with serenity, courage, and wisdom. Slowly I learned once again that I am not alone. I asked God to show me the unexpected blessings and they came tumbling forth. The crisis time has passed and we are living with the lasting changes that it brought into our lives. The year ended with the celebration of the marriage of our youngest daughter and the reuniting of our entire family—all of our children and grandchildren. What a miracle!

I would like to close with a quote from *From Survival to Recovery*, "We in Al-Anon are blessed with spiritually conscious, loving companionship on our human journey. We are gifted with life—all life—life with its laughter and its tears, its loneliness and its love, its wisdom and its idiocy, its justice and its cruelty, its family disease of alcoholism and its family of recovery of Al-Anon. So today I say 'yes' to life and 'thank you' Al-Anon for giving me the courage and tenderness to live it."

Ben R., Saskatchewan

It is a great honour and privilege to be asked to present a spiritual sharing at an Al-Anon World Service Conference. I thank the WSC for this remarkable opportunity. Often we do not seem to recognize the most significant moments of our life while they are happening. Consequently, everything that I share with you here is with the benefit of considerable hindsight.

Speaking of spirituality, to many, it means trusting a "Power greater than ourselves." Lois W., co-founder of Al-Anon, wrote that spirituality is living a life that has a deeper meaning than the search

for daily necessities, and that every activity could have a spiritual meaning to many people. While these are undoubtedly components of spirituality, there are also others. Certainly the spiritual experience is different for each of us.

When I was a young child three or four years of age, my family traveled for a weekend vacation to Jasper National Park in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. I was looking out the window and saw a black bear climbing atop the cabin next to ours. A cub walked up to the window I was looking through. We looked at one another, two children looking at one another. I pressed my face against the glass for a better look. The little cub, standing on its hind legs, did the same. We were two innocents transfixed for several long moments, gazing through the glass into each others' eyes. This lasted until I told my mother there was a bear at the window. To me, that magic and enchantment was a very early spiritual awakening. It taught me at an early age that there is power in this world deeper and more profound than any conceived by humankind.

I was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, during the early 1950s. In the blue collar neighborhoods where I was raised, I now understand that alcohol was a factor in almost every home, including in my home. My father, I don't want to say he was an alcoholic but he drank six days a week from the late 1940s until 1980. His father, my grandfather, drank while my father was a child. Alcohol has damaged the lives of some of my father's "alcoholically-challenged" brothers, as it has some of my brothers. For some fortunate reason, I'm not an alcoholic. I become ill before drunk.

Our home, an alcoholic home, was where contradiction, shame, humiliation, contempt, despair, hate, anger, and fear were interwoven with love, warmth, pride, and hope. It was an agnostic home. I grew up alone. Unlike my siblings I had few friends, and escaped totally into fantasy and television. I grew up afraid.

I never explored or took any real risks. I was frightened by people, ridicule, failure, my father, and just living life. I argued with my siblings, and we did not support one another in our pain. My mother had come to Canada, a war bride from Amsterdam. She was like a gazelle among goats, she always seemed far too pretty and too sophisticated for the Canadian prairies of my childhood. Consequently, I myself assumed an aloofness to society around me. As a child I was close to my mother, but it was not a healthy closeness. She confided in and counseled me. However, I dare not trust her for support on any issue against my father. My father, when sober, was witty and intelligent. However, for most of the week, his world was a dark drunken place where we, the children, were deemed responsible for much of the gloom. For several years, I wished him dead.

My skills for survival in that home were cowardice, dishonesty, manipulation, introspection, and hypersensitivity. I took my cues for living from others: parents, teachers, peers, television. I did not know how to listen to my heart. Although I feigned superiority, I had zero self-esteem. I was afraid that once people got to see who I really was that they would not want anything to do with me. I loathed my looks, my behaviour, and my mannerisms. I did not talk, did not trust, and did not feel. Honing these "skills" enabled me to survive until adulthood. However as tools, they were totally unsuited for use as an adult.

One day, in my mid-teens, I found a paperback at home. This book alleged, quite remarkably, that our world was being visited by crafts piloted by beings from other worlds! As a teenage boy I was hugely impressed, and reread and reread that one book. Subsequently, I started star gazing at night. Over the next few years, I never did see an alien star ship! However, in carefully learning the night sky and studying the physical universe, I discovered the tranquillity that comes from sitting quietly and observing nature. I also encountered

countless other books in the library. For me reading opened another universe, the universe of ideas.

I started attending university in 1970, when I was 18 years old, to get a sense of self-esteem. I wanted to become a medical doctor. Finally, I thought, people would respect and love me. Much to my amazement, I was accepted into medical school in Alberta in the fall of 1972. Even more astonishing, one year later, I had failed out. I was devastated.

It was a time for reevaluation, and redirection. To me, ideas and creativity had become most important in life. Even to this day I care not what someone wears, nor what they possess—all that matters is what resides in their hearts and minds. I love to create new ideas, using older thoughts. I knew that I wanted to spend my life in study and creativity. One can do that, I felt, in art or science. I had little background in art, so I chose science and decided to complete an undergraduate degree in the biological sciences. However, after completing this degree, I still felt empty. I reasoned that more advanced study would provide fulfillment.

I was a graduate student from 1975 through 1986; first at a university in Saskatchewan, where I now live, and then Ontario. These were good years for my career, but nightmarish for everything else. Especially in Ontario, I was an isolated, introspective workaholic. In Ontario I lived for five years in an unfinished basement. My world was the research laboratory, the shopping mall, and my residence. There were no intimate relationships. Only a few things kept me alive. Fortunately, there were always a few caring friends from the university. Also, I had discovered other things like running, the guitar, and bird watching. Finally, in 1986, I completed my last degree. Ironically, I had gone to university to get a sense of self-esteem, yet, I had no more self-esteem than when I had started university 16 years earlier. Worse, I was still alone and afraid. I had not yet realized that contentment comes from within, not without. I did not have spirituality, but I did have a huge ego.

I moved to Maryland in 1986, having accepted a temporary position at a university. I had arrived! Although I had expected to begin life anew, it quickly became more of the same depression, isolation, and anxiety. I had, after all, taken me with me. Also, my work situation was difficult. My boss, whom I had chosen to work for, was not a terribly healthy individual. Within two months things started falling apart.

Mercifully, in early 1986 two wondrous things occurred. My sister sent me an excellent magazine article on adult children of alcoholics, and I saw a poster at work announcing a noontime Al-Anon meeting at the university. However I did not attend Al-Anon right away. I needed two more months of "booster shots" for pain and loneliness, before I tried Al-Anon.

My first Al-Anon meeting was in Baltimore, during May of 1986. Initially, I had a very difficult time with Al-Anon. I felt superior because of my university degrees, and I just could not understand Higher Power. Thankfully, there were some excellent people at that meeting. They did not judge me, were good enough to listen to me and kept telling me things like "fake it till you make it" and "Keep Coming Back." For my part, there was nowhere else where I could talk openly about what was really happening to me. I stopped feeling superior at that meeting because there were several individuals who had educations superior to my own. One of them became my counselor. Another became a good friend who took me to meetings and answered all of my phone calls. At the university these individuals specialized in alcoholism and taught counselors how to be better counselors. I was in very good hands, I thank God for that. Gradually, ego was replaced by humility.

Walking to work one dazzling day in Baltimore, the sky was clear blue. It reminded me of the prairie skies. I had been wrestling with

the concept of a Higher Power for several weeks. Suddenly, I remembered the astronomy of my youth. If the sun is but one of a hundred billion stars in our galaxy, which is itself but one of a hundred billion galaxies, I thought, "You know Ben, perhaps there is a Power greater than you."

I began to listen to my heart. I knew that I had to find a better work situation and, consequently, accepted a better position at a university in St. Louis, Missouri, where I lived for the next three years. During that time I attended almost exclusively Al-Anon adult children of alcoholics groups. I needed, and still need, the special focus that those meetings provide. The wonderful people there taught me how to work the Steps, how to love myself, and how to do innumerable practical things, such as drive a standard transmission, start a barbecue, and paddle a canoe (We didn't do all of these at the meetings!). While in St. Louis, I also came to recognize that I too was an addict. Until then I had used work, food, television, cigarettes, love, and sex to avoid reality and feeling feelings. In particular sex and love had become an acute problem and, consequently, from 1988 to 1994 I attended meetings of another Twelve Step fellowship that focused on these.

A woman friend was also in St. Louis. We attended the same Al-Anon adult children group, but she was older and far wiser. From her I learned how to argue using "I" rather than "you" statements. I also learned how to love others, and the difference between sex and love. We were intimate friends for one and one-half years, until it was time for me to leave St. Louis. In this life this special person has been my closest companion, and we are still the best of friends. Yet, having been married twice, she did not want another binding relationship. One of the hardest things that I have ever had to do in my life was to leave her to go on with my life.

I accepted a permanent position as a professor at a university in Saskatchewan, Canada, in 1990. I teach, and do research. In both of these, I try to follow my heart. My Higher Power must have a tremendous sense of humor. I have won awards for teaching a course which as a medical student I never did pass!

Al-Anon service work has changed my life. So much of my life has been spent alone, and although I have had many ideas they never seemed to make it out of my head. In service I have been forced to take what was on my inside, and share it with those on the outside. I have learned how to love myself, and to share that self with others.

My father died, after a lengthy illness, in 1996. I am so grateful to Al-Anon adult children that in the years preceding his death I had been able to move from hating to loving him. Long before he died we had been able to tell one another that we loved each other. Al-Anon adult children had taught me that alcoholism is a disease, and that no one is to blame. There is no sickness like hate. Forgiveness gave great freedom to my spirit.

I have also come to appreciate the importance of family and children. My mother and I are now friends as equal adults. We speak by phone weekly, and visit regularly. My sister has two young daughters. These nieces mean everything to me. Although we live a couple thousand miles apart, I can be in almost daily contact with them by computer.

Sitting by a majestic river one shining summer day in Saskatchewan, I was contemplating the nature of my Higher Power. Although I had begun to attend a formal place of worship, I was still having trouble visualizing a Higher Power. With penetrating clarity, I suddenly understood that a human being probably has as much chance of fully comprehending their Higher Power as does a ladybug of fully appreciating the intricate workings of a rocket. Thereafter, I no longer had to understand my Higher Power. I had only to believe.

In my mid-forties, I had given up hope of ever having a wife and

children. Since moving to Saskatchewan, there had only been repeated rejection and hurt in this area. Losing hope, I had unfortunately fallen back into some of my old ways with sex and love addiction. By early 1997, I was occasionally seeing one prostitute. While she was a good person, I was mistakenly hoping to find intimacy with her. Also, as a release from tension and/or boredom, I would occasionally "cruise". For me "cruising" means to drive to the disreputable parts of the city to look at street prostitutes. I did not own a television and unfortunately, had come to use "cruising" as an escape from reality.

In mid-1997 I met a wonderful woman in Al-Anon. She was everything that I was looking for. Plays, movies, walks, dinners, stargazing, bird watching all helped to make this a very special relationship. Although we were not intimate sexually, there was much romance, affection, and passion. She felt strongly about me, as I did about her. I had told her about my addictions from the start and, of course, no longer visited that other lady. Although there were many questions, after several months our relationship was at its zenith. Tranquillity and joy had become a part of my life.

One day my new friend asked me if I had ever done anything with sex addiction since we had begun dating. Truthfully, and ashamedly, I told her that I had twice gone cruising. I began to cry, and her first reaction was to hug me. Leaving her later that night, I will never forget the look of betrayal and devastation on her face. I realized that my inability to be honest with myself had caused her that hurt. I also knew that I genuinely loved her. However, what I did not know was that she would never want to hug me again. In fact, shortly thereafter she no longer wished to hear from or speak to me.

I fell into a bottomless depression for the last two months of 1997. I required little yellow pills, started seeing a counselor, bought a television, began again to attend that Twelve Step program for sex and love addiction, and wept frequently. During that time, I hid in my apartment from life. I lost my sense of humor, and people at work began to return the frowns that I was giving them. I was angry with myself, with her, and with my Higher Power. One of my greatest fears had been realized; somebody really got to know me, and did not want anything to do with me.

My journey back into the world of the living was aided by Al-Anon service work, and letting my Higher Power back into my life. Al-Anon members in Saskatchewan love their world service delegates. Surrounded by such boundless unconditional love, remaining depressed is simply impossible.

I am still not the person that I want to be. However, nor am I the person that I was. I am no longer alone. I am no longer afraid. I have a sense of self-worth and I have a Higher Power I believe that I have awoken my own sense of spirituality.

In all these years, I have learned three things. First, beginning with yourself, always be true. Second, including yourself, respect all life. Finally, my Higher Power is not limited by my lack of imagination.

DELEGATE SHARINGS

Each outgoing delegate gave a three-minute talk on the Conference theme: Inventory—Searching for Progress and Growth

Annie A., Utah

When I came to Al-Anon, I clearly recall hearing the word inventory often and totally ignoring it because...what was the point. I didn't relate to this word and looking at myself was certainly NOT anything I needed to do. As with all things in the program, little by little I began to understand its meaning and I still didn't like it much.

Like with everything this wonderful program has been and is teaching me an inventory is a good thing. After doing an inventory it felt like missing puzzle pieces of my life were falling into place. Things were not perfect but I had a better understanding of my life. This was a free gift.

As GR, DR, area officer, and now delegate, I have had to look at myself and my actions more times than I can count. Why do I do this service stuff? In the beginning it was a wonderful tool to help me keep my eyes off someone else. Years later I stayed in service to preserve what has been given to me because Al-Anon is my anchor.

Last year I went to a Sunday night meeting of my home group, and much to my dismay, no one was there. This really made me take a look at myself. I had not been attending meetings like I had in the past. I had been busy; the summer was hectic; I had gone on vacation; any excuse would do. I was not being responsible. Now I am attending that meeting every time possible. You see, inventory for me comes in many different ways on any given day.

The joys of doing the inventory are growth and a great sense of satisfaction when things work out just fine without my pearls of wisdom. And that, my friends, is growth.

During the last few months at home we have been remodeling a bathroom. My husband has worked each weekend in this bathroom. As the tile was going down I would occasionally go in and offer encouragement or lunch. I learned something rather unattractive about myself. Out of a room of hundreds of tiles my eyes would instantly zoom to the ONE tile that might be just a hair off center. Thank God for the inventory lessons I learned in Al-Anon. I could keep my criticism to myself. The program is in my bones and brain, and with luck, in my vocal cords.

I look upon the Al-Anon program as a beautiful, hand blown glass ball that is fine, fragile, pure and will last forever if handled with the utmost care. The only way we can preserve this gift is to cherish it, love it, and never take it for granted. By looking at ourselves and to our Higher Power we can be guides for Al-Anon, building on our history and planning for the future.

Ben R., Saskatchewan

I am an adult child of an alcoholic. When I was a child, my family was damaged by my father's drinking and by our reactions to him. I grew up insecure, afraid, introspective, and hypersensitive; yet self-reliant, cunning, and manipulative. Also, rather than listen to my heart, I took my cues for life from other people and institutions. I carried these survival traits into my adult life, where for over a decade they did not work very well at all. I grew depressed and isolated.

I came to Al-Anon in May 1986. From the start I was drawn to Al-Anon meetings for adult children of alcoholics. At regular Al-Anon meetings when I heard people share, I would hear my mother speaking. However, I heard myself in the sharings of

Al-Anon adult children. At these meetings, I worked the Steps and the program. I was no longer alone or depressed. After a while, I learned to listen to my heart. I also came to understand the freedom that comes with forgiveness.

Eventually, I became involved in Al-Anon service work outside my home group. At first, I was angered by the general lack of consideration and understanding shown Al-Anon adult children groups by Al-Anon as a whole. Rather than leave Al-Anon, I knew I needed the strength of the fellowship in working the program. I also perceived that whether we are AA, Al-Anon, Alateen, or Al-Anon adult children, our recovery is bound up with one another. I need to stay a part of the whole.

As GR, then my area's first Al-Anon Adult Children Coordinator, DR, and now world service delegate, I have worked within Al-Anon for the recognition and support of Al-Anon adult children. While I have had some success and seen many changes, much more remains to be done.

Several years of service have, I hope, broadened my understanding. I now see that a successful future for Al-Anon is intimately linked to the well being of all our special focus and minority groups—whatever their reason for being. I believe with all my heart that that to sidestep stagnation, Al-Anon must do whatever it can to attract families and friends of alcoholics. That means extending our welcome, love, and resources to a new diversity of special focus and minority groups. However, I have also learned that each of these groups has the responsibility to participate fully in our remarkable fellowship. Only in this way will misunderstanding be replaced by camaraderie, and division by unity.

Betty W., Newfoundland/Labrador

I once worked for a brokerage firm and keeping an inventory (before computer age) was a major part of my job. It was very frustrating at times and I developed a strong resentment towards "inventory."

Many years later I found myself at an Al-Anon meeting where the chairperson announced a group inventory was planned for the next week. I had been around the program for a while but hadn't done the Steps so I stayed away from the meeting.

I chose to attend only the meetings where I felt comfortable. I joined a group and settled in. They elected me secretary, then treasurer. I accepted because they were "safe" jobs and I was in familiar territory. I attended my Al-Anon meeting every week and kept asking, "When will things get better?" A very wise, long-time member said I should Keep Coming Back. It wasn't exactly what I wanted to hear but I kept going back—although sometimes I didn't know why. The meeting night would roll around and there I'd be with all my problems.

It was suggested that I work the Steps. I wasn't sure how they could help me but nothing else was working so I decided to give them a try. When I got to Step Four—there was that inventory again. A *searching* and *fearless* moral inventory! I didn't know how to deal with that! I thought I'd just skip over it but it bothered me, so I talked to another member about it. She said it might be easier if I wrote it down. That didn't seem so scary—I could do that. So I started to

write. I realized that almost every time I found a fault with someone else, it was because I saw something in them that I didn't like about myself. It was very painful—admitting my faults—but I found that I had some good qualities too. When I finally did Step Five, I felt like I had been set free.

Today, the Steps are a never-ending journey for me. I know they were written in numerical order to help keep me on track. I had no problem admitting that I was powerless over alcohol, my life was certainly unmanageable. I know that my Higher Power will restore me to sanity and I try to turn my will and life over to His care.

I no longer fear the word 'inventory.' It has become part of my daily reflections. I can talk to my God and know that with His help I will be OK. Al-Anon has given me so much to be grateful for. When I look back at the person I used to be, so full of fear and anger, I know that I have made progress in this program. I also know that I will continue to experience growth as long as I attend meetings, remain involved in the fellowship, and follow the Steps of recovery.

Bob B., Idaho

This subject has given me a lot of inspiration to think about inventories and how important they are in my life. So I've done a lot of soul searching, I guess, to try to think about what I want to say about inventories here today. This has been an experience that I wouldn't have had any idea what I would have missed had I missed this, or had my area felt that they didn't want me to have this experience. I'll forever be grateful that they allowed me to do this. As I look out over the people in this room, some are very special. And those that are very special were very special the first time I met them. And I believe that I will continue to cross paths with most of you from now on, because we'll be going to the same places, and you'll be there. I know this because at the regional service seminar last fall I walked in the hotel on Friday afternoon. I looked around and there were 12 people in the lobby that I knew. Some of them I knew from the Conference and it gave me a great feeling of satisfaction to know that those people are there. And I'll continue to find them at other Al-Anon functions. Since I came into this program I don't attend much of anything except Al-Anon and AA functions. So these are the only people I know anymore. My circle of friends has completely changed. And that may be a result of an inventory. I have come to the conclusion that about every decision I make is the result of some type of inventory. I look at it, I go down the list and decide this is good and this is bad, I make my decision that way. Even the other morning at 12:30 a.m. I had to call my neighbor and ask him to turn his TV down. At first, I thought well, I'll just wait and I'll probably go to sleep. At six o'clock in the morning it'll be payday time. But thru the process of deciding what to do, I believe I took an inventory and decided, "No, that's not the thing to do, it's not right. I can wake him up at six o'clock in the morning but he'll never know why I did it. He won't realize that I was trying to get even." Archie Bunker says that revenge is a great thing, it's a good way to get even, but I don't believe that. I know that's not part of our program to do it that way.

So I think inventory will be different to me from now on, just because I knew that I needed to speak to you about it. Preparing for that has given me a lot of different ideas about what inventory is and what it can be used for. Because looking at the things I do, I believe I use an inventory in every decision I make. That's the process I go through—inventory. Maybe I always have, I don't know. I did a lot of things before I got in this program that I don't know why or how I did them. I certainly am more aware of those things in the last few years than I was all my life. Now I'm aware of them thru inventory. My personal inventory is done a lot of the time by a process I

call "I remember when..." and I remember things that happened as I was growing up. I look at them and I try to look at how I felt when it happened; what the results of it were and what actions I took. I believe those things make me do things the way I do them now. That is part of what made me what I am now. I want to thank all of you for being here. I want to thank you for allowing me to be here.

Bobby S., South Carolina

I was amused as I reflected on my first meeting, searching for a plan of progress and growth. It was from the drunk in my house. Little did I know I would have a rebirth and it would change my life forever.

Prior to Al-Anon, self-deception magnified my problems and became an obstacle to the solutions of most of them. Self-justification and a self-righteousness blocked my ability to recognize truths. I needed PMS—a physical, mental, spiritual healing from a loving God, as I understand him.

I was amazed to discover the simple tools of the program were effective as I searched for strength and growth. I received many gifts in my search for progress and growth.

Then in the spring of 1994, my worst fear became a reality when my husband died suddenly in an emergency room. Although I was surrounded by Al-Anon, I wanted to withdraw from this planet. You wouldn't let me.

My children no longer refer to me as BMIC—big mother in charge. When I wanted to get involved in service work, they said, "Go for it, Mom. Maybe it will keep you out of the nursing home for three years." What an awesome journey it has been in my life.

I would like to share with you a letter I received that warmed my heart: "Dear Bobbie, thank you for giving so much of yourself. You touch us all with your outstretched arms and heart. We are blessed to share it with you. I will hold you in my heart forever as I continue to walk this walk."

Cieni P., Puerto Rico

Very early in Al-Anon I was interested in service. I felt as if I was prepared to give back all the good things I had received from the program and service seemed the best way to do it.

One step at a time, and suddenly I was a member of my area committee. Service within the area committee was a great help to my recovery process. I came to know my fellow members more deeply. I could better appreciate the value of their contributions to the program and I ceased to judge them in a negative way. I also understood the value of extending service beyond the group.

I think that when you serve, you share. You give whatever your experience is, sometimes painful, many times, highly gratifying. You received, and you have a very fine opportunity of practicing tolerance, of practicing compassion, of practicing mercy.

Every minute, every hour you spend in service is a splendid investment of your time and energy in your personal search for growth. I had an opportunity to meditate on the specific results of my work in service, in my comprehension of my intimate feelings. What important changes occurred to me as a person! I humbly tell you I am a better person now than before Al-Anon. My personal inventory, after all these years of continued service, creates quite a very positive result: Speaking and hearing the language of the heart; trying to understand the real me; trying to understand you, not from a judgmental attitude, but from a comprehensive point of view; being honest when I tell you that I love you unconditionally; opening my mind

and my heart to you in a deliberate effort of making your feelings my feelings; and asking in my prayers the wisdom to speak the exact words you need in the moment you come to me for consolation.

Before Al-Anon, before service in Al-Anon, I never felt this precious feeling of warmth and love toward my companions and friends. Maybe my worst problem when I came to this program was my skepticism toward people, I didn't trust anybody. I could not share, I could not love, because I could not trust. Now, and this might be the true miracle, the biggest miracle of them all, I warmly feel it—that I love you, friends, love you deep in my heart.

Dolores T., New Mexico

It seems only yesterday that I took an inventory about service—service to Al-Anon as a delegate. First, I did not know whether the area wanted someone like me to be their trusted servant. Then, I did not know whether I really could be trusted. Could I make the commitment and would I be able to keep that commitment? Physically, I have challenges; emotionally I can, and do, get very tired. With the help of God—my Higher Power, and my sponsors, I was able to make the decision that I could and would stand for the position. Then I would rely heavily on guidance, love, and action. Nothing, I have learned, is accomplished without action. “Let Go and Let God” is beneficial only when I step out in faith and action.

During my time as delegate I have taken several small inventories of myself and last year I was involved in several group, district, AWSC, and area checkups. Have I seen progress? Yes, of course. God cannot stand aside without allowing me and others to grow when truth and vision are revealed.

I wrote this talk during January sometime and then I lost it and did not want to rewrite it. I could not remember what I wrote. Now, does that make sense? Why did it get lost and why did it not get typed back then? One reason is simply my practice of a character defect. Steps Six and Seven have helped me so much and yet, a character defect that I had not, until now, been ready to have removed, procrastination, kept hitting me in the behind over and over. I am entirely ready to have this removed. So on my knees I can go and trust that God *can* and *will* remove my defects so that I can better serve my fellow human beings.

God knows I love to read so he had me placed on the Literature Committee. I realize so much growth when I take time to internalize and work the readings into my life. I have informed my area that we will be completing inventories of all our literature in the years to come.

I am going to get through this talk without tears of “poor me” and with a sigh of relief and gratitude because I believe God smiles when he sees his guidance in action. I have taken action which a few short years ago seemed impossible. The experience of serving Al-Anon as a delegate has changed my life and my horizons have widened and deepened. I am forever grateful that the effects of alcoholism led Bill and Lois to look for a recovery program for themselves and others.

Donna V., Iowa

Taking my Fourth Step inventories were, to me, much like mining excavations. Those journeys were a descent to treacherous, deep shafts filled with the darkness of my secrets, the disease of my denial, and the dread that I might find even more negative, frightening things about myself. I doubted that I would find anything of value. Al-Anon members told me that taking my inventory was essential to my recovery. They assured me I would experience growth and progress; that I would find contentment and serenity. I

only wanted to feel better.

I began my dig with the only tools necessary—paper, pen, and a Higher Power. I seemed to have no trouble at all dredging up all my character defects. “Don't forget to list assets,” I was told. When I did think of anything positive, I immediately felt disgusted with myself, wondering if I possessed any humility at all. I came to the realization that the very things I would rather not examine were probably the ones that were keeping me from growing into the kind of person I wanted to be.

Determination to get this thing over with and thinking I fully understood what an inventory was turned out to be quite unique—unique because it was an inventory based on the alcoholic's behavior—one more time. That was just a few weeks into the program and it read: I did this because he did that! It took a patient, loving sponsor who suggested that second sentences were keeping me sidetracked. Later inventories were mining expeditions for what was mine only—what belonged to me.

The first treasure I found when completing every one of my inventories, fearsome as they were, was relief. Next, little gems of wisdom, realization, and ownership came to me. Those bitter emotions of anger and rage from being hurt were my responsibilities now. Now I knew what to eliminate. When I saw the truth about my resentments, I didn't have them anymore.

Once a newcomer asked me how I handled all the realizations that came out in an inventory—I don't. I doubt that I could, or I would find myself with nothing but a list. I think all I have to do is face them and the Higher Power handles them. And that includes the precious wealth of positives we find in the mining process.

What came from this search was the knowledge that I possess courage, worth, and love. Only then was I able to comfort, support, and accept others... and wasn't that what Al-Anon had been saying? It had to begin with me. Because of these inventories, I have a heart overflowing with gratitude.

These jewels of gratitude were lifted to the surface by the powerful Steps of Al-Anon that enfold, guide, protect, and sustain us all, and the loving people that have touched my life. Al-Anon people never know when and how they leave such lasting impressions!

Doug J., Nevada

As I contemplated our theme, the word “searching” kept jumping out at me. From my very first Al-Anon meeting, I found myself searching for ways to feel better about myself and the things going on around me. I found comfort in the meetings and in working the Twelve Steps. When I got to Step Four, I stopped. I could not understand why looking at myself was necessary for me.

Nevertheless, there was that word, “searching.” I knew I was looking for a way to feel better about myself. I had found peace in working the first three Steps and my sponsor encouraged me to go on. By taking the Fourth Step, I might start to find a balance in my life. Searching included research. Looking back at actions and feelings to learn from past mistakes. Doing this might lead to a path of growth and serenity. I may find ways to make changes in my own behaviors and attitudes by taking an honest look at myself.

Doing a personal inventory has helped me examine the problems in my life that just would not go away. Whether that be as father, husband, or a foreman on the job, an honest inventory seemed to open new doors and help find solutions to the problems.

At the beginning of my term as delegate, and looking ahead at some of the goals I had for the area, I became overwhelmed with the tasks ahead. I felt like I did when I came upon the Fourth Step for the first time—unworthy and full of fear. How could a personal

inventory help me to do the area's work? I shared my feelings with my service sponsor and she helped me through a tearful, verbal inventory. And as I had discovered with other personal inventories, it showed me a new path to walk through the fears as a trusted servant and take the next step in front of me.

At my first area world service committee meeting as delegate, there were many problems facing the area that needed solutions. It was clear that an area inventory was in order. We are a large area with a small population and many miles between districts. Communication was our biggest problem. As a committee, we discussed the need for a mid-year area world service committee meeting and brought it before the GR body at assembly. They unanimously approved it and we have since found that communication in the area has greatly improved.

Through this process I have experienced not only progress and growth in our area, but my own personal growth as well. My hope is that this Conference continues on with the structure-wide inventory and uses that information to search for progress and growth in carrying the message to others.

Jan R., Arkansas

The heritage of two alcoholic parents set the stage for a pattern of living acquired in childhood which I repeated over and over until I came through the doors of Al-Anon in 1973. Even though I married two men who are alcoholic and raised five children, two of whom are alcoholic, I did not come here because I wanted or needed what you had. I came because I wanted the acceptance and approval of others.

When I came to you, I had no identity of my own nor was I capable of self-honesty. The God of my understanding would move mountains for you, but not for me. I was given a sponsor who loved me unconditionally and gently guided me through the process of the Steps, enabling me to find a loving God who moves mountains for me today. This spiritual journey has been, and continues to be, more exciting than I could ever imagine.

Applying our three legacies to my personal life, serving as a greeter, coffee maker, sponsor, GR, DR, area secretary, chairman and now delegate, has been part of a journey which has given me the self-honesty and identity I didn't have when I came here. I have progressed and grown by keeping the focus on myself, accepting others, and completing the opportunities I've had to serve God, the Al-Anon fellowship, my neighbors, and my community to the best of my ability.

Our Conference theme has given us the opportunity to examine what our primary purpose is, what has worked in the past, and what is no longer useful in fulfilling that purpose today. It is essential for our progress and growth to keep the focus on our individual responsibility towards fulfilling that purpose.

I came to my first Conference with an attitude of distrust for the World Service Office and the Conference process as a whole. I was unable to manifest the unity and harmony necessary to progress personally or as a trusted servant. The grace of God, the help and accessibility of WSO staff and trustees, and the willingness of other delegates to share and participate have enlightened me. I have had another spiritual awakening as the result of these steps. As one part of the whole, I have been given the opportunity to carry a message of unity and harmony back to my area with the hope of guaranteeing the survival of Al-Anon and Alateen for those still suffering from the devastating affects of alcoholism. I have progressed and grown on my spiritual journey.

Joan V., Connecticut

Before Al-Anon, I lived under the illusion that progress and growth would happen on their own without any help from me. Today I realize that I am on a journey filled with obstacles, challenges, and joy, with my Higher Power as navigator. Every day can be filled with those wonderful learning experiences and adventures, and a change in my attitude will lend to growth.

I began my service as our area delegate with the optimism that this would be a great experience. Everyone would love each other, there would be no gossip or criticism, and many things would be accomplished.

When I returned from my first Conference, the disease of alcoholism came crashing back into my life with a frightening intensity. I was filled with fear and despair. I thought, *this can't be happening, not now*. By using the tools of the program, I was able to pray for our son and to turn him over to the care of my Higher Power. I did this every day and I found peace.

As our area became a place of turmoil and dissension, I found a return of the feelings I had with alcoholism. Fear knocked, faith answered, no one was there. All plans were put on hold. In our program, I had heard that I could have a good life whether the alcoholic was still drinking or not. I went back to saying the Serenity Prayer dozens of times a day. The *Service Manual* and the sections on the Concepts of Service became daily reading. The ways of the world do not work in Al-Anon; our program DOES work in the world. Early in Al-Anon an old timer told me, "Dearie, it will get better next week. Let go and be willing." All of the things that have happened are part of the plan for me.

Today I need not take the opinions of others as a measurement of myself. I can speak, think, or remain silent. I do not have to react. I don't have to take things personally. My recovery is important. Studying the Concepts of Service and Traditions and having workshops at assemblies gave me help. I can feel confident as to how I am doing in service, and encourage myself and other trusted servants to do the best for today. The unconditional love of the program has been the greatest gift and learning to accept how things are—Just for Today.

Fear of new things and recollections of the past can keep me from progress and growth. Our fellowship is moving toward the 21st century with new ways of carrying the message. Let us not have fear of progress. It is the same program that Lois W. and the pioneers had. If I am open and willing, the day will have many gifts for me—more than I could have ever imagined.

Juanita C. Illinois (S)

What an experience these last 2 1/2 years have been. If anyone would have told me 20 years ago, when I came into the Al-Anon fellowship, that one day I would be attending the WSC as a delegate from Illinois (South), and standing before you like this, I would have told them they were crazy.

Our theme "Inventory—Searching for Progress and Growth" shows me just how much I have grown through this program. I could not go to my first meeting till I could get someone to go with me. I did not have the courage to come through these doors by myself. I had trouble talking to anyone, I could not face you and look you eye to eye.

I thought my self-esteem was GREAT but through doing the Steps and working on my Fourth Step inventory, I found out I felt inferior to many. I thought I was as GOOD as you, but also felt, on the outside, really not belonging. I attended many assembly meetings before I started being comfortable around you. You didn't shut me

out, I shut myself out.

I finally started opening up when I volunteered to be the Convention Liaison for our area. I had attended many conferences and conventions and thought, "I can do that." This would give me a chance to go different places, and I like to go. I have many, many friends in the program just through working on conventions.

We just finished the North Central Regional Delegates Meeting which was hosted by my area. When I came into the program I never would have been able to take on the responsibility of meeting with hotel personnel, planning menus, and helping with a program that would suit everyone. There you see, I'm also trying to be a people pleaser, but I wanted you to like me.

Thinking back to my first inventory, I was told for every negative thing I put down, I also had to list a positive one. I started with the positive ones first—I really thought I was OK. I was a kind, considerate person (except to my alcoholic), who would do anything for you but I also found out I was a very self-centered person. In the Lord's Prayer the part that says "thy will be done" really hit me between the eyes. For so many years I thought it was "my will be done." You see, what Juanita wanted, Juanita usually got one way or another. I was a very, very conniving person. I have learned to be more patient, more trust-worthy and have more compassion for my fellow man. I'm still working on the resentments that pop up every now and then but I'm a lot better than I was. I guess you can call that progress.

You know, I think it's time to do another inventory. I know I have some growing to do.

Judy D., Wyoming

When I arrived at Al-Anon's door, I was an 84 pound, twisted, bent and broken human spirit, afraid of my own shadow. My group and the person who became my sponsor scooped me up and gave me the kindest of gifts—unconditional acceptance. With a network of shared experience, strength, and hope to support me, I developed an awareness of a Higher Power that I had but to acknowledge and let in.

You nudged me into sharing those secrets that had kept me a victim. I, who had been literally wasting away, not only wanted to live but was grateful to be alive. Thus began my gratitude list and today being alive is at the top of that list. I volunteered for service work which gave me a sense of value and pride, and with it came progress. I slowly began to bloom like a flower, sometimes talk like a jaybird, and learned to laugh from my soul.

As my journey advanced with you as my teacher of the legacies, to my surprise, I gained passage from group to district to area officer. It was in serving at the area level that you instructed me to get intimately familiar with the Twelve Concepts of Service. With that, you gave me the opportunity to find the courage to speak up when it seemed appropriate and to keep quiet when I was being unreasonably judgmental. You taught me to trust the process, to get out of God's way, and you applauded me when I did. By example you demonstrated to me that I best served by being responsible for myself, by truly listening to another's point of view, and by giving voice to the minority—even when that minority voice was my own. When I lost confidence, you were there to remind me of progress not perfection and helped me to again focus on Al-Anon principles. Amidst this, I became aware of my Higher Power regularly sitting on my shoulder.

Yes, at times it has been painful to stand by, giving support yet allowing others to fumble and struggle at their own pace. And then again, it's quite wonderful to see how much my area has grown

because its individuals have had to struggle—my own growth a part of that struggle, assisted by your reminding me that although we are equal partners in this fellowship, we grow individually. That participation, balance, and unconditional acceptance are keys to progress—and absolute faith is mandatory.

My mended soul and spiritual progress are the result of service and inventory, both God-sent gifts. To give back a bit of what I have been given by all of you, my area, and this incredible program of love, is my aim for continued growth and progress.

Loretta F., South Dakota

Before Al-Anon, most of the searching I did was for relationships. One example immediately comes to mind. I searched for and found my first husband. His name was Dick Tracy. After he was killed, I searched for and found my next husband. His name was Joe Friday. Now, I am happy to report that with the help of Al-Anon, sponsorship and my Higher Power, I am not out there searching for progress and growth in a man called Clark Kent.

Today I laugh a little about the crazy way I lived and about the relationships in my life. Today I have choices and, if something's out of balance in my life, I know one of the first things I can do is take an inventory. Every time I have done that, I have grown. My Higher Power always has a lesson for me to learn and is always there for me when I need to take action.

I have learned so much about myself over the past two years as a delegate. It has been a wonderful experience that I'll always treasure. Service work has been an important part of my progress and growth in Al-Anon. I believe it is the cornerstone of my continued growth in this program. I was introduced to service work first as group representative, then as district representative, and now as area delegate. Although prior service experience has helped me as delegate, many times these past two years I have felt inadequate and unworthy. Then I am reminded that I only have to do my best and then give it to God to do the rest.

One of the most challenging but rewarding projects I worked on as delegate was helping to edit the new book *Paths to Recovery*. At the minute I got the manuscript I was undergoing many medical problems. In fact, I had been told I needed immediate heart surgery. I was overwhelmed at all the changes I was going through but once more my Higher power helped me through. I asked for and received help from many of my Al-Anon friends and they rallied around me.

Today we are using the new book in a local Step meeting and as a result many Al-Anons, including myself, have recommitted themselves to working the Steps, Traditions and Concepts.

I am looking forward to being a part of the inventory we are planning here at the World Service Conference. I believe that with all of us trusted servants working together with open minds, patience, and tolerance, we can find areas to be improved on and make recommendations accordingly.

If we all do the footwork together and invite out Higher Power to do the rest, Al-Anon will continue to grow...Let it Begin with Me.

Lucy A., Ontario (N)

Once upon a time, a short while ago, I didn't know what type of person I was. Now I understand why. I had to be very gentle with me in order to make sense of this program. So I began slowly, very slowly, to study and practice the Steps. Bit by bit I started to change but I couldn't see where any progress was taking place in my life. Then someone suggested it was time for a personal inventory. As a result

of this inventory, I became aware of my good qualities and most of my defects of character. I discovered the person I really was, with my weaknesses and strengths, and came to realize I wasn't so bad after all.

In order to progress and grow into the person I wanted to be, I needed to draw from my strengths to help me work through the shortcomings that always seemed to block my way. These shortcomings constantly haunted me and I had to battle with them, it seems, at every turn of my growth. As GR, I felt our group was not progressing as I thought it should so a decision was made to take an inventory. This enlightened us as to our potential as a group and where we could start to improve our situation. The process took a long time as I continually struggled to work through the barriers of my shortcomings. Now when I feel things could be different or that I'm not getting anywhere, it's a signal—inventory is needed.

I remember when I was thinking of retiring. Many, many hours were spent on analyzing the pros and cons to this so called "life of leisure." I didn't know it then but, I realize today, I was taking inventory so that I could continue to grow and progress as a person even though I was retiring from the work field.

Searching for progress and growth by way of an inventory is a thought I need to keep foremost in my mind. It's a process I can use in every aspect of my life to reach peace and serenity.

Accepting to serve the fellowship in a delegate's capacity is progress for me. The growth I experienced in accomplishing this task far surpasses what I ever imagined and as I continue my journey in the Al-Anon program, I can see clearly now, I'm not finished with me yet.

Marie D., Maine

"Dear Lord, give me a faith I can live by, a purpose I can live for, and a self I can live with." When I came into the Al-Anon program, my life was unmanageable. I had just broken up with a boyfriend, my mother had been in treatment for alcoholism and had been sober for a very short time, and I didn't know I could have my own life. I was attending "aftercare" with a friend who had just gone through a treatment program for alcoholism and she thought I had it "together" so she asked me to be her concerned person. I feel like I came into Al-Anon's back door because I was supporting others—and hadn't yet learned how to support myself.

Growing up in an alcoholic home has taught me many things: how not to get my needs met, how to stay in the background, and how to be a victim. At one of my aftercare sessions a group member suggested maybe I needed to try Al-Anon. I came through the halls crying and believing that no one would understand. No one could possibly know what I had lived through and had experienced.

I think about our theme this year. I think about myself and the changes that have happened in my life. I think about the wonderful people I have met in Al-Anon that have taught me a faith to live by—believe that I believe, Marie. That's how it begins. I think about the people that have said to me, "What can you do about it right now? Turn it over to a Higher Power, He will not give you more than you can handle," and, "Hold on to that knot."

I think about my purpose in this life. My purpose foremost is to be self-caring. It is about being honest and it is about sharing what works. My purpose is not to tell you how to do it. My purpose is to live my life to the best of my best ability. It is about using the Twelve Steps of Al-Anon in a positive, meaningful way—the first three Steps on a daily basis; Step Four to Step Ten, taking my inventory and making amends; Steps Eleven and Twelve, sharing my Al-Anon recovery with others.

I almost lost my sponsor a few weeks ago. With modern medicine, her heart is mending today. I see her wonderful smile. I finally saw my Higher Power, for the first time, in her home through a time of despair, which gave me hope. That is the self I can live with. The self that is becoming comfortable with herself. The self that believes in herself. The self that can stand alone. That is what Al-Anon has taught me.

No matter what, all I have to do is show up. All I have to do is listen. All I have to do is be honest. All I have to do is be.

Marg S., Nebraska

When I began my term as delegate, I knew the day would come when I would have to give a three minute talk. I also knew, traditionally, that the talks are based on the Conference theme and when I knew what the theme was going to be I thought to myself, *Geez, this will really be difficult. How can I possibly share on this?* Then I thought, *This is really what I have been doing all along since I started Al-Anon.* Searching for progress and growth—and the way I have done this is by taking inventory.

Before I came to Al-Anon I did inventories, although I did not term them as such. I looked at what I did and I looked at what others did, but I was not looking for progress and growth—I was judging, and no one, not even myself, was going to win.

Like you, I hit bottom and walked through the doors of Al-Anon. At first, when I heard about inventories I was scared. I really did not want to look at myself and what I had done. No one had been there. No one would understand or like me. Most of all, I did not like me and was not sure I ever would.

First, you gave me a Higher Power that I could use and who would be with me all the time. You told me an inventory was important to find my good qualities and that the past was over. I had done the best I could do with what I had. So I began my journey. I am not sure that I was aware I was doing this thing called inventory but I began, little by little, searching and looking for progress. Thank God, I have had you along the way to show me the progress because, you see, I don't always see it.

I have used inventory in all areas of my life. I have talked with my Higher Power, my sponsor and others, and reasoned things out. I can still be scared but it is not an overwhelming fear because I am not afraid today to search for progress and growth.

Our groups, districts, and areas have done or are doing inventories. I believe this necessary for us. This tool gives us the courage to go forward, just as it does in our personal journeys.

As we proceed through these days of Conference and take our inventory in this changing world of Al-Anon, I'm confident that our Higher Power will be with us. I am also confident that, like me and others before me, the World Service Office, Conference, and Al-Anon Family Groups will continue to search for progress and growth.

Marjorie L., New Hampshire

In giving thought to this topic, I had to ask what it meant to my life. As always and in all things, the answer comes through the teacher that appears when I am ready to listen. What I heard was, "You can't control the forces so adjust your energy and attitude, let the changes begin with you."

My recovery journey has always been a great ride and the bus has had many passengers with lessons and opportunities for my progress and growth. A loving sponsor patiently guided me through the Steps

of recovery and shared her experience with me as I sorted out what was useful to keep in my life and the defects that held me prisoner.

My potential was visible to my home group before it became obvious to me and I began to accept the challenge of each new position when asked to serve. Miracles started to happen. I felt good as I helped carry the message of Al-Anon to other members, sharing what had been so willingly shared with me.

When I was ready, another teacher appeared. I was elected group representative and now I could be a link to a larger family of recovery. I was entrusted to broaden my thinking beyond my own agenda and realize the common welfare of the fellowship of Al-Anon. The Power greater than myself was healing what had been so badly damaged while I lived each moment, one at a time.

The world opened up and invited me to serve as district representative. I experienced more growth pains as I learned about principles above personalities and how we are all unique with a similar goal: our search for serenity.

How endless the road to progress and growth is and how vast the horizon for serving appears. Yet, with the principles of our fellowship everything is manageable, one job at a time. When life was at a nicer, more comfortable place along came another teacher. I was nominated to serve as area delegate. I accepted and that risk has taken me on the greatest ride of my life.

Inventory has revealed a great and capable person who has always searched for a place to be all that I can be to myself, to my family, and to the world that I live in.

Mary Paula H., Missouri

I remember how Step Four and the term 'inventory' frightened me when I first came into the fellowship. I was sure that if everyone knew my defects they wouldn't like me and that if I admitted and eliminated them, I would no longer exist. The idea of an inventory frightened me so badly, I actually dropped out and went back into my misery. Fortunately for me, my Higher Power sent me the means to bring me back into the program, and gave me the motivation to look at myself and do something about my defects.

As I continued to come to the program, the term 'inventory' took on a different perspective. We were experiencing some problems in my home group so we took a group inventory. This was the first time I really saw how this program works at the group level. We identified the problem and our individual roles in the problem. We looked at it in light of the Traditions and determined what we, as individuals, could do to correct the situation.

As I continued to get involved in service, I saw many examples of inventories. We looked at what was happening and how it was affecting the group, the district, the area, and now the World Service Office. Each time I participated in such an inventory, I found out a little more about myself, my role and responsibility in the situation. Sometimes it was a defect I had overlooked; other times it was an asset that was replacing a defect, and unfortunately, sometimes it was a slip into old patterns.

The funniest thing was that I began to see myself as part of something bigger—bigger than me, bigger than my home group, bigger than my area. And best of all, I was *part of not apart from*, this something. I began to see that I belonged. I could see how I had changed and how with every little change, my life had improved.

I remember hearing someone say this is a program of progress not perfection. I may never be perfect but I can continue to grow and progress. And as each of us grows and progresses so does Al-Anon/Alateen. "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity."

Pamela H., New York (S)

One night I greeted a newcomer and was surprised to learn that we knew each other in that "other life." My friend, who is at least 20 years my junior, remembered me as the "crazy lady" who was constantly talking to herself and everyone around her. As a leader of her Junior Girl Scout troop I demanded respect, progress, and perfection in all my charges. As I stood there with my mouth open, she said, "I earned more badges with you than any other leader."

I brought those feelings of anger, resentment, perfectionism, and inflexibility into the rooms of Al-Anon and listened while you spoke of a new plan of life called the Twelve Steps to recovery. I followed directions and was amazed to find my life changing for the better. A wise lady opened the door to service and asked me to step through. In those new positions, I was trusted to carry the voice of my group to the district and area, and later be responsible for the special cargo of Al-Anon called Alateens.

Complacency became my next companion. Although I attended meetings and was an Alateen sponsor, I didn't feel satisfied. Well, once again my Higher Power was listening and sent my answer down in a bolt of lightning.

In October 1996, I was elected the new delegate of New York (South). I felt so proud to be entrusted with this huge responsibility and I eagerly anticipated the challenge.

My first year as delegate was not an easy one. I was carrying the ghosts of past delegates on my shoulders and I needed to set them down. I even heard someone say, "New York (South) has a school for delegates."

That insult turned into a compliment when I realized that "being prepared" was a good quality. So, my fear of rejection overcame the fear that I would be alone for the next three years and I asked you to accept me as I am. You did and last year I felt privileged to walk the beach with several of my new friends.

My friend is now a sponsee and she still hears my voice but in a warmer, gentler way. I know I am powerless over others and can only lead by example. Like Clark Kent, I have two lives and I am comfortable in both. By day I am a mild-mannered teacher's aide and by night a delegate serving my area to the best of my ability.

Pat D., Louisiana

What a great privilege and honor you have given me. The privilege to serve the very program that has given me much more than I can ever give back as hard as I try. The honor to meet and address all of the delegates from far and near, members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Director, the WSO officers, staff workers and volunteers.

Inventory has played a major part in my recovery and most of all, in my service work. I am a firm believer in having groups do a regular inventory on how better to serve people who are suffering in isolation. As I have said for so long; always having Al-Anon materials in schools, public libraries, doctors' offices, and getting information to professionals; having district representatives to constantly reach groups with all the information received through world service as we continue to grow; the assembly and coordinators making sure we are progressing on a positive and constructive path so that we can better serve Al-Anon as a whole. This year we are undertaking a Conference inventory. WOW! I do feel at home.

With this year before us we find ourselves taking inventory about where we have been and how far we have come in the past. As the delegate from Louisiana, I have been reflecting on the WSO and the Louisiana Assembly's activities. Both have made a lot of progress

and we're still looking forward to more. Sometimes progress and its associated changes are uncomfortable but sometimes they are necessary. The WSO and my assembly believe that the changes made and that we continue to make are just that—necessary.

Thank you again from this Southern gal with a big heart. My three years as delegate have given me the greatest education at a bargain price.

Valerie B., Alaska

I remember coming to my first WSC feeling a little sorry for myself. My area did not have any DRs or area coordinators. We were also having difficulty with apathy in members regarding all levels of service. However, after leaving that first WSC, rather than looking at my cup as half empty, I looked at it as half full. True, Alaska didn't have any DRs or area coordinators, but we did have area officers. We have three intergroups in our large state and some members were involved in service and they were making a difference. I also felt personally responsible for the decline in the number of people involved in service. After some searching I realized, if I was doing the best I could, our Higher Power was the one in charge. What a relief, I was only responsible for my part.

Through service I have had so many blessings. My self-esteem greatly improved. I have continued to grow and learn from the gals I sponsor, and from my sponsor. I know I don't have to be perfect. My sponsor told me that what other people think of me is none of my business. This has helped me a lot. I still want people to like me. However, I know if I do what is best for me without hurting others intentionally, it will be the best thing for everyone involved.

When I was new in Al-Anon, every night when I would look back on my day. I would say, "I shouldn't have yelled at my children." I could not see any progress. My sponsor said, "Perhaps you waited another minute more than usual before you yelled or perhaps you yelled an octave lower than usual." Looking at it that way, I did start to see progress and that stopped being an issue every night. I also realized I was doing the best I knew how to do and I should quit beating myself up over things I said and did. I remember telling my sponsor word for word how I handled situations. I wanted her to tell me I had done well. She finally told me, "Whatever you did or said was OK, you did the best you knew how to do." She loved me unconditionally and I am forever grateful.

I can not begin to tell you all the ways I have grown and made progress. I am grateful that I can see progress and I know I don't have to be perfect. I have learned to admit when I am wrong and ask for help when I need it. I know now I would rather have peace than be right! I hope I can continue to make a positive impact in other members' lives.

1998 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

MOTION #1 (97 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions)—CARRIED

That the following persons be seated at the 1998 WSC with voice but no vote:

Richard Keilly, Director of Business Services, Non-Al-Anon Member

John B., Chairperson, Executive Committee for Real Property Management, Al-Anon Member

Hilda Maria B., Representative from Mexico, Al-Anon Member

Carole P., NPIC Office Manager, Sunday, April 19 and Monday, April 20, Al-Anon Member

Patrick Q., WSO Forum Coordinator, Wednesday, April 22 and Thursday, April 23, Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2 (Unanimous)—CARRIED

That the Conference use a two-thirds majority for all Conference decisions.

MOTION #3 (Unanimous)—CARRIED

That Conference use closed ballots for making decisions.

MOTION #4 (94 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions)—CARRIED

To approve the 1997 Annual Report as amended.

MOTION #5 (95 Yes, 1 No, 0 Abstentions)—CARRIED

To approve the 1997 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #6 (92 Yes, 2 No, 1 Void)—CARRIED

To approve the 1998 Budget Committee Report.

MOTION #7 (89 Yes, 1 No, 1 Void)—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 119, *1995/1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Handbook section, page 113, "Composition of the Conference" as follows:

The World Service Conference (WSC) is composed of state, provincial, and territorial delegates from the U.S. and Canada - one delegate from each assembly area, the members of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, standing committee chairpersons, and the Al-Anon WSO administrative staff. At the 1985 WSC it was voted to make the Conference member ratio two-thirds elected delegates to one-third staff and volunteers.

MOTION #8 (91 Yes, 2 No, 1 Void)—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 119, *1995/1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Handbook section, page 115, "How the Conference is Financed" as follows:

The cost of the Conference, as well as that of other worldwide Al-Anon services, is covered by the WSO General Fund. It is the responsibility of the WSO to ask all members to respond generously to the three appeals sent annually (in March, July and November) for support of these services. All members reap the benefits of the Conference.

MOTION #9 (88 Yes, 5 No)—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 119, *1995/1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Handbook section, "Finances" as follows:

The DR's expenses to attend assemblies and area world service committee meetings are shared by the groups within the district. When the DR is also a GR, the assembly expenses are normally paid by the group he represents. Money for this purpose may also be

raised by special events such as round-robins, district workshops, potluck suppers, rummage sales, and other cooperative ventures.

MOTION #10 (86 Yes, 8 No)—CARRIED

Based on the unanimous recommendation of the Public Outreach Committee and Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee, to grant conceptual approval be given for the development of a resource booklet for professionals.

MOTION #11 (59 Yes, 29 No, 4 Abstentions, 2 Void)—NOT CARRIED

To reprint the first edition of *Al-Anon Family Groups* with references to indicate changes that have occurred since the first printing.

MOTION #12 (Referred to Group Services Committee -See Motion #17)

That the 1998 WSC give conceptual approval to develop a guideline or "piece*" on the aspects of service sponsorship. (*Piece: a card like "Detachment" or a bookmark)

MOTION #13 (92 Yes, 1 No, 2 Void)—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 61, *1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Policy Digest section "Membership and Groups" as follows:

Alateens are members of the Al-Anon fellowship. Where there is no Alateen meeting available young people seeking help are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings. As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. Family members below teen years may not be ready for the Alateen program. Such children may have to depend on others to choose what they learn. This could lead to the development of a teaching program. "Teaching" is not compatible with the Al-Anon principle of sharing. There are however, younger children who can benefit from the Alateen program which requires the ability to participate in a shared learning experience.

It is within the autonomy of each Alateen group to lower the age limit or divide into groups according to age. Whatever the decision, all such groups will be registered as "Alateen" at the World Service Office.

Members beyond the teen years are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings.

MOTION #14 (90 Yes, 4 No)—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 66, *1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Policy Digest section "Conventions." as follows:

Al-Anon/Alateen Area-wide Conventions, Rallies, Reunions, Roundups (or Any Other Large Get-togethers)

...The chairperson or another convention committee liaison member has a voice and may have a vote on the area world service committee.

MOTION #15 (92 Yes, 1 No, 1 Void)—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 80, *1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Policy Digest section "The Forum" as follows:

Sharings received for *The Forum* are reviewed for their fidelity to the Al-Anon program and principles by a volunteer committee and *The Forum* staff. Time sensitive articles, such as editorials, interviews, "Inside Al-Anon." etc., may be reviewed by *The Forum* staff.

MOTION #16 (78 Yes, 14 No, 2 Void)—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 69, 1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, Policy Digest section. "Finances" 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

Quarterly 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. In 1998, the World Service Conference voted to increase the appeal frequency to quarterly (February, May, August, November). Since it is not possible to maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon, the appeal letters are mailed to the groups' record of address. It is requested that the letter be read at three consecutive 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 a dollar a year for each years' membership. Members of the area assembly stimulate interest in this plan.

Memorial Contributions

Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the World Service Office in memory of anyone who is deceased. (see page 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 page 66, "Distribution of Proceeds")

AA Conferences/Conventions

Contributions received from AA conferences/conventions that are offered to Al-Anon as acknowledgment of its participation in these functions may be accepted by the World Service Office 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 office.

MOTION # 17 (77 Yes, 12 No, 1 Abstention, 1 Void)—CARRIED

To refer Motion #12 to the Group Services Committee.

MOTION #18 (86 Yes, 9 No)—CARRIED

Upon depletion of current stock, the World Service Conference gives the World Service Office conceptual approval to return to the use of the original text of *Al-Anon Family Groups* (with appropriate footnote and annotations) when reprinting *Al-Anon Family Groups*, if financially feasible.

ASK-IT-BASKET

(all references to the "Service Manual" are to the 1995/1996 edition)

Administration

- Q.** When will the WSO address the need to be able to communicate electronically with GRs, DRs, and areas? (i.e. providing e-mail or files other than paper?) This question particularly references group records.
- A.** *An ongoing process is in place to communicate electronically with our members. It is expected to begin with Conference members following the 1998 WSC and then, in stages with the rest of the membership. A separate e-mail address is being established for group record changes that is targeted for later this year.*
- Q.** Internet web site—When will the WSO begin allowing area web sites to use excerpts from our CAL in addition to the current listings?
- A.** *There is an Internet Ad Hoc Committee of the Board investigating legal aspects of offering excerpts of Conference Approved Literature that would safeguard the copyrights we hold for the fellowship as a whole. Current guidelines only permit members in electronic meetings to use approved listed service CAL. The Public Outreach Department has identified the tools it believes most appropriate for newcomers. These items are available on the current listing.*
- Q.** What can we do to clear up conflict between the WSO web page and the web page created by an Al-Anon member?
- A.** *Members can contact the WSO when they see any violations to the WSO web page; they can also contact the individual who they believe is violating Al-Anon's copyright.*

Board of Trustees

- Q.** (Canada) Why are we left with only two trustees for the next two years? Is this a common practice in the USA or just a one-time thing?
- A.** *One of the three regional trustees from Canada resigned and the Board of Trustees has decided not to fill the vacancy at this time but rather to have the other two regional trustees from Canada serve the region temporarily.*

Budget

- Q.** Why is the price for *Paths to Recovery* a lot more than *How Al-Anon Works*?
- A.** *How Al-Anon Works is considered Al-Anon's "basic book" and the Board of Trustees priced it below the usual necessary mark-up in order to put it into the hands of as many members as possible.*

Business Services

- Q.** In our district, there are several members who purchased the *Courage to Change* daily reader from the original printing, which have been notorious for falling apart. They are going through the process of calling the WSO for verification of obtaining a new book; understanding that the WSO does not want these books returned to them. Since these books were purchased in "good faith," why can't we get them replaced in "good faith" —

avoiding the hassle of having to make the phone call and receive verification?

- A.** *Courage to Change was first published in 1992. There were difficulties with the binding of the original printing and many books were replaced. Articles were written in WSO publications advising members that the WSO would replace defective books. After six years, any book, particularly a daily reader, undergoes a great deal of wear and tear. Also, the WSO no longer has any recourse in contacting the printer.*
- Q.** LDC is having problems with WSO orders. (2 shipments for 1 payment).
- A.** *When the WSO computer system was installed in 1996, orders were processed in the accounting department and printed in the shipping department. When the accounting department learned that duplicate copies of orders were printed in the shipping department, systems were instituted to avoid a reoccurrence. They include having the orders printed in the accounting department and then checked against a daily register. We are grateful that Al-Anon is an "honest program" and our members have alerted the WSO about this problem.*
- Q.** Why does WSO issue additional credit to past due unpaid literature accounts? I thought last year we were told no more credit?
- A.** *Credit is not extended to past due accounts with the exception of certain literature distribution centers that establish and maintain payments as agreed.*

- Q.** I would like to know why it takes such a long time for a check to go through our account? We have sent a check for *The Forum* in October and it has not shown in our account yet. We are now in February.
- A.** *Checks are deposited daily. If your check has not cleared the bank after several months, you can assume it has not been received by the WSO.*
- Q.** If we ordered *The Forum* subscription for someone else and it is coming back to the WSO because of an incorrect address, does the WSO have a way to track back to the giver of the "gift" to let them know to get corrected or decide to do something different?
- A.** *No, it is not possible. The WSO relies upon the individual receiving a Forum subscription to advise the WSO of a change of address. If someone gives a gift subscription and is aware that the recipient has moved, the individual can let the WSO know the new address or have the recipient contact us. In the meantime, when the issue is returned and there is no forwarding address, the subscription is placed into suspended mail.*

Fellowship Communication

- Q.** Can we/are we pursuing distribution to book stores? Is this promotion?
- A.** *The WSO sends a mailing to book stores annually to inform them about new and existing books. In addition, Al-Anon CAL is periodically listed in publications distributed to book stores. This is not promotion, it is a form of attraction to let the public learn about our fellowship.*

Q. Will WSO sell books on tapes?

A. A survey is in process to determine the needs for CAL on tapes. There is no plan currently to record and sell Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature on tapes. Several pamphlets have been recorded previously; the distribution and sales have been minimal and any future production would need to be accomplished in such small quantities that the resulting cost could be prohibitive.

Q. How do all the other companies, including bookstores, get our books and books on tape?

A. See the answers to questions above. Books on tape are available through agencies who serve the visually impaired that have obtained permission from the WSO to record these items. We do not know of any retail stores that have our books on tape.

Q. Has the WSO considered our Al-Anon hard cover books on cassette or CD? (i.e. ODAT, *Courage to Change*, *Paths to Recovery*, *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions*, *How Al-Anon Works*, etc.)

A. See the answer to question above.

Q. How did the "blended stories" get started and when? What books have "blended stories?" What was the first book or pamphlet without blended stories?"

A. Since the Conference approval process began, the Literature Committee has been aware that stories were blended in many works based on the rationale that more member sharings were included. Text sections of most of our literature contain the combined experiences of many members. When *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* was produced, it came to light that a few stories in the section labeled "Personal Stories" were blended and the Board of Trustees worked with the Literature Committee to discontinue this practice. All works subsequently produced, such as *Paths to Recovery* and *Courage To Be Me*, do not contain blended personal sharings.

Q. Have you considered literature targeted to the parents of alcoholics?

A. The pamphlet *To the Mother and Father of the Alcoholic (P-16)* is directed to parents. In addition, almost every book contains stories sharing the experiences of parents.

Q. By publishing literature addressed to particular groups of people (gays, adult children, senior citizens), are we violating the principle of Al-Anon unity?

A. Unity is maintained when the Literature Committee publishes literature that is faithful to the Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service. While the Al-Anon message is a unified one, the WSC has voted at times to produce literature to help specific individuals identify with that message.

Q. Why are we fragmenting our fellowship by producing so many pieces of specialized literature? The unity of Al-Anon is our common problem—we have all been affected by someone else's drinking. The WSO is struggling financially, the literature sales are down and the solution so far is to discontinue books and pamphlets, raise prices and produce new pieces. Perhaps, we already

have too much! There is a simple solution. *The Forum* is our 'voice.' Dedicate a section each month to articles submitted on special topics, such as spirituality, senior citizens, etc. Why don't we utilize the 'voice' we already have? It would save money and perhaps our members will actually read the CAL material we already have. Let's keep it simple. Let's go back to Step One. We are making our WSO unmanageable because we are trying to be all things to all people!

A. Before a piece of literature becomes CAL, it requires a motion approved by the WSC. In response to requests for additional specialized literature discussed at its meeting during the 1998 WSC, the Literature Committee suggested that articles written by these members be published in *The Forum*. Also, the committee is currently engaged in an inventory of all existing CAL.

Q. Why was *Lois' Story* discontinued? I heard it was because her story appears in our books, but newcomers do not buy books and we need to keep our founders in the forefront.

A. The new pamphlet *Al-Anon's Co-Founders: The Extraordinary Work of Two Ordinary Women (P-87)*, will keep both *Lois* and *Anne*, our co-founders, visible to our membership. In addition, *Lois' Story* appears in *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics*.

Q. Can the book, "Anne Smith's Journal" by Dick B. be made into Conference Approved Literature? If not, why not? "As *Lois Sees It*" is no different, both are stories of our co-founders' early memories.

A. No, the Literature Committee does not review material that has already been copyrighted or printed by other publishers.

Q. Would it be possible to publish more booklet/small book types of publications to keep the cost of literature down?

A. There currently are a great deal of booklets, pamphlets and leaflets. When the Conference passes a motion to produce new literature, the sharings that evolve determine the size of the final product.

Q. Doesn't it seem likely that an ever increasing volume of literature leads to redundancy and a gradual changing of the Al-Anon message?

A. The Al-Anon message remains constant; our membership, however, changes and the Literature Committee is charged with the "creation of fresh material to meet new needs or changing conditions" as outlined in Concept Eleven of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual.

Q. Is WSO considering publishing *Paths to Recovery* in large print?

A. No, but this "first" request for doing so will be communicated to the Literature Committee.

Q. District 10—FL(N) area would like to convey a heads up regarding 1st person pronouns and 2nd person pronouns when looking at future books and brochures.

A. This information will be passed on to both Literature Committees.

Q. Why doesn't Al-Anon Family Groups write a Twelve Step workbook similar to the Twelve Steps of Overeaters Anonymous Workbook?

A. *Literature Committee II considered such a request in the last year and did not believe that there was an identified need for such a workbook since the publishing of Paths to Recovery.*

Group Services

Q. At what point do we move from "listing" to "registering" on-line (WWW) Al-Anon groups? Please provide us with a plan of action regarding this matter.

A. *"Listing" or "registering" is still under consideration by the Ad Hoc Committee on the Internet for a three-year trial period that ends in October 1998.*

Q. Can guidelines be developed for anonymity with the use of the Internet, on-line meetings, web pages, etc.?

A. *Guidelines were distributed at the 1998 WSC. Copies can be obtained from your delegate or by writing to the WSO.*

Q. Can we get the "Al-Anon Spoken Here" door hang again? This was very helpful in making people aware that we focus on Al-Anon only and not to bring outside issues to the meeting.

A. *The door hang was discontinued since the distribution was minimal. It has come to the attention of the WSO that one district produced cardboard replicas for the meetings within the district. The pamphlet Al-Anon Spoken Here (P-53) can be used as a topic for discussion regarding keeping the focus on Al-Anon.*

Q. How was the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual developed?

A. *The Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P24/7) originally consisted of four separate books that grew out of the need to disseminate shared information: Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work produced in 1964; the World Service Handbook (by the Admissions/Handbook Committee), 1973; the Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, 1975; and Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service (by the Policy Committee), 1970. In 1992, the four booklets were combined into one and retitled. Also at that time, a section was added called: The Al-Anon Program.*

Q. Where can Braille books be purchased for low vision groups?

A. *The order blank Material for the Visually Impaired (S-14) lists agencies that distribute Braille (CAL) books and pamphlets. (Available by writing the WSO or your nearest LDC.)*

Q. Why are AA and Al-Anon group discussion meetings not allowed to be registered as Al-Anon "open" meetings, should we change this policy?

A. *In keeping with Tradition Six and Al-Anon's policy of non-affiliation (Tradition Three), the Policy Committee determined that a group must be either an Al-Anon or AA group. (See Guideline G-3, Cooperation Between Al-Anon and AA.)*

Q. Are there any other ways an area office can support itself besides selling literature?

A. *In addition to the sale of literature, an area can be supported through contributions and fund-raising events.*

Q. How long does it take a new group to register and who do they contact?

A. *Contact the Group Records department to register a new group. Groups are registered within one week of receiving complete information.*

Q. How should a beginners' meeting be handled if it is held at a hospital? Should it be done by the district or have officers and be a regular meeting?

A. *If it is held in a hospital and attracts patients and their families while being treated at the hospital, it is considered an institution group because its membership is transient. Institution groups usually are supported by the district or in some cases by one or two groups. It doesn't have officers and usually doesn't take collections. If the group attracts individuals in the community, it is considered a regular group that meets in an institution facility.*

Q. Why did they discontinue guidelines for starting Alateen groups? When a school or counselor wants information they are not going to buy the book. I feel this is our important guideline and should be reinstated.

A. *There is a separate guideline for Alateen Meetings in School (G-5) and the material is covered in the Service Manual and in A Guide To Alateen Sponsorship (P-86). The Alateen Advisory Committee will be informed of your concern.*

Q. There is very little information available from WSO specific to area assemblies and information services. Are there plans currently being looked at for providing this information? Could it be included in the new Al-Anon group notebook {binder}?

A. *In addition to the guideline on Information Services (G-4), the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual contains information relative to area assemblies and information services. The new group binder contains a copy of the Manual and a section to list area information that can be obtained by contacting the area delegate.*

Q. Could the group records process be reviewed? We continue to have problems, the same ones that have been going on for years. I don't think it is enough to continue to submit corrections. Let's review the process and try to remedy the source of the problems.

A. *Reviewing the group records process is an ongoing necessity, particularly with the conversion of computer systems that occurred in May 1996. The Group Services Committee reviewed the process at its meeting during the 1998 WSC. The committee is currently working on an instruction sheet for processing area printouts. Last year the committee revised a Registration/Update Sheet. While the WSO feels confident that there will be ongoing improvements, anyone working with directories understands that they are only accurate the minute they are completed.*

Q. A solution to the group records problem.

A. *See the answer to question above.*

- Q.** When we send some changes at the group level to WSO (changes with GR, address, etc.), why are there so many errors still?
- A.** *There are many reasons for incorrect group records information. For example, it is not unusual for information from several sources to be sent to the WSO. The Group Services Committee continues to work on methods to insure that newcomers and members seeking a meeting will be given correct information.*
- Q.** Speaker tapes—I recently purchased a tape from a company at a service seminar, on sponsorship—Concerns: First and last names used, personal facts revealed, i.e. Anonymity—who monitors this?
- A.** *It is up to each member to inform suppliers about their concern when Al-Anon policies are violated. If the Al-Anon/Alateen copyright or trademarks are involved, the WSO would contact the supplier. At regional service seminars (RSS), the only tapes that are sold are that of the RSS itself.*
- Q.** Who decides what will be sold at our functions and what won't?
- A.** *Most functions are conducted with the oversight of a planning committee. It would be up to that committee to determine what would be sold at that function. For example, the RSS Committee at the WSO determines what may or may not be sold at each RSS.*
- Q.** Should the WSO have liability insurance to cover group district, area, and regional functions?
- A.** *Unlike other organizations such as the Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, each group, district and area is autonomous. Since the WSO exerts no control or oversight for these entities, it cannot provide blanket insurance coverage.*
- Q.** If we want to be number one in resource for families and friends of alcoholics, how come our toll-free number is not in all the telephone directories?
- A.** *As there are literally thousands of telephone directories, providing the number of the WSO toll-free meeting line as well as the local Al-Anon information service number would be an excellent public outreach project for groups, districts and areas.*
- Q.** When a member calls a newcomer as the result of an answering service referral, caller ID identifies the member's phone number. Some people are concerned about anonymity, especially when the person answering the phone is not the person who called the answering service. Has anyone else had this problem?
- A.** *It is usually possible to put a "block" on caller ID so that members can prevent his or her number from appearing on caller ID prior to making the call. Contact your local telephone provider to determine how this can be done.*
- Q.** Removal of Alateen sponsor card completely from the home page to protect Alateens.
- A.** *A reply card for individuals interested in sponsoring an Alateen group to send to the WSO was discontinued because the Board of Trustees was concerned that the WSO web page is open to the general public and only members can sponsor Alateen. The Alateen Sponsorship Is It For You? Card (S-27) is featured and members are referred back to their own group, district or area for additional information.*
- Q.** How often do group printouts go out to areas? My area has not received them in a long time. The last ones we received were badly scrambled.
- A.** *Area delegates were sent a form to determine the number (up to four) and times printouts were to be sent to the delegate or Group Records Coordinator. Following the 1998 WSC, as agreed to by the Group Services Committee, each area will receive up to two printouts per year sent at the area's instructions. The committee also discussed a problem with printouts that appears to have been corrected.*
- Q.** A group mentioned that the secretary was supposed to keep the list of members at home as there were some phone numbers on the list that were confidential. What is the take on that? Will there be any guidelines to that effect?
- A.** *Placing one's name on a phone list is voluntary. Where to retain the list is up to group autonomy. Refer to the topic of "anonymity" that can be found in the index of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual for guidance.*
- Q.** In our Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual for 1992-1993 the preface for Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work contained the following: "Every Al-Anon and Alateen member should own and study this manual. It gives a clear and concise picture of the Al-Anon fellowship, its purpose and functions, and how it helps us to resolve group problems." This passage has been dropped and a member of my area wants to know why, and also requests that it be restored.
- A.** *This was omitted from the 1995-1996 printing but will appear in the 1998-2000 edition targeted for completion mid-year 1998.*
- Q.** In the Service Manual, it is mentioned many times what an AA member cannot do in Al-Anon. Would it not be better to specify at only one place in the Manual what an AA member could have as task or function within the Al-Anon fellowship?
- A.** *Any member can make a recommendation to the WSO for revision offering suggested wording, keeping in mind that the functions vary from area to area. Any suggested changes to the Policy and Concepts of Service sections of the Manual will be directed to the Policy Committee; suggestions for the World Service Handbook section will be sent to the Admissions/Handbook Committee.*
- Q.** Why is Anne's picture above Lois' picture on the new pamphlet?
- A.** *The photos of the paintings of Anne and Lois appear as they do in the lobby of the WSO, left to right.*
- Q.** Can a member be a member of more than one group?
- A.** *As stated in the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, members who attend and participate fully in several groups, may consider themselves a member of those groups.*
- Q.** What is a "home group?" People seem to think that there should be a list of the members belonging to a group? What is the policy on that?

A. Members usually consider their "home group" the group that they attend regularly and where they can vote and hold office. It is the primary place where they work on personal recovery and make a commitment to conduct service work and offer financial support. It is up to group autonomy concerning whether or not to maintain a list of members; there is no official policy.

Q. Where does the idea of registering a group come from? What purpose does it serve? Where could we find information concerning this matter?

A. Information about registering a group can be found in the Al-Anon guideline, *How to Start an Al-Anon Group (G-12)*. The idea is as old as the fellowship itself when our co-founders Lois and Anne wrote to the 87 individuals and groups that AA gave them since AA could only register groups consisting of alcoholics. Registering with the World Service Office provides groups with a link to worldwide unity through the Al-Anon World Service Conference, it keeps groups abreast of information through publications sent from the WSO and helps members find the group through the toll-free meeting directory line. It is also essential to register with existing local services (district, area and Al-Anon information service). Staying connected keeps a group alive with new information and helps newcomers and traveling members find your group.

Q. Regarding the list of Al-Anon members: Could we after having realized that for a certain length of time many members have not attended meetings, contact these members to find out if they still want their names to be on the list?

A. Contact with members who no longer attend your group is suggested in order to let them know that the group cares and that they are missed. At that time, you may also ask the member if he or she wishes to remain on the group list.

Q. Why doesn't WSO sell the group binder (S51GS) to anyone who has \$17.14 (\$15 + \$2.14 shipping and handling) to pay for it? I hope the Conference will change the policy this year.

A. The Al-Anon New Group Binder costs \$15.00 plus \$1.05 postage; the Alateen New Group Binder costs \$12.00 plus \$1.00 postage. It is issued to registered groups only and the group name and registration number appears on the cover.

Q. How can we let some members know in a loving way that we try to follow Tradition Four in our group? "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole." (Some of our members pick up sayings and practices from attending other Twelve Step programs.)

A. Hold a meeting on Tradition Four and discuss what this means to your group in terms of the boundaries between "autonomy" and "practices that affect Al-Anon or AA as a whole." You might also consider taking a group inventory (*Write to the WSO for guideline G-8*). A meeting on Al-Anon Spoken Here (*P-53*) may provide additional clarity.

Q. Is there any way to augment the Alateen component of our annual Al-Anon/Alateen WSC? Currently their participation is negligible, and information and issues pertaining to them is all but lost in the din of the larger Al-Anon concerns.

A. Alateens are served by the Alateen Advisory Committee, the Group Services Committee and all area delegates. For the past two years, up to two Alateen members were invited to attend the Group Services Committee meeting held at the WSC. At every WSC, Alateen concerns have been brought forward. Any additional suggestions could be sent to the Alateen Advisory Committee.

Q. In order to improve decision making, under the WSO trial structure the Group Services Committee can obtain input from its Archives and Alateen Advisory Committees. Would it not be prudent to establish a "Special Focus and Minorities Advisory Committee" for the same purpose?

A. The Group Services Committee seeks to serve all members, groups, districts and areas including special focus groups and minorities within the fellowship. Any request for additional service can be addressed to that committee. There has not been a defined need at the present time to create an additional advisory committee.

Q. Can we have a pamphlet on Alateen sponsors' guidelines and sponsee boundaries for Alateen sponsors or regular sponsors?

A. Please refer to A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship — An Unforgettable Adventure. Additionally, safety guidelines are in development.

Membership Outreach

Q. Please explain fully the Conference expenses, the equalized expenses and the actual delegate expenses to the Conference. Because of the closeness to Virginia Beach, our area expenses would be less than the equalized expenses. (I'm referring to the explanation of the delegate equalized expenses, page 116 in the Service Manual.)

A. The premise behind the "equalized expenses" is that one area should not pay more than another because of their proximity to the location of the WSC. Currently the equalized expense that each area contributes is 66 2/3% (2/3) of the total amount and the WSO absorbs 33 1/3% (1/3) of the expense. Some areas that are financially able, pay 100% of the cost (\$1350 for 1998).

Q. When you send out mail to Canadian delegates and set a time frame for an answer, and we don't receive it until about 7-10 days before the return date, can some of this time be extended? It takes approximately one week to return it to you at the WSO.

A. Whenever mail is sent to Canadian delegates (from Conference services or from any standing committee), the WSO is aware of the time lag due to Canadian mail. Every attempt will be made to allow adequate time for processing and returning mail.

Q. The Hispanic groups in our area have written over 100 letters to the WSO requesting translation of the *Paths to Recovery* book. We believe that it is a great piece of recovery literature. We also feel that it will have the same impact on Spanish speaking groups' recovery process as it did with the English speaking groups. That's why we are asking for the translation. We have several translators in Al-Anon in this area. How can they help?

A. The goal of the WSO translation team is to facilitate as many

quality Spanish and French translations as physically and financially possible. For the most part, it is most effective to use professional translators (some who are members and may contribute their talents) or work with other structures in accomplishing translations. We hope to cooperate with other countries in the near future to translate Paths to Recovery. Periodically, in publications, the WSO seeks reviewers of translated materials. If members let the WSO know about their facility with another language, we maintain this information and contact the members as needed.

Q. How many French-speaking groups exist in France, Belgium, Switzerland or other French countries? Please breakdown your answer by country if possible.

A. There is currently a total of 329 French-speaking groups in the countries listed: 95 in Belgium, 191 in France and 43 in Switzerland.

Q. Two French language delegates represent 185 groups (Quebec-[E]) and 341 groups (Quebec-[W]). Could these two areas unite and create their own GSO as is the case in all other countries in the world? Would that not reduce their dependency on translations? Could they not decide for themselves what is and what is not to be translated?

A. Both Quebec (East) and (West) have been part of the US and Canadian structure since its inception. While the Admissions/ Handbook Committee allows an area to divide once (as with Quebec [East] and [West]), there are no provisions for an area of the US and Canada to form a separate structure. In addition, there are other areas with French speaking members within the US and Canada and the WSO is committed to serve all French speaking members.

Q. If Quebec (East) formed a GSO, would the WSO recognize it? Would WSO give the Quebec (East) GSO the permission to translate and/or reprint CAL in French?

A. See answer to question above.

Q. Could a delegate be sent to the RISGA [IAGSM] instead of the Conference? Would he/she have vote and voice on the RISGA?

A. There are two delegates from the US and Canada structure already attending the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). This is determined by the Al-Anon Board of Trustees rather than by individual areas within our structure.

Q. What would happen if Quebec (East) decided to cease sending a delegate to the Conference? Could a delegate be sent to the RISGA [IAGSM] instead of the Conference? Would he/she have voice and vote on the RISGA?

A. If Quebec East did not send a delegate to the WSC, the Conference would lose the input that French speaking members now have into matters affecting worldwide Al-Anon. The delegate would not be sent to the IAGSM. (See question above.)

Q. The Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (page 100) indicates that a district representative (DR) is elected from among the incoming, outgoing or active past group representatives (GR). What are some of the criteria that we can use to determine whether a past GR is active?

A. The criteria would be based upon the involvement of service in which the GR participates in at the group, district or area level as determined by the voting members of the district. Some areas establish specific requirements or guidelines.

Q. If after one year experience we realized that PFA is greatly missed, could we in Quebec or Montreal be responsible for the translation and the printing of our literature?

A. The decision to bring French language services (PFA) into the WSO, like all other structural changes, are on a trial basis. If after a fair trial period the present arrangement proves unworkable, the Board of Trustees will determine what changes are necessary in order to best serve French speaking members in the US and Canada.

Q. Whoever made the decision to ask the French language members of Al-Anon to write in a foreign language in a magazine (The Forum) they would be the only ones in the world to have in translation? Can that decision be reconsidered?

A. It is necessary that all sharings sent to The Forum be in English. This decision would be reconsidered if the WSO had the financial resources to increase The Forum budget to include translations. It is possible for a member to provide a sharing in his or her original language and then have it translated into English by another member. This is true for all non-English speaking members.

Q. Where is the French documentation (literature) printed presently?

A. Some French translations are printed by a printing firm in the US, some in Canada and many are now printed in-house at the WSO.

Q. In the 1993 Ask-It-Basket it was mentioned that the decision to translate and publish books in French is up to PFA and the Executive Committee at WSO. Now that PFA doesn't exist any more, who will be responsible to decide? WSO alone? Would the French members have their say? Don't they know better than anyone else their needs and wants?

A. The Executive Committee continues to consider the viability of publishing literature into French based on input from our service structure that includes area delegates and trustees familiar with the needs of French speaking members.

Q. Has France or Belgium, Switzerland or other Francophone countries ever asked for permission to translate CAL into French? Was permission granted? If not, why?

A. Both France and Belgium have been granted permission to translate and reprint literature into French. Often their translations are distributed throughout European French speaking countries. Switzerland has not requested permission to translate and reprint but they have a separate GSO and upon request they would be granted permission if established criteria were met.

Q. Could we continue to have the translation of books in French in order to have an area and some healthy groups?

A. The WSO does continue to translate literature into French.

Q. One delegate (Pennsylvania) represents 750 groups while another delegate (Newfoundland) represents but 35 groups and both the delegates have the same voting right at the WSC. Can you explain? How representative are delegates?

A. *Our structure is based on geographic division. In this way, all decisions are not only made by populated areas thus protecting smaller communities. In the same vein, some groups have 50 members and others only two or three, yet both only have one GR.*

Q. Our area has a large participation of Hispanic groups. About 1/3 of the Hispanic groups live here in Southern California. They are anxious to know what's happening in the region. We also have translation equipment and members who are willing to do translation. At our Sharing of Service workshop and PRAASA we held Spanish speaking programs concurrently. Can the WSO consider this at the forthcoming Southwest RSS in 1999 as well as others?

A. *This idea was discussed at the US Southwest Regional Service Seminar Breakout and will be brought to the Regional Service Seminar Committee at WSO.*

Policy Committee

Q. Tradition Seven provides Al-Anon with a specific guide in being self-supporting and accepting only contributions from within the Al-Anon fellowship. There are those individuals who see AA as an integral part of the Al-Anon fellowship rather than a separate entity, thus justifying contributions at conferences from AA and clouding the self-supporting guidelines. Al-Anon's International Convention scheduled for this coming summer, brings with it more questions about Tradition Seven. Recently there has been talk and controversy about the AA International Convention held in San Diego and an alleged financial incentive from that city received by AA Headquarters (GSO) as a result. Whether true or not, will Al-Anon (WSO or Utah area) receive any kind of financial incentive (gift or otherwise) from Salt Lake City as a result of choosing to host the Al-Anon International Convention there? Please provide information which clarifies, justifies or negates this question.

A. *In keeping with the Seventh Tradition of self-support, funds are only accepted from Al-Anon members. At many AA functions, Al-Anon members pay a registration fee and as stated in the Policy Digest section of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, "Contributions received from AA conferences/conventions that are offered to Al-Anon as acknowledgment of its participation in these functions may be accepted by the WSO or its service arms." Al-Anon has been offered complimentary meeting space as an incentive to hold the Convention in Salt Lake City. This is standard for any city seeking 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.*

Q. Regarding any jewelry or pin provided to commemorate the 1998 International Convention and then sold at the convention which will be discussed in the Policy Committee meeting prior to WSC 1998, and then presented to the Conference. Alternative (to any jewelry) suggestion: Publish a commemorative *Forum* with a special embossed design and a gold foil cover which could be kept as a permanent memento. The question is: Will there be an alternative or could there be one?

A. *The WSO is planning to sell only the book Having Had a Spiritual Awakening... at the 1998 International Convention. A medallion or jewelry was considered for Al-Anon's 50th Anniversary celebration in the year 2001; the planning committee for this event subsequently decided not to pursue the idea. Any suggestions from our members will be considered by the committee.*

Q. Should gender-specific language be used in the Steps and Traditions?

A. *In order to change any of the wording in the Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service, it is necessary to obtain written permission from three quarters of every registered Al-Anon and Alateen group worldwide. Although many members over the years have requested that the Conference consider wording changes, the Conference as a whole remains steadfast in retaining the original wording of our legacies in spoken and written communication within Al-Anon while suggesting that individuals interpret the wording for their personal use in a way that makes them feel comfortable.*

Q. It seems there is a discrepancy in wording of Tradition Three and Tradition Five. Tradition Three states, "The only requirement for membership... in a relative or friend." Tradition Five states the one purpose of Al-Anon is to help "families of alcoholics." Could that be changed to: families and friends?

A. *See the answer to question above.*

Q. How does an area initiate a web page for meeting lists, etc. so as not to break Traditions? For instance, because of the high cost, an Al-Anon member volunteered to design the page, then included his/her business name on the page. How to maintain the page, due to the same concerns regarding not affiliating but needing the expertise of professionals?

A. *If an outside entity was listed on an Al-Anon area web page, it would violate Tradition Six. If the area cannot afford to pay for professional help in designing the page, it is suggested that only members who are willing to contribute their expertise and maintain the integrity of our Traditions be used.*

Q. Is it time to ask groups adult children of alcoholics vs. Al-Anon to make a choice again as in July 17, 1984 and letter of August, 1981? [Copies of the above referenced letters were attached]

A. *The WSO wrote to the then-existing 14 adult children groups registered in 1981 when the adult children groups were beginning to register with the WSO. Since then over 1,000 groups have registered and there is additional information to inform these groups about Al-Anon policies. If problems occur with one or two, even several groups, it might be best to deal with them on an individual basis.*

Q. Why is it still even an issue about dual membership when clearly AA has a different primary purpose?

A. *The subject of dual membership remains an issue because members continue to bring the subject up within the areas, the WSO and at the World Service Conference.*

Q. At district level can dual members serve as PI coordinator, secre-

tary, treasurer?

A. *Al-Anon members who are also AA members do not hold office beyond the group level as these positions may lead to membership in the World Service Conference. The Al-Anon /Alateen Service Manual defines the roles that lead to Conference membership as: GR, DR, area coordinators, newsletter editors, delegates and their alternates. Also, dual members do not serve on WSO committees as they could become a Conference member since they are eligible to serve as a chairperson of the committee.*

Q. *In the Service Manual, page 71 under Fund-Raising, subtitle "Activities & Services" can we know the meaning of the expression, "within the fellowship" and also "in agreement with the groups directly involved."*

A. *"Within the fellowship" refers to fund-raising efforts by Al-Anon and Alateen members; "in agreement with the groups directly involved" refers to a group conscience decision by the members of the group, district or area conducting the fund-raising.*

Q. *An Al-Anon member wishes to let his/her name stand for group representative. A few members of the group know that this individual is also a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. However, when they approach this dual member they are told that contrary to Al-Anon's policies, he/she feels that dual members ought to be able to serve beyond the group level. Furthermore, these few members are warned by the dual member that they cannot inform the other members of the group because they would then be violating Traditions Eleven and Twelve by breaking his/her anonymity. What ought these few members do?*

A. *When the vote is to take place, an announcement can be made informing the group of the dual member policy, asking any dual members to refrain from standing as GR. One other option for the members involved to take (in addition to not voting for the dual member) is to have a discussion asking for suggestions from the group on how to handle such a situation without naming the individual involved.*

Q. *When will our Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual actually reflect the reality of our fellowship by stating on page 62 that we actually have special focus and minority groups?*

A. *A suggestion to acknowledge special focus groups is currently being considered by the Policy Committee.*

Public Outreach

Q. *Is there some kind of public outreach to public libraries with a limited book list of CAL books?*

A. *Each year there is a mailing to regional libraries informing them about Conference Approved Literature. As a public outreach project, groups, districts and areas can supply local libraries with Al-Anon CAL.*

Q. *If we are going to fully utilize NPIC, why not let the office receive donations and issue income tax receipts as a charitable organization in Canada?*

A. *The WSO serves groups and members in Canada as a whole and is investigating facilitating tax deductible Canadian contributions. National Public Information (Canada) [NPIC] was formed*

in recognition of the specific public information needs of Canada, particularly at a national level; it is a public outreach service arm only.

Q. *Why is the NPIC manager not attending the full Conference? Wouldn't it be to her advantage to attend all the meetings?*

A. *The WSO staff, NPIC subcommittee plus Canadian trustees and delegates attend the entire WSC and are familiar with the needs of NPIC. The NPIC Manager attends the Public Outreach Committee meetings and returns to the office to be available to serve the Canadian Public Outreach needs of media representatives, professionals, and members.*

Q. *Since the need for financial prudence at the World Service level, can we get guidelines, which are available to groups at no cost for the first copy, put on the AFG, Inc. web site? Starting with G-2, G-5, G-12, and G-13. Please explain.*

A. *There is a budget for placing material on the WSO web site. Your request will be considered. Also, guidelines may be reproduced and accessed electronically on area web sites.*

Q. *Can WSO include in their web site meeting schedules for smaller areas who don't have the manpower, resources to do it themselves?*

A. *The WSO publishes Getting in Touch with Al-Anon on the web site. This helps members and other individuals trying to find Al-Anon meetings with local Al-Anon information services (AIS). Contacting an AIS insures greater accuracy of information and doesn't run the risk of anonymity violations. The WSO does not maintain lists of groups on its web page.*

Q. *Our area world service committee wishes to design, produce and distribute, within the area, posters to attract adult children and minorities to the program. If we submit our designs to the WSO for review, as stated on pp. 84-85 (under Public Information Literature) of the Service Manual, can we do this?*

A. *Yes, one piece is permitted.*

Q. *Our current web page on the Internet serves primarily newcomers and the professional community. Consequently, it is mainly within the domain of Public Outreach; although it is possible to obtain information and an order form for literature. Can we expand the page to include much more for our current membership, by extending it well into the services provided by Group Services and Membership Outreach?*

A. *The Public Outreach Department continually seeks to refresh, revise, and expand information on the WSO web page when financially feasible. Suggestions from our membership, such as yours, are taken into consideration when revisions/additions are made.*

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**Non-voting

1997 WSO ANNUAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ric B., Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

This report of the World Service Office's activities is provided annually 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 56 full-time employees (there is one vacancy), 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./Helen R., Chairpersons

Interim actions of the Executive Committee were approved by the Board each quarter. The Board approved creating a separate building fund escrow account to provide for estimated future capital expenditures. The Board approved that all scheduled Regional Service Seminars be delayed one year beginning with 1998. The registration fee for RSSs will be raised to \$25.00 in the year 2000.

All nominees for trustee-at-large, regional trustee, as well as Board officers, Executive Committee at-large members, at-large members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management, having been given traditional approval by the Conference, were elected. The chairs of the two Executive

Committees were also elected. The new chairperson announced her selections for committee chairs and assignments which the Board approved. The Board approved ending the trial period for the WSO web site and the 1-3-9 automated system on both 800 numbers and made them permanent.

The Board was given an in-depth presentation from Public Outreach on the history and current impact of PSAs. Our goal will be to have Al-Anon/Alateen on the air (both radio and TV) 12 months a year beginning this year. We have the commitment of the staff to evaluate it and provide updates to the Board along with the guarantee that the Budget Committee will look at the costs and the value when working on the 1998/99 budgets.

The Board approved the purchase of a van for the WSO which will be utilized during business hours for the transportation of packages and purchase of supplies, etc., as well as during Executive and Board weeks for the transportation of volunteers.

A Letter of Agreement was signed between the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) and the Board pursuant to Motion 12 of the 1994 WSC. This agreement is simple but comprehensive and will be of benefit for future members of both the ECRPM and the Board of Trustees. The presentation given at the 1997 WSC by the ECRPM Chairperson gave closure to the relocation. Future reports regarding property ownership will consist of the required three-year report to the WSC by the Board of Trustees on the issue of the Traditions and whether the ownership of property has violated the Traditions.

The Board recommended that *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* be discontinued one year from September 15, 1997, based on the recommendations from three delegate committees – Public Outreach, Literature I and Literature II.

In an effort to review mailings sent out from the WSO, a survey was sent to past delegates to determine who is receiving which publications and whether they want to continue to receive them.

The Canada Central Trustee tendered his resignation which was accepted by the Board of Trustees. After a lengthy discussion about the nominating process necessary to fill a regional trustee position, the Board decided not to fill the position during this term of office. The Board has requested that the Canada West Trustee serve as the link of service for Manitoba during this interim period and that the Canada East Trustee serve as the link of service to Ontario (North) and Ontario (South). We sincerely hope that this vacancy will not interfere with our primary purpose of carrying the message to families and friends of alcoholics wherever they reside.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Pat B., Chairperson

As authorized by the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee set the registration fee for the 1998 Al-Anon International Convention at \$75.00 for those registering before December 31, 1997; \$80.00 for those registering before May 15, 1998; and \$85.00 for those registering after May 15, 1998, including on-site.

The committee approved revising the prices of *Al-Anon Can Help* Pamphlets (P-79-P-84). The committee authorized the printing of the following: 35,000 copies of the 1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Membership Survey (S-29); 5,000 military sleeves to be used in the pilot project "military outreach" and to authorize use of the sleeve until supplies end for the military newcomer packet at a selling cost of \$1.00; Public Outreach Supplementary Order Form to order K-3, Public Information Service Kit, K-5, Institutions

Service Kit and K-15, CPC Service Kit; 10,000 copies of *...In All Our Affairs* (B-15) in soft cover. Revisions included: Alateen Kits K-6 and K-7, covers of *Alateen Talks Back* series and the Media Kit. Pending possible revision of *Pebble in the Pond* (P-42), permission was given to include a flyer with each booklet listing important current changes. Other printing authorized included: *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians* in French and a leaflet on our co-founders.

Additional actions included: approval of the translation of *...In All Our Affairs* (B-15) in Spanish; purchase of a professional quality camera and lenses; permission to develop the new group kit for new groups and to sell to existing groups beginning July 1, 1997; Alateen new group kits were also developed and approved; permission to update the military reprint with new graphics; for a second conference call for the Group Services Committee in October 1997; approval of a baker's dozen offer for *The Forum*, using a blow-in card for January-March 1998.

The committee expanded the consignment policy to include sales at exhibit booths, sales at assemblies or conventions, and sales at RSSs for an 18-month trial period beginning July 1, 1997 and ending December 31, 1998 and approved policies for both.

In the study of existing newcomers' kits, the Al-Anon, Alateen and Al-Anon adult children kits will remain the same. The men's and parents' kits are to contain the same pieces as the regular newcomers' kits, adding the specialized pieces, *Al-Anon IS for Men* and *Does She Drink Too Much?* to the men's kit and *To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic* to the parents' kit.

Decisions regarding additional kits were as follows: Keep K-3 (PI Service Kit), K-5 (Institutions Kit), K-15 (CPC Service Kit), K-16 (Alateen Service Kit), K-19 (Media Kit) and discontinue all other kits: K-4 (PI Discount Package), K-8 (Sampler: Alateen CAL), K-9 (Institutions Discount Package), K-26 (Professionals Resource Kit), K-28 (Facilities Starter Package) and K-22 (Step Study Kit).

The committee agreed to provide uniforms for our offset printers, shipping clerks and maintenance employees to protect personal clothing.

As delegated to the Executive Committee by the Board of Trustees, the committee accepted the following candidates for the following committees: Alateen Advisory Committee: Richard McD., second year; Shana G., Candi A., and Jessica W., all first year; Mary Ann S. and Laurel L., second year Alateen sponsors; Dylan H. and Kathryn M., first year at-large; Literature Committee I: Wesley deC., first year; Catherine T., Jo F. and Margaret McP., all second year; Literature II: Melody G., first year; Karen C-S., Patt L. and Vicki LaB., all second year; *Forum* Editorial Advisory: Ora B., Sandie D., Skip A. and Suzie C., all second year; Roland D., fifth year; International Coordination Committee: Jennie H., first year; Archives: Juanita G. and Judene G., second year, Diane C., third year; Public Outreach: Diane H. and Khayriyyah A., both first year, Penny C., Patricia I., and Frank R., all second year; Outreach to Professional Advisory: Jerry M. and Dr. Theresa M., first year, Nancy B-L., Patricia R. and Pat H., all second year.

The 1997 PSA radio and TV campaigns were approved. In order to conduct a total PSA recycle campaign in 1998 in three languages, permission was granted to produce TV and radio PSAs of "Cocktail Party" in Spanish and "Fear and Anger" in French. These versions had not been produced when the original PSAs were made.

Reprint procedures are being reviewed for clarification and modification as well as safety guidelines for Alateen members and sponsors. The committee referred the language of S-27, *Alateen Sponsorship - Is It For You?* and the electronic postcard from the Internet to the Board of Trustees. The Board will review WSO's involvement in Alateen sponsorship referrals, especially from the Internet, but also from other sources. The committee reviewed changes to the Personnel Manual prior to distribution to the staff.

BUDGET COMMITTEE (SEE BUSINESS SERVICES)

POLICY COMMITTEE Helen R./Margaret M., Chairpersons

Rewording of the Finance section of the 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (Policy Digest) regarding "Triannual Appeal," seeking to clarify that the appeal is not directed to the groups but to the individual member, was approved by the Conference.

The Policy Committee agreed with the suggestion that the editorial policy for all WSO publications regarding mentioning outside programs and literature follow the guidelines which are in *Al-Anon Spoken Here*.

Disruptive members in meetings as an issue comes up repeatedly at groups (both Al-Anon and Alateen), and at district and area levels. *Al-Anon Spoken Here* was discussed as an excellent meeting topic to help alleviate some of these problems.

The Internet Ad Hoc Committee reviewed issues relating to registration of on-line meetings as groups and whether they would fit in the service structure. A final draft of its guidelines is under review. Completion and distribution are anticipated in early 1998.

After a professional photographer raised the issue of full name credit for photography in *The Forum*, the committee by consensus affirmed the policy of not identifying professional photographs in *The Forum*.

As part of the Fiftieth Anniversary, a request was approved to print a calendar which would include celebrations all around the world. The committee concurred that a calendar, as part of the celebration of Al-Anon's 50th Anniversary celebration, does not violate the reference to trinkets, jewelry for sale on p.71, Policy Digest in the 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

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 1995-1996 *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. In July, the 50th Anniversary Committee withdrew their request to produce a pin or medallion for this event.

After a request from a structure outside of the US and Canada, "Why is Al-Anon Anonymous?" will be retitled "Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?" to clarify the intent of the pamphlet.

The committee requested legal interpretation of the impact of putting our guidelines on-line. In the meantime, the statement "must be reprinted in full, any excerpts not authorized" will be added to the authorized Internet list. It was agreed that AIS/GSO web pages which meet copyright and trademark guidelines may be listed in *Getting In Touch*. Legal counsel stated that permission to reprint does not include permission to excerpt unless expressly granted in reprint permission.

The Alateen Advisory Committee recommended via the Group Services Committee that the paragraph "Membership and Groups" on page 61 be

reworded. An inconsistency re "conventions" on page 66 was brought in line with page 135 of the 1995-1995 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. So that our *Service Manual* reflects current practice, a change will be made to the *Forum* section on page 80. These proposed revisions will be presented to the 1998 Conference for approval.

There was considerable discussion as to sharings identifying members as members of specific religions in our INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALITY (working title) book. In the final analysis, a motion was passed to remove references to specific religions.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Larry A./Betty B., Chairpersons

The committee presented a slate of Board officers, at-large Executive Committee members and Executive Committee Chairperson to the Board in January, as well as a nominee for the Executive Committee for Real Property Management and its Chairperson.

The Nominating Committee met with the Conference Committee on Trustees during the Conference. Resume forms were reviewed. Minor editing changes were accomplished. The committees discussed the distribution of resumes. A plan to do two mailings per year (January and June) to the delegates was developed. The timetable for submitting resumes was revised for clarity.

The committee reviewed qualifications for membership on at-large and advisory committees: Past World Service Office staff may serve after three years from date of termination, provided that they do not serve on any committee within the department in which they worked; Alateen members of committees must include a plan for housing and escort during their travel and stay at the World Service Office; members who are also AA members may not serve on at-large or advisory committees.

After researching previous Nominating Committee minutes, Board of Trustee minutes and Conference summaries relating to Motion 12 of the 1994 WSC and Motion 5 of the 1995 WSC, the committee found that there were no references to a requirement for length of Al-Anon membership discussed for Executive Committee for Real Property Management candidates. The committee felt that the requirement of five years continuous active Al-Anon membership as required for other committee participation at the World Service level was appropriate. It was also noted that there are no specific requirements for the job. Only portions of Motion 12 and Motion 5 currently appear. As the CCT had input as to the back of the ECRPM resume, any change to the form will be discussed with CCT before a change is instituted. The scoring sheets will be revised to conform to the resume format, making it simpler to score the resumes.

LONG RANGE STUDY PANEL

Marion W./Nancy B., Chairpersons
Sandra F., Secretary

1997 WSC: In keeping with Goal Three of the Five Year Plan to take a structure-wide inventory, the WSC passed two motions: to take an inventory of our service structure using the AFG Service Plan format and to take an inventory of the Conference itself at the 1998 WSC, including workshops.

AFG Service Plan: The 1997 Plan focused on Goals Two and Three (Communication and Inventory). Copies were distributed to our service structure with an *Area Highlights* mailing. Requests were received to make the 1997 AFG Service Plan permanent. Members were informed that the service plan is designed in keeping with the Five Year Plan and the Plan changes as the fellowship works on new goals. The 1998 AFG Service Plan will focus on an inventory of a "healthy group, district, area, etc."

Fellowship Focus Groups (FFGs): All nine area FFGs participating in the 1996/97 FFGs (one in each region) submitted final reports on Goals Two and Four. The LRSP analyzed the FFG reports and asked the Executive

Committee to review the suggestions as well.

During the RSS breakout sessions at the WSC, areas to conduct the 1997/98 FFGs were selected from among those within the region who volunteered. The panel agreed that the new FFGs would work on Goal Five (establishing the Al-Anon name).

The areas are: US Northeast: New York (S); US Southeast: Georgia; US South Central: Missouri; US North Central: Ohio ; US Southwest: California (S); US Northwest: Nebraska; Canada East: Quebec (E); Canada (W): Saskatchewan; Canada Central: Manitoba. The LRSP established that the purpose of the FFGs is for the WSO and the areas to work on the Five Year Plan goals together: the FFGs carry out the goal within its area and the WSO works on the goal in the US and Canada. The report to the Conference is the vehicle for the FFGs to share with other areas.

Five Year Plan: The panel voted, and the Board concurred, that the LRSP continue to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the first five goals of the Five Year Plan and take a year to evaluate the entire plan.

Visioning: The panel conducted several visioning sessions, exploring the development of individualized, personal vision and mission statements in preparation for transferring these to a broader level encompassing Al-Anon as a whole.

Study of Trends: In view of the continuing decline in literature sales, the Executive Committee has suggested that the LRSP study trends in Al-Anon literature sales and distribution that impact the fellowship in order to test the premise that literature is the primary means to carry the Al-Anon message.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

LEGAL

The necessary forms were submitted to our copyright attorney to register the names of Al-Anon, Alateen, *The Forum* and our marks with the European Economic Community (EEC). This registration will cover the existing registrations in some countries and extend to several additional countries within the EEC. A series of questions regarding copyright infringement and use, especially as it relates to proposed Internet use, were answered. This information was shared with the Internet Ad Hoc Committee and the Policy and Executive Committees.

PENSION

The Pension Committee considered a report to evaluate whether Al-Anon's goals for long-term retirees were still being met by the Plan. Our pension consultant suggested that a formal review was not necessary at this time as the objectives were being met.

AUDIT

The 1996 annual audit was completed. Again, due to problems with the computer software at the beginning of the year, additional time was required as several schedules need to be reconstructed by hand.

GROUP SERVICES

Sandra F., Director

COMMITTEE

*Ann H./Felix M., Chairpersons
Sandra F., Director*

Following the 1997 WSC, the Group Services Committee entered the second year of its three-year trial. Two meetings were held at the 1997 Conference and conference call meetings were held in January and October. Originally, the committee suggested its scope was too broad. In clarifying its charge, it was agreed the scope was more manageable, as the role of the committee is to provide oversight into projects developed at the WSO rather than to become involved in the details. Projects included revision of the Seventh Tradition leaflet and one-time distribution of a service bookmark based on a prototype used in the Hawaii area. During the October conference call, the committee determined the thrust of its activities for 1998 is to provide helpful direction to proposed groups, review services for adult children and simplify group records procedures.

New Group Binder (S-51): Groups that registered with the WSO after May 1 received a personalized binder containing information aimed at giving new groups an effective start. After three months, a letter was sent to new groups that provided additional information and included a questionnaire designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the binder. Approval was given to make the binder available for sale (\$15.00 each) to existing groups. A report will be compiled in the first quarter of 1998. Procedures have been established so that beginning in May of 1998, groups will receive a letter acknowledging their one-year anniversary. The new group binder was adapted for Alateen and will be sold to existing groups at a cost of \$12.00, distribution beginning in 1998. In conjunction with distribution of the binder, three new service tools became available: Group Business Meetings (GS/GK-1), Dollars and Sense—A look at group finances (GS/GK-2) and Group Bank Accounts (GS/1126).

Guidelines: 1997 marked the beginning of a major revision of Al-Anon/Alateen guidelines. The content was updated, edited to provide information in brief, avoiding repetition of material that existed in other sources. Although more graphically appealing, one of the downsides of the new style is that photocopying and faxing is more difficult due to graphics and shaded portions. Adjustments will be made in future printings and a set of guidelines are available in the Group Services Department without shading to be used for faxed transmissions. The content of guidelines that fall in the purview of other departments are compiled within that department. Two guidelines were discontinued because the material is available in other sources: What is Expected of an Alateen Sponsor? (G-17) and Organizing an Alateen Group (G-19). A new guideline titled Safety for Alateen Members and Sponsors is in process. Approximately half of the guidelines have been revised. The balance will be completed next year.

MEMBER SERVICES

Al-Anon Adult Children: Seven areas have initiated the position of adult children coordinators. The Group Services Committee is considering making material available in the reprint of the *Inside Al-Anon* special issue for adult children in other sources since Fellowship Communication is undergoing an extensive review of all reprints. Early recommendations include a suggestion that reprints are temporary. The adult children reprint has been used over ten years. If the information is still valid, a service tool may be required.

Al-Anon Information Services/Intergroups (AIS): An AIS/LDC (literature distribution center) Workshop was held in conjunction with the Northwest Regional Service Seminar in Portland, Oregon. The day-long agenda was set by the attendees and each session was designed to encourage interaction. Fifty-nine members from 13 areas participated. Attendees

exchanged copies of flyers and newsletters, discussed policies and shared information. The evaluations revealed that the greatest value of the workshop to the participants was the exchanging of their experience, strength and hope. Following the workshop, an extensive report, results of a questionnaire and evaluation was distributed to all AIS/LDCs and to Conference members.

The AIS Guidelines were substantially revised based on a questionnaire sent to all registered AISs.

AIS and LDC offices that previously had separate identification (ID) numbers were given one ID number. By combining the listings, literature orders will be easier to track and many duplicate mailings were eliminated.

Getting In Touch With Al-Anon/Alateen (S-23): The January/June and July/December issues were produced. The Policy Committee agreed to list web site addresses of AISs/GSOs that comply with World Service Office copyright policies in future editions.

Three General Service Offices (GSOs) reported that many of the AIS offices listed in *Getting in Touch* are receiving service literature in English which they are unable to interpret. To eliminate unnecessary postage and duplicate mailings, all future correspondence will be directed to the GSO. AIS offices in those structures will obtain future service materials from their respective GSOs.

Services For The Disabled: A survey was sent to AIS offices to obtain information concerning services for the disabled. It outlined problems with churches being exempt from the American Disabilities Act's legislation and the growing need for "wheelchair accessible" meetings. Many areas reported that the meetings accessible to the disabled are often noted on meeting lists.

An increasing number of disabled individuals are requesting membership in the Lone Member Service.

Requests continue for material in Braille or cassette, particularly *The Forum* and *Courage to Change*. Some areas report that as a service project, they record literature on an individual basis for blind members.

Lone Member Service: The *Lone Member Letter Box* was redesigned this year. An attempt is underway to increase Lone Member sharings in future issues. E-mail addresses are now added to the Lone Member Directory in order to facilitate increased communication between Lone Members and Lone Member contacts. Alateen Lone Members and contacts will be encouraged to participate by introducing the service through *Alateen Talk*.

Inmate Correspondence Service: There is a continued shortage of contacts to service the Inmate Correspondence Service. Plans to appeal to the fellowship for participation will be placed in upcoming WSO publications. There are presently 59 registered inmates (35 men and 24 women) and 36 proposed.

GROUP RECORDS

Data Base: A new group information form was designed for simplicity and consistency in obtaining group records and replaces a variety of forms previously used for new group registration and group updates. A group-wide mailing with *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* resulted in thousands of changes submitted by individual groups. An evaluation form was distributed at the 1997 WSC that resulted in modifications of the form. Responses indicate approval of the new form and that many areas are adopting the same form.

Area Printouts: Based on suggestions from area delegates, printouts were revised from one-to-a-page to three-to-a-page. During the process of the change, many areas received printouts with missing groups. This situation has been rectified. Some areas receive printouts more than twice a year. In many cases, the area receives new printouts before sending in changes on

the previous printout, or the WSO receives the corrected printout shortly before the new printout is to be sent, thus the staff is unable to input changes.

800 Number Calls: With the implementation of a voicemail message directing 800 number callers to the appropriate source for help (either Group Records, Public Outreach or a recorded informational message), Group Records is able to service more callers in a timely manner.

800 Number Calls:

1997	1996
39,608	23,332

Electronic Meetings: There currently are nine on-line meetings listed with the WSO. The contacts of these meetings did not receive mailings from the WSO as intended due to computer programming errors. This situation was rectified by the end of the year. Calls from contacts continue seeking direction on a variety of subjects including literature and service tools to use, making contributions and requesting guidelines.

Group Records:

	1997	1996
Information Services & GSOs	308	318
Literature Distribution Centers	211	207
Lone Members	147	172
Al-Anon Groups Worldwide	28,488	28,065
Alateen Groups Worldwide	3,179	3,040
Total	31,667	31,105

1997	US	CANADA	OVERSEAS
Al-Anon	15,914	2,009	10,565
Alateen	1,990	201	988
Information Services & GSOs	181	19	108
Literature Depots	182	14	15
Lone Members	132	15	66

Group Records has been maintaining graphs of group statistics for the past ten years plus a year-to-date graph for each month of the current year.

ALATEEN

COMMITTEE

Betty B./Larry A., Chairpersons
Evalynn N., Associate Director, Alateen

Two local Alateen members of the committee attended the Group Services Committee meeting at the 1997 WSC. Based on a recommendation from the Group Services Committee, attendance is being considered for similar representation at the 1998 WSC. Since the Alateen Advisory Committee members come from a greater distance than the former "in-town" Alateen Committee members, policies were established by the Executive Committee in regard to travel and housing arrangements for underage committee members to attend meetings at the WSO. The committee explored solutions that would increase the safety of Alateen members and Alateen sponsors. Articles in *Alateen Talk*, *Area Highlights* and *The Forum* as well as a committee-developed workshop titled "Connecting the Dots" were developed to alert our membership of safety issues. The workshop presents typical problems facing Alateens and sponsors today and guides participants to seek solutions through use of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship* (P-86). Another factor in strengthening Alateen growth and ensuring safety is the committee goal of engaging district representative (DR) involvement with Alateen groups and sponsors. Other than sponsors, DRs are the only other adults who can

attend an Alateen meeting without a group conscience. The committee feels greater involvement between DRs and Alateen will generate greater feelings of trust and togetherness between Al-Anon and Alateen. The Alateen Advisory Committee, Group Services Committee and Alateen Coordinators participated in the formation of the proposed Alateen member and sponsor safety guidelines which are being reviewed.

Another area of concern addressed by the committee is the problem of older Alateens who sponsor Alateen groups without having made a healthy transition to Al-Anon. Some transitioning Alateens report that they feel unwelcome or patronized at Al-Anon meetings and feel more welcomed at AA meetings. A concerted effort is being made to encourage Al-Anon groups to read *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship* (P-86) which contains many good suggestions for Al-Anon involvement with Alateen groups other than being a sponsor. To generate fellowship enthusiasm, the committee adopted the rallying cry of "Recycle Your Program..."

A draft of a service tool entitled *Helpful Information About Alateen Meetings in Schools* was submitted to the Group Services Committee. This leaflet is designed to answer the questions of educators.

ALATEEN TALK

Topics covered for 1997 included Alateen sponsors; Alateens and service; bridging the gap between Al-Anon and Alateen; and the slogans. Sponsors are sending in sharings from their groups indicating that the groups are using *Alateen Talk* as an important part of their meeting format. The topic for the next issue is introduced with a sharing sheet which seems to generate discussion for the Alateens and provide a meeting format. The sharing sheet is attached to the Younger Members insert and increases the publication from six pages with a separate sharing sheet insert to eight pages. Overflows of sharings are routed to Fellowship Communication for *ALATEEN EVERY DAY* (working title) and *The Forum*.

A new subscription form was designed and inserted in the Summer 1997 issues of *Alateen Talk* and *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*.

ALATEEN CONFERENCES

World Service Office staff attended Alateen conferences in Florida (Florida Alateen Conference), Indiana (KOMIAC), Arizona (Arizona Alateen Conference) and Northern CA (NoCAC). Contact was made with nearly 1200 Alateen members and sponsors. The "Connecting the Dots" workshop was facilitated at each of the conferences. The Alateens especially enjoyed the problem-solving aspect. Comments ranged from "Wow! I didn't know we had the answers right here all this time," (1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) and *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship*, P-86) to outright surprise by the Alateens and the adults when they realized that the DRs could come into the Alateen meetings.

It has become apparent through correspondence, phone calls, and staff who have attended conferences, that when Alateen conferences have a direct link to the area and are planned by Alateens with Al-Anon guidance, fewer behavioral problems arise. Many questions came to WSO asking for clarification about group/district/area financial support of Alateen conferences, Alateen conference fund-raising, and Alateen conference scholarships. Of primary concern is how Alateen conferences fit into our service structure. These issues will be considered by the Alateen Advisory Committee.

ALATEEN COORDINATORS & SPONSORS

One mailing to coordinators was completed in the fall. Trends reveal that many coordinators and sponsors are not familiar with *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship* (P-86) and the 1995-1996 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). Many of the problems reported concerning sponsors involved dual members with limited Al-Anon experience, unsuccessfully transitioned Alateens, and AA sponsor assistants who take over the role of sponsors. The problems that surface have a common theme: inadequate background in Al-Anon. Coordinators continually ask for "sponsor training." An AIS Alateen coordinator developed a sponsor training workshop.

Sixteen Al-Anons attended; eight became Alateen sponsors to four new Alateen groups. The sponsor reported that the workshop helped allay fear of Alateens and made the potential sponsors aware that there is a support system in place for them.

In cooperation with Fellowship Communication, Project 3000 was launched. The goal of this project is to have each of the Alateen groups in the US and Canada obtain a copy of *Courage To Be Me—Living With Alcoholism*. Alateen coordinators were asked to coordinate the project within their areas. Tracking will be accomplished through *Alateen Talk*.

The WSO has received many requests from coordinators for lists of Alateen groups in their areas. Printouts are generally sent to area delegates or group record coordinators. Alateen Coordinators state that many times they do not see the lists and it is far easier for them to maintain accuracy and updates, as they have a more intimate knowledge of the status of Alateen groups. On a one-time basis, a copy of the Alateen group printouts were sent to area delegates who were asked to forward them to the Alateen Coordinators.

IN GENERAL

Since articles were printed in WSO publications reporting on areas that have developed Alateen member and sponsor qualification guidelines, many districts who were previously unaware they could do so, began adopting similar procedures. In several instances, members were connected with others who have successfully established guidelines. It was noted that areas experience greater adherence to the behavior guidelines once established, provided that the implemented guidelines include Alateen members' input.

ARCHIVES

COMMITTEE

Lorill W./Catherine J., Chairpersons
Sandra F., Director of Group Services
Barbara M., Archives Coordinator

The committee approved the development of a new system for accessioning archival material. Work has also been accomplished on revising several archives forms. The Long-Time Members Questionnaire was completed and the Group History form is in process. The Archives Guidelines were substantially revised based on committee suggestions and a questionnaire sent to Archives Coordinators. The committee selected a logo and the slogan "Look to the Past to Protect the Future" to be used on all correspondence, fliers, etc. originating from the WSO Archives. Input regarding the program for the Pioneer Luncheon at the 1998 International Convention was sought. The development of an "official" Al-Anon timeline has been in the works for the past year and will be finalized at the January 1998 meeting.

CO-FOUNDERS PAMPHLET

Al-Anon's Co-founders - The Extraordinary Work of Two Ordinary Women was developed by the Archives Committee and reviewed by the Group Services Committee. An eight-page leaflet was subsequently approved by the Executive Committee and is currently in production. When completed, this leaflet will replace *Anne's Story* (P-66) and the previously discontinued *Lois' Story* (P-11).

ELECTRONIC STORAGE

Each year, minutes of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee and Policy Committee are scanned into an archival data base. In addition, an optical disc containing records of groups for the year is maintained. The Stepping Stones Foundation has several boxes of the World Service Office core collection that are scanning into their system and will make a copy on CD-ROM for our files. The new technology can copy from optical disc to a CD-ROM that cannot be written over or erased.

NEW ACCESSIONING SYSTEM

The Director of Group Services and Archives Coordinator met with each department director to determine what departmental files require accession-

ing and which files should remain in the department. An outline of the new system and finding aids are in the process of completion. Now that the system is established (based on "subject" rather than "provenance"), accessioning began with the voluminous material involved in relocation, property ownership and restructuring. An archival binder has been compiled of photographs depicting the process of relocation and the Open House held at the WSO in 1996.

NOTABLE ACQUISITIONS

During the Archives Coordinator's visit to Stepping Stones, the Foundation gave the WSO a soft cover bound transcription of Lois' diary kept on the year-long motorcycle trip with Bill in 1923; a copy of the original pages of the diary and the transcription side by side; two copies of Lois' personal stationery and two copies of the invitation to her last Holiday Open House. A photo of Lois and Mary S. on a riverboat cruise after the 1980 International in New Orleans was sent from a Canadian member.

RESEARCH REQUESTS

Over 100 groups from Canada, Australia, and many US areas requested histories. For long-time groups, this process can be tedious in that old World Directories need to be researched. In some cases, it is necessary to review the "kardex" cards developed by Anne B. Other research requests included: numerous requests for copies of skits; origin and discontinuation of several Conference Approved Literature pieces; opening and closing prayers at meetings; phrase "ambassadors in the field" pertaining to WSC delegates; photos of WSO's locations—beginning with AA's 24th Street Clubhouse; the first time the process for changing the Steps and Traditions is mentioned.

A researcher (non-member) spent several days in the WSO Archives to prepare for a doctoral dissertation on alcoholism. Following her research, she changed the focus of her work to alcoholism in the family. In preparation for her research in the WSO Archives, the Archives Advisory Committee determined parameters for conducting research. A copy of AA's policies were reviewed to offer guidance.

IN GENERAL

A trip was made to New York to visit the AA Archives and Stepping Stones. Plans are underway to move the WSO material in off-site storage from Upstate New York to Norfolk. Consideration will also be given to retaining some of the material at the WSO Archives which is temperature and humidity controlled, unlike the Archives in NY.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATION

Caryn J., Director

STATUS OF PROJECTS

Literature Inventory: Fellowship Communication and the two Literature Committees initiated a "searching and fearless" inventory of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. Over 50 recovery pamphlets and booklets were included in the first phase of the inventory, completed this year. Each of the 67 areas in the US and Canada participated. Area delegates were given the inventory materials including copies of two pieces of literature and an inventory worksheet. Delegates were asked to work with Literature and Alateen Coordinators in organizing their area's participation. Feedback from the inventory will be analyzed by the Literature Committees in an attempt to determine if our literature is meeting the needs of our fellowship. In 1998, service materials will be inventoried in phase two of the process.

Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts: Al-Anon's newest book was released in April 1997. This comprehensive study of our fellowship's three legacies, authorized by the 1993 World Service Conference, is a compilation of member sharings as well as questions for

group and individual study. This book contains specific suggestions for working, studying and living our fellowship's Steps, Traditions and Concepts of Service.

Recommendation of Discontinuance of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*: This book, first published in 1965, was produced for the purpose of reaching out to professionals. It was the recommendation of the Outreach to Professionals Advisory and Public Outreach Committees that its discontinuance be considered, as the material is greatly outdated and no longer appropriate for professional outreach. Both Literature Committees agreed and the recommendation for discontinuance was made to the Board of Trustees. One year's notice of discontinuance was given to area delegates in September. Copies of the book will remain available from the WSO and literature distribution centers "while supplies last" and, though it will no longer be in print, it will remain a part of Al-Anon history as Conference Approved Literature.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE I

*Pat L./Howland R., Chairpersons
Mary Lou M., Associate Director*

ALATEEN EVERY DAY (working title): Over 150 sharings had been received from Alateen members around the world for a new Alateen daily reader approved by the 1995 World Service Conference. A free-lance writer/editor has been selected to edit the sharings for this new book. Sharing sheets and a writing workshop have been extensively distributed through WSO publications, area delegates, Alateen and Literature Coordinators.

Revision of *Al-Anon IS for Men and Does She Drink Too Much?*: After committee review and discussion, a motion was made and carried by the World Service Conference to authorize extensive revision of these two pamphlets. A male free-lance writer was contracted to rewrite the pamphlets. Committee comments on recommended changes were sent to the writer, and a first draft was submitted to the committee in December.

Revision of *Sponsorship—What It's All About*: Committee review resulted in the decision that minor revisions of the existing pamphlet were appropriate. The committee's comments and suggestions were incorporated into the text of the pamphlet by a task force of staff, at-large members and the committee chairperson; a proposed revised draft was sent to the full committee for review. The revisions, once approved, will be incorporated into the next printing of the pamphlet.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS LITERATURE COMMITTEE I

Alateen's "Just For Today": The committee was asked to review this piece of literature and recommended that it be revised. Committee members agreed, however, that more input was needed from Alateen; thus each delegate committee member asked Alateen members in his/her area to review the "Just For Today" along with their other literature inventory assignments before any specific recommendations are made.

Why Conference Approved Literature?: It was agreed that this service tool needs revision and updating. Comments from all committee members were compiled and redistributed to the full committee for review and further comment. A proposed revised draft will be completed in early 1998 and processed by the committee.

Suggested Revision to *How Al-Anon Works...*: A member requested that his blended story be removed from *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics*. The committee reviewed the member's original sharing for possible use as a replacement. A decision will be made before the book is reprinted sometime in late 1998.

LITERATURE II

*Nancy B./Blanche M., Chairpersons
Caryn J., Director*

INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALITY (working title): The final draft of the manuscript was approved with substantial unanimity by the committee and has been submitted to Policy reviewers for approval. It is expected that the book will be released at the 1998 International Convention in Salt Lake City.

The number of sharings and the representation from our international members is reflective of our total membership. Although numerous requests were made to our Asian service structures over the last few years, no sharings from those countries were received.

After committee review, the matter of mention of specific religions in the book was referred to the Policy Committee. After discussion, the Policy Committee recommended that reference to specific religions not be included and such references will be removed. The Titling Committee will select a title in January 1998. It is planned to include member photos reflecting spirituality in the design of the book.

RECOVERY TODAY (working title): Development of an Al-Anon adult children daily reader was authorized by the 1997 WSC. Sharing sheets were designed and mailed to Literature Coordinators, Conference members and requesting parties in September. Over 70 sharings have been received.

Newcomer Brochure: The 1997 World Service Conference authorized development of a newcomer's brochure. A proposed manuscript, based on a prototype submitted by a member, was reviewed and revised by the committee, and a final draft approved late in the year. The final draft is in the final CAL review process and will go to Policy reviewers in January. It is not intended to replace the current newcomer's packet, but rather to supplement it.

Revision of *This is Al-Anon*: After committee review, it was agreed that minor changes were needed to update this pamphlet. The full committee submitted comments and suggestions for revision and a task force incorporated the changes, which were then submitted to the full committee for approval. The revisions, once approved by the Policy reviewers and Executive Director, will be incorporated in the next printing of the pamphlet in 1998.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS LITERATURE COMMITTEE II

Writers' Guidelines: The Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature process is a unique one, and working with free-lance writers, though they are always Al-Anon members, has presented challenges in the past. In an attempt to clarify our process and policies, guidelines were developed by the committee and approved by the Executive Committee.

"Al-Anon Is & Is Not" bookmark: The committee recommended to the Public Outreach Committee that a change be made to the wording to clarify that individuals are anonymous, not the program. Public Outreach agreed and the change will be made in the next printing.

OTHER LITERATURE ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

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. Reprint guidelines provided to delegates at the 1997 WSC have resulted in an increase in correctly prepared requests.

Project Approval/Requests: Throughout the year, numerous pieces of existing Al-Anon literature were reviewed and approved for reprinting. Fellowship Communication works closely with the Production Department to maintain adequate supplies in the warehouse, thus avoiding backorder problems.

Literature Guidelines: (G-31) Ordering Al-Anon Literature and (G-6) Area Literature Coordinators guidelines were revised in cooperation with the Group Services and Business Services Departments.

Leaflet Title Change: Based on a request to clarify translation, the title of P-33, *Why is Al-Anon Anonymous?*, will be changed to *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* After discussion in Literature II and the Policy Committee, it was believed the change will clarify that our members are anonymous, not the program itself.

Inside Al-Anon Xtra: The WSO news vehicle was distributed to all English-speaking groups bimonthly. This colorful, one sheet newsletter's purpose is to disseminate important "need-to-know" information to the Al-Anon fellowship.

Area Highlights: Editing of the newsletter for our service structure was transferred to Fellowship Communication in mid-1997. This publication is the vehicle to share area and district service experiences with area trusted servants. Approximately 3,000 copies of *Area Highlights* with inserts are mailed quarterly to area delegates, chairpersons, coordinators, newsletter editors, district representatives and general service offices overseas.

Literature Catalog: The 1997 Literature Catalog was released in March 1997. It was redesigned and reorganized for ease of use. The 1998 Catalog has been designed and will be printed early in 1998. Additional improvements include an index of titles and a tear-off order form.

"Alateen Talks Back" Series: Based on a request from the Alateen Advisory Committee, an Al-Anon member artist was engaged to redesign the covers of these six booklets. The more contemporary cover designs will be added as the booklets are reprinted (existing stock will be sold first).

Cal is for CAL!: The WSO has two "Cal" costumes which are available for use at upcoming assemblies and conferences. Round trip travel (postage) is paid by each requesting area.

Cal workshops on specific topics and pieces of literature were distributed to our area Literature Coordinators. Topics include "Sponsorship," *What's "Drunk," Mama?* and *Courage To Be Me—Living with Alcoholism*.

Hazelden: The director met with the director of Hazelden's commercial team and assistant to the trade team during an all day visit to Minnesota in September in conjunction with her trip to the RSS in Portland, OR. Hazelden renewed their commitment to cooperate with the WSO in helping to carry the Al-Anon message.

THE FORUM

Connie D./Marion W., Forum Editorial Advisory
Committee Chairpersons
Caryn J., Director
Mary Lou M., Associate Director
Pat Q., WSO Forum Coordinator

The Forum: A local (Virginia Beach) free-lance designer worked with the WSO Forum Coordinator on the January through August issues. In July, plans to design the magazine in-house were completed, effecting a much smoother production schedule.

Member photography was added to *The Forum* with the March issue. Photos are filed in photo albums by categories for easy retrieval and use.

The "Talk To Each Other" page continues to generate reader response. Topics included the use of AA materials in Al-Anon, safety in Alateen meetings, meetings in clubhouses, "I Need Al-Anon," "Just For Today" and long time members.

A renewal/survey card and a letter from the WSO Forum Coordinator were mailed to subscribers receiving "second" notices of renewals in August,

September and October. The results of the survey are being tabulated. The holiday gift subscription program where any subscriber may renew or purchase a subscription at the \$9.00 per year rate and purchase up to four new subscriptions for \$7.00 each was designed for insertion in the October, November and December issues. This offer expired December 31, 1997. New gift cards were developed and designed for use by Customer Service personnel. In addition, the last quarter flaps featured a special offer of a unique holiday bookplate with literature orders.

Editorial Committee: The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee completed review of 200 manuscripts at each of its quarterly meetings.

Communication: Mailings to Forum Coordinators included a copy of the guidelines for conducting a Forum writing workshop, information on the holiday book plate and gift subscription offers, information on the ongoing Forum challenges and some past issues for distribution at area events. Complimentary subscriptions for area Forum Coordinators were reinstituted. Dozens of members held writing workshops, generating multiple submissions.

Challenges among areas and districts began with the RSS held in Hampton, VA in March. Participating areas included New York (N), New York (S), New Mexico, Kentucky, Delaware, and Florida (S). A district challenge in California was very successful. Information was shared with area coordinators in coordinator mailings and *Area Highlights*. Subscription statistics by state illustrate the general decline in Forum subscriptions.

G-32 Area Forum Coordinator Guidelines are in the final revision stages and will soon be processed for approval.

CARRYING THE MESSAGE - A MARKETING PLAN FOR FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATION

Caryn J., Director
Mary Lou M., Associate Director, Literature
Pat Q., WSO Forum Coordinator

Noteworthy results:

Courage To Be Me—Living with Alcoholism: Marketing of this exciting new Alateen book continued:

- A new single sheet flyer targeting professionals has been utilized by the Public Outreach Department.
- In the Summer 1997 issue of *National Association for Children of Alcoholics*, a wonderful review on *Courage To Be Me* was published. In a thank you letter, a complimentary issue of *Paths To Recovery* was forwarded on to the editor/reviewer.
- Two ads for *Courage To Be Me* in the *Student Assistance Journal* were attractively presented in the *Student Assistance Buyers Guide*, generating dozens of inquiries.
- In June, a complimentary copy of the book was sent to the Library Reviewer of Prevention First Incorporated, the publishers of *Prevention Forum*.
- The first ad for *Courage To Be Me* appeared in Hazelden's summer 1997 catalog.
- A "Cal" workshop on *Courage To Be Me* was included as an insert in the August Forum.

Paths to Recovery - Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts: Flyers for this book were included in numerous mailings. A creatively designed book-mark/order form was included in the September mailing of *The Forum* as well as with other WSO mailings.

What's "Drunk," Mama?: In cooperation with Public Outreach, an area project was developed to encourage groups to have a copy of *What's "Drunk," Mama?* and crayons available. When a member brings a young person to a meeting, the group is encouraged to give the child the booklet to color, creating a learning/active experience for the group as well as educate the parent and child. Ideas for distribution of the booklet to libraries, doctors, schools and other professionals were also provided. A "Cal" work-

shop for using the booklet was developed and distributed to area Literature Coordinators.

Combined Outreach Efforts:

- Complimentary books were sent to the new and outgoing presidents of the National Association of School Psychologists and to Dominican University in River Forest, Illinois for a class for librarians on recovery issues.
- Two book exhibits with the National Education Association provided exposure to our literature to hundreds of school librarians.
- *Courage To Be Me* and *Paths to Recovery* were presented in the "recovery" section of the Publishers Marketing Association (PMA) annual celebration catalog and in special PMA mailings to bookstores and the media. The "Books For Review" listing resulted in over 30 requests to review either or both of the two books by media around the US.
- A letter and 1997 Catalog were mailed to all bookstores who have previously ordered from Al-Anon specifically introducing them to our newer titles and restating our selling terms.
- New flyers on the *Recovery Collection* (RC-1) and *Alateen Recovery Collection* (RC-2) were completed and distributed to Literature and Alateen Coordinators, LDCs and in *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* and *Alateen Talk*.

Team Training And Development: New team development exercises were utilized, training staff on the importance of group efforts and how to support each other.

The director attended a two-day book marketing workshop in Arlington, VA. Acquiring many new ideas and learning do's and don'ts made the experience most worthwhile.

Other Activities: The Director and Associate Director completed a draft revision of the WSO pamphlet and submitted it to the Executive Committee for review. The pamphlet was returned with numerous suggestions for changes and revised accordingly.

The team began the process of cleaning out files on completed manuscripts. Files for the following titles, containing contracts, sharings, correspondence and manuscript drafts, were accessioned for archival retention: *Paths To Recovery*; *When I Got Busy, I Got Better*; and *Courage To Be Me*.

The director met with the Executive Director, Assistant to the Director of Public Outreach and Customer Service Manager to discuss guidelines for the 18-month trial period of LDC consignment sales at professional exhibit booths, assemblies, conferences and RSSs. Two policies were drafted, approved by the Executive Committee, and distributed to LDCs.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Phyllis M., Director

COMMITTEE

Margaret M./Doris S., Chairpersons,
Public Outreach Committee
Felix M./Marjorie S., Chairpersons,
Outreach to the Professionals Advisory Committee
Phyllis M., Director
Claire R., Associate Director

STATUS OF PROJECTS

Who Are The Members of Al-Anon and Alateen? (S-29): The format was redesigned and an introduction thanking professionals for their continued referrals added.

1999 Al-Anon/Alateen Questionnaire Membership Survey: Recommendation for additions and modifications were forwarded to Wolf/Altschul/Callahan, Inc. for evaluation and cost estimate.

Military Project and Holiday Press Releases: PI, CPC, and Institutions

Coordinators were encouraged to work together to distribute the press releases to newspapers, magazines, and professional bulletins.

The Sky's The Limit In Service (S-51/PO): An order form allowing members to create their own PI, CPC, and Institutions Kits (K-3, K-5, and K-15) was made available. This form serves as a revision of the three service kits (K-3, K-5, and K-15). The order form format was designed to avoid duplication of materials.

Media Kit: An interim US Kit (K-19) and a Canadian version (K-19C) were developed. Contents of the kit were updated and obsolete service materials were discontinued. Background information about National Public Information Canada (NPIC) is being included in the Canadian Kit.

US Public Service Announcements: Two sets of PSAs were distributed to preselected radio and TV stations at six month intervals. The "Ask Yourself" TV project continued from October 1996 to June 1997 (340 English, 10 Spanish stations). Each version of the "Ask Yourself" TV PSAs were sigma-encoded for a 37-week tracking cycle. Fifty-one per cent of the TV stations and 35% to 45% of the radio stations surveyed aired the PSAs (English and Spanish). Five areas were randomly selected from the six US regions to serve as focus groups. The PI efforts of local members resulted in a 16.5% increase of TV broadcasts. A final "Ask Yourself" TV PSA campaign report documented a total of 10,441 airplays. The vendor gave a conservative estimate of the value of the PSAs at \$7,022,345 in free air time. These figures (airplays and estimated value) will be used as a baseline for future PSA outreach project evaluations.

In the summer, a re-release of the 1994 Al-Anon "Cocktail Party" and Alateen "Birthday Party" in English and the 1991 "Fear and Anger" Spanish radio PSA occurred. In the US, 1500 English and 70 Spanish radio stations received the PSAs. TV PSAs were released in September to 550 US English and ten Spanish stations. Again, the TV PSAs in the US were sigma-encoded for tracking through the 1997 holiday season. The first report from October 21st to December 14th documented 1,222 airplays. Members participated by completing a "Be Our Eyes and Ears" coupon published in *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* and distributed by area PI Coordinators.

Future PSA Campaigns, US and Canada: A plan for production of one new PSA and re-releasing one previously produced PSA in 1998 and 1999 was developed and approved. PSAs will be produced in English, French and Spanish with appropriate labeling for Canada (800 number, NPIC title, and Telecaster numbers). The objective is to keep the Al-Anon and Alateen names broadcast throughout the year by providing the media with radio and TV PSAs at scheduled six-month intervals.

New PSA, 1998: The committee reviewed and made recommendations for the 1998 radio and television script. The radio script will be released in July, 1998 and the TV portion in September.

Military Outreach Project: A military literature sleeve was designed and 5,000 copies were produced for a pilot project with the branches of the armed forces. Professional and client packets were developed using the new sleeve and updated packet contents. A special offer of five free military client packets and an evaluation form of the professional packet were included. With committee approval, this long range (five year) project was launched with mailings to Veterans Administration hospitals, Navy Family Service Centers, Naval hospitals and medical clinics in the US. Similar mailings were conducted in Canada. Mailing lists and informational materials about the project were provided to area (US) CPC and Institutions Coordinators. Coordinators were asked to have local members volunteer to make telephone follow-up calls to each facility. Coordinators were also asked to distribute a feedback sheet to each local member to submit to the WSO. The combined response rate for the WSO mailings and local member follow-up affirmed the importance of WSO, area and local member joint efforts. A final report was sent to the US Department of the Navy and will be distributed to the Public Outreach Committee and area CPC and Institutions Coordinators. Using the experience with the Navy, the military outreach project will be expanded to the US and Canadian Air Forces in 1998.

Service Materials Review: The Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee is reviewing all Public Outreach service materials. Ideas for consolidation, retention, and/or elimination of each item are being compiled. A review of the Open Letters series is underway. Tracking of LDC orders of the *Al-Anon Can Help* pamphlet series (P-79 -P-84) was done to assess their use at the local level.

Spanish and French "Thank You For Your Inquiry" Professional Reply Cards: Based upon the success of the English reply card used to reduce the number of form letters to respond to professional inquiries, Spanish and French translations were made.

Proposed Professional Resource Booklet Outline: A recommendation and proposed outline for the development of a concise and informative booklet was sent to the Literature Committee. Area coordinators were surveyed about the concept of a booklet, its value, and a feasible price range for the membership to purchase and distribute the booklet as a service tool for professionals.

A Pebble In The Pond: A memorandum providing a list of revised materials is being developed for insertion. A major revision of the text is being planned.

NEWSLETTERS

Al-Anon Speaks Out: The Spring 1997 issue was produced and distributed. It featured a "Help Us To Support You" survey of the readership's professional needs. The results were tallied and showed a strong desire for access to local meeting schedules (88%), a list of examples of meeting topics (79%), more statistics about groups and members (70%), information and members' articles describing the benefits of service work (66%), and familiarization with the Al-Anon service structure (51%). Based upon committee evaluation of the survey and recommendations, newsletter articles and coordinator projects were developed. A postage-paid return card for those interested in remaining on our mailing list was included. The Winter 1998 issue was compiled and readied for production.

COMMUNICATIONS

Public Outreach 800 Number: Total calls - 7,533

The activation of the automated attendant and interdepartmental cooperation with Group Services resulted in improved management of the 800 number calls. Teamwork and technology increased the time available to the Public Outreach Clerk to respond to newcomer and professional inquiries by 35%.

Daily 800 Number Call Log: Revisions and re-evaluation of our record keeping system were ongoing with the goal of increasing our ability to use the daily log as a measuring tool of newcomer and professional inquiries.

A system for tallying the calls received by Public Outreach and Group Services as a result of the media was established and maintained from June to December. Professionals remain the largest resource of reported referrals to the 800 number.

Radio PSA	TV PSA	Internet	Professional Referrals	Phone Directory	Magazine/ Source Book
33	75	117	222	263	265
Public Outreach (numbers above)					
10	20	91	193	109	89
Group Services (numbers above)					
43	95	208	415	372	354
Totals (numbers above)					

Al-Anon/Alateen World Wide Web Site: The WSO Site, <www.al-anon.alateen.org>, was accessed 42,599 times, bringing the total number of visitors to 46,609 since it was established in October 1996. A breakdown of site traffic is as follows: 85% US, 3% Canada and 12% international. In

addition to the US and Canada, 39 countries have accessed the site. Regular updates included: *Getting In Touch With Al-Anon/Alateen* (January and June printings), three monthly sharings from *The Forum* and monthly conference/convention schedule (*The Forum*). Enhancements to the site were: *Alateen Talk* newsletter (on-line version); electronic sharing sheet/postcard, new Alateen Daily Reader; *Alateen Sponsorship—Is It For You?* questionnaire and electronic post card; *Fact Sheet For Professionals* electronic postcard; International Convention brochure; expansion of Spanish and French sections (including Spanish and French versions of the *Fact Sheet For Professionals* with electronic postcards); and electronic literature and *Forum* subscription order forms.

AD MATS

Thank You, Professionals and Complimentary Copy Offer, 1996 Membership Survey: An ad thanking professionals for their referrals including a special offer was published in the May/June issue of *Professional Counselor Magazine*. A free ad slick and mat was made available to area coordinators for use in local publications.

PARTICIPATION AT CONFERENCES AND EXHIBITS

Exhibits: The exhibit booths were sent to eleven national conferences where local members manned the display and responded to questions. The Assistant Director, Public Outreach attended two events - National Student Assistance Conference, New Orleans, LA and National Association of Social Workers Services, Baltimore, MD. Open Al-Anon meetings were provided at the National Association for Native American Children of Alcoholics (NANACOA), Oakland, CA.

Pilot Project, Special Printing for WSO Exhibits, Fact Sheet For Professionals (S-37): As a trial project to test the effectiveness of target audience publications, the following statement was developed and approved by the committee for a limited number of conference convention printings: "In the spirit of cooperation, Al-Anon welcomes 1997 (fill in name of the convention) attendees." Two special printings were made for the American Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse and National Wellness Conferences.

COOPERATION WITH OUTSIDE ENTITIES

Presentations were made at the following events: University of Utah School of Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies, Salt Lake City, UT and Rutgers 1997 Summer School of Alcohol Studies, New Brunswick, NJ.

Meetings With Staff: The Assistant Director, Public Outreach attended the regular meetings of the National Institute Council on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Department of Health and Human Services, Bethesda, MD. The Director and Assistant Director met with directors of the Bureau of Medicine, Family Support Services, Family Advocacy and Retirement Activities in the US Department of the Navy, Washington, DC, to obtain worldwide listings of facilities. A listing of Veterans Administration Hospitals was obtained as result of a meeting with Congressmen Owen Pickett, Virginia Beach, VA and Michael McNulty, Albany, NY, who are involved with committees related to the armed services.

Complimentary Literature and Materials: Dreamweavers Child Abuse and Victim Advocacy, Itasca, IL; University of Utah School of Alcoholism and Other Drug Dependencies, Salt Lake City, UT; and Rutgers 1997 Summer School of Alcoholism Studies, New Brunswick, NJ.

Resource and Agency Directories and Magazines: Articles mentioning Al-Anon appeared in the following publications: *MADDVOCATE* magazine (summer issue) published by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD); Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN health guide directory; *Skywords* (Sept. 1997), a publication of the National Association of Professional Flight Attendants.

COOPERATION WITH THE MEDIA

Publications: Notable inquiries were received from the following magazines: *Seventeen*; *Mademoiselle*; *Patient Care*; *PV Electronics*; *Jump Magazine*.

Television: The Executive Director was interviewed by Channel 13 WVEC, Virginia Beach, VA. Channel 13, NY, NY requested a description and contact information for inclusion in the *Viewer's Guide* for the March 1998 airing of the Bill Moyers show on addiction.

Radio: The Translations Services Manager was interviewed by Hampton University Radio Station WHOV. The Dr. Tony Grant Show, Dallas, TX, requested permission to announce the Public Outreach 800 number and WSO web site address (URL). The Executive Director was interviewed for the WIRK-WBZT, West Palm Beach, FL Sunday Morning Public Affairs show which was aired by four local stations. In conjunction with an interview with Lorrie Morgan, country western singer, an explanation of Al-Anon was given by talk show host Don Imus on his "Imus In The Morning" TV show. Clarification of Alateen's purpose and subsequent referral to the AA General Service Office were provided to the Maury Povitch Show staff.

Newspapers: Clippings about the senior outreach and 45th Al-Anon Anniversary press releases, Ann Landers and Dear Abby syndicated columns, alcoholism or Al-Anon in general were received from members. Articles about seniors in need of Al-Anon appeared in *The Richmond Times Dispatch*, Richmond, VA and *Today's Woman*, KY/IN tabloid magazine. Alateen was featured in *Family Style Magazine*, a Sunday newspaper insert. *USA Bridge Today*, a Japanese biweekly newspaper, sought information about adult children recovery. The *Chicago Tribune* requested Alateen information and the WSO web site for the Ann Landers column resource file.

Resource Directories: Al-Anon will be listed in printed telephone and electronic directories published by: Hazelden Foundation, Center City, MN; Federal Prevention of Substance Abuse, Los Angeles, CA; National Health Information Center, Washington DC; Scott Publishing, Inc., Edmonds, WA; Phillips Publishing (*Health and Wisdom For Women* newsletter), Potomac, MD; Family Systems Within Educational Contexts, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA; *First Directory*, United Way, Springfield, MA; *Letters At Dawn Journal*, Vancouver, WA; InfoLink (800-FYI-CALL); National Victim Center, Arlington, VA; *Seventeen Magazine*, NY, NY; President's Crime Prevention Resource List; Federal Prevention of Substance Abuse, Los Angeles, CA.

Internet: Various commercial and not-for-profit organizations requested permission to hyperlink to the WSO web site or sought permission to include Al-Anon/Alateen information on their sites: The Caron Foundation; WellTech International; Missouri National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence; Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD); and Community Living For Alcoholics By Rehabilitation and Education (CLARE) Foundation; Kids Net sponsored by the American Medical Association.

Members Requests: Members from various AISs and areas sought information about the following subjects: building a web site, hyperlinking to the WSO's web site, listing of AIS and area web sites in *Getting In Touch With Al-Anon/Alateen* (pamphlet and electronic version) and the materials for posting on the Internet. The Omaha AIS/LDC was provided with assistance regarding distribution of the leaflet, *Are You Troubled By Someone's Drinking*, as a grocery bag "stuffer" by Bakers Supermarket and a local Walmart. Other inquiries included information about health fairs, beginner's meeting cassettes (discontinued), Spanish translation of *A Pebble In The Pond* and suggestions for updating literature with the Who's New address and telephone number.

COORDINATORS

Surveys: Two surveys were sent to PI, CPC, and Institutions Coordinators to assess their needs, service project preferences, available resources (time, funds, and volunteers) and current area coordinator structure. Results were discussed by the committee and distributed to coordinators.

Biannual Mailings: The committee concurred that a system of compiling two mailings per year (February and August) should be implemented to

provide coordinators with the materials needed for their assembly workshops, presentations, and implementation of outreach projects within the areas.

Trial Structure, Public Outreach Service: A preliminary plan for consolidation of the CPC, PI and Institutions area structures was developed by the committee. Further review is planned.

NATIONAL PUBLIC INFORMATION CANADA (NPIC)

Tom C./Margaret M., Chairpersons
Georgette G., Office Manager/Carole P., Public Outreach Service
Manager for Canada
Phyllis M., Director

PERSONNEL AND OFFICE

After seven years of employment, Georgette G. resigned as Office Manager. Carole P. was selected as her replacement. The Director and Associate Director visited the office and worked with Carole P. to assess and update NPIC operations. To familiarize Carole with the Public Outreach service and the WSO, a one-week training session in Virginia Beach, VA was held. An NPIC work plan was also developed. The office was moved to larger quarters in the same building and office equipment (fax/scanner and telephone answering systems) were upgraded.

STATUS OF PROJECTS

Public Information Needs: A delegate inventory was prepared and distributed to assess public outreach in Canada. Findings will be compiled into a reportback. As an interim measure, newsletter articles were developed to increase fellowship awareness of NPIC's role as a national and regional resource for the media and professionals.

Canada East Fellowship Focus Groups, Long Range Study Panel: Responses were reviewed regarding new services and dissemination of information in Canada by the WSO. Recommendations to include corresponding data related to Canada in items such as press releases and PSAs were implemented whenever feasible.

First Nations People, Proposed Project: A mailing list of bands was obtained from Indian Affairs. A pilot direct mailing to 250 Friendship Centres is under consideration because 60% of First Nations people live in cities rather than on their native lands. A cooperative project with the National Native Alcohol Drug Abuse Program (NNADAP) and Substance Abuse Subtle Screening Inventory (SASSI) has also been suggested as a means of training employees who conduct screening tests for alcohol and substance abuse.

Military Outreach Project: Military Professional Packet mailings to nine Veterans Administration and 41 Family Resource Centers were made in conjunction with the first phase of the US outreach to the military. There was a 6% rate of response. Special order forms and feedback sheets for military professionals and a French Military Client packet were created with NPIC contact information. Canadian CPC and Institutions Coordinators were asked to provide local follow-up.

Al-Anon Speaks Out, Canadian Bulletin: The mailing included postage-paid return cards for professionals wishing to continue their subscriptions and a special offer of a free copy of the *Al-Anon is for Adult Children* pamphlet and *From Survival To Recovery* order forms. Six per cent of the subscribers asked to continue their subscriptions and 4% of the readers responded to the special offers.

NPIC Contact Information: The address and telephone numbers were added to the *Al-Anon Can Help* pamphlet series (P-79 to P-84), 1996 Membership Survey leaflet, and the WSO worldwide web site.

Lois's Story, French Version: A VHS videocassette is now available for rental from NPIC.

NPIC WSC Dinner/Presentation: The Office Manager compiled demographic (number of groups, AISs and LDCs) and geographic information from the delegates to inform WSO Public Outreach staff about Canada and its specific needs. Information obtained from the areas will be used at NPIC committee meetings and to evaluate services in Canada. A video showing the NPIC office was presented by the Office Manager to the Canadian delegates and Canadian trustees.

Public Service Announcements: Annual renewals of Al-Anon/Alateen registration numbers authorized to broadcast French and English PSAs were received from the Canadian Telecasters' Committee Inc. The numbers are being imprinted on radio and TV PSAs along with NPIC contact information. Radio and TV PSAs with Canadian address and phone number were distributed with a cover letter from the Executive Director, literature and a reply card in English and French. "Ask Yourself" TV PSAs were sent to ten Canadian TV stations and Radio Canada (TV). Reply cards and personal follow-up telephone surveys of radio and TV stations were conducted. Using this method, the vendor determined that 70% of the Canadian stations contacted received and aired the "Ask Yourself" TV PSA which resulted in 85% coverage of TV stations in Canada. Canadian areas served as focus groups. Area and district PI Coordinators were provided with complimentary radio PSAs and upon request, TV PSAs were made available.

A second PSA outreach effort was launched with the distribution of the Al-Anon "Cocktail Party" and Alateen "Birthday Party" to 50 English and 50 French radio stations. "Cocktail Party" and "Birthday Party" TV PSAs were distributed to 30 English and 15 French TV stations.

Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC): The WSO is researching the feasibility of registering with Revenue Canada as a charity to qualify Al-Anon's PSAs for CBC broadcast.

COOPERATION WITH THE MEDIA, OUTSIDE ENTITIES, AND CONFERENCES/CONVENTIONS

Television: An Alateen group was filmed at its meeting location and featured as part of the CJOH TV, Ottawa, ON news series, "Battle of the Bottle."

Presentations: The Office Manager gave a presentation to nursing students at the Professional Centre of Nursing, Ottawa University, Ottawa, ON and luncheon for professionals as part of the 25th AA Anniversary Round-Up, Vernon, BC.

Exhibits: The NPIC exhibit booth was sent to four exhibits and provided materials for a take-one table. The overall condition of the booth and its graphic appearance are being evaluated.

COMMUNICATION

800 Number Telephone Calls: A total of 273 calls were received. Fifty-six percent of the calls were attributed to the PSAs. Overall, there was a 54% increase in calls during 1997 in comparison to 1996. These figures will serve as a baseline for future evaluation of the PSAs in Canada. Following completion of training at the World Service Office, the Public Outreach Service Manager set up a new system for tabulation of 800 number calls.

Business Telephone Number: Canada Bell confirmed that the Ottawa AIS's telephone listing will be published in the 1998 telephone directory. This will decrease the number of Ottawa meeting information calls received by NPIC and result in the establishment of a more precise measuring tool for PSA calls and other outreach efforts.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

Mary Ann K., Director

CONFERENCE

COMMITTEE

Skip L./Pat S., Chairpersons
Pat S./Doris S., Assistant Chairpersons
Susan A., Associate Director, Conference

The committee held one full staff, one interim and three full committee meetings.

MAILINGS TO CONFERENCE MEMBERS

Conference members received regular mailings bimonthly. During the first quarter, they received the Conference Communication Kit containing registration and other pertinent materials. Conference members also received the Preliminary Budget, Auditor's Report, Communication Questionnaire Report, Regional Trustee Resumes for Canada, 1996 Annual Report, Policy Motions, and Notes on the 1996 Bell Curve Presentation for insertion in the Conference Notebook. Second year delegates were asked to sponsor new Conference members.

Subsequent mailings included material related to the 1998 World Service Conference as well as newsletters, public service announcements, copies of letters to coordinators and new material. Areas which adopted a Russian group received a summary of contributions to date.

CONFERENCE PREPARATION

From January through May, activities focused on coordinating, compiling material and wrapping up the 1997 World Service Conference. The remainder of the year involved negotiations with the Holiday Inn Executive Center and preparations for the 1998 WSC.

In March, the Conference Chairperson, Assistant Conference Chairperson and Associate Director, Conference hosted a one-hour conference call with 22 of the new Conference members.

1997 CONFERENCE SUMMARY

The 1997 Conference Summary design and editing took place at the WSO rather than through the services of an outside designer. Additional graphics and subtitles were added to improve the appearance and readability of the Summary. Current delegates received 2,600 complimentary copies of the 1997 Conference Summary for distribution to area world service committees. Current delegates, trustees and GSOs received a personal copy, totaling about 350 copies. More than 500 copies were sent to past delegates, past trustees and past WSO Conference members. A total of 3,250 individual orders were filled.

EQUALIZED EXPENSE FUND

The Executive Committee designated the 1998 Equalized Expense at \$900 US with subsequent Board approval. Full cost of attending the Conference is \$1,350. As of December 31, 1997, payments have been received from 60 areas.

ASK IT BASKET (AIB)

Questions and answers from the 1997 World Service Conference were reviewed by a committee at the Conference and printed in the 1997 Conference Summary.

REGIONAL TRUSTEE (RT) PROCEDURES

A cover letter, voting procedures and resumes of regional trustee candidates from Canada West, Canada Central and Canada East regions were sent to

all voting and non-voting Conference members prior to the RT nomination session at the 1997 World Service Conference.

Regional trustee election results were Marjorie S., Canada West; Tom C., Canada Central; Catherine J., Canada East.

Area delegates in the US North Central, US Northeast and US Southeast regions received material at the 1997 World Service Conference, as these regions will submit candidates' names for nomination at the 1998 World Service Conference.

Candidates for regional trustee:

US North Central: Lawrence A., Illinois (N) and Peggy S., Iowa.

US Southeast: Jeannette B., Alabama; Valda R. and Marion R. (alternate), Florida(N); Don K., Florida(S); Skip A., Georgia; Diane H., North Carolina/Bermuda; and Felix M., Puerto Rico.

US Northeast: Bette O'B., Connecticut; John S., Maryland/District of Columbia; Cecelia L., Massachusetts; Joan S. and Rachel K. (alternate), New York (N).

Areas not listed from the US North Central, US Southeast and US Northeast did not submit candidates this year. The names of the voting trustees will be drawn at the January 1998 Board meeting.

1998 WSC

1998 Theme: Inventory — Searching for Progress and Growth

Dates: April 19-23, 1998.

Election Assemblies/Panel 38 (1998-2000): Outgoing delegates received AWSO forms to complete at their election assemblies and mail to the WSO. Areas elected Panel 38 delegates in the fall of 1997. Each delegate received a welcome letter with pertinent material including a *1997 Conference Summary*, *1995-1996 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, and information regarding the new service structure.

Delegate Committee Appointments: A questionnaire mailed to Panel 38 delegates requested their committee preference. Following the return of the questionnaires, assignments to delegate committees commenced. Factors which determined new delegates' committee assignments included past delegates' committee assignment, number of delegates from the same region on the committee, new delegates' preference and timeliness of the return of the form.

Opening Session: Sunday, April 19 at 8:30 am in the Executive Ballroom.

Visit to the World Service Office: On Friday, April 24 at 9:30 am, trolleys depart for the WSO with a return trip to the hotel after lunch.

Three Minute Talk Theme: Outgoing delegates received an invitation to present a three-minute talk on the Conference theme: "Inventory — Searching for Progress and Growth." Those delegates selected as spiritual speakers could elect to not present a three-minute talk.

WSO Chosen Agenda Items: Conference members will submit their questions to the WSO prior to the Conference to be sorted in advance. Through a vote, Conference members will select four topics for open discussion. Remaining topics will either be addressed in workshops and reported back to the Conference or included in the Ask-It-Basket.

Taping: A request for proposals generated bids from two taping services. One will be chosen to record the World Service Conference. Conference members may purchase audio tapes of the three-minute and spiritual speakers' talks. Speakers will receive complimentary tapes of their talks.

New Conference Member Orientation: A conference call for new members is planned for February 21, 1998. An orientation meeting is scheduled for Saturday evening, April 18.

Overseas Representation: All GSOs received an invitation to the World Service Conference. Germany and Mexico indicated an early interest in sending a representative.

Delegate Committee Reportbacks: These will be brought to the WSO, compiled and mailed to members following the World Service Conference.

Leadership/Inventory Workshops: In response to a motion at the 1997 WSC, Conference members will participate in a workshop designed to inventory the Conference.

Conference Notebook: Printing of the notebook will take place immediately following January Board Week. Material mailed from the WSO prior to the Conference will not be duplicated in the notebook. This material stamped, "FOR WSC NOTEBOOK," is to be brought to the World Service Conference for inclusion.

1999 WSC Site: Possible sites for the 1999 WSC include five hotels in the Greater NYC metropolitan area.

SUBCOMMITTEE: ADMISSIONS/HANDBOOK

Mary A-T., Chairperson

Susan A., Associate Director, Membership Outreach

The full standing committee met twice at the Conference. A memo was sent to the Board to approve the seating of non-voting members at the 1997 Conference. With delegate input, the committee continues to work on the two new pamphlets entitled, "Joys of Service" and the "Links of Service" poster for service-minded members. A definition for "emerging national structures" was added to the *Handbook* section. Some revisions regarding DRs' expenses and the ratio of 2/3 delegates to 1/3 staff and volunteers were drafted for approval by the Conference.

OFFICE COMMUNICATION

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, trustees, past trustees, district representatives, area chairpersons, and newsletter editors. After reading area newsletters, articles of interest as well as letters sent to the WSO by service-minded members were excerpted for *Area Highlights*. Editorship of *Area Highlights* was transferred to Fellowship Communication in the fall.

1998 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Ric B., Chairperson

Mary Ann K., Convention Coordinator

Susan A., Co-Coordinator

Carole K., Volunteer Convention Consultant

Registration/Housing Forms: An eight-page information brochure designed in-house in English, but printed outside due to the large quantity, contains all the information members need to fill out the one-page registration and separate page for housing. Translations of Spanish and French were produced and printed in-house. All versions gave encouragement to members to attend and vacation options. A map of the Salt Lake City downtown and valley area depicts the location of the 25 hotels contracted to hold room blocks for the Convention.

Mailings: Five registration/housing forms were sent to every group with *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*; five forms were sent to district representatives with *Area Highlights*; Coordinators and Lone Members received copies also. One hundred copies of the form were sent to the General Service Offices around the world. The mailings were scheduled in such a way that groups

outside the US/Canada and General Service Offices were mailed first; Canada, Alaska and Hawaii were mailed next; and the groups in the US were mailed last, giving everyone an equal opportunity to register for the hotel of their choice. Subscribers to *The Forum* received a convention registration form with their October issue.

Dormitory Accommodations: Three-, four- and five-night packages including breakfast, will be available at the University of Utah and the free shuttle bus starting on Thursday at noon will include the dorm as one of its stops.

RV: The VIP campsite will be another site on the Al-Anon shuttle bus schedule.

Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau: In addition to our work with the bureau to get the Convention Center under contract, Al-Anon will use the Housing Bureau section of the Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau to process all the housing requests including the dorms. The on-site personnel needed to work on registration will also be hired through the bureau.

Registration Process: The company contracted to handle registration has agreed to mail five inserts with the badge: a letter from the Chairperson of the Convention, a list of the tours available, a questionnaire about volunteering, a return envelope and a flyer on the Pioneer Luncheon. If the form is sent in Spanish or French the inserts with the badge will go in that language.

Hospitality: After some informal discussions with the delegate from Utah, the Southwest Regional Trustee and the Planning Committee, the idea of having individual hospitality suites was not considered the best option for this Convention due to cost and the large hospitality room. It was agreed to request all areas and regions join with the volunteers in Salt Lake in making their hospitality room (Exhibit Hall C of the Convention Center) a warm and friendly meeting place. Most areas and regions are supporting this concept. Interest was expressed by some on-line members for a hospitality suite, but they decided instead to request a workshop about being on-line and all the benefits. This will be included in the program.

Program: Workshop titles were submitted by a variety of committees and service and recovery titles will fill the days' activities. Volunteers and staff will select speakers from the volunteer questionnaires sent to conventioners. All information about the convention is planned for printing in the program, eliminating the need to have a labor-intensive registration packet.

Convention Center/Salt Palace: All existing space in the Convention Center has been reserved for Al-Anon. During the day, WSO will use all the breakout rooms for workshops. Registration will also take place here. On Thursday and Saturday evenings there will be a dance.

AA: In the October/November issue of the AA newsletter, *Box 459*, AA wrote about the unique relationship that AA has with Al-Anon and noted AA's participation in the Al-Anon International Convention. AA will have an information booth in the registration area where local members will distribute the AA program. AA meetings during the day will be at the Doubletree Hotel. Speakers for these meetings will be obtained from the printout of AA registrants which Al-Anon is providing AA monthly. The AA GSO Coordinator for this event, plus present and past AA delegates from Utah toured the Convention Center with the Al-Anon Host Committee and the Al-Anon Convention Coordinators. The Utah AA Assembly is deciding whether or not to have an AA hospitality room in the Doubletree.

Delta Center: The Associate Director, Public Outreach joined the Convention Coordinators and Host Committee members as they toured the site with special emphasis on organizing the "Language of Love Parade." The Host Committee will lead the parade into the Delta Center and it is hoped that 400 members in costume will follow. The signs grouping parade marchers will be in the 30 languages in which Al-Anon literature is trans-

lated. Planners hope that there will be members to represent these languages and instructions will be sent to those coming from other countries. The Director of Fellowship Communication will also work on the parade coordination. Immediately following the parade, the "Language of Love Meeting" will take place. The Delta Center will be the site of the Big Meeting on Saturday night and the Sunday Spiritual Meeting. The Associate Director, Literature will coordinate these meetings. Reserved sections at this event will be for the hearing impaired, the Host Committee, the local band playing for the parade and the AA GSO representatives.

Pioneer Luncheon: Coordination of this event began early in 1997 by the Director of Group Services, since the reservation flyers for this luncheon went out with each registration, saving a mailing cost. Professional entertainment is planned along with an Al-Anon program.

Conference Reunion Luncheon: Glenna C. and Roberta A., the Host Committee Chairpersons, have written a warm invitation to this luncheon and it is signed by all the past Utah delegates. The Associate Director, Conference is working with them to ensure that this event, which will be at the Marriott on Friday, July 3 at 11:30 am, will be renewing and inspiring.

GSO Luncheon: The Associate Director, International is working with the Planning Committee and the GSOs for this event, which is to be held on Thursday, July 2 at 12:30 pm at the Wyndham. The event is to encourage those in service at the national level and to give those serving an opportunity to meet each other.

Book Sales: INTERNATIONAL SPIRITUALITY (working title) will be launched at the convention. The registration and hospitality areas will have booths where the book can be purchased.

Tapes: A local taper has been arranged so all the workshops and the Big Meeting will be taped and sold for members to take home.

Decorators: During the February and November trips to Salt Lake, meetings were held with the display firm that will help WSO and the Host Committee decorate the Exhibit Hall, build the stages for bands and entertainment at the Convention Center and the major stage at the Delta Center. They will also create our signage for the convention.

Shuttle: The destination management company provided a list of tours before, during and after the convention to mail to registrants. A booth in the registration area in the Convention Center will provide additional information along with shuttle bus schedules. The dorm at the University of Utah, the University Park Hotel and the RV campsite VIP are the stops on the WSO shuttle.

Media Coverage: On a June trip to Salt Lake to participate in the Utah School of Alcoholism, the Director of Public Outreach also began working with the Host Committee to set up a schedule with the local Public Information Chairperson, Jerrie K. They plan to build a relationship with the media and announce the new PSAs during the convention as part of the campaign to interest the media in Al-Anon. Initial contact will begin in January from the WSO and will be followed by the local members to create opportunities for interviews and other coverage of the International Convention.

Host Committee: The Host Chairpersons met with the Director of Membership Outreach and Associate Director, Conference for several hours on both trips to Salt Lake and were at their disposal to do anything required of them to help with the coordination of the Convention. About twenty of the host core committee did a walk-through of the Convention Center and Delta Center with the WSO staff and facility personnel. They were able to see some of the complexities of the overall plans for the Convention and how important their role is. The local host committee arranged for an open Al-Anon meeting where the AA GSO Convention Coordinator and the WSO Convention Coordinator told their personal stories, focusing everyone's attention on how grateful we are for both programs, which not only

help in our ongoing recovery, but now encourage us to celebrate that recovery.

50TH ANNIVERSARY

Mary Ann K., Chairperson

OBJECTIVES

The Board approved the objectives presented by committee as follows: to celebrate the fact that Al-Anon Family Groups have been helping families and friends of alcoholics for 50 years; to use this milestone as a means of letting the public and professionals know that Al-Anon is a credible and viable worldwide organization true to its mission and principles; to foster growth and unity within Al-Anon by celebrating together and to include in the celebrations as many members as possible.

PLAN

The committee will send a plan to the Board of Trustees for presentation at the 1999 WSC incorporating the appropriate ideas received from around the world on celebrating this milestone. With the Policy Committee's approval of a calendar containing celebration events and the history of Al-Anon, the committee will create the criteria for such events to be listed. The Public Outreach segment of the plan will be written by the Director of Public Outreach. Ideas from the Archives Advisory Committee and *The Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee will be reviewed and incorporated when financially feasible. WSO is considering holding its celebration in Virginia Beach.

THEME

"Fifty Years of Passing it On" has been chosen by the committee as the theme and a special logo will be created for this milestone.

LOCAL AREA CELEBRATION

To include a large number of members in this event, planners of events are encouraged to create their own celebrations or to incorporate, into a scheduled event, some time to acknowledge and involve members in this anniversary.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

Margaret G., Chairperson

Marsha W., Associate Director, International

INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON GENERAL SERVICES MEETING (IAGSM)

Virginia Beach, VA was the site for the Ninth International Al-Anon General Services Meeting held October 16-19. The Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee chaired this meeting that brought together 42 delegates representing 23 of the 30 General Service Offices, International Coordination Committee members and WSO staff. The topics ranged from "Finding Answers in the Concepts" to an in-depth discussion about "Alateen Sponsorship in a Changing World." There were a total of nine general sessions and six workshops. The theme "Growing in Experience, Understanding, and Love" was truly descriptive of this meeting. The following motions were proposed:

The Admissions Committee recommended that the Ninth International Al-Anon General Services Meeting admit the representatives from Korea and French-speaking Switzerland who have met the criteria set in the guidelines. Motion passed.

The IAGSM recommends to the Board of Trustees to decide that each structure may produce original recovery material within the four requirements set down by the WSO board in 1994. Motion did not pass.

The IAGSM recommends that the IAGSM be held in Germany in the year 2000 and, in the event of an emergency, the IAGSM be held in the United States. Motion passed.

The delegates shared their interest in setting up a home page for the General Service Offices that would be unifying for the fellowship and cost-effective. The possibility of joining their pages to the World Service Office home page will be explored.

In the Alateen presentation, a delegate shared that after many intense meetings at their Conference in 1996, the General Service Board of the UK and Eire presented a document outlining procedures for the appointment of Alateen sponsors and the registration of Alateen groups. They believe for the protection of Alateens and their sponsors, Alateen sponsors will be asked to go through a screening process. To be in accordance with the laws in the UK and Eire, when an organization works with children, two adults must be present at all times. This law also protects the sponsor from unfounded accusations. UK and Eire's Conference and Board agreed it is their responsibility to protect Alateen members from inappropriate sponsors.

During the IAGSM, as the delegates shared their structure's experience strength and hope, they spoke of the importance of the Concepts of Service and their value when making decisions. Many also shared about the positive cooperation between Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous in their countries.

At the last general session, each delegate was given an opportunity to share what they planned to take home from the IAGSM. One thought expressed a feeling shared by all, "I will take home so much love, service and inspiration....I thank Al-Anon for a loving Higher Power and a new world family."

ADOPT A RUSSIAN GROUP

Areas still enthusiastically continued to support this project. Group registrations total 104. Letters from Russian members express appreciation for the love, support and hope illustrated in the literature.

SERVICES

Translations: The following were sent to reviewers: Belgium (Flemish) - *Courage to Change - One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II*, first three months; Brazil (Portuguese) - *Alateen: Hope for Children of Alcoholics, When I Got Busy, I Got Better, Homeward Bound*; Germany - *Does She Drink Too Much?*; Sweden - *Al-Anon IS For Men, Why is Al-Anon Anonymous?*, *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, Al-Anon Spoken Here, Al-Anon Is and Is Not*; Netherlands (Dutch) - *Moving on from Alateen to Al-Anon*.

Literature Requests: Requests and correspondence were received from Saudi Arabia; Belarus; Egypt; Nyeri-Kenya, East Africa; Greece; Kerala, India; Malta; Mauritius Island, Indian Ocean; Estonia; Latvia; Indonesia; Philippines; Uganda; Japan.

Mailings to GSOs and Delegates: Ten different mailings were sent with information about WSO publications, the IAGSM and the 1998 International Convention.

Reprint Permission:

How Al-Anon Works For Families & Friends of Alcoholics

Argentina, Australia

This is Al-Anon

Argentina

Homeward Bound

Argentina

What's Next? Asks the Husband of the Alcoholic

Argentina

Al-Anon Speaks to You the Professional

Argentina, Mexico

What Do You Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking?

Colombia

Planting A Seed

Colombia

Institutions Meeting Explanation

Colombia

Information for the Newcomer

Colombia

Sexual Intimacy and the Alcoholic Relationship

Colombia

Are You Troubled by Someone's Drinking? (Al-Anon Is for You!)

Colombia

Courage to Change: One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II

Brazil

Door Poster

Brazil

Flower Poster

Brazil

Alateen Talks Back on Higher Power

Brazil

Alcoholism, A Merry-Go-Round Named Denial

Korea

How Can I Help My Children?

Korea

Al-Anon/Alateen Is and Is Not (bookmark)

Mexico, Sweden

One Day At a Time in Al-Anon

Netherlands

Sponsorship, What It's All About

Sweden

Al-Anon IS For Men

Sweden

Why is Al-Anon Anonymous?

Sweden

Al-Anon Spoken Here

Argentina, Sweden

AL-ANON INTERNATIONALLY**ASIA****India**

A new Intergroup has registered in Chennai.

Korea

They are planning a home page and will hyperlink to the WSO's home page.

AustraliaAs a result of reading the article in *The Forum*, July 1997, on the Literature Workshop presented at the WSC, the Literature Committee requested a copy of the workshop.**New Zealand**

The GSO sent a request asking if discontinued literature could be sold. The GSO has autonomy on this and WSO shared our experience about the process of deletion.

EUROPE**Belgium (French speaking)**

The GSO asked where they should send French literature orders since the closing of PFA. A literature distribution center was created in Montreal at the same address to distribute French literature. The WSO encourages all orders for French literature be sent to this LDC in Montreal.

Commonwealth of Independent States

An Al-Anon information service has formed in Moscow and has requested permission to reprint. The criteria for printing and guidelines for a GSO were sent. They also advised they had their first Conference in Moscow in October. An invitation extended to WSO staff was declined as the Conference was scheduled the same weekend as the IAGSM.

Finland

A representative wrote requesting PSAs for Alateens. They are planning to make a tape in Finnish to introduce Alateen to school age children. We sent a Media Kit from Public Outreach to give ideas and a script of the Alateen video which they found useful.

FranceIn order to help build enthusiasm for the 1998 International Convention, the GSO requested permission to translate and reprint *The Forum* article on the 1990 International Convention in Seattle, Washington in their publication, *La Chaine*.**Germany**The Chairperson of the Alateen Committee found a discrepancy in the wording of the Alateen Preamble in *Courage To Be Me*. We advised the text of the preamble is incorrect as printed and will be corrected in the next printing.**Italy**

The GSO requested that WSO share experience regarding the duties of the Associate Director, Conference to assist in their preparation for their Conference held in April.

Spain

The GSO reported their Conference held in March was successful. It was reported that reading Concept Ten and several pages from our daily readers set the tone for discussions that answered questions and diffused problems.

SwedenThe GSO inquired as to the reason for the cross-reference listings in the book, B-21, *From Survival to Recovery*. These listings are printed to assist librarians and researchers for cross-referencing topics and is a requirement when listing a book in the United States Library of Congress.**UK & Eire**

The GSO asked for a copy of the list of Al-Anon/Alateen service materials approved for publication by the WSO Board of Trustees and Policy Committee on the Internet. In addition, shipping problems were raised by the GSO and later addressed by the Budget Committee.

NORTH AMERICA**Costa Rica**Advised they will purchase 300 copies of a first printing of *...In All Our Affairs* in Spanish.**Mexico**The GSO is committed to buying 5000 copies of a first printing of *...In All Our Affairs* in Spanish from the WSO.**Panama**

The first intergroup registered with WSO. They informed us they have ten active groups.

SOUTH AMERICA**Argentina**The GSO sent documentation indicating the trademark of Al-Anon and Alateen is now registered. Based on the reportback in the 1995 *Conference Summary*, the GSO asked the WSO to share experience in dealing with disruptive members.**Brazil**

Trademark registration of Al-Anon/Alateen has been completed.

ColombiaThe GSO requested a definition of the duties of officers on the Executive Committee; they also advised they will purchase 2000 copies of the first printing of *...In All Our Affairs* in Spanish.**Venezuela**

The GSO reports their goal is completion of the Al-Anon and Alateen trademark registration process before the end of the year.

SPANISH SERVICES*Raquel K., Translation Services Manager***NEW MATERIAL COMPLETED**Check It Out Posters (SM-55 and SM-56) and flyers were sent to delegates with Spanish-speaking groups in their areas; 1998 International Convention flyer; an invitation to WSC delegates for the Spanish Luncheon; public service announcements (PSAs) on CD with a script and book marks with slogans from Mexico were given to delegates during the luncheon; (SP-37) *Fact Sheet For Professionals*; courtesy card to use with routine replies; three appeal letters were translated; 1998 "Tornado" TV and radio Al-Anon/Alateen; PSA scripts: Al-Anon TV "Cocktail Party" and Alateen TV "Birthday Party" PSAs.Letters were sent to Spanish-speaking members in California who requested the translation into Spanish of *Paths to Recovery - Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts*; correspondence was sent to and from eleven Spanish-speaking GSOs and also to individuals regarding business and program issues.

UPDATE MATERIAL - MINOR REVISIONS

Al-Anon/Alateen Is and Is Not (SM-44); *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friend of Alcoholics* (SB-22); *Are You Troubled By Someone's Drinking?* *Al-Anon IS For You* (SS-17); *Al-Anon Birthday* contribution envelope (E-3); Spanish order form and order blank for supplementary material (SS-16); *Information For The Newcomer* (SS-4); *Courage to Change: One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II* (SB-16); *Dear Mom & Dad* (SP-67); *When Got Busy, I Got Better* (SP-78); *Alateen Sponsorship Is It for You?* (Portuguese language) (PP-27); *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* to be printed in Colombia (SB-8); *Operation Alateen* (SP-30); *Is Alcohol a Problem in Your Family?* *Alateen Poster* (SM-41s); *How Can I Help My Children?* (SP-9); *So you Love an Alcoholic* (SP-14); *Purpose and Suggestions* (SP-13); *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (SP-48).

NEWSLETTERS

Three issues of *Al-Anon y Alateen en accion*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* 1997 World Service Conference Highlights were mailed to groups, individuals, delegates, coordinators and GSOs; *Al-Anon Speaks Out* mailed to 400 professionals.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

Edition, revision and proof reading of *Al-Anon y Alateen en accion*, December/January/February and March, 1998; finish the revision of the translation of the book *...In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work For You* (SB-15), and proof mechanical of it; 1998 *Catalog*; Web Site material; Winter issue of *Al-Anon Speaks Out*; update guidelines.

FRENCH SERVICES

STAFF

With a letter to all French Canadian Groups, the WSO is recruiting a member for the Language Services Coordinator position to replace an employee who left. To comply with immigration laws requiring recruitment in the US before looking to another country, a notice of this opening was sent to all *Forum* subscribers with the December issue. In March, a French bilingual secretary was hired to assist the Language Services Department.

TRANSITION MEETING, FRENCH SERVICES AT WSC

The Executive Committee Chairperson, the Canada East Regional Trustee, delegates from Quebec (E) and (W), and the Director of Membership Outreach make up the transition team. The Translation Services Manager and Language Services Coordinator also participated. In this meeting, the delegates were informed that at the WSO, three employees speak French in order to serve the individual members and groups. The process for the translation and publication of *The Forum* was reviewed as well as the commitment of the WSO to continue to give the French groups quality service.

NEW MATERIAL

Check It Out! posters (FM-55 and FM-56) and flyers were sent to Canadian delegates; letters for Group Records registration and Al-Anon information services; 1998 International Convention flyer; three appeal letters; *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians* (FP-85); three letters with WSO news; correspondence to and from individuals on business and program issues; courtesy card used with routine replies; public service announcements (PSAs) Fear and Anger, new PSAs - Tornado; *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*; World Service Conference Highlights were mailed to all groups.

UPDATED MATERIAL

Minor Revision, *Al-Anon IS for Men* (FP-1); *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (FP-17); *What Do You Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking?* (FP-19); *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (FB-8); *Birthday Envelope* (E-2); *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (FS-37); *Freedom from Despair* (FP-6); *Purpose and Suggestions* (FP-13); *Al-Anon Fact File* (FP-36); *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (FP-48); *Are You Troubled by Someone's Drinking?* (FS-17); NPIC Fact Sheet; *Homeward Bound* (FP-8); *Information for a Newcomer* (FS-4).

NEWSLETTERS

Le Forum: January to June sent to subscribers; July, August, September,

October with Alberte C. for revision and printing; November and December with freelance translator.

PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics (FB-22) with Alberte C.; French and English price list (FP-16); Audio Visual Order Form (FS-16 AV); guidelines update; web site material; *So You Love an Alcoholic* (FP-14); 1998 Catalogue.

REGIONAL SERVICE SEMINARS

COMMITTEE

Pat A./Ann H., Chairpersons
Mary Ann K., Director

After discussion and debate, the RSS Committee voted to recommend to the Board delaying the 1998 Regional Service Seminars until 1999. This decision was based on the concern that the resources of both the WSO and the fellowship could not support three seminars and an International Convention in the same year.

The committee approved the following changes: that the RSS registration fee be raised to \$25.00 local currency, beginning with the year 2000 seminars; that the coffee breaks be replaced by refreshment breaks including soda and juice and that they be cash bars and no longer part of the meal package or a WSO expense, beginning at the 1999 seminars; that the guidelines be amended to suggest that the host committee registration chairperson and host committee chairperson or co-chairperson be given complimentary rooms at their seminar; that the guidelines be amended to suggest that WSO pay room and meal package for the host committee registration chairperson and host committee chairperson or co-chairperson when they can afford to pay the travel to a preceding RSS.

Committee members reviewed a letter written by a delegate with concern regarding the RSS registration process. An ad hoc committee was formed to explore whether the RSSs are serving our purpose and to bring recommendations and suggestions back to the committee in January. Included in their recommendations will be consideration of changing the registration process.

Committee members discussed an area request to have a WSO staff member attend a one-day service workshop at the WSO's expense. The committee decided that since one of the major reasons the 1998 RSSs were postponed to 1999 was lack of staff resources, we would not be able to fulfill this request.

The use of "seed money" provided by WSO and the lack of clarity in the RSS guidelines about repaying the remainder of it after expenses, specifically when fundraising is done, was another issue sent to the existing ad hoc committee. The RSS Committee is looking into all costs incurred by the seminars.

Currently, the site selection process is done at the WSC by the delegates from within the region. The process was clarified: if WSO cannot work with either of the hotels where bids were submitted, then WSO will ask the Host Committee for another bid.

The six-month follow up evaluations of the March 1997 US Southeast RSS continue to arrive. To date, 119 have been received and enthusiasm at the RSS continues to motivate those who stay involved in service.

1997 REGIONAL SERVICE SEMINARS

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

Reportback: Doris S., Ric B., Claire R., Mary Lou M., Don C. and Mary

Ann K. represented the World Service Office. There were 486 registrants. From the evaluation, workshops were the most popular session on the evaluation with the structure and bell curve most helpful. Five hundred dollars was returned to WSO after the Host Committee paid expenses. Tapes were sold of most of the general sessions and reportbacks were mailed. Members used two buses and their own cars to tour the World Service Office on Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and on Sunday, some staff opened the office from 12:30 pm to 3:00 pm.

Canada Central

Connie D., Chairperson
Susan A., Coordinator

Dates: August 22 - 24, 1997

Site: Holiday Inn - Airport West, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Theme: Keys to Recovery

Reportback: Helen R., Ric B., Marsha W., Larry A., Tom C. and Susan A. represented the WSO. One hundred and sixty-seven people attended. From the evaluations, members especially appreciated the session on DRs, the spiritual meeting and the sharings from World Service Office staff and volunteers. No taping was done and reportbacks were mailed.

US Northwest

Ann H., Chairperson
Mary Ann K., Coordinator

Dates: September 26 - 28, 1997

Site: Sheraton Portland - Airport Hotel, Portland, Oregon

Theme: Raining Service Opportunities

Reportback: Helen R., Ric B., Sandra F., Caryn J. and Catherine J. represented the World Service Office. There were 374 registrants. This large number was due in part to the AIS/LDC workshop held on Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm before the RSS began at 7:00 pm that evening. Sandra F., Caryn J., Jayne D'A. and Margaret M. attended the AIS/LDC workshop. Nancy B. attended in preparation to chair the RSS in the US Southwest, fall of 1999 and Catherine J. attended in preparation to chair the RSS in Canada East, spring of 1999. The WSO sessions ranked the highest on the evaluations as to what people enjoyed and learned. The Host Committee sent \$753.49 to the WSO. No reportbacks were written and every session was taped.

BUSINESS SERVICES

Richard Keilly, non-member,
Director of Business Services

BUDGET

COMMITTEE

Don C., Chairperson

Richard Keilly, non-member, Director of Business Services

The activity of the Budget Committee is reported monthly to the Executive Committee. Actions (recommendations/motions) of the committee are reported to the Executive Committee or directly to the Board, depending on the matter. Any such actions are reported under either the Executive or Board sections of this report.

The committee reviewed monthly the financial statement and continued ongoing planning and review of the appeal letters. In July, the 1997 Budget was revised by adjusting contributions upward by \$70,000. While contributions tended to flatten toward the end of the year, they still maintained an increase over 1996.

Project approval consideration was given in many areas including *Paths to Recovery*; the printing of catalogs in two color; registration fee for the 1998 International Convention; changes to *Pebble in the Pond*; the Al-Anon/Alateen Membership Survey (S-29); military packet sleeves to be used in a

"military outreach" pilot project; the translation of ...*In All Our Affairs* in Spanish, the printing of ...*In All Our Affairs* in soft cover; the printing of 3,000 copies of the Gay and Lesbian pamphlet in French; an increase of \$7,528.00 to the already-budgeted \$30,000 1997 PSA radio and TV campaign; holiday promotion for *The Forum*; 1998 WSC equalized expense; co-founders eight-panel leaflet; *Forum* blow-in card baker's dozen renewal project; and to recycle existing radio/TV PSA spots, the translation and production into French and Spanish was authorized.

In November and December, in the preparation/development of the 1998 Preliminary Budget, the committee met with each director. Due to the disturbing trend of declining overall literature sales, it was necessary to cut back — or table indefinitely — many worthwhile projects. The directors (and in some cases, associate directors and supervisors) were called upon to justify many parts of their budgets. The painful cutbacks impacted every service and department.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Jayne D., Customer Service Manager

CREDIT CARD

A new point-of-sale terminal for credit cards was acquired for the Customer Service Department. The new terminal saves on telephone costs, processing time and settlement time. We now accept all major credit cards - American Express, Discover, Visa and Master Card - for literature, subscriptions and contributions. Order blanks were updated to include the addition of Discover and American Express.

MAILINGS

The new book, *Paths to Recovery*, was offered on consignment to our literature distribution centers (LDCs) throughout the United States and Canada. One hundred three LDCs responded and orders for 13,500 books were processed.

SHIPPING CHARGES

Foreign shipping charges were reviewed. Customer Service prepared charts to compare the shipping charges for our overseas GSOs and domestic LDCs. As a result, shipping and handling charges outside the US and Canada increased from 7% to 10%.

THE FORUM

Many letters have been received inquiring about incorrect *Forum* expiration dates on labels. The Customer Service Department is working with the Technological Services Coordinator to eliminate this problem. All inquiries are being answered through correspondence and telephone calls.

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE

An accounts receivable aged report was made available for use by staff management in 1997. Collection efforts by the Customer Service Department reduced the amount of outstanding accounts receivable to approximately \$200,000.00 at year end.

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

Janet Lucci, non-member, Human Resources Manager

SALARY INCREASES

Cost of living increases were paid to new employees on their one year anniversary date. Other staff received their increases on either April 1 or June 1, depending on hire dates. Merit increases were based on an employee's work performance during the preceding year.

PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

A revised copy was distributed to all staff, the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees.

MEMORANDUM SERIES

The internal memorandum series keeps employees apprised of job vacancies, new staff, holiday schedules, special events, co-worker information and changes in office procedures.

HOLIDAYS/OFFICE EVENTS

In June, we held our first Relocation Celebration/Employee Appreciation Day in honor of our first year in Virginia Beach. The staff joined together for lunch and games. Some of the activities included volleyball, badminton, softball and various inside games. We held an end of the summer afternoon Employee Picnic in September. The staff contributed salads, side dishes and desserts.

Staff also contributed their favorite dishes for our Thanksgiving celebration. A final holiday party was held in mid-December with the WSO providing the entrees and the staff bringing their favorite desserts. Some of our staff provided entertainment by singing, reading poetry and even playing a cello/keyboard duet.

BENEFITS

On May 1, we offered our staff a new benefit - a professional Employee Assistance Program. Now, an outside provider is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to offer professional counseling to all employees and their families. Previously, the Human Resources Department had referred an employee to their health care provider. Our EAP provider offers five free confidential sessions per year to each employee and their family before they have to access their health care benefit.

BALANCING WORK AND FAMILY

Our Employee Assistance Program held an on-site seminar to assist employees regarding how to better manage their work and family lives. Twenty-five employees attended this one-and-one-half-hour session.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The staff attended a variety of seminars including The Exceptional Assistant, the Meeting Professionals International Conference, Overview of Microsoft Office Software, and various software training such as Excel and Word. All new supervisors were sent to a How to Supervise seminar.

The entire management and Policy Committee team joined together for an on-site Team Training Seminar that had been designed specifically for Al-Anon. The Executive Director, Directors, Associate Directors, Human Resource Manager, Controller and Customer Service Manager continue to meet as a team on the WSO goal of establishing avenues of communication that encourage teamwork, mutual support and respect.

OFFICE OPERATIONS

Reception: The Virginia Beach area continues to bring many visitors and this year over 300 guests visited the WSO. Tours are offered at 2:00 pm daily by the receptionist. In keeping with a long-standing tradition, all visitors are asked to sign the WSO guest book.

Volunteers: Our volunteer force is now being managed by our Business Operations Coordinator. We had an overwhelming response this summer from volunteers and have compiled a large supply of Newcomer Kits. Volunteers continue to help with some of our mailings including *Area Highlights* and *Alateen Talk*.

PUBLICATIONS

Steve Raiford, non-member, Publications Manager

By the end of 1997, four of the five members of Publishing Operations had begun their second year with the WSO. This stability in staffing has led to gains in efficiency and quality.

The WSO service departments receive a production report each week from Publishing Operations that enables them to track their projects through each

stage of production. The report shows the current status of each job, its destination, due date, and any action that is needed to keep the job moving through production. This report has enhanced inter-departmental communication and all but eliminated the amount of time service departments spend inquiring about the status of their projects.

The coordinator position was upgraded so that the person in this job now has the skills to serve as a backup for the graphic designer on such projects as newsletters and order blanks. A second desktop publishing work station was installed as the department took on the task of designing *The Forum* in-house.

The print shop eliminated their backlog of work during the first quarter due to improved project planning and better coordinating. The press equipment was extensively repaired and continues to be well maintained in order to increase production capacity, thereby enabling us to increase the number of titles printed in-house.

A printer was contracted to produce the new book, *Paths to Recovery*, and a partial shipment was received at the WSO in time to meet the scheduled due date. The balance of the shipment will be received on an as-needed basis to avoid overwhelming the shipping/warehouse department. This new title was also registered with the US Copyright Office and the required samples were sent to the Library of Congress. US copyrights for all titles expiring at the end of 1997 were renewed and verification was received from the Library of Congress.

The form used by service departments to request work was expanded to include delivery and storage instructions. A holding area was created for depositing printed materials used for mailings so that the warehouse would no longer need to receive printed pieces not intended for storage or filling orders. The space for the holding area was created by reducing the types and amount of paper that are stored for in-house printing.

The graphic design of many titles, notably *The Forum*, guidelines, and all newsletters has been updated and improved by the graphic designer. Order blanks have been designed for better readability and many other publications now have a greater perceived value due to their improved graphic design.

TECHNOLOGY

Edward Corona, non-member, Technological Services Coordinator

COMPUTER SYSTEM

The Members Only database has been a recurring problem throughout the year. In January, Michael Stein & Associates came to the office to correct many of the major problems with the software. However, continual adjustments to the software program have been necessary. At various times during the year, we have experienced problems with *The Forum* mailing list; accounts receivable have not been balanced; the program did not accurately save information, i.e., start dates on subscriptions were changed if the user entered new information in that account, etc. The majority of these problems have been now been solved. However, Members Only continues to be a "Work In Progress".

A new computer has been purchased for the Archives room and two additional printers have been purchased this year. Additionally, extra RAM memory has been installed to upgrade the network server.

TELEPHONE SYSTEM

The telephone system experienced a complete shutdown in January, but this problem was promptly resolved with no further occurrences.

APPENDIX

STAFF

Ric B., Executive Director
Fran T., Administrative Coordinator
Sandra F., Director Group Services
Evalynn N., Associate Director, Alateen
Joe T., Assistant to Director, Institutions, Lone Members
Michele R., Assistant to Director, Alateen, Adult Children
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
Julie M., Assistant to Director, Public Outreach
Carole P., Public Outreach Service Manager for Canada
Mary Ann K., Director Membership Outreach
Susan A., Associate Director, Conference
Marsha W., Associate Director, International
Raquel K., Translation Services Manager
***Steve Raiford.**, Publications Manager
***Richard Keilly.**, Director Business Services
***Cathy Broyles.**, Controller
***Edward Corona.**, Technology Coordinator
Jayne D., Customer Service Manager
***Janet Lucci.**, Human Resources Manager
***Camille Peters.**, Business Coordinator
***Carlos Delgado.**, Warehouse Manager

*non-member

1997- 98 VOLUNTEER CHAIRS AND STAFF SUPPORT

Board of Trustees - Helen R., Chairperson; Ric B., Executive Director
Executive - Pat B., Chairperson; Ric B., Executive Director
Policy - Margaret M., Chairperson; Ric B., Executive Director
Nominating - Betty B., Chairperson; Ric B., Executive Director
Budget - Don C., Chairperson; *Richard Keilly, Director Business Services
Long Range Study Panel - Nancy B., Chairperson; Sandra F., Secretary
Group Services - Felix M., Chairperson; Sandra F., Director, Group Services
Alateen - Larry A., Chairperson; Evalynn N., Associate Director, Alateen
Archives Advisory - Catherine J., Chairperson; Sandra F., Director, Group Services; Barbara M., Archives Coordinator
Literature I - Howland R., Chairperson; Mary Lou M., Associate Director, Literature
Literature II - Blanche M., Chairperson; Caryn J., Director, Fellowship Communication
The Forum Editorial Advisory - Marion W., Chairperson; Caryn J., Director, Fellowship Communication; Mary Lou M., Associate Director, Literature; Pat Q., *Forum* Coordinator
Conference - Pat S., Chairperson; Doris S., Alternate Chairperson; Susan A., Associate Director, Conference
Admissions/Handbook Subcommittee - Mary A-T., Chairperson; Susan A., Associate Director, Conference
1998 International Convention - Ric B., Chairperson; Mary Ann K., Coordinator
50th Anniversary - Mary Ann K., Chairperson
International Coordination - Margaret G., Chairperson; Mary C., Assistant Chairperson; Marsha W., Associate Director, International
Regional Service Seminars - Ann H., Chairperson; Mary Ann K., Director, Membership Outreach
Public Outreach - Doris S., Chairperson; Phyllis M., Director, Public Outreach; Claire R., Associate Director, Public Outreach
Outreach to Professionals Advisory - Marjorie S., Chairperson; Phyllis M., Director, Public Outreach; Julie M., Assistant to Director, Public Outreach
National Public Information Canada (NPIC) - Margaret M., Chairperson; Phyllis M., Director, Public Outreach; Claire R., Associate Director, Public Outreach; Carole P., Public Outreach Service Manager for Canada

*non-member

Trial WSO Restructuring Chart

