

2004 Conference Summary

Al-Anon Family Groups 2004 World Service Conference
Ramada Plaza Resort Hotel, Virginia Beach, VA

April 18-22, 2004

DYNAMIC GROUPS TODAY—

Building Blocks For Tomorrow



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Concept Eleven

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

“Our World Service Conference is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.”

2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), page 157

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CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Gen B.,
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

“Dynamic Groups Today—Building Blocks for Tomorrow” was the theme chosen for this year’s Conference. It was used throughout the five-day session as the foundation on which to build skits and presentations, and was the focus of sharings by outgoing panel 42 Delegates.

Early on Sunday morning, before the official opening of the 44th World Service Conference and after the daily Al-Anon meeting, all members of the Conference gathered for their first meal together. The Chairperson made formal introductions of the respective panels, World Service Office (WSO) staff, Trustees, and others who were in attendance



at the Conference.

The Conference began promptly at 8:30 a.m. with the Serenity Prayer. The first order of business was to approve the Admissions/ Handbook Committee motion which allowed the following persons to be seated with voice but no vote:

David Zach, Director of Business Services
(non-Al-Anon Member)

Pat H., Chairperson, Executive Committee
for Real Property Management (Al-Anon
member)

Maria del Carmen R., International Represent-
ative from Mexico (Al-Anon member)

The motion carried unanimously. (See WSC
Motion #1, page 56.)

The Chairperson called roll and began the lengthy first-day announcements. By consensus, the Conference voted to allow still photos. Everyone was reminded that no video taping was permitted before, during, or after the Conference or at the WSO. The processes for voting, submitting a motion, and time at the microphone for discussion of a topic were reviewed. An Ask-It-Basket and Seventh Tradition basket were placed on the dais for those who wished to contribute.

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cecelia L.,
Chairperson, Trustee

“On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc., I have the pleasure of extending to you a very warm welcome to our 44th World Service Conference.

“Each year, as the Conference officially gets underway, I become filled with gratitude for the privilege of being a part of something as awesome as each Conference proves to be. My spirit is truly moved as I stop and ‘remember when.’ I thank the God of my understanding for leading me to the dynamic group that showed me the way to recovery and encouraged me in the service positions that led to here and now. I thank the God of my understanding for leading each and every one of you to your particular dynamic group that, in turn, resulted in you being here today.

“On page 301 in *Paths to Recovery* it says, ‘Each and every member of Al-Anon has the potential to become a leader.’ We have realized that potential and we are just where we are

supposed to be. How fortunate we are that that place is here.

“At this time, we begin our work as a newly formed ‘Al-Anon Family Group,’ officially called the 44th World Service Conference. Will we be a dynamic group? Well, the dictionary defines dynamic as ‘marked by continuous productive activity or change; marked by energy; forceful; vigorous.’ So what do you think? I say we are a sure thing.

“Will we be a building block for tomorrow? Well, I estimate our collective Al-Anon wisdom at about 2,000 years. So what do you think? I say ‘How can we miss!’

“So, once again, I bid you welcome. May you enjoy the week’s journey as we work to ensure that each and every Al-Anon group realizes its potential to be not only a dynamic group today but also a building block for tomorrow.”

After her greeting, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees read the Traditions.

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Each year, Delegates gather on the evening before the official opening of the Conference to share their areas' successes, challenges, and projects. This meeting is open to all Conference members.

This year the moderator divided attendees into four groups, which each addressed four topics: "Successes," "New Ideas," "Concerns," and "Lessons Learned."

Successes

- Participated in a Native American national conference
- Increased productivity at assemblies by providing information in advance, forming committees, limiting time at the microphone, starting on time, doing an in-depth area inventory, discussing weaknesses, instituting a registration fee
- Had a Trustee presentation of Alateen timeline from 1961 to present
- Donated for the first time to the World Service Office (WSO)
- Increased Spanish groups from two that meet three times per week to four that meet six times per week
- Action committees were formed: to implement Alateen requirements; to give a presentation to nurses
- Initiated an e-mail communication tree for area world service committee (AWSC) members
- Using a Web site to help a large area stay in contact; another developed an e-mail group which has helped to bridge the communication gap in a large geographic area
- Had a 100 percent increase in attendance by Group Representatives (GRs) at assemblies
- Filled many long-vacant coordinator positions
- Had all districts in the area participate in the AWSCs and approximately 350 members attend assembly
- Gave an Al-Anon presentation at a ministerial association gathering
- Had individual members donate to fund a billboard
- Increased Al-Anon's name recognition through a newspaper interview and a large article on Alateen
- Allowed GRs to talk instead of just listening at assemblies
- As part of their "Successes," some of the Delegates shared about the projects their areas created for the WSO Special Project

New Ideas

- Had volunteers hand out literature on Alcohol Awareness Day at a large shopping mall
- Sent letters and schedules with Al-Anon's Public Service Announcements to all libraries; provided Al-Anon/Alateen bookmarks to libraries to put in books being checked out
- Started an outreach program at rehab and detox centers that have family programs
- Created an area Policy Manual and Newcomer's Packet; wrote personal welcome and thank you letters to newcomers
- Passed a "Forum for Change" can to purchase subscriptions for professionals; had a contest on how to recycle *The Forum*, with three categories for winners: Easiest, Most People Involved, and Most Original
- Had District Representative (DR) workshops titled "Talk to Each Other"
- Put Al-Anon on the Iditarod trail
- Initiated a three-year project linking Coordinators and districts together on literature, Alateen, and outreach projects; the teams switch each spring at the AWSC so everyone can participate in each project
- Worked with a local restaurant to use placemats with Al-Anon information on them
- Worked with local grocery stores to put literature in bags
- Had orientation sessions during registration and at lunch at every assembly
- Contacted as many counselors and facilities as possible; got e-mail information; sent them a simple e-mail with the WSO toll-free number, meetings in the local area, and free literature and directories when needed; project was named "Cover the Bases"
- Hand delivered a letter to local AA meetings, along with schedules and pamphlets, explaining what Al-Anon is
- Invited past Delegates to assemblies to share service experience on the theme, "Look to the Past to Protect the Future"
- Had Alateen Sponsor getaway weekends

Concerns

- Having service positions filled with a name but the member is not involved
- Accountability of trusted servants to attend meetings; lack of education for those new in service positions

- Teen attendance down, but have Alateen Sponsors interested
- Dual members seeking positions beyond group level, saying the *Service Manual* is unimportant
- Updating of group records at district, area, and WSO levels
- Using member e-mail addresses for personal gain
- Working with those who are resistant to change
- Attracting members with time and expertise to serve as Web master
- Newer literature encouraging separateness and uniqueness rather than unity is slowly diluting Al-Anon's original form and content with continuous changes and revisions
- Lack of group donations
- Legal demands requiring insurance and/or policies causing less involvement in service beyond the group
- Perception that groups are being directed by the Board of Trustees to provide something which is unenforceable regarding Alateen; Alateen safety and behavioral requirements
- How to educate members regarding potential predators without sounding like it's gossip or criticism
- Al-Anon members going to AA functions but not Al-Anon functions or gratitude days
- Members unwilling to make a commitment

Lessons Learned

- Attitude is everything
- Listen to all points of view
- Be flexible and patient
- Show enthusiasm and don't apologize for taking time to share
- Walk through challenges with the help of others
- The importance of working together as an Al-Anon "family"
- Following the three Legacies in any decision or action
- Delegate
- Early presentation of information regarding large expenditures at budget discussions
- Early presentation of background information for items requiring a vote
- Maintain a balanced budget
- Have a sense of humor
- Share experience, strength, hope, and responsibilities when rotating service positions
- Educate, communicate, and allow time for the process to work
- Don't encourage unqualified members to fill positions
- The importance of "carefully defined service authority"
- Leadership is to serve, not to dominate
- To use an independent service for Web site instead of a member's site
- Keep repeating the need for commitment to service and what the position entails
- Projects always take more time than is planned
- When implementing a project, have all the literature and supplies available; momentum is lost spreading it out over months
- Regularly read the essay on leadership qualities under Concept Nine in the *Service Manual*
- Delegates don't have all the answers; "we don't know what we don't know"
- Take more time to focus on who is there and less time on who is not

CLEARING THE AIR

Colleen R.,
Trustee

With two-thirds of the Conference returning each year, there are, at times, some who may have had some afterthoughts regarding an issue that was or was not presented, an opinion that was not expressed, or a procedure that was either not understood or misunderstood. This time is set aside for those who wish to express their concerns about any issue left over from last year's Conference that would hinder their ability to fully participate this year.

When the floor was opened, these were the concerns of those who chose to share:

- That the Chairperson review the voting procedures
- That everyone be conscious of the two-

minute time limit at the microphone

- That the WSO should have waited until all the research was done on the original text of the Legacies before the changes were made
- That all Ask-It-Basket questions and Chosen Agenda Items submitted to the WSO be given the same weight and that the Conference be allowed to choose what is talked about on the floor
- That there be more "down time"
- That, although the Conference is meticulous, attention be paid to how information from this Conference is translated into other languages and who is looking at the detail.

APPROVALS

2003 Annual Report

A copy of the 2003 World Service Office (WSO) Annual Report was mailed to each Conference member at the beginning of March 2004. Members were asked to submit questions to the WSO in advance. The only question submitted asked for an explanation of the “click-it-forward e-mail communication.” With this process, portions of Coordinator mailings would be sent via e-mail. When Coordinators received an e-mail, they would “click-it-forward” to District Representatives, who could then “click-it-forward” to Group Representatives, who could print it and take it to their groups. This process is currently being tested with the Delegates before implementing it fully with Coordinators.

At the Conference, the floor was opened for questions. Clarification of the reference in the Report to the “2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act” was requested. It was explained that, due to recent corporate financial improprieties and the losses resulting from them, the United States government has enacted laws regarding the responsibilities of company financial departments. The law was

originally aimed at for-profit entities, but it is now being considered for not-for-profit corporations also. The law requires independent oversight of a corporation by an independent audit or finance committee.

In the Report, it stated a goal that 50 percent of material in the Conference mailings would be available electronically by the end of 2003. One member asked if a goal of 100 percent would be met this year. It has been the policy of the WSO to try to get the information to all members at the same time. A delay in implementation occurred because not everyone at last year’s Conference understood the “e-buddy” system. There were technical difficulties and new equipment was purchased which should allow more material to be available electronically. Some information, like pamphlets, will never be sent electronically.

Appreciation was expressed again for the new Report format. A member commented that the Report was not received in a timely manner.

A motion to approve the 2003 WSO Annual Report was carried. (See WSC Motion #2,

Ric B.,
Executive Director

2003 Auditor’s Report

Conference members received the 2003 Auditor’s Report in advance of the Conference to allow time for review. The Director of Business Services began his report by calling Conference members’ attention to the Report of Independent Auditors. He explained that the report, dated March 1, 2004, contained an unqualified opinion (the best opinion you can have) concerning the financial statements of the AI-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. (the WSO), as of December 31, 2003.

As of December 31, 2003, the WSO had total assets of \$11,239,432 and total liabilities of \$3,329,666, leaving unrestricted net assets of \$7,909,766 among the General, Reserve, and Building funds. Revenue from operations in 2003 totaled \$4,077,845 and expenses for the year were \$3,963,759. A gross profit of \$2,620,467 was realized on literature sales. Subscription income from *The Forum* totaled \$298,157. Contributions were down approximately \$36,000. The

Reserve Fund had a change in net assets of \$489,624. The Building Fund, established in 1995 to record the purchase of the building housing the WSO, showed the cost of land, building, and building improvements after depreciation at \$2,445,998. There was \$80,286 of contractual reserve for the retirement of bonds and \$1,200,000 of Board-designated reserve for bond retirement above the contractual amount. Building expenses are charged to the General Fund through occupancy costs.

By a motion passed in July 1999, the Board of Trustees authorized net investment income (excluding realized and unrealized gains) from the Reserve Fund and the Building Fund to accrue to the benefit of the General Fund beginning July 1, 1999. Investment income in the General Fund for 2003 was \$156,000.

One member asked for clarification of the distinction between a qualified opinion and an unqualified opinion. It was explained that

Jack S.,
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach,
*Director of Business Services
(Nonmember)*

in a qualified opinion, the auditing firm has some reservations about the financial statements of the company being audited. An unqualified opinion indicates the firm has no reservations about its opinion. Another member commented that because our building fund is included in the report, the assumption is that there is no separate corporation that owns the building. It was explained that there is no separate corporation. However, a separate committee, the Executive Committee for Real Property Management, oversees the

operations of the building.

A separate handout showing contributions generated discussion. The report summarizes all contributions, including the quarterly appeals. It was asked why Washington, DC was not included on the report. The response was that because the report is by area, Washington, DC is included with Maryland.

A motion was made to approve the 2003 audited financial report. The motion carried. (See WSC Motion #3, page 56.)

2004 Budget

Jack S.,
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach,
*Director of Business Services
(Nonmember)*

Before the official presentation of the 2004 budget, the volunteer Treasurer asked the Conference members to share some of their “big ideas” or dreams of things that could be done for public outreach. Ideas shared included:

- Buy our own TV time so we don’t have to rely on public service announcements
- Have the Al-Anon and Alateen name everywhere, making Al-Anon a household word
- Put posters on the back of the doors in stalls in bathrooms at bars or airports

Conference members were asked to share ideas on how the World Service Office (WSO) and areas could work toward a stronger relationship. Some of the ideas expressed were:

- Have a staff member from the WSO visit the area
- No registration fees for regional service seminars
- Have more outreach to the on-line world: Host a list server for us so we are not subject to advertising
- Translate literature into all languages at the same time as English literature.

Members received handouts, which included a “2005 Fiscal Roadmap,” a comparison of the 2003 actual with the 2004 budget, and the Capital Budget for 2004.

One member asked for an explanation of the credit under Packing and Shipping. In March of 2003, the WSO changed the amount it charged for shipping and handling of literature. The amount collected now is slightly higher than the amount being paid. That causes a credit in the expense column. Regarding the “2005 Fiscal Roadmap,” it

was asked why the WSO thinks the trend for expenses would go up when it seems to be going down. Because of inflation, the long-term trend for expenses is up. We have been fortunate in the past to reduce costs, but it is not reasonable to believe we can continue to do that in the long run. Another asked the reasoning behind making up the deficit from the General Fund and not the Reserve Fund. The explanation was that the Reserve Fund is set aside for emergencies and funding special projects. One of the handouts listed the amounts designated for the 2004 Capital Budget. One member asked why this is not on Schedule 1 of the Budget. Although this is a cash outlay, our budget is on an accrual basis. These cash outlays will appear on the financial statement as the items depreciate. Would the WSO eventually be sending out all materials via e-mail, allowing them to do away with postal mailing? The WSO is in the process of getting all the Delegates and Coordinators on-line, but it is not practical to transmit certain materials electronically, so there will still be mailings from the WSO. Why is the 2005 AA International Convention not in the 2005 Fiscal Roadmap? Will Al-Anon be participating and, if so, what expenses are anticipated? When Al-Anon is invited and participates at an AA International Convention, AA pays our expenses. When AA participates at our International, we pay AA General Service Office expenses to participate. Another question was asked regarding the mortgage on the WSO office building and the expectation as to expenses when it is paid in full. The building mortgage is projected to be paid by 2016. While

continued on page 8

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

	<u>2004 Budget</u>	<u>Preliminary 2004 Budget</u>	<u>2003 Actual</u>
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries (includes Temp Help)	1,847,000	1,847,000	1,833,462
Payroll Taxes	151,000	151,000	146,046
Employee Benefits	<u>544,000</u>	<u>544,000</u>	<u>440,564</u>
Total Labor Costs	2,542,000	2,542,000	2,420,072
Building Occupancy	298,000	298,000	290,668
Packing & Shipping (Net)	(1,000)	(1,000)	14,849
Postage	256,000	318,000	239,401
Telephone	70,000	70,000	66,483
Stationery & Office Supplies	112,000	112,000	74,246
Outreach Activities	29,000	29,000	18,529
Public Information Exhibits	12,000	12,000	4,331
Office Services & Expenses	155,000	155,000	160,244
Repairs & Maintenance	18,000	18,000	12,207
Travel & Meetings	166,000	166,000	147,855
Direct Conference Costs (Net)	70,000	70,000	59,831
Regional Service Seminars	20,000	20,000	11,796
Legal & Audit	30,000	30,000	38,199
Printing	136,000	136,000	131,060
Canadian Public Information	27,000	27,000	15,110
In-Office Volunteers	6,000	6,000	5,030
PSA Campaign	92,000	92,000	84,629
Miscellaneous	<u>22,000</u>	<u>22,000</u>	<u>23,395</u>
Total Operating Expense	\$4,060,000	\$4,122,000	\$3,817,935
International Al-Anon Gen'l Service Mtg.	77,000	77,000	
Membership Survey	0	0	11,923
Depreciation & Amortization (Exc. Bldg.)	<u>140,000</u>	<u>170,000</u>	<u>133,901</u>
Total Expense	\$4,277,000	\$4,369,000	\$3,963,759
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>			
Literature Sales less cost of printing	2,526,000	2,526,000	2,620,467
Contributions	1,160,000	1,160,000	1,003,221
Forum Subscriptions	275,000	275,000	298,157
Interest	79,000	79,000	156,000
Funds from General Fund *	<u>237,000</u>	<u>329,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Total Estimated Revenue	\$4,277,000	\$4,369,000	\$4,077,845

* To be used only if necessary revenue is not received

the interest costs will disappear, the other costs, such as maintenance and utilities, will continue. Someone asked about the negative projected budget for 2004. The Treasurer advised that for the past 10 years the WSO has had a break-even budget. This is the first time we have anticipated a negative budget. We have accumulated over \$1,000,000 in the General Fund because we have had several years when income exceeded expense. So, in the short term, a negative budget will not

substantially weaken us financially. Projects have been cut from the budget this year and the Committee will take another look at it in July. One member asked what the WSO felt was the long-range projection for contributions, and the response was that it is hard to estimate, but it is up to the fellowship.

A motion was made to approve the 2004 Finance Committee report. The motion carried. (See WSC motion #4, page 56.)

VISIT TO THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

On the second day of the Conference, members and their guests visited the World Service Office. Since it was a weekday, this was an opportunity to see and meet the WSO staff. Delegates and their guests were greeted as they arrived by a double column of WSO Trustees ushering them into the lobby, where the Executive Director welcomed them. He explained the unique features of the building and pointed out the portraits of Al-Anon's cofounders, Lois and Anne, on the wall of the lobby.

Conference members then gathered into small groups for tours of the office conducted by WSO support staff. Delegates observed the day-to-day operations of the World Service Office. One of the most popular stops on the tour was Group Records, where staff mem-

bers located home groups in the database. While on the tour, guests had the opportunity to preview the newly re-designed WSO Web site. They also listened as staff members responded to toll-free meeting line calls and located meetings for callers. Another popular stop for many members was the Archives room. There they saw memorabilia of our pioneers and records of Al-Anon's early years on display. Conference members were also impressed with the shipping department, warehouse, and print shop. Following the tour, a picnic luncheon was served on the patio. Before boarding buses to return to the hotel and the business of the Conference, Delegates and their guests strolled around the outside of the building taking many pictures to share with their areas.



Front Entrance of the WSO

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Gen B.,
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Cynthia H.,
*Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—Conference*

Delegates from each panel, Trustees, and staff members comprise the Selected 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 a committee, the committee requested by the new Delegate, and timeliness of the request. Below are the Delegate committee assignments for this year's Conference:

Committee	Panel 42 (2002-2004)	Panel 43 (2003-2005)	Panel 44 (2004-2006)
Admissions/ Handbook	Bev A., NE Tim H., ON (N) Jennie McC., ME	Carolyn L., KY Jan H., TX (E) Fran K., IL (N) Gail C., ON (S)	Mickie Z., MP Ruth H., WA John McL., VT Carol C., CO
Conference Committee on Trustees	Shirley T., WY Dru S., MO Bonnie T., AK*	Miriam McK., CA (S) Mari Lee W., IN Julie M., MD/DC Ruth H., MB Denise R., RI	Ann F-S., MA JoAnne H., MN Janie J., AL
Group Services	Elizabeth S., NY (S) Jerie S., AR Judi O., NH Diane B., SK	Lucy R., FL (N) Vicki H., CA (N) Carol F., MN (S) Connie D., NY (N)	Elaine L., QC (E) Debbie P., OK Nancy C., WV Paula B., NC
Literature I	Renee M., NV Jay P., LA Dawn D., SD Sharon S., UT	Sue B., MI Denise M., DE Margie R., TX (W) Jane L., TN	Debbie F., GA Kal T., BC/YT Marilyn M., AB/NT
Literature II	Theresa P., CT Pat R., IL (S) Rick M., NM Jacqueline M., PR	Stuart M., FL (S) Pierrette G., QC (W) Ethel B., HI	Cindy M., AZ Susan G., OR Jim S., WI Kathy B., NJ
Public Outreach	Harriet F., NL Nancy B., SC Carol V., IA Ruth B., ID	Geri H., OH Jeanine S., PA Mary K., KS	Fran A., MS Kay R., MT Shirley J., ND Phylliss S-T., VA

* Alternate Delegate

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATION

Ora B.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Caryn J.,
Director of Communication

Joe T.,
WSO Archives Coordinator

Archives Advisory Committee

The primary purpose of the WSO Archives is to preserve our records through systematic record retention, provide research services, and to display pertinent items reflecting our history.

In 2003 the Board of Trustees approved a three-year trial suspension of this Committee. The last meeting attended by at-Large members was in January 2003. Since that date the staff has updated the Chairperson and the Executive Committee regarding the work carried out in the Archives. This is our annual report to the Conference.

Staff continues to preserve minutes and other valuable records on the LaserFiche system. Such records are now retrievable electronically rather than having to be physically touched. Cataloging continues. Preservation of older materials is ongoing. The lobby display has been changed to show a history of past issues of the *World Service Conference Summary* (P-46) and related



WSO Archives Display

memorabilia. One sizeable addition to the collection was the documentation for Al-Anon's most recent daily reader, *Hope for Today* (B-27, B-28).

The WSO Archives record management and retrieval capabilities are effective in timely research for the staff, volunteers, and the fellowship. Requests for missing documents printed in Coordinator mailings, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, or *Area Highlights* have generated many donations from the areas and individual

members. Similar requests will continue to be made in these communication tools.

Staff continues to follow the direction established at past Advisory Committee meetings, the Executive Committee, and the Board of Trustees. There remains much work to be done and at this time it appears the suspension of the Committee is appropriate, as no new issues have arisen that need the expertise of an Advisory Committee.

Peggy S.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Julie F.,
Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Patrick Q.,
Associate Director of Fellowship
Communication—Literature I/Forum

Suzanne M.,
Fellowship Communication
Coordinator

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee

The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee includes members from Arkansas, British Columbia, Florida, Iowa, and North Dakota. At each of its quarterly meetings, the Committee reviewed and graded 250 manuscripts and critiqued the last three issues of the magazine to assure that the quality of the magazine and the editorial policy is consistent with Al-Anon philosophy.

Staff implemented the Committee's decision to ask groups to select a topic from the annual index and submit five to ten questions for the magazine's "Round Table Topics" department. The Chairperson reminded Conference members to encourage groups to submit a topic with questions to *The Forum*. If selected, the magazine will publish the group's name and state/province/country, unless the group requests to remain

anonymous.

The Forum staff included a sharing sheet, "Calling All Al-Anon and Alateen Members Referred to Al-Anon by a Professional," in the January 2004 *Forum*. This issue included *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, which the World Service Office mailed to the current mailing address of all English-speaking groups that receive the newsletter. Committee members have begun reviewing and grading these manuscripts for possible inclusion in the 2004 September Recovery Month issue of *The Forum*. September's edition will contain several personal stories of members whose experience included professional referrals to Al-Anon.

The Chairperson asked Conference members to remind their areas that members can access three *Forum* articles each month on the

Members Web site, www.al-anon.org/members, as well as purchase or renew a subscription. She also asked the Conference to remind their areas that the Group Representatives are also the Forum Representatives. As such, the Group Representatives encourage their

group to subscribe for at least one copy, acquaint their members with the magazine's value, and urge members to subscribe. Group Representatives also suggest that their members send stories of interest to *The Forum* at the WSO.

*Submitting "Round Table Topics"
to The Forum*

Literature Committee I

Literature Committee I celebrated the completion of *Blueprint for Progress: Al-Anon's Fourth Step Inventory* (P-91) by distributing copies to Conference members during the general session. The eight and a half by eleven, 96 page, spiral bound edition follows the 1999 WSC motion for a major revision and expansion of *Blueprint for Progress* (P-5) to a comprehensive Fourth Step workbook. *Blueprint* has been the Committee's main project for the past year. New chapters include topics such as fear, anger, control, intimacy, sex, and spirituality. The publication is three-hole punched for use in notebooks and is available through local literature distribution centers and the WSO for \$7.50 US.

Staff briefed members regarding the Committee's newest project, RECOVERY IN RELATIONSHIPS (working title). To date, the fellowship has submitted over 700 personal stories for this project, in which members describe changes in significant relationships that have occurred during recovery in Al-Anon. The Committee agreed to solicit more stories from men, racial minorities, gays and lesbians, and Alateens to approximate the percentage of these groups that comprise the Al-Anon fellowship according to the most recent membership survey.

The Committee concentrated on their roles and responsibilities by reviewing the Conference Approved Literature process. As members of one of two Literature Committees, they updated the procedures that apply to e-mail reviews of text. They reviewed several requests from the fellowship regarding new literature and changes in existing literature. They denied all requests for changes, but agreed to sponsor a motion

to grant conceptual approval for a new daily reader focusing on parents and grandparents of alcoholics.

Reaction on the Conference floor to this motion was mixed. While some members saw a need for more literature to address parents, not all were convinced that a daily reader was the ideal format. Several members felt that there were enough daily readers, with one member sharing, "Where I live, people can't afford to buy a reader." Another concern was that, "When we focus, it separates us. We cannot be all things to all people. It's still the same program. It still offers recovery regardless of who qualifies us." One member said she had felt the same way about *Hope for Today* (B-27, B-28) until it was released. "It's the only daily reader that I have stuck with and read daily." Another said, "My son is in jail and we are looking to bring a grandchild home. I think a daily reader deserves some thought." The motion did not carry. (See WSC Motion #8, page 56.)

Literature Committee I members agreed with a Group Services Committee request to discontinue *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship* (P-86), because it does not adequately meet the current needs of Alateens and their Sponsors. The recommendation for discontinuance will make it possible for the Group Services Department to adapt the material into a service tool. Members also agreed to recommend to the Executive Committee the discontinuance of *What's "Drunk," Mama?* (P-44).

Following open discussion, the consensus of the Committee was to recommend to the appropriate committee the development of a service tool on abuse and alcoholism.

Bidge B.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Patrick Q.,
*Associate Director of
Fellowship Communication—
Literature I /Forum*

A Revised and Expanded Blueprint

Literature Committee II

Zelda R.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Tom C.,
Associate Director of
Fellowship Communication—
Literature II/Newsletters

This year the Committee completed the major revision of *Al-Anon Sharings from Adult Children* (P-47) approved by last year’s Conference. The next printing of this pamphlet will include revised text, several stories from *Al-Anon Is for Adult Children* (P-52), and new text on the Twelve Steps. The Committee also completed minor revisions of several other pamphlets, including *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7).

After discussion, the Committee concurred with the recommendation of the Group Services Committee to discontinue *Alateen Sponsorship—An Unforgettable Adventure* (P-86).

The major revision of the book *Al-Anon’s Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8), approved by last year’s Conference, is proceeding on schedule. The Committee has given initial approval to text changes and has selected several replacement stories.

In 1985, the World Service Conference passed a motion that the Al-Anon Preamble must appear on the copyright page of all Conference Approved Literature. The Fellowship Communication Department recently discovered and brought to the attention of the Literature Committees that because of design/formatting variances, adherence to this motion has not always been completely possible. Some pamphlets include the Preamble elsewhere than on the copyright page. In order to amend the 1985 Motion, the Committee presented two motions to the Conference. The first, a formality based on the importance of previously carried motions,

requested that the Conference reconsider the 1985 motion. (See WSC Motion #10, page 57.) Once that carried, they presented a motion to amend it to read that the Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps be included in all Conference Approved Literature, preferably on the copyright page. The only question that arose in discussion of this motion was a clarification of which pieces this would affect. The response was that the motion only specifies Conference Approved Literature, not service tools. This motion also carried. (See WSC Motion #11, page 57.)

Last year’s Conference gave conceptual approval to a piece on FACING GRIEF & LOSS WITH AL-ANON (working title). It has been assigned to Literature Committee II, which has begun brainstorming on the best approach to take with this piece. To date, over 100 sharings have been received. The Committee invites the fellowship to continue submitting sharings.

Literature Committee II and Policy reviewers approved a revised draft of the pamphlet, *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17). In final review of the pamphlet, however, the Executive Director did not approve the revision. The Committee is studying alternatives.

The Committee also discussed several options for the booklet *What’s “Drunk,” Mama?* (P-44). After careful consideration, the Committee decided to recommend discontinuance to the Executive Committee and to examine other options for fulfilling the needs met by this booklet.



Upcoming Revisions

GROUP SERVICES

Group Services Committee

The Group Services Committee met by teleconference call in February 2003 and approved the Alateen Advisory Committee's recommended discontinuance of *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship—An Unforgettable Adventure* (P-86). A memo was sent to the Literature Committees for their concurrence, since this booklet is Conference Approved Literature.

The Alateen Advisory Committee also recommended requiring two Sponsors at each Alateen meeting. The Group Services Committee agreed that having two Sponsors should be strongly recommended and encouraged, but not made an Al-Anon policy.

The Committee members were given an opportunity to share their views and concerns regarding the Board's motion regarding Alateen minimum safety and behavioral requirements.

The Committee reviewed a draft of the Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service form. The Associate Director of Member Services/Alateen described how the form will be used to help areas certify that Alateen Sponsors and other Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service meet the area requirements.

The Group Services Committee received graphs showing the number of Al-Anon and Alateen groups within and outside of the Conference structure. The number of groups worldwide decreased from 27,153 to 26,140 during 2003.

The Committee discussed ideas from the Alateen Advisory Committee regarding replacement of *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship—An Unforgettable Adventure* (P-86) as a service tool or tools.

The Committee reviewed the revised Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change

Form, and suggested that the Group Records Coordinator be listed at the bottom of the page in the list of trusted servants that receive copies. The Committee also reviewed the new Alateen Registration/Group Records Change Form as well as the Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service form. All of the new forms were distributed during the Conference.

The Committee also discussed how to strengthen the links of service at the district level. Committee members were asked to submit service sharings on this topic for possible publication in *Area Highlights*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, or "Inside Al-Anon" in *The Forum*. Empowering District Representatives with current information, an increased understanding of their role, and getting a Service Sponsor were some of the ideas the Committee had for helping districts serve the groups they represent. The discussion continued on how the communication between districts and intergroups works in the areas represented by the Committee members. In some areas the districts sponsor the intergroup and there is a sharing of ideas and finances to help initiate and complete Public Outreach projects. In other areas, the two entities foster conflict as a result of unclear boundaries and purpose. Sharing ideas and having open communication between districts and intergroups seemed to be the number one solution.

The on-line registration form and system, which is only available for use by Group Records Coordinators, is under-utilized. Less than ten areas are using the system. The WSO will contact the Coordinators to determine why they are not using the system before making any other recommendations or changes.

An announcement was made that the April

Lynda E.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Dolores T.,
*Associate Director
of Group Services*

Judy D.,
*Alateen Advisory Committee
Chairperson, Trustee*

Barbara O.,
*Associate Director of Member
Services/Alateen*



New Registration/Change Forms



Links of Service

17, 2004 Policy Committee meeting affirmed that Al-Anon would have only one “Welcome” and confirmed the Group Services Department’s removal of the “Newcomers’ Welcome” from the Group Binders (M-59 and M-60). All members of the Group Services Committee received Group Binders for input before updating.

One of the Committee duties is to report, identify, and evaluate Seventh Tradition

ideas. The Committee suggested a revision of the pamphlet, *The Seventh Tradition Suggests* (S-21).

The Committee discussed Alateen Conferences and the need for the multiple area Alateen conferences to abide by the implementation of the Alateen minimum safety and behavioral requirements process. This will be an ongoing discussion.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

Admissions/Handbook Committee

Liz W.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Cynthia H.,
*Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—Conference*

*Unity through the Handbook—
Similarity, not Sameness*

The Admissions/Handbook Committee, with Trustee and Delegate members, is a subcommittee of the Conference Committee. It has two specific responsibilities relating to the World Service Conference (WSC). The first responsibility is to review and make decisions on all requests for seating recommended non-voting participants at the Conference (see “Conference Theme and Opening Remarks,” page 2), and to make decisions on all requests to seat populous areas that want to divide.

The second is to make recommendations for changes to the “World Service Handbook” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). Since 2002, when the Conference voted to affirm the Board’s

implementation of the revised World Service Office committee structure, the Committee has devoted much of its time to reviewing and revising the current language in the Handbook to accurately reflect the links of service and make the text consistent with the new structure. That review was completed at this year’s full Committee meeting. During discussions, Committee members endeavored to remain true to the vision of Al-Anon’s cofounders—that the WSC structure support dynamic groups through the use of the Handbook. The Handbook provides a base of unity, which is one of our assets. Unity was described by one 1975 WSC member as “Unity is not sameness, it is similarity.”

International Coordination Committee

Colleen R.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Marsha W.,
*Associate Director of Membership
Outreach – International*

During this past year, the number of Al-Anon General Service Offices (GSOs) increased from 32 to 34. Requests from Portugal and Peru to establish GSOs were approved by the Board of Trustees on a trial basis. Both have been granted reprint permission.

Contact has been established with members in Cuba. They indicate that they have over 30 groups and would like to work with the World Service Office (WSO) toward building a sound foundation based on our three Legacies. (See Spanish Luncheon, pages 16-17.)

The Associate Director—

*IAGSM 2004
São Paulo, Brazil*

International and Chairperson of the Policy Committee will represent Al-Anon at the 10th International A.A. Convention in Greece from May 6-9, 2004. The primary purpose for attending this meeting is to strengthen the links of communication with Greek and Turkish Al-Anon service members who attend this event. The WSO representatives will also participate in the Convention as a speaker and workshop leader.

The Executive Director and a volunteer Al-Anon member on the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee will participate in the First Asia Pacific Institute of Addictions in

Singapore from May 30 to June 3, 2004. As with the WSO trip to China in 2002, this is an opportunity to share the benefits of the Al-Anon and Alateen programs with professionals and others through presentations and three open Al-Anon meetings.

The Twelfth International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) will take place October 6-9, 2004 in São Paulo, Brazil. This is the first time this event will be held in

South America. The theme is “Building Al-Anon’s Future on Our Spiritual Foundation—the Warranties.” The agenda will include six workshops and eight Delegate presentations at the beginning of each General Session. To date, thirty-seven Delegates representing twenty-six structures plan to attend.

One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (RB-6) was reprinted in Russia for the first time.

2005 AA International Convention with Al-Anon Participation

“Let It Begin with Us,” is the theme for Al-Anon’s daytime workshops and meetings at the 2005 AA International Convention to be held June 30th to July 3rd in Toronto. Workshop speakers will be randomly selected from lists of registered participants. In addition to workshops and meetings for Al-Anon and Alateen members, a reception will be held to encourage members who live outside the World Service Conference structure to become involved in service. In keeping with the same format used for our participation at the 2000 AA International Convention in Minneapolis, no other Al-Anon gatherings are planned.

Al-Anon members may attend all AA

events, including the big meetings Friday night, Saturday night, and Sunday morning. The registration forms and housing information will be mailed to all groups in September 2004. Updated information can be found on AA’s Web site: <http://www.aa.org>.

Ric B.,
Chairperson

Marsha W.,
Convention Coordinator

Dolores T.,
Convention Co-Coordinator

*Al-Anon’s Participation at the
2005 AA International Convention*

2008 Al-Anon International Convention Update

Conference members viewed a presentation about Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, site of Al-Anon’s 2008 International Convention with AA participation, to be held July

4th through 6th. Members living in the Pittsburgh area are looking forward to welcoming Al-Anon, Alateen, and AA members from around the world.

Ric B.,
Chairperson

Marsha W.,
Convention Coordinator

Dolores T.,
Convention Co-Coordinator



Pittsburgh—Home of the 2008 Al-Anon International Convention!

Regional Service Seminars (RSS)

Carolyn W.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Mary Ann K.,
Director of Member Services

Canada Central RSS



US Northwest RSS

Regional service seminars (RSSs) are weekend events for Al-Anon members. Those new to service come to learn more about the Al-Anon structure and how to be effective in their service work. Longtime members come to renew their commitment to service and discover new ways to serve. Our structure is divided into nine regions, three in Canada (Canada West, Canada Central, and Canada East) and six in the US (US Northeast, US Southeast, US North Central, US South Central, US Southwest, and US Northwest). Three RSSs are held each year and the event rotates so that every three years one seminar is held in each of the nine regions.

The Regional Service Seminar Committee revised the “Regional Service Seminar Host Committee Guidelines” to give clearer direction to those planning the RSSs. With these guidelines in place, the RSS Committee agreed to meet three times a year (July, October, and January) on a trial basis, eliminating the April meeting.

The US South Central RSS brought togeth-

er 281 Al-Anon members in Tulsa, Oklahoma from August 8th to 10th, 2003. Two hundred twenty members attended the Canada West RSS in Calgary, Alberta, during the weekend of November 7th to 9th, 2003. “Service—Our Beacon of Recovery” was the theme for the US Southeast RSS, first of three seminars in 2004. It brought together 326 members in Raleigh, North Carolina.



US Southeast RSS

Still on the schedule for 2004, members from Canada Central will show that “Service Rocks” in Winnipeg, Manitoba from August 13th to 15th. The Holiday Inn—Downtown in Anchorage, Alaska, will be the site of the US Northwest RSS from September 17th to 19th, as members become “Wild about Service.” Early registration is encouraged for Al-Anon members eager to support the Alaska area, who will be hosting an RSS for the first

Site for 2004 World Service Conference

Cynthia H.,
*Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—Conference*

The search for a site to hold the 2005 World Service Conference (WSC) began immediately following last year’s WSC. There were several factors involved in making the decision including availability of meeting space, cost, service, food, and the need for time to prepare financial reports.

Based on those factors, the 2005 WSC will convene at the Stamford Marriott Hotel in Stamford, Connecticut from Saturday, April 16, through Wednesday, April 20, 2005. At some time during the WSC, Conference members will have an opportunity to visit

Stepping Stones, the home of Al-Anon cofounder Lois W.

Connecticut

*Site of the 2005 World Service
Conference*

Spanish Luncheon

Dolores T.,
*Associate Director of Group
Services, Moderator*

Participants received a handout containing two charts taken from the US Census Bureau and the Statistics Canada Census. The US chart showed the percentage of Hispanics or Latinos in the United States and within each state and Puerto Rico. The Canadian chart showed the Spanish population for all of Canada and within each province.

Conference members compared the charts to the number of Spanish-speaking groups

in their areas. As of February 1, 2004, there were 429 Spanish-speaking Al-Anon groups and 11 Alateen groups in the World Service Conference structure.

The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International reported that the Translation Services Manager is attending Spain’s 25th annual Conference. The World Service Office (WSO) has received information about groups in Cuba and has begun

communication with one contact there. The Delegates were asked to refer any correspondence from Cuba to the WSO. The WSO's experience as a clearinghouse is needed when countries are beginning to establish a service structure, as it appears Cuban members are doing.

The Associate Director of Group Services' and the Translation Services Manager's attendance at the 31st AA Hispanic Convention with Al-Anon participation reinforced the idea that to attract Spanish-speaking members, we have to go to their events. The Delegates were then asked to share about their relationship with the Spanish contact in their areas and their experience serving the Spanish-speaking members. Some of the activities shared: Progress continues on a joint project of translation and review of Al-Anon Guidelines between members in Puerto Rico and California (South); one Delegate took the love gifts from last year's Conference to the only Spanish-speaking meeting in the area and committed to visit them quarterly; the simultaneous translations offered at the US Southeast RSS encouraged the Spanish communities to attend in the future; without a working knowledge of Spanish, one Delegate attended a Hispanic Convention and identified with those members who have language barriers. Based on their experiences, Delegates also suggested that holding meetings in clinics and hav-

ing the clergy recommend Al-Anon make it easier for members to overcome cultural barriers and attend.

A brainstorming session on how to encourage Spanish-speaking group registration generated these ideas: Be enthusiastic about getting connected; visit groups in person; take a map of the area with the Spanish-speaking groups marked; focus on the benefits of registration; stress that the information at WSO is confidential and will be used to send newcomers to the group; remember that the *Best of Public Outreach* (SP-90) is available in Spanish; give a gift of a poster for new group registrations; keep talking and repeating.

Each Delegate was given a copy of the newly translated *From Survival to Recovery* (SB-21) to show at their area assemblies. The luncheon closed with the Al-Anon Declaration in Spanish.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Long-Range Study Panel

For new members to this year's World Service Conference, the Chairperson of the Long-Range Study Panel gave a brief history of the Panel and how it became a part of the Board of Trustees meetings. He reported that at a recent meeting, the Board focused entirely on strategic planning. He also reported that the Board developed its own vision and mission statements. The vision statement—what you would like the world to look like “down the road”—is “All people affected by someone else's drinking will find help and recovery in every community.” The mission statement—how you get there—is “Anticipate the future and Al-Anon's place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.”

Skip A.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Mary Ann K.,
Director of Member Services

Policy Committee

Judy P.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Caryn J.,
Secretary,
Director of Communication



Possible changes to wording in the “Policy Digest” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) pertaining to Alateen safety continued to be discussed at length. Consideration was given to presenting a motion to the World Service Conference (WSC) requiring two Sponsors for each Alateen meeting. After a lengthy discussion it was tabled.

Literature Committee I asked the Policy

Committee to consider a new subtitle for the pamphlet *Blueprint for Progress* (P-5). The title will remain as it is, with the word “revised” showing on the newly designed cover.

Members of the Committee reviewed proposed revised text for Concept Eleven to be submitted to the WSC. Suggestions were offered to the Board of Trustees for consideration.

An ad hoc committee is considering the differences between “Policy” and “policy,” and “rules” versus “guidelines” in the Policy Digest. Categories currently being reviewed are:

- Definitions of terms or phrases used in Al-Anon
- Legal in nature and/or has legal ramifications
- Suggestive in nature, much like what is now in our guidelines
- An interpretation of the Traditions and/or the Concepts of Service
- A World Service Office (WSO) requirement or procedure

All text in the Policy Digest is being identified by the ad hoc committee using these criteria.

At the WSC, the Chairperson of the Committee submitted three motions for consideration. All three change the text of the “Policy Digest” section of the *Service Manual*:

- To change the wording on page 90 under “Posters” to add a local service phone number, Web site, e-mail, or office address. (See WSC Motion #5, page 56.)
- To change the wording on page 73 under “Direct Contributions” to limit individual contributions to the WSO to one percent of the last audited WSO annual budget. (See WSC Motion #6, page 56.)
- To change the wording on page 74 under “Bequests” to accept a one-time legacy from a member up to ten percent of the last audited WSO annual budget. (See WSC Motion #7, page 56.)

On-Line Al-Anon Meetings

An Open Policy Committee meeting was held during the Conference so Delegate members could observe the Committee in action. At this meeting, the motions pertaining to direct contributions and bequests were brought back for wording revision. The Committee also discussed whether it was a “need” or a “want” to limit such contributions. The Seventh Tradition says that we are self-supporting through our own voluntary contributions and it is the intent of the WSO to continue to rely on contributions from the groups and the sale of literature for the bulk of its revenue. Final revisions to the wording of these two motions were discussed and were approved. Later in the week, they were approved by the Conference. (See WSC Motions #6 and #7, page 56.)

The Committee discussed the current policy of the WSO regarding on-line meetings. There are currently 44 registered on-line meetings, including meetings in English,

Spanish, French, German, and Estonian. The current issue under review is whether on-line meetings should be, and how they could be, represented in the Al-Anon structure. The WSO does register them as meetings, but at this time individual members are represented in the service structure according to where they live. Regarding representation, one member created a hypothetical situation that, if the meeting had a Group Representative, it would be no different than a face-to-face group. For example, if the Group Representative lived in Mississippi, the meeting would then have a vote in the Mississippi area. Conversely, with no physical address, it is difficult to determine which area or structure the meeting’s representative would attend (for example, if the Representative lived in Germany). The WSC has authority over who attends the Conference. It does not determine representation at any area level. The Committee tabled the discussion until the July meeting.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public Outreach Committee

The Public Outreach Committee gave final approval to the new Public Outreach service tool, *Al-Anon Is for Adult Children of Alcoholics* (S-69). An ad hoc committee of Al-Anon members who came to Al-Anon because they grew up with alcoholism provided input to the first drafts of the leaflet. With the addition of this new service tool, and receipt of a memo from Literature II requesting that the Committee formulate ideas for outreach to the gay and lesbian community, discussion was held on methods of outreach to diverse populations utilizing all of the targeted pamphlets and leaflets. These audiences include: men, parents, dual members, gays and lesbians, Native Americans/Aboriginals, and people of color. The Committee discussed possibly reclassifying some of the Conference Approved Literature (CAL) “Is For” pamphlets as service tools. This was discussed further at the Committee’s second Conference meeting, where they decided to present a motion to the floor recommending *Al-Anon is for Men* (P-1), *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-45), and *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians* (P-85) be reclassified from CAL to public outreach service tools. Unlike CAL, which focuses on recovery, outreach service tools are designed to attract people to meetings and assist members in conducting Al-Anon/Alateen service.

In discussion on the Conference floor, it was mentioned that many groups have been using these pamphlets as public outreach tools for some time. Revising them would broaden their ability to reach more minority members. One member said, “When I heard *Al-Anon Is for . . .* I thought Al-Anon was being too focused. I now understand the need to reach out to every group out there.” A few members shared that some of the outreach pieces to minority groups have not been well received by members of those minorities. There was also concern that the wording, “Al-Anon is for” could be confusing for people not familiar with what Al-Anon is in the first place. The Public Outreach Committee is going to be looking at being clearer on the cover of all the service tools about what Al-Anon is. The motion carried. (See WSC Motion #9, page 56.)

In following up on an ongoing “wish list” for Public Outreach, the Committee is working on a pilot project with two areas in Canada to explore ways that local numbers might be listed in every local telephone directory. A final draft of the pilot project was reviewed at the April meeting.

The 2004-2005 public service announcement (PSA), “Reality” was approved by the Committee in January. The final version was previewed at the April Committee meeting before unveiling it to the entire Conference. Conceptual ideas for the 2005 PSA were categorized and will be forwarded to our PSA vendor.

The three revised service guidelines (*Outreach to the Public/Media* [G-10], *Outreach to Professionals* [G-29], and *Outreach to Institutions* [G-9]) were distributed to the Conference as companions to the new *Area Public Outreach Coordinator* guideline (G-38).

The Public Outreach Committee accepted recommendations from the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee consists of Al-Anon members from Alberta, California, Illinois, Tennessee, and New York. A recommendation to the staff in making presentations at national conferences was to utilize “experiential” examples whenever possible, such as open meetings or having a member tell a brief portion of their recovery story. Use of the professional expertise as a public outreach tool is also important. This was further emphasized as staff prepares the “Inside Al-Anon” article for the September issue of *The Forum*. Having member/professional stories, such as the one in the September 2003

Skip A.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Mary Lou M.,
Associate Director of Public Outreach—Media

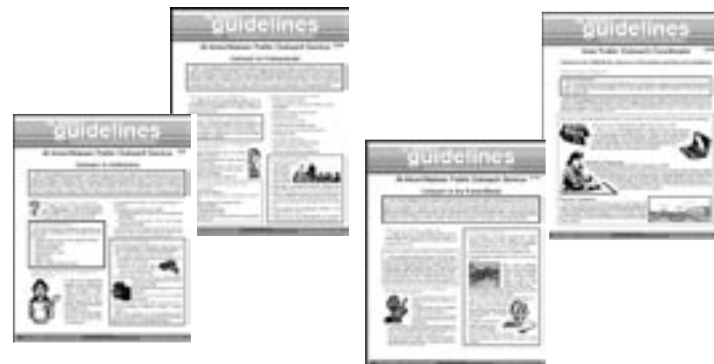
Gen B.,
Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee, Trustee

Howdy R.,
Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee, Executive Committee

Claire R.,
Associate Director of Public Outreach—Professionals



Al-Anon Is for Adult Children (S-69)
Is Now a Service Tool!



Forum, evidences to members that professionals are human, make referrals, and have problems too.

The Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee focused on how they can best serve the Public Outreach Committee and Al-Anon. Brainstorming sessions focused on human representation, targeted information, revitalizing the “Meeting on Wheels” concept, letting judges and lawyers know that Al-Anon is a resource, and encouraging Al-Anon members to be more welcoming to all persons.

The Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee decided that it would meet annually

in October with additional meetings to be called as the need arises. The Committee Chairperson sits on the Public Outreach Committee and offers advice and guidance for Canadian public outreach efforts. In all venues—PSA and poster distribution, as well as toll-free and professional calls—it appears that public outreach projects designed for both the US and Canada are effective. The Public Outreach newsletter *Al-Anon Speaks Out* for US and Canadian professionals is now on the WSO Public Outreach Web site. It will no longer be printed as the *Canadian Bulletin* in English. A French version will be posted annually containing excerpts from both editions.

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Conference Committee on Trustees (CTT)

Dru S.,
Missouri
 for Sarah P., Alaska
Alaska, Panel 42, Chairperson

Ric B.,
Secretary, Executive Director

In the Chairperson’s absence, her report was read by an outgoing Committee member.

“When I was told that I was on the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), I had mixed feelings because I didn’t know what was involved. After reading the correspondence and participating in the Committee orientation I became less apprehensive. I appreciate being on this Committee because I see the purpose and value of our Committee. The main purpose is to assist the Nominating Committee to review and evaluate Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) résumés.

“The Conference Committee on Trustees is a subcommittee of the Nominating Committee. It is comprised of eleven voting members. The CCT has a key role in the selection of candidates who will guard the principles and growth of Al-Anon in a changing world. As stated in the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* on page 186, under Concept Eleven:

‘The Nominating Committee, after having consulted with the Conference Committee on Trustees, will make recommendations that will determine, to a large extent, the continuous success of our services.

‘. . . Careful deliberation, painstaking investigation, refusal to accept casual recommendations, advance preparation of lists of suitable candidates—these need to be the principal attitudes and activities of this Committee.’

“Review and evaluation of the résumés of candidates follows a predetermined timeline. The Executive Director receives résumés by August 15th. They are then forwarded to the CCT members before September 1st. The candidates are scored on five pre-established criteria. The CCT members then submit their scores to the Nominating Committee before its October meeting.”

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee met with the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) during the World Service Conference (WSC). The Chairperson explained the purpose and functions of the CCT and Nominating Committees. The ranking process of candidates for Trustees, officers, and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) were reviewed with the CCT as part of the yearly orientation at the WSC.

At its January meeting, the Committee presented the Board of Trustees with its nomina-

tions for Board officers, at-Large members, the staff member, and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The nominee for the ECRPM and its Chairperson were also presented.

Following nomination of Regional Trustee candidates for the US Northeast, US Southeast, US North Central, and Canada Central, Conference members gave traditional approval to the nominees for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustees, the at-Large member of the ECRPM, and the Board's officers.

Winnie S.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Ric B.,
Secretary, Executive Director

The following Trustees and officers were affirmed by the 2004 WSC:

Trustee at Large: Gen B., 2 nd three-year term Mary G., 1 st three-year term Doreen D., 1 st three-year term	Regional Trustees: Colleen R., US North Central, 2 nd three-year term Frank R., US Northeast, 1 st three-year term Juanita P., US Southeast, 1 st three-year term Jo-Anne L., Canada Central, 2 nd year of 1 st three-year term
Officers of the Board: Judy P., Chairperson Julie F., Vice-Chairperson Zelda R., Treasurer	Executive Committee for Real Property Management: Susan M., three-year term
The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2004-2005: Catherine J., 2 nd one-year term/Chairperson Howdy R., 3 rd one-year term Cecelia L., 1 st one-year term Caryn J., WSO staff, 1 st year of two-year term	
The Board announced Colleen G., Chairperson—Executive Committee for Real Property Management.	

Regional Trustee Nominating Process 2004

The process of selecting the Regional Trustee (RT) candidates for nomination at this World Service Conference (WSC) actually began a year ago.

Candidates from areas in the US Northeast, US Southeast, US North Central, and Canada Central regions were selected through their area's process. Their names were forwarded to the World Service Office by their area delegates prior to January 1, 2004. Once all résumés were received, the profiles were mailed to Conference members for review prior to the WSC. Then, at the designated time during the WSC, one nominee from each region was selected.

The nominating committees for each US

region selecting an RT nominee this year were comprised of:

- Delegates from each of the areas within their region
- Three Delegates from outside the region chosen by lot from among the first- and second-year Delegates
- Three Trustees chosen by lot at the January 2004 Board meeting

The nominating committee for the Canada Central region was comprised of the Delegate from each of the areas within the region, one Delegate from outside the region, and one Trustee from outside the region. The Delegate and Trustee from outside the region were chosen by lot at the January 2004 Board

Cecelia L.,
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

meeting.

The Chairperson of the Board serves as Chairperson of the RT Nominating Committee and conducts the voting procedure, assisted by a member of the regional nominating committee. Following roll call for each of

the four regions nominating RTs at the 2004 WSC, the nominating process proceeded. The names of a nominee for the US Northeast, US Southeast, US North Central, and Canada Central regions were then presented to the full Conference for affirmation.

Regional Trustee (RT) Candidate Selection Process 2005

Cynthia H.,
Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—Conference

“At the World Service Conference (WSC), three Regional Trustees are nominated by the WSC Nominating Committee, composed of the Delegates from the respective regions, Delegates chosen by lot from outside the regions, and Board members chosen by lot.” (2002-2004 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 116.) This process assures that the Board is geographically diverse.

At the 2005 WSC, Regional Trustee (RT) nominees will be selected from the US Northwest, US Southwest, and US South Central Regions. Areas within the Canada East Region will also be asked to submit résumés for possible nomination in 2005 for the balance of that three-year term. Immediately following the 2004 Regional Trustee nomination process, packets were distributed to the Delegates from these four regions.

RTs act as liaisons to the World Service Office (WSO) in three ways:

- They keep the WSO informed of the dates of election assemblies for each area in their region.
- They follow up with the Delegates in those areas regarding the Nominating Process.
- They encourage Delegates in their regions

to nominate candidates from their areas.

Immediately following the selection of a candidate by the area, the Delegate is asked to send the completed résumé form (or notification that there is no candidate) to the WSO, no later than January 1, 2005. Failure to meet this deadline constitutes forfeiture.

In June, following the 2004 WSC, each Area Chairperson in the nominating regions will receive a packet identical to the one distributed to the Delegates. This is to alert them to the procedure for selecting a Regional Trustee candidate by the area and to request that they pass the information on to the Group Representatives in their assemblies. All areas in the nominating regions are encouraged to submit the name of a candidate for RT and, whenever possible, an alternate.

After January 2005, when all résumés have been received, the profiles will be mailed to WSC members for examination prior to the 2005 WSC.

The following WSC first- and second-year Delegates from outside the regions were selected by lot to participate in the RT elections for the US Northwest, US Southwest, US South Central, and Canada East Regions:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
US Northwest	Pierrette G., Panel 43 QC (W) Jeanine S., Panel 43 PA Carol F., Panel 43, MN (S)	Julie M., Panel 43, MD/DC Jan H., Panel 43, TX (E)
US Southwest	Janie J., Panel 44, AL Jeanine S., Panel 43, PA Debbie F., Panel 44, GA	Mickie Z., Panel 44, MP Denise M., Panel 43, DE
US South Central	Janie J., Panel 44, AL Julie M., Panel 43, MD/DC Ruth H., Panel 44, WA	Connie D., Panel 43, NY (N) Nancy C., Panel 44, WV
Canada East	Jane L., Panel 43, TN	Stu M., Panel 43, FL (S)

At the January 2005 meeting of the Board of Trustees, three members of the Board and an alternate will be selected to vote in each of the three US regions and one member of the Board and an alternate will be selected to vote in the Canada East region.

GROUP RECORDS PRESENTATION:

THE GLAMOROUS JOBS OF THE CMA AND THE GROUP RECORDS COORDINATOR

The Associate Director of Group Services and the Director of Member Services showed up in bathrobes and curlers to demonstrate that the Current Mailing Address (CMA) and Group Records Coordinator service positions are not always considered very glamorous. Through their presentation, however, it became clear that both positions are fundamentally important to the whole of Al-Anon.

Building blocks labeled “Group Records” and “CMA” were placed on the podium. Blocks representing more “glamorous” positions, including Forum Coordinator, Public Outreach Coordinator, and Conference member, were then placed on top of them. While placing the blocks, the presenters complained about all the fun work other service members get to do. While they go to TV and radio stations, solicit stories for *The Forum*, and spend time in a hotel next to the beach, all the CMA and the Group Records Coordinator get to do is keep track of names, addresses, and phone numbers. By pulling the “Group Records” and “CMA” foundation blocks out from under the others, all of the others crashed to the floor.

After removing the bathrobes and curlers to reveal glamorous outfits, the two presenters enacted a true story to demonstrate the importance of the group contact listed on the registration form. A former member, returning to Al-Anon after a number of years, called the toll-free meeting line.

She was given a group address and contact. Unfortunately, the contact name given was her own! No one had updated the data with the WSO since she stopped attending. Without good data, the connection between the WSO and newcomers is broken.

In another demonstration, Delegates discovered what the groups miss if the CMA information is incorrect. The following list includes items mailed to the group:

- Appeal letters (quarterly)
- *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* (quarterly), including many inserts
- The *Service Manual* (usually every two years)
- Registration forms for upcoming regional service seminars
- January issue of *The Forum* (annually)
- New group binder (to newly-registering groups)
- Al-Anon and AA International Convention registration forms
- *Alateen Talk* (quarterly to Alateen groups)
- Annual Update
- *Accion* and *Le lien* (to Spanish- and French-language groups)

Mary Ann K.,
Director Member Services

Dolores T.,
*Associate Director of
Group Services*

*CMA and Group Records—
Foundations for Service*

DIRECTORS' PRESENTATION:

THE CONCEPTS OF SERVICE—OUR GUIDE TO LEADERSHIP

Each year the Directors select a topic they believe is important to discuss with Conference members. This year the focus was on our third Legacy, the Twelve Concepts of Service.

To depict the strength achieved when the three Legacies are integrated, the Directors held individual signs—one for each Legacy—with a colorful streamer attached. The Executive Director provided brief excerpts from the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)

about the ideas included in the Concepts of Service—delegation, decision-making, balance, resolving conflict, vision, and leadership. These topics are further strengthened by the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The streamers were then braided together to demonstrate the power and strength that occurs when the Legacies are interconnected.

The Executive Director, serving as a game show host, introduced *The Right Concept of Service Game* as a fun way to dispel

Ric B.,
Executive Director

Caryn J.,
Director of Communication

David Zach,
*Director of Business Services
(Nonmember)*

Mary Ann K.,
Director of Member Services

myths and learn about practical applications of the Concepts of Service. All Conference members received a copy of the game. Like most game shows, this one had commercials, including one that shared a new use for the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)—as a remedy for sleeplessness.

In breakout sessions, Conference members shared positive and negative service leadership experiences where the principles of the Concepts of Service were helpful or could have been helpful. The following is a sampling of those insights:

- Conflict in Al-Anon is not only normal, it is okay and part of our spiritual growth. The Concepts of Service teach us how to deal effectively with the conflict.
- Service is a privilege not a right. When elected for a position we have to do the best job that we can, based on the guidelines for the job.
- Practice patience and share the guidance in the *Service Manual*. Don't beat people over the head. Trusting the group conscience is a sign of good leadership.
- The interconnectedness of all the Concepts of Service—it is always okay to use your own leadership style.
- Leadership is a primary need in the fellowship. However, all members are not willing to accept the risks of criticism. Those who choose not to lead do not absolve themselves of the responsibility to support their leaders in the areas.
- Deciding for my group what they could



A new use for the Service Manual!

have decided for themselves made me aware of Concept Four.

- Be open, listen, and don't let fear keep us from facing a conflict. Turn to the Concepts and Traditions to help face the conflicts that come up.
- Letting the minority voice be heard simply by listening and not defending a position or restating an opinion is a direct result of studying the Concepts.
- Everyone can contribute something to the common good. We can participate by being good listeners.
- This discussion will help me in dealing with a person who has rotated out of a position, but won't give it up.
- Allowing everyone to have a voice in resolving conflict is found in Concept Four.
- The reminder to just listen and ask, "What would you like me to do?"
- To help another member understand "delegation," someone used housework to demonstrate it. Certain housework must be done or the house becomes unlivable. If everyone who lives in the house does their share, then no one person is overwhelmed. Everyone takes part, feels responsible, and feels they contribute.
- We must continue the conversation by "talking to each other and reasoning things out."

ALATEEN DISCUSSION

Cecelia L.,
Chairperson, Trustee

The primary topic for discussion at this year's Conference was the Board's implementation of behavioral and safety requirements for Alateens and Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service. In the opening session, the Chairperson of the Board explained that the discussion would continue throughout the week, for as long as necessary, and that it would be sectioned into four segments, each with a specific focus. She explained that at the first session she would give the

background and reasons behind the Board's action. The second session would give all Conference members an opportunity to comment in general about the motion. The third session would focus on concerns, questions, and answers regarding implementation from the Delegate's perspective. The fourth would describe the process developed by the World Service Office (WSO) staff for distribution of information to accommodate the various area processes for registration and certification.

Background to the Board's Action

In her overview of the background to the Board's decision, the Chairperson noted that the Board had been looking at the issue of Alateen safety and discussing it with the Delegates for many years. Two years ago, in a "Talking with the Delegates" session at the World Service Conference, the Board asked, "What do you, as Delegates, think is the most important issue facing Al-Anon in the future?" In the Delegates' responses, the topic of Alateen safety was of such high priority that at the following year's Conference, Alateen safety was the entire focus of the "Talking with the Delegates" discussion.

Time was devoted to this topic at Board, Policy Committee, and Group Services Committee meetings. The Board reviewed all information ever recorded about Alateen from the WSO Archives. "We were buried in the papers. We did not take this lightly," she said. Conference members were shown the three-inch-thick stack of papers the Board studied.

As more areas created their own Alateen requirements, it became very obvious that the WSO had nothing in place to support these areas. Because guidelines were perceived as optional suggestions, if a potential Sponsor failed to meet the guidelines of the area, this person could still register the Alateen group at the WSO and sponsor it. Nothing could be done if this member refused to step down.

The Board, recognizing its responsibility to protect the legal rights of the organization, was unanimous in its decision that the time had come to take action. It began a process of setting down basic requirements which would need to be adhered to by the fellowship as a whole in order to maintain the right to use the Al-Anon or Alateen name. After the resolution was finalized and approved in December 2003, it was immediately sent to all Delegates. It requires implementation by the areas no later than December 31, 2004.

Some members of the fellowship did not agree that this action was necessary. Citing Concept Five, they voiced their minority view by petitioning the Board to reconsider its actions. The Board thoroughly reviewed all correspondence received and, after careful consideration and much discussion, denied the appeals.

Addressing concerns that the Conference should have been consulted before making its decision, the Chairperson replied that the

Board has been consulting the Conference for years on this matter, and that they were finally ready to take action. To those who question the Board's right to take such action, she shared that Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a corporation, and that the Trustees are entrusted with the legal rights of the corporation. While the Trustees are entrusted with legal responsibility, Alateen safety is the moral and ethical responsibility of every member.

Concept One states that, "The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups." As one reads the remaining eleven Concepts, however, it becomes clear that they are a series of delegated trusts. "Without that trust," she said, "none of us have anything to work with."

Next, the Chairperson read a series of quotes from the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) which support the Board's actions. They are as follows:

- "In managing the affairs of the corporation, the Board is authorized to: . . . take whatever measures are prudent and effective in carrying out the purpose of our fellowship." (Pages 116-117.)
- "Except in great emergency the Board of Trustees ought never take action liable to affect Al-Anon as a whole greatly without consulting the Conference. However, it is understood that the Board shall reserve the right to decide which of its decisions may require referral to the Conference." (Page 146.)
- "Hence, the principle of delegated authority and responsibility to our trusted servants must be implicit from the top to the bottom of our active service structure." (Page 156.)
- "Within the framework of their general responsibilities, whether these be defined by charter, resolution, or custom, it should be traditional for all world service boards, committees, and executives to decide which matters they may properly dispose of and upon which they will report, consult, or ask specific directions. Our world servants should be trusted with these discretions, otherwise no effective leadership is possible." (Pages 157-158.)

- “This provides that our responsible leaders be trusted to decide, within the framework of their duties, how to interpret and apply their authority and responsibility to each problem or situation as it arises. This sort of leadership discretion is the essence of the Right of Decision. We need have no misgivings about granting this privilege at every level of world service.” (Page 159.)
- “But for so long as our world services function reasonably well, then “trust” must be our watchword, otherwise we shall wind up leaderless.” (Page 160.)
- “Similarly the World Service Board of Trustees (operating of course within the provisions of its own ByLaws) should have the right, at all times, to decide when it will act fully on its own responsibility and when it will ask the Conference for guidance, approval of a recommendation, or actual direction.” (Page 160.)
- “Our entire Al-Anon program rests squarely on the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust Al-Anon, and we trust one another. Therefore we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The Right of Decision we offer them is the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively; it also is the symbol of our implicit confidence.” (Page 160.)
- “We trust our servants, knowing that in the unusual event that they fail in their responsibilities, we still have ample opportunity to recall and replace them. As trusted servants, our Al-Anon leaders must always be in readiness to do for the groups what the groups obviously cannot do for themselves. Consequently our servants are bound to use their own information and judgment, sometimes to the point of disagreeing with uninformed or biased group opinion.” (Page 164.)
- “The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.” (Page 167.)

In concluding the opening session of the Alateen discussion, the Chairperson said, “I do see our actions as a legal matter. . . . I am confident that the Board has made the right decision. I know there are those of you who disagree, but I believe you have elected good leaders. I do not believe that the Board would have been led to make a mistake when we were in such agreement that it was the time to do something and that what we did was the thing to do.”

Delegate Feedback

The Chairperson began the second session by reading the Board’s motion. (See Appendix I, page 80.) Then Conference members were invited to give feedback on the Board’s action and their reaction to it. This opportunity for members to share their feelings was introduced as a “Clearing the Air” session on this specific topic.

Almost all of the Delegates spoke to the issue. The majority of those who expressed themselves were grateful that the Board had exercised its authority and responsibility in creating the minimum requirements. Others stated that while they understood the need for Alateen safety to be addressed, they did not agree with the approach taken by the Board. A few Delegates were concerned about what would happen if these requirements were implemented.

One Delegate said, “Our area was the first to pass the guidelines that required background checks. There was discussion and not a lot of unanimity for a lot of years. The

WSO helped us. They were instrumental in getting us to where we are today.” Another said, “I would hate to see Al-Anon involved in a legal controversy. We can’t stop 100 percent of the problems, but I think this motion will help.” A Canadian Delegate shared that in Canada, groups that work with youth are required to have criminal records checks. She said, “Because of this, we were not able to rent a facility. We really do need requirements; guidelines are no longer acceptable.” Another Delegate shared, “We had to ask an Alateen Sponsor to step down, so we are in favor of these requirements.” One member said, “We have had guidelines for Alateen groups, but some ignored them. We had no way to enforce them. We now have ways to protect the children. We can’t do everything, but we can try.” Another shared that some members of his area felt like they were being dictated to—that there were no “warm fuzzies.” He said, “This issue is not warm and fuzzy. There are no warm fuzzies when it

comes to protecting our children. Whenever something can impact our fellowship, we need to look to Tradition One.” From another Delegate came, “I recognize that this is a legal responsibility of the Board. I am sure it was difficult and I appreciate the work that was done.”

The minority voice was also heard. One member shared feelings that these requirements were totally outside the goals and objectives of Al-Anon, citing Tradition Five. She felt that Al-Anon was getting into child protection and police work and that it was not appropriate. Another member felt Tradition Six was being violated because problems of money and property were separating us from our primary spiritual aim. One member said, “There is a big difference between guidelines and requirements. This is heading us in a direction that is not best for the fellowship.” Others felt that the Board was trying to tell the fellowship what they could think, and were troubled because they did not feel the groups and areas were given the opportunity to discuss the Board’s motion, but were rather given a directive. “The Board didn’t consult the Conference before making the requirements, but they had the discretion to do so.”

Other Delegates felt that there have been

many years of discussion and that they had been included in those discussions. One Delegate said, “From 1995 to 1998, we heard we needed to have guidelines in place.” Another stated, “We’ve ignored this for too long. If we had been more receptive when it was brought up before, there wouldn’t have been a need for this. We have to protect all of our kids.” Addressing concerns about the Sixth Tradition, a member said, “My area appreciates the Board’s support. This protects our name and our fellowship, not just our assets.” The Board was clear in its directive that all groups need to comply with the area requirements in order to have a registered Alateen group.

The Chairperson concluded this portion of the discussion with a quote from Bill W.’s essay on leadership, as found on page 174 of the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*:

“Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism—an acid test. There are always constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship.”

Area Implementation

The third segment focused on how the areas planned to implement the motion. Before opening the floor, the Chairperson informed the Conference that the topic of one of the Chosen Agenda Items selected was “Alateen Background Checks.” She suggested that members with questions or comments about background checks could address them during that time period, leaving this session open to address other implementation concerns. At this point, many Delegates had concerns and questions regarding how their area would follow through. Members were encouraged to share solutions as well as their questions. Those Delegates whose areas had already developed and implemented requirements were able to provide valuable insight into the process and answered many of the questions that arose.

One Delegate began by addressing perfectionism. “We put together requirements that we will vote on at our assembly. As the years go by we will probably make

changes to them. We wanted to do them perfectly the first time, but we finally decided to put them in place and continue to work on them.” Another Delegate shared that, “We are going to start visiting each district and doing Alateen orientation meetings for anyone interested in Alateen, both kids and Sponsors, and show the do’s and don’ts of sponsoring.” Someone else said, “We do not have Alateen District Coordinators, just an Area Coordinator. We want the District Representatives to take on the responsibility of visiting the groups. They are our first line of defense. They should know who the Sponsors are. If there is a problem, they can bring it back to the meeting.”

A member cautioned that in smaller areas, some AA schedules list Alateen groups. When checking meeting lists for registered groups we need to cooperate with them. One assembly put a moratorium on registration of Alateen groups until their requirements were in place. Another is considering connecting

requirements to an annual training session. A Delegate shared, "Our Alateen Sponsors don't get their way paid to area functions. We are looking at how we can support our Alateen Sponsors. They want workshops, training, and guidelines."

A number of Delegates had questions about cost, and wondered how the area would afford to pay for legal counsel. One Delegate responded, "When we incorporated, we found places that do pro bono work. So, to be self-supporting, we were willing to give them a library of literature." Another member shared that Al-Anon can accept free services, provided they are given to all not-for-profits and an exception is not being made for Al-Anon.

Several areas require signed permission slips from the parents of Alateens in order for the Alateens to attend all events, including Alateen meetings. "If the Alateen gets hurt at the meeting, we need to know how to get in touch with someone." Also, the Alateens need to know there are consequences if they break the rules. One area has all their panel members attend at least one Alateen confer-

ence during the term. They also have all permission forms notarized.

One area Delegate shared that in her area Alateen members must be pre-registered for any function. No walk-in registrations are accepted, and a Sponsor must accompany the Alateens without exception. "We need to take care of our own members and not feel guilty if we turn someone away," she said. On that point, a WSO staff member elaborated on a recent conversation with the WSO's attorney regarding Alateens over the age of 18 and their status as adults. The WSO was advised that they are adults, but if they register at a function as an Alateen, they can be required to abide by the Alateen requirements. There is no difference in required behavior regardless of age.

Although not all of the questions were answered in this one session, a dialogue was opened and those who were in a position to do so availed themselves for further discussion later. Answers to some of the questions became clearer after the next session, when the WSO staff addressed how they plan to process information.

WSO Process for Implementation

The Director of Member Services emphasized at the beginning of this session that the World Service Office wants to be a partner with the areas in implementing the new Alateen safety and behavioral requirements. The staff has developed a WSO process that can enhance communication and provide support to the areas as they develop and implement their processes.

The Associate Director of Member Services/Alateen presented information on this process. Each Conference member was given a folder with information and the new Alateen forms. The new forms included the Alateen Group Records Registration/Change form, the Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service form (this will replace the Alateen Group Sponsor Questionnaire form), and the Area Process Notification form. While introducing each form, she explained its purpose and gave general instructions on its use. The presentation stressed that the WSO was looking forward to working with the areas in whatever way possible to ensure a smooth transition for all.

Each area is asked to designate an "Area Alateen Process Person." This person will

receive information from the WSO to distribute within the area according to the area processes. A timeframe for WSO distribution of processed and unprocessed information was given. The Area Alateen Process Person will also receive the annual certification list from the WSO. A sample was included in the packet.

Areas are encouraged to share information with the WSO as they begin developing their area registration and certification processes so that that information can be shared with other areas through the Alateen Coordinator mailings.

The Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service form was discussed. A revision was made in response to a Delegate request regarding the wording preceding the Area Authorized Signature line. It was noted that the Area Authorized Signator can be any service position that the area determines in its process. The person authorized to sign the form is not guaranteeing the behavior of the Al-Anon member involved in Alateen service. The signator is verifying that to the best of his/her knowledge, the member does meet the area Alateen safety and behavioral

requirements.

The Associate Director of Group Services then introduced the new Alateen Group Records Registration/Change form. The form will be used only for Alateen groups and includes spaces for new information such as Sponsor name and Sponsor WSO number.

Questions and answers followed the presentation. December 31, 2004 is the date for area Alateen requirements and registration and certification processes to be in effect. A member determined to be ineligible to be of service to Alateen in one area would also be ineligible in other areas. Several questions concerned who needs to complete the Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service form. The definition of an Al-Anon member involved in Alateen service was described as any Al-Anon member who is directly responsible for Alateens while being of service to Alateen. Each area would more clearly define what roles that involves. Another question concerned multi-area Alateen Conferences and how to comply with the requirements. Areas with Alateen conferences were encouraged to provide feedback to the WSO on this matter, as no final decisions have been made by the Board. A Delegate asked whether accepting free background checks violates the Traditions. If free background checks are offered to all not-for-profit organizations,

then Al-Anon can accept them. If they are offering them only to Al-Anon, then accepting them would violate the Traditions.

Another Delegate asked when medical and permission slips were necessary. This issue must be addressed in accordance with local laws. Some Delegates shared that their areas also require medical forms for meetings. “What if Alateen groups don’t comply with the area requirements?” The response was to talk to the group—to try and reason things out at the group level first. If the group refuses to comply, then it is up to the area to notify the WSO to revoke that group’s registration. A group will not be able to use the Alateen name if it refuses to adhere to the area group conscience.

As the four sessions evolved, a sense of unity spread throughout the Conference. In response to the Board’s action, the topic of Alateen is now being thoroughly discussed on an area, district, and group level. This discussion has also brought many members to a deeper study of our Traditions, Concepts of Service, and the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

(See also Chosen Agenda Item #3, page 34 and WSC Motion #12, pages 55 and 57.)

COMMUNICATION PRESENTATION: Focus!

Caryn J.,
Director of Communication

Mary Lou M.,
*Associate Director of Public
Outreach—Media*

Claire R.,
*Associate Director of Public
Outreach—Professionals*

Patrick Q.,
*Associate Director of Fellowship
Communication—Literature I/Forum*

Tom C.,
*Associate Director of Fellowship
Communication—Literature II/
Newsletters*

Improving Our Focus.

The World Service Office (WSO) Communication Section, with the help of some WSO volunteers, presented a humorous skit dramatizing the results of recent focus groups that the staff facilitated throughout the US and Canada. The parody of a television news program titled *50/50* (because “we get the facts right 50 percent of the time”), attempted to throw light on an apparent lack of focus among Al-Anon groups.

According to on-air personalities “Katie Cutie” and “Rock Philips,” some Al-Anon groups are totally unfocused, some have selective perception, and some don’t have a chance to focus because communication materials aren’t placed in front of them. A cast of WSO volunteers playing various service roles presented the audience with samples and explanations of *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, *The Forum*, “Inside Al-Anon,” and *Area Highlights*. Possible diagnoses for this lack of focus included “glowcoma,” funnel vision, fear of boredom, and wearing rose colored glasses or blinders.

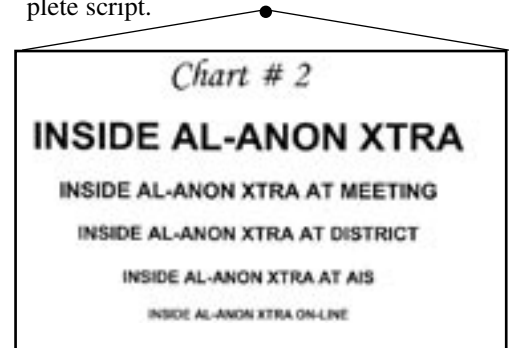
The *50/50* news program called on a doctor (DR) to conduct an eye exam for the entire audience. Charts printed in large and small type represented percentages of the

Al-Anon fellowship that regularly see certain Al-Anon communication vehicles. The doctor (DR) pointed out how many of these vehicles are available on-line, either on the Public Outreach or the Members Web site, in easily downloadable formats.

The skit concluded by posing two questions:

- How can the WSO support the areas in their efforts to get information to the districts and the groups?
- How can the WSO and the areas energize trusted servants to deliver information to the districts and the groups?

Conference members received the complete script.



Do You See Our Newsletters?

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSA)

Mary Lou M.,
*Associate Director of Public
Outreach—Media*

The 2004-2005 public service announcement (PSA) is titled “Reality.” Before viewing the new PSA, Conference members were given an overview of the use of PSAs

and the World Service Office’s PSA history. People see and hear marketing “impressions” everywhere they go—in the media, through contact with professionals, friends,

libraries, the Internet, etc. PSAs are part of an overall marketing strategy. The impact of the individual elements of a marketing campaign can be difficult to measure. It can take exposure to many “impressions” before an individual may be motivated to take an action, such as attending an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting. Al-Anon’s measurables, such as the number of airplays and calls to our toll-free line, have risen over the past years of annual PSA production.

Following the overview, “Reality” was premiered for the Conference members. In this PSA, seven actors of various ages, genders, and ethnicities portray people whose lives are controlled by someone else’s drinking. An announcer describes some of the

feelings each person is going through, and the emotions are etched on face after face. It climaxes with a montage of faces as the announcer reads, “We want our lives back.” Then comes the payoff: help is available in Al-Anon and Alateen, because “to help them, you have to help yourself first.” The audio and video message is complemented by coordinated print ads and posters.

The World Service Office will distribute both radio and TV PSAs to selected stations in the US and Canada in June. Area Public Outreach/Information Coordinators and Delegates will receive a list of stations in their areas prior to the distribution. Posters, tapes, and CDs will be available to the fellowship in June as well.



Reality

In keeping with the 2004

Conference theme, Conference members convened in breakout session rooms, which were transformed into “construction sites.” Six Delegate “project managers” wearing yellow hardhats and construction clothes were provided with “blueprints” by “architects” of the Al-Anon “Planning Commission” (World Service Office staff and Trustees from the Conference Committee). The “project managers” briefed their respective “construction crews” about their task of building dynamic groups.

Each “construction company” held a “site-planning” session by dividing its crew into groups of two. Each pair of crew members were given the task of responding to the following questions:

1. What makes members, as individuals, dynamic?
2. What are the building blocks that make a group dynamic?

The teams of construction workers shared their best ideas and recorded them on the

CONFERENCE WORKSHOP: DYNAMIC GROUPS TODAY—

“production schedule.”
The entire group chose its top four ideas from the list.

The next phase of the six “construction projects” activated the workers. Crew members were asked to make signs featuring their group’s characteristics in order to attract newcomers and to help create a sense of identification for its members. Building supplies were distributed to the workers who in turn created individualized signs for their group.

The final phase of the workshop consisted of creating a display of signs from each “construction company.” Crew members gave a 30-second explanation of their signs, how the signs represent their Al-Anon group, and what “building blocks” were used to make their group dynamic. All Conference members received a copy of the workshop script and are returning to their areas with their signs so that other Al-Anon groups and service arms can construct their own dynamic groups as building blocks for Al-Anon’s future.

CONCEPT ELEVEN PRESENTATION

Cecelia L.,
Chairperson, Trustee

In 2002, the World Service Conference (WSC) approved the Board's implementation of the new committee structure of the World Service Office (WSO), which had been used on a trial basis for six years. Since then, the Board of Trustees, with input from the WSO Policy members and last year's Conference, has been reviewing the descriptive text portion of the "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service" section of the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)* to assure that it reflects the new structure.

Reviewing the text and considering which portions needed revision has been a long process. The text describing Concept Eleven,

which details each committee, required the most changes. After further work over the last year, the Board presented its final draft of the proposed text. The Board Chairperson and the Conference members reviewed the text page-by-page. Although time did not permit resolving all concerns and suggested changes from the Delegates, they were noted and will be considered by the Board. Delegates were encouraged to take the draft back to their areas for discussion. Any further suggestions from the areas are due to the WSO by October 1, 2004. The Board plans to present the revised descriptive text of Concept Eleven to next year's Conference.

BY-LAWS REVISION PRESENTATION

Cecelia L.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Since the World Service Office relocated in 1996, some of the office procedures have changed. Over the last year, the Board has worked on amending the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. to reflect these changes. In accordance with the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter, the Chairperson of the Board presented the amended By-Laws to the Conference for review. The Conference does

not vote on the By-Laws, but can recall any amendment if not satisfied with it. In a page-by-page review, several minor changes were suggested and the wording of one section was questioned. Amendments to that section were removed from both sets of By-Laws, and will be reviewed by the Board at a future date. Any additional changes made will be brought to the 2005 or a subsequent Conference for review.

(For revised wording of the By-Laws, see Appendix II and III, pages 81-87.)

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS PROCESS

Prior to the World Service Conference (WSC), members were invited to submit questions of a general nature regarding topics that pertain to Al-Anon worldwide. The questions were provided to Conference members when they registered at the WSC. All Conference members were asked to review the topics and select the three questions that they believed to be most important to the fellowship at this time.

- The four topics that received the most votes were discussed in open floor discussions by the full complement of Conference members.

- Topics that received at least five votes were discussed in small group workshops. Written report backs of all of the sessions were copied and mailed to Conference members following the Conference.
- Those receiving fewer than five votes were answered in the *Conference Summary* section titled "Ask-It-Basket." (See pages 59-65.)

Moderators were selected for each of the four floor discussions by drawing names from a hat. To insure that topics were handled without bias, the person who submitted the topic did not moderate the session.

Chosen Agenda Item No. 1: Strengthening the Structure

The following questions were the basis of the first discussion on the floor of the Conference:

- How do we handle lack of participation from a majority of groups in a district?
- What are the best ways for an area to support the district?
- How do we resolve conflicts at area assemblies?
- How do areas arrange their districts? Changing demographics leave some districts with few or even no active groups, while others have perhaps too many groups to oversee. Also the physical size of some districts with just a few groups makes transportation a problem. Does anyone have a flexible method of districting or redistricting?
- How do we relate “service” to “growth” at the group, district, and area level?

One area supports the districts by taking roving workshops to the districts, whether they have a District Representative or not. They stress sponsorship and service work in general. This has encouraged new Group Representatives and District Representatives to attend assemblies.

Other ideas included an inventory at all area assemblies to give everyone an opportunity to air concerns and resolve conflict. Some do it verbally while others use a printed questionnaire. This attracted members new to service and also encouraged the rotation of longtime members. A Group Representative orientation before assembly proved beneficial to some areas, while others meet with the area Chair on the morning after an assembly to make sure everyone understood what happened.

One area has a procedures digest and a motions digest, which

they keep up-to-date. They also have an officers’ meeting on the Friday before assemblies.

At the group level, to keep members involved and increase participation, a sign-in book is used at each meeting. If members do not come for a while, they are called and invited to an anniversary. To make service exciting, another area writes letters, sends invitations, calls, and does simultaneous workshops in all districts at the same time on the same topic.

Conflict resolution also received attention. One area suggested taking time to invite a Higher Power into the discussion. Another area had some struggles with an Alateen conference. They resolved it and other potential conflicts by having a Sunday morning inventory after every conference. Another area had a dispute between two of its literature distribution centers, almost to the point of legal action. By using reason, working with longtime members, and using the First and Twelfth Traditions, they were able to work through it. Conflict guidelines that define the process were developed in another area. They also did an area inventory over a three-year period. They challenged all participants to wipe the slate clean and make suggestions on what they would like to see the area do.

Some District Representatives do not know where their districts start and end. One solution was to have everyone meet at the assembly and bring maps. Then they would map out districts in a way that seemed most logical to them. For those districts with no representative, an adjoining district adopted it and helped educate its groups so that they could be on their own again. A Redistricting Committee was appointed in one area with participation of all the districts.

Chosen Agenda Item No. 2: Our Groups

The second open discussion on the Conference floor addressed these questions:

- Some groups are qualifying and excluding newcomers from Al-Anon membership based on what the newcomer believes the primary addiction is. Has Al-Anon lost the true meaning of “try six meetings before you decide if Al-Anon is for you?” How can we help groups and members return to the spiritual courtesy of letting individuals decide if they belong in our meetings?
- Members seem more diverse in groups and less unified in our primary purpose. Are there any “specific” ideas to help us bond together?
- How can we help bridge the gap between age groups in meetings? Teens/seniors; early recovery/30-plus years?
- How do we “gracefully” ask members to use Al-Anon literature other than the daily readers at meetings?
- How do we reiterate the importance of home groups in our personal recovery?
- Why do we continue to focus on our differences within the fellowship (i.e., race- and gender-specific literature), instead of focusing on recovering from the effects of our common

problem?

- How can we help a group that is struggling and hence keep our newcomer coming back?

To help get past the urge to qualify newcomers, it was suggested that meetings have an orientation for newcomers, where longtime members share that other programs are left outside the door. They can also explain that Al-Anon uses only Conference Approved Literature to keep the focus on our program. Encourage them to attend at least six meetings, and let them know that everyone is free to decide for themselves whether Al-Anon is for them.

To help groups and members bond together, a Delegate shared that one district regularly hosted a speaker meeting and chose local members to speak. It brought the district together and helped it stick to Al-Anon’s primary purpose.

On the subject of bridging the gap between age groups, one member spoke in favor of diversity, “We need that difference. I was 23 and you all looked old to me, but I wanted what you had so I kept coming back.” Another member suggested that no matter what our differences, peace of mind is something you can’t see, but it keeps people coming back. Someone else said that when Alateens come to an Al-Anon meeting in search of an Alateen meeting, they need to be welcomed and assured that Alateen is

part of the Al-Anon fellowship.

Suggestions on how to “gracefully” ask members to use Al-Anon literature other than the daily readers included creating a poster board labeled “Pamphlet of the Month,” and then studying that pamphlet one meeting per month. Having a good supply of all the literature is also helpful. One member fills a suitcase and sets it all out at the meeting. Chairing a meeting with books other than daily readers was also suggested. Communication and education are two of the keys. One group has the Literature Coordinator come to the meeting with a big bag of literature and discusses its contents with the group. It was also suggested to offer newcomers a pamphlet, suggest they take it home and read it, and when they come back discuss it with them. Another group gives back issues of *The Forum* to newcomers and a meeting is chaired using one of the stories.

Members also shared the importance of encouraging the attitude that, “This is my home group and I’m going to do whatever is

necessary to keep the doors open.” Also stressed was the benefit of having open meetings. One Delegate described a situation in which a local university was requiring students to attend Al-Anon meetings where there were no open meetings. Another Delegate asked all the groups in her area to take a group conscience on whether their meeting was open or closed. This information was then listed in their schedule.

One member shared that her group was about to fold when she first attended. Service positions were created that could be filled by the newcomers, such as a greeter. “Today it is a thriving group of about 30.” Celebrating Al-Anon anniversaries once a month with cake and talk of recovery gives an added sense of belonging. One Delegate shared that, “At the district, the Group Representatives share group successes and problems. When they say membership is down, some of us agree to go to that meeting to support it.”

Chosen Agenda Item No. 3: Alateen Background Checks

The topic of the third open discussion addressed the following questions:

- How are areas implementing the mandatory guidelines for Alateen?
- Who is paying for the background checks?
- Who is responsible for the oversight and certification of the groups, conferences (especially the AA and Al-Anon conferences which have Alateen participation), activities, etc.?
- How do you check the background of potential and actual Alateen Sponsors and keep “anonymity”?
- When a background check is done on an Alateen Sponsor, who controls the information?

During this discussion, it was clarified that the minimum requirements of the Board resolution did not require background checks and that it was on the list of suggested items. Conference members were cautioned to be careful if using background checks. It was suggested they use a carefully designed release form that requests only the information absolutely necessary to determine if the applicant meets area requirements for being an Alateen Sponsor. The Connecticut and New Hampshire Areas have used outside agencies for their background checks and their Delegates provided information regarding the process worked out with the World Service Office. In both cases, the areas provide the agency with the request form. After research is complete, the agency notifies the designated member in the area whether the applicant has passed or failed. If the applicant does not pass the check, and wants to know why, it is the applicant’s responsibility to contact the independent company for more information.

Discussion followed on how to certify eligibility without having a background check for felony convictions. It was suggested that areas could include a question about felony convictions as part of their area requirement procedures. As further clarification, a Board member shared that it was the Board’s intent that those certifying the eligibility of any applicant were doing so to the best of their ability; that they thought the applicant was tell-

ing the truth. If it was later determined that the applicant was not qualified, that person could be asked to serve Al-Anon in another capacity. “To be an Alateen Sponsor is a privilege and not a right. It needs to be treated that way.”

It is not unusual for organizations to require that adults working with children have not been convicted of a felony. That policy is the safest for the organization and its members. If something were to happen in an Alateen meeting and it was discovered that the Alateen Sponsor had been convicted of a felony and that the area had knowledge of it and still let that person serve, the potential for problems could be great.

On the issue of payment for the background checks, some areas have provided funds in their budget for this expense, and others are asking the applicant to pay for the background check.

One Delegate indicated that her area has not implemented the background check, since it was among those items that were “suggested” and not “required.” However, the area included a provision on their form to allow the flexibility to do so in the future.

In one area, the State Department of Motor Vehicles offers free background checks to volunteer organizations. The Delegate shared that when the area’s Alateen Coordinator submitted a request to the Department of Motor Vehicles, she was able to maintain her anonymity by stating she was a volunteer working with children who were family members of alcoholics. She also shared that her area’s Alateen Coordinator had contacted an agency, which had offered to provide free legal advice, but in return they wanted permission to use the Al-Anon name on their client list. The area chose not to use their services.

One Delegate said that she had downloaded several pages of information regarding background checks and was willing to share the information with others. She also suggested that members could contact the Department of Justice. Another Delegate offered that the Alateen group should be connected to an Al-Anon group, and that the Al-Anon group could pay for the background check.

Chosen Agenda Item No. 4: Concept One

The final floor discussion pertained to these two questions:

- How do we truly get the groups to be the final authority in AI-Anon? Meaning, how can we get the groups to actively participate and make the “upside down” pyramid concept come to fruition?
- What are some other special projects that can encourage interaction between the areas and the WSO? These could, like this past special project, teach areas how to use the WSO’s resources and expertise while designing their own projects and meeting their own needs.

One area created a workshop that used a display showing the groups at the top and how our fellowship works upside down. It was an eye-opening experience for many members to see the importance of the Group Representative in the links of communication. Another area plans to hold an open area world service committee meeting so members can see what happens there.

Other Delegates shared that they learned a lot from the Board of Trustees’ “Talking with the Delegates” sessions at previous Conferences and used that model to listen to the districts and groups. “It was the first time we were asking them what they wanted.” One Delegate got the districts actively involved by taking three issues and making them the action committees’ challenges for the year.

Another area partnered a past Delegate as a “senior advisor” with a new Group Representative and provided them with a question from the assembly’s “Ask-It-Basket.” The two worked together, searching the *Service Manual* for the answer. The new Group Representative gave the answer to the assembly while the “advisor” stood by in support.

Participation on action committees was helpful for one area’s Coordinators. It helped them learn to ask for help and no longer feel that they had to do everything alone.

Chosen Agenda Items—Workshop Highlights

The following is a summary of member comments.

Topic: Assembly Attendance

- **How can we get Group Representatives (GRs) to understand that an important and vital part of their position is attending assemblies?**
- **What makes an area assembly both a learning and fun experience?**
- **How do we increase attendance at area assemblies?**

A District Representative’s (DR’s) enthusiasm gives the GRs the idea that if you missed the assembly, you missed something big. Incorporating action committees into the assembly agenda gives the GRs opportunities to participate and feel “a part of” the assembly.

Including sharings on recovery at intervals during business meetings is helpful. Another area has an AI-Anon meeting during the assembly weekend.

Other suggestions included giving a standing ovation to the GRs who return for their second assembly or giving each district a special “holler” to use when roll is being called at assembly.

Carpooling can also help district members get to know each other better. One suggestion was to have members register for the assembly at the district meeting, then meet at an agreed location and travel to the assembly together.

Making sure that qualified members volunteer to fill positions was stressed.

To make being a GR a memorable experience, one area celebrates the GRs leaving the assembly, similar to the way the Delegates leave the World Service Conference. Another Delegate signs and writes a personal note in the *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* of new GRs.

Topic: Reaching Out

- **How do we attract a critical mass of Alateens to sustain a group?**
- **How do we construct building blocks to minorities?**
- **How do we (the fellowship) get help and recovery to all people affected by someone else’s drinking?**
- **How can we better educate the fellowship about the important role professionals play in referrals of their clients to AI-Anon? How can we gain a greater understanding of what “cooperation” means and AI-Anon’s public relations policy as it appears in the 2002-2004 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, on pages 87-88?**

Having AI-Anon meetings in areas more heavily populated by minorities requires an effort on the part of current members to get out of their comfort zone. “Boldly go where AI-Anon has never gone before” could be a theme for an outreach project that a group, district, or area could undertake. Contacting AA and

cooperating with them to establish AI-Anon groups where AA has already established meetings can be helpful. Contacting women’s shelters can also spread awareness of our fellowship.

Many members are confused about how to approach a professional. The confusion comes from trying to determine the dif-

ference between promotion and attraction. There are guidelines available from the World Service Office to help with outreach to professionals. If you take someone with you, both of you will

benefit. Focus on informing college students by targeting schools of law, medicine, and nursing. They are our future professionals.

Topic: The Al-Anon Focus

- **As more dual members attend Al-Anon meetings, how do we keep the focus on Al-Anon?**
- **Are the groups not promoting literature and *The Forum* in their groups during the meetings? Do they use it as a topic to start the meeting?**

To keep the Al-Anon focus, all newcomers need courtesy, kindness, and time to understand the program.

Taking a group conscience and writing an opening statement, which the meeting chair reads in addition to the Suggested Welcome, reminds everyone of Al-Anon's singleness of purpose and helps keep everyone focused on the Al-Anon message. A good pamphlet for dual members to read is *Al-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53). Reading the Traditions, listening to personal sharings, and sharing how we have been affected helps keep the meeting on track.

To increase awareness of the different pieces of literature, one

group passes a special basket at several meetings. When a pre-determined amount is collected, a name is drawn and the winner can use the funds to purchase a piece of literature. This encourages members to look at all the literature before making a choice. To promote *The Forum*, have a raffle with *The Forum* as the prize and use it regularly for meeting topics.

It was suggested that a group action committee be created to generate new ideas for interesting meeting topics. Groups could consider doing book studies or designating a pamphlet-of-the-month.

Topic: Attracting Newcomers to Service

- **How do groups get a Group Representative when nobody is willing?**
- **How do we get people into service, especially Alternate Group Representatives?**
- **How do we get willing service workers to fill the positions?**
- **What can we do as an individual or a group to attract people to become involved in service?**
- **How can we make service more attractive at group and assembly levels so that we can get new people taking positions? It seems like we just rotate from one position to another and the rest of the people just let us do the work.**

When no one is willing to step up and serve, one member suggested that the group make sure there is plenty of information readily available on all service positions so new members have an idea what the position involves. When it comes time to elect a new Group Representative (GR), wrap a box in pretty paper and fill it with a *Service Manual*, a copy of *Area Highlights* and/or other newsletters, and *The Forum* magazine. After the election, present the new GR with the box. Do something similar for the Alternate GR. In the description of the position, suggest that the position be shared.

One area has put together a nominating committee. Six months prior to the end of the three-year term, this committee offers to the election assembly a slate of officers from among all the groups in the area, as well as other members attending the assembly.

Other ideas to get more willing service workers included:

- Refer to *Area Highlights* for creative ideas.
- Have workshops on how to get volunteers and bring food, have fun, and share in the fellowship.
- Tie workshops to an exciting theme.
- Ask others to help with whatever service tasks you are doing to expose them to service.

- Share your exciting moments in service.
- Bring a member along to the assembly. Offer them a bed and let them know that all they have to pay for is their food.
- Remind longtime members to be careful not to stifle the newcomers by sharing "all our wisdom."
- Make sure we step down when our term is up.
- Use service as a meeting topic.
- At a meeting, toss a ball around. Whoever catches it shares why they got involved with service and how it has helped them. For those who are not in service, have them share why they are hesitant to serve.
- If members are reluctant to commit to three years, ask them if they could commit to 24 hours at a time.
- In the group, consider making the term for a position three months and then allowing the person to rotate off. They may eventually consider working toward longer commitments.
- Be available for support.
- Don't call it "service work."

Topic: Literature

- **Why do we continue to produce new pieces of literature instead of following on a clear, concise message in one or two main books? We seem to have a backlog of literature to review with two literature committees—will we need three soon?**

Literature goes where we cannot and it is tied to our primary purpose. Also, our membership changes over the years, so new books meet new needs. Newcomers are more likely to stay if they feel AI-Anon has something for them. Sometimes a specific piece of literature will catch their eye. It may contain just the personal

sharings they need. The process from conceptual approval to final copy takes approximately five years. For French and Spanish translation, it is a few years more. Literature sales help measure what's working for the fellowship.

Topic: Links of Service

- **Are the links of service working? If not, what alternatives are there?**
- **Should the WSO be communicating directly with the members, rather than relying on the links of service?**

"If one link is broken, the links of service don't work," and "Delegates are on information overload, so maybe the World Service Office should communicate directly with members," were two of the comments made during this workshop. However, a majority of the comments focused on what could be done to improve the links of service. Here are some of the suggestions they made:

- Have the Group Representative as the current mailing address (CMA) and the Alternate Group Representative as the default CMA.
- Take back to our areas that each level of service has a responsibility to report back on all issues and concerns as presented.
- Educate, educate, educate! Plant the seed.
- Appreciate, appreciate, appreciate! Send a letter to Group Representatives, letting them know they are the important link.

- Repeat, repeat, repeat! Be sure announcements are heard.
- "Offer" service jobs rather than telling people which job to do.
- Have set agendas to keep business meetings focused so they can be productive.
- Allow Delegates enough time for their reports.
- Hold annual workshops where the Delegate can reach out to potential service members.
- Use the area newsletter as a service tool.
- Encourage members to read the newsletters the group receives.
- Tie in the recovery aspects of the *Conference Summary* with the business side.
- Display literature and newsletters.
- Reprint items from *Area Highlights*.

Topic: Web Sites

- **What are problems that areas have encountered with their area Web sites and how have they resolved their problems?**
- **What are problems that areas encountered with their AIS/LDCs and how have they resolved these problems?**

Members of this group discussion did not have any problems or solutions to share with regard to their area Web site, but they agreed that being a Webmaster was a huge job, that it takes people with a special talent to maintain a Web site, and that the WSO had been helpful in setting it up.

In the process of setting up the Web sites, they found it important that the Webmaster or Committee Chairperson is a part of the area world service committee (AWSC). Then, problems and/or concerns can be reported to the AWSC. It was suggested that a Web Committee oversee the Webmaster position. This would allow an individual to serve without requiring a term limit. Some areas allot time at the AWSC meeting to make sure the Web site adheres to the Traditions and Concepts of Service.

Guidelines were important, and having a committee continue after guidelines were in place gives support to the Web master and maintains a connection to the area. Guidelines are needed for communication on the Web site and the process to pass the communication on to the appropriate person and to return communication to those who log on. If there is personal information

on the Web site, a password should be required to access it.

With regard to the AI-Anon information service/literature distribution center (AIS/LDC), problems with local offices included a lack of commitment by volunteers and the need to improve communication, not only between the AIS Coordinators, but also between the AIS and the LDC. It was suggested that training sessions be held to better educate the volunteers. To improve communication between the area and the AIS, a Liaison attends the area world service committee meeting. The AWSC could consider having a special meeting to discuss the problems and find solutions. If an AIS is having financial problems, hold a fundraiser and make it an annual event.

One issue of particular concern was an LDC that was continuing to sell discontinued Alateen literature. It was suggested that the information regarding the discontinued literature be conveyed through area newsletters, the Delegate's report, and/or whatever other means were available to alert the membership that this literature was discontinued.

Topic: "Policing Alateen"

- **With a motion saying all areas must have Alateen guidelines, are we asking areas to "police" groups? And what are we to do if some group is not following these guidelines?**
- **How can we "police" the Alateen groups and Alateen Sponsors to be sure they are following the rules to be sure that both the Alateens and Alateen Group Sponsors are safe?**

The resolution of the Board of Trustees does not require "policing" of Alateen groups. It only sets out the minimum safety and behavioral requirements each area must adopt in order to continue to use the Alateen name. The requirements developed by each area will provide both the Alateens and the Alateen Sponsors with confirmation that there are consequences for any inappropriate behavior and/or actions. While this group did not discount the seriousness of this question, they chose to focus on positive ways to encourage and support Alateens and Alateen Sponsors. It was suggested that Alateen Sponsors keep in touch with the area world service committee by attending assemblies, so that they know the area supports them. They felt it important

to encourage District Representatives to visit Alateen meetings on a regular basis and to suggest that an Al-Anon meeting adopt an Alateen group. In whatever way possible, members were encouraged to volunteer to help the Alateen groups and Alateen Sponsors. To help them stay involved, keep Alateens and Alateen Sponsors informed of district and area activities. Whenever necessary, help Alateens do an anonymous group inventory and then let them find their own solutions to any problem. If a group isn't following the requirements, "talk to each other, reason things out," but set a time limit for talking. If all else fails, be prepared to tell the parents and the meeting place that the group is no longer listed with Al-Anon.

Topic: Al-Anon at 53

- **How can we keep our groups dynamic and continue to attract members who have several years in the program? We seem to lose a lot of the "middle" members of our groups.**
- **Are our groups "dynamic" so they will be "building blocks for tomorrow?"**
- **Since there is a large drop in attendance, how can we get the members to be more active in our local conferences and gratitude days?**

A dynamic group is one in which members change and grow. When group attendance starts to drop, call those who had stopped coming to see what happened. Ask ourselves, "Am I dynamic?" Sometimes longtime members "rest on their laurels," expecting the newcomers to do the job. "Getting me out of my chair was the first step. I was asked to participate in a skit," shared one member.

Have we lost the concept of "home group"? It was suggested that longtime members become mentors or Service Sponsors for new members. When a service opportunity arises, work with a newcomer, take time to get everything organized, and provide clear directions so it is easy for them to try. Help them understand what materials they need for the task. Have written guidelines for positions or a written script of what to expect.

Reaching out to those who are unable to attend meetings is a great act of service. Do we help older members get to meetings? Do they need rides? Do we need to take meetings to them? Do we need to take new literature to them? As we age, we can also reach out to others by asking for help to get to places. That gets someone else involved. "Just tell the newcomer that you need to go and you need someone to go with you." "Fear sometimes keeps a person

from participating. Going with someone the first time makes it easier." This prompted another member to share that when her group became disjointed and lost middle members, they started visiting other groups, as a group. They also went back to "get in the car." Middle members are the "bread and butter" of service. The ones who are involved in service stay.

Some of the things that cause attendance to drop include lack of rotation of service positions at the group and/or district level. As a newcomer, they may be "afraid of the experts." Longtimers need to allow others to participate. Be careful not to push people into positions before they are ready, and then criticize them when they don't do everything correctly. We need to be allowed to be human no matter how long we have been in the program.

Do we cut some people out of service because of finances? Be flexible and creative. Have a garage sale to finance a Group Representative's way to a regional service seminar.

One member tried to get a district meeting going and held a spaghetti dinner. There was an unexpectedly large turnout. Social events connected with food draw people. It is a way to bring in groups from all over the district.

Topic: Dual Members and Service

- **How can we better explain the spiritual principles involved in Al-Anon not allowing AA members to serve in positions beyond the group level? What are the principles and/or what Steps, Traditions, or Concepts of Service apply?**
- **Would the Conference reconsider its position on dual members of Al-Anon and AA serving as Group Representatives?**

Dual membership and service have been discussed many times before. In a 1977 Conference motion, it was decided that dual members would not be able to serve beyond the group level. Our primary spiritual purpose is to help the families and friends of

alcoholics. AA's primary purpose is sobriety. We gain appreciation of the recovery process from our dual members. Many would be untrusting and uncomfortable with a dual member serving beyond the group level.

Topic: Board of Trustees

- How do we balance the Trustee's concern regarding our financial liability (example: current Alateen motion) while not being diverted from our primary spiritual aim, such as the principle of adherence to the unenforceable and accepting other members without judging them?
- Since Alateen is Al-Anon, how can we help ensure that our Trustees, many of whom have not been Alateens or Alateen Sponsors, have sufficient experience when they make policy decisions regarding Alateen?

The Board of Trustees is concerned with Alateen safety liability and the liability of the Al-Anon name. The Board of Trustees has the legal responsibility for the corporation of Al-Anon Family

Groups Headquarters, Inc., while the World Service Conference has traditional responsibility of the fellowship. Most Board members do have Alateen experience as Sponsors or Alternates.

DELEGATES (PANEL 42)

Sarah P., Alaska

(Sarah submitted her sharing but was unable to attend the Conference due to illness.)

The staff at the local alcoholism treatment center told me they couldn't treat my son unless I went to Al-Anon. The counselor gave me a piece of paper for signatures to verify my attendance at meetings. At my first Al-Anon meeting I looked for "the boss" at the table and figured it was the person who led the meetings. I wanted to talk, but I would be breaking the biggest secret I was told as a child, "Don't tell anyone what is happening in our family, because it's none of their business."

I continued to attend Al-Anon and soon I was leading the meeting. By this time, the meeting had dwindled to three of us. We kept talking over and over about what was happening in our homes. The treatment center counselor had a video on codependency, which I took to the Al-Anon meeting. I had keys to the meeting place and set up everything for the other two members who attended.

One night I was reading the opening and turning on the VCR when a woman joined us. We ignored her and continued to watch the video. Several times the woman said, "Is this an Al-Anon meeting?" We nodded yes, and continued to watch the video. I thought she was rude because she asked again, "Is this an Al-Anon meeting?"

The following week the same woman came back and asked to lead the meeting. She talked about her life, Conference Approved Literature, and sponsorship. I liked what she said, but when she talked about sponsorship, I thought to myself, "No way am I asking her to be my Sponsor."

One day I did ask her to be my Sponsor. She asked if I planned to be an alcoholism counselor because I had \$500 of prevention books and kept reporting my efforts to control the drinking. She wanted me to read daily from *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* and not from outside material.

I started to work the Twelve Steps. My Sponsor started a new meeting and gave me the key to open so I could set up the room. I arrived early so I could read the literature. By this time I was reading only CAL. In the quiet of that Al-Anon meeting room, I

found peace. I started my journey in service work and my healing began.

It's been an honor and a gift to serve as Delegate. I wouldn't have been able to do my job without the loving, enthusiastic members in Alaska, because it's been a partnership with my Higher Power and Al-Anon right from the beginning. My Sponsor took me by the hand and said let's follow the basics of Al-Anon. Let's keep it simple and not dilute it with this other stuff. She was so right! My journey keeps unfolding and it's exciting to wonder what my Higher Power has in store for me.

Jerie S., Arkansas

When I first began attending Al-Anon in 1984, I wasn't looking for a dynamic group. In fact, I really wanted a very dull group, one that wouldn't notice me or ask too many questions. At meetings, I would count over seven chairs so that I could read the shortest Step. I certainly didn't want anyone to fuss over me. Even after several meetings, I wasn't sure that I wanted to "join up." Back then, I would have given the word *dynamic* the definition of "peppy" or "energetic" and pictured sickeningly cheerful people with false smiles and buddy-buddy attitudes—nothing that I could remotely relate to. I didn't have a clue then that what would become my home group really was dynamic or that Al-Anon would change my life.

Today I have a different understanding. The word *dynamic* has come to represent "change" and "action" to me. My home group and my Sponsor eventually helped me realize that I could change if I took action. I didn't have to figure everything out first. The words "change" and "action" can also describe dynamic groups. I think a group is dynamic if its members change. I don't mean just its membership. I think that, in a dynamic group, the members grow and change and make one another witnesses to the miracle of healed lives and changed attitudes.

The members of a dynamic group take action. They work the Steps, they have a Sponsor, and they become Sponsors themselves. Members of a dynamic group become self-supporting; they take turns chairing meetings and holding group offices. A

dynamic group has a Group Representative who attends district and area meetings, and it has members who help with outreach projects and are involved in Al-Anon service.

One person, or even two or three, cannot make a group dynamic. It's an inside job of each member of the group. The more members who actively participate in their own personal recovery, the more dynamic the group will become. Just as there is no set formula for each person's journey of recovery, there is no blueprint for a dynamic group. Dynamic groups come in all kinds of packages because they are made up of all kinds of people with varied experiences and personalities. Some dynamic groups may be very gentle and accepting; some may actually be peppy; and others might be quite serious and business-like. Having a dynamic group is not about reading a particular welcome or having a particular pamphlet or using a particular format; it's about members sharing their recovery with other members and encouraging one another's personal recovery. It's about seeing the blessings and being involved in the miracles and continuing to grow and change. I am a building block for the future, and so are you, and so is the newest member of a dynamic group.

Taffy P., Connecticut

With the help of Al-Anon meetings and my Higher Power, today I can stand before you a confident woman. I am willing to take charge of my life and to live life to the fullest. Figuratively speaking, Al-Anon saved my life. Literally speaking, it saved my sanity.

Throughout the years I have been coming into these rooms, service has been my lifeline. Dynamic groups loved me when I couldn't love myself. They encouraged me to keep coming back and they gave me hope that I could have a good life despite the disease of alcoholism. Dynamic groups gave me the courage to face my fears when all I wanted to do was bury myself under the covers and forget my problems. In other words, Al-Anon groups gave me the building blocks for my soul.

The dynamic groups I attended kept repeating the Steps, Traditions, and slogans. They showed me new ideas such as detachment with love—until these ideas became a part of my life, my foundation. They shared with me how to overcome parts of my own disease—blaming, belittling, and being bossy. I was bossy because I refused to believe I was powerless over other people, places, and things—such as my husband's drinking. They reminded me that blaming was a stumbling block to my own recovery, particularly when I refused to keep the focus on myself and I blamed the alcoholic for all of my unhappiness. Belittling was one of my problems because I had so little self-worth. I didn't believe I deserved a better, happier life, whether the alcoholic continued to drink or not. I'm still a work-in-progress.

I may not work my program perfectly, but I'm not sure anybody does! At least, I'm trying to work the program to the best of my abilities. My dynamic Al-Anon groups gave me the building blocks to transform myself into the person I am today. I continue to build on that foundation so I can become the person I am capable of becoming.

Who knows what is going to happen tomorrow? "One Day

at a Time" is all I can successfully handle. However, Al-Anon and its dynamic groups have given me the faith to believe that whatever comes along, I will be able to handle it.

I have come so far from the frightened woman who crawled into these rooms, thanks to my home groups and Sponsors. They are the giants on whose shoulders I am able to stand. Because they believed in me, now I can believe in myself, and I have the freedom to continue building my body, mind, and soul. Who knows how far I can go? I'm already looking forward to my next incredible adventure!

Ruth B., Idaho

To me, a dynamic group is involved, energetic, and growing.

The first Al-Anon meeting I stumbled into was not dynamic. It wasn't a healthy group, but I didn't know that. I didn't know what to expect at an Al-Anon meeting. All I heard was a lot of whining about how horrible life could be. After a few weeks, I stopped going. It took me five more years to be in enough pain to try Al-Anon again. This time I was directed to a meeting that was exactly what I needed. I felt at home there immediately. It became my home group.

What made this meeting different and kept me coming back? Many things—among them was the peace and serenity I saw in your faces. I was attracted to you! I was attracted to the warmth and love I felt, to the laughter I heard, and to the enthusiasm I saw in your eyes. Enthusiasm is from the Greek, "en theos," the God within. I saw God in your eyes.

You talked about the solution—how you had found the answers through the Steps. I identified with your experiences, and I was drawn to your strength and hope. You talked about sponsorship and when I asked, you said, "Yes."

I noticed that the group's unity came ahead of any one individual's needs. No one was in charge. In our business meetings, I saw how a Higher Power was working through the group conscience. When there was a problem, we discussed it openly and things changed. It was an incredible example of healthy conflict. I learned how to express an opinion and speak my truth. When the vote didn't go my way, I learned about acceptance.

I saw a willingness to serve in this group. Group positions were filled. The group took on service projects, created committees, and hosted workshops. We learned about trusting each other. You told me to get into service and I did, mostly to get your approval. What I didn't expect was that through service, I'd finally feel like I belonged. I was finally a part of you.

As a newcomer, I didn't know why I felt so attracted to this group. Today I know it's because there was a balance of all three sides of our triangle—recovery, unity, and service. No matter how much Public Outreach we do, if our groups are not healthy, newcomers will not keep coming back. I love this program because it saved my life. I want it to be there for others. Healthy, dynamic groups *grow* and thrive. They create generations of recovery. Unhealthy groups wither and die. The most important thing I can do in Al-Anon today is to make sure my group is healthy. Let it begin with me.

Pat R., Illinois South

I was taken aback when I received the Conference theme: “Dynamic Groups Today—Building Blocks for Tomorrow.” Great theme for the Conference, but how was I to speak about this topic when I really wanted to talk about change! You have taught me how to do change and all the possibilities it has created in my life. That’s what I wanted to talk about!

I did what any Al-Anon person knows how to do; I had a conversation with my God and contacted my Conference Sponsor. She suggested that I move the words around to make them more personal to me. How about, “Dynamic Groups Today: Building Blocks for Better Relationships Tomorrow?”

When I arrived at Al-Anon, my credo was, “If I can’t do it, it can’t be done,” and then someone asked me to be their Sponsor. I was fairly sure that I couldn’t do that! I quickly called my Sponsor and she suggested that I say “yes.” Then, if uncertainty set in, I was to call her and together we could offer direction. What a novel idea! Asking someone for help and discussing a problem together. I had just found my first building block in striving for healthier relationships.

A longtime member of my home group shared how she had learned to “lay down the sword.” That was the easy part. The more difficult part is to “lay down the shield” and risk being vulnerable. Hmmmm. Shortly after that meeting, already aware that I had great difficulty in admitting when I was wrong, an opportunity was presented. I knew I was wrong about an issue between my husband and me. Dare I risk? Very scary! Quietly, from the next room, I said: “I’m sorry, I was wrong.” He fell on the floor, grasping his heart. Oh no! I knew this honesty stuff was dangerous! I ran to call 911 and he looked up with a nasty grin and said, “I never thought that I would live long enough to hear you say that you were sorry and you were wrong in the same breath.” For the first time in many years, we laughed together.

My current lesson is “speak boldly.” It’s really not my nature. Where did I come up with this idea? Where was I learning to express my truths honestly and with compassion? Could it be from this dynamic fellowship, where I have already learned to ask for help, to risk, to be honest? My building project is not yet complete, still a work-in-progress, but I have this fellowship to guide and direct my continued growth.

Carol V., Iowa

When I entered my first Al-Anon meeting in 1979, I didn’t care if it was a “dynamic” group. I just wanted help because alcoholism had torn our world apart. I felt I was living a lie. I was full of fear, yet wore a mask that life was just fine. Those members welcomed me and shared their stories with me. I felt they truly understood and I was not the only one to have lived in such chaos.

The slogans, because they were simple and my mind could focus on them, were the first tools of the program that I used. The Steps were the start of a little sanity and I liked hearing how others applied them to their lives. I didn’t understand why we read those dumb Traditions at each meeting and the Concepts of Service were not mentioned.

I began my service work by setting out literature and making coffee. It didn’t feel like service, but it fed my need to be needed. When I chaired meetings, I felt more a part of my group. When I was asked to be the Group Representative, I was apprehensive; but they assured me that I could do it. Thank goodness for that very helpful District Representative. Service was not a topic of discussion in my first home group, but I’m grateful that I was allowed to serve as Group Representative and take those initial service steps.

In 1988, we moved and I immediately found a new home group. Before long, I realized that the move was a gift from my Higher Power. The members were enthusiastic about service, discussing it at meetings, and inviting others to “get in the car” to attend district and area functions. Not only did we read the Traditions at each meeting, they were often the meeting topic! I soon realized how important it was to have a whole program, including the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service.

In September 1993, three people within two weeks asked me if I was active in service. I took it as a strong nudge from my Higher Power and willingly stood for the position of District Representative. My Al-Anon focus grew from me-and-my-group to our district. At the end of that term, I was elected area Treasurer and found my focus changing to my area. My next position was Alternate Delegate, which included Forum Coordinator and Conference Coordinator. When I was elected Delegate, focusing on worldwide Al-Anon became very evident at my first World Service Conference. Through service, my focus on Al-Anon has changed and grown, as has my personal program.

I think of our three Legacies as the main building blocks of the Al-Anon program, followed by enthusiasm, willingness, commitment, and service. All of these together make for a dynamic group. I thank my Higher Power for that stumbling block of alcoholism that was put in my path because my Al-Anon program has been the stepping stone to the wonderful life I have and love today.

Jay P., Louisiana

In college, I received a Chemical Engineering degree and learned all about dynamics and building chemical complexes. That knowledge helped me build a very successful career and a happy family life. We were on top of the world and life just couldn’t have been any better. We thought we had everything we needed to be happy. Then the disease struck and, unfortunately, our building blocks came crumbling down. I finally crash-landed in Al-Anon. All my knowledge and hard work had not bought me happiness. Somehow I miscalculated the dynamics on how to be happy. I had no clue.

One of the first things I noticed in Al-Anon was that the members were happy. It seemed like they were holding a candle in their heart and the bright light was shining through their eyes. I knew right away what I was missing and what I was seeking desperately. I found it spiritually through working the Twelve Steps. I thank my Service Sponsor for gently guiding me toward service to the fellowship. It is only through service that I realized how big our fellowship is and how God works through us to carry the

message of hope. God is truly the dynamic force who guides us through our group conscience. If we remain open and willing, God will guide us to make this fellowship a better place for all future newcomers to find the true happiness, joy, and freedom the fellowship has to offer.

As a trusted servant, I have continued to carry the message and gained a much deeper understanding of the philosophy contained within Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service. Practicing these thirty-six tools in my daily life has become a way of life. It is like looking at the world through a kaleidoscope; with every turn, I see new possibilities. The fellowship's total trust in me has given a tremendous boost to my self-confidence. As a result, I am self-assured, with more confidence and energy than I ever had before.

Finishing my term as Delegate is not the end of my service journey. It is a way of life, which continues to nourish my soul. It is a privilege and honor to be a dynamic building block of this fellowship. Al-Anon has given a new direction to my life. I have a rewarding career, a happy marriage, hobbies, and many new friends. I will always be grateful to Al-Anon, for it has blessed me with so many precious gifts.

Jennie McC., Maine

It took me a year or so to find a group where I felt comfortable. I was looking for the fellowship I'd witnessed in my husband's AA meetings. Once I found my home group, I immediately began what I later learned was service: making coffee, setting up, and handling the oh-so-complicated finances. What I hadn't expected was that service made me feel like a part of the group and was instrumental in my returning week after week. Service offered me challenges and new sources of experience, strength, and hope. I still try to get new people to chair meetings as soon as they are able, to hear the new voice, and to get them hooked.

Al-Anon is where I learned that people don't like to be interrupted. I grew up in a family where it was standard to finish another's sentence or to move on to the next point because everyone knew what was going to be said. What a revelation it was when a group conscience discussion resulted in a decision that we raise our hands if we wanted to speak. I found that if I was called on to speak, people expected me to finish my thought. I'd never had anyone actually listen until the period at the end of my sentence. I was used to just trailing off and not having to come to a conclusion. It forced me to think more about what I thought and how I wanted to express it.

When our group was approached about joining our district, I was told, "Oh, we don't do service in this group." The next time we were approached, the group had grown, the district had come alive, and I volunteered to be Group Representative, whatever that was. It took a while before I understood the structure of Al-Anon and its importance. When they suggested I leave my babies and go to assembly for the weekend, I thought they were nuts. In spite of a wicked headache at my first Group Representative caucus, I was hooked.

From great mentors, I am learning to be open, honest, and willing, willing to let minority points of view speak, to serve,

and to share. I've been swayed by more than one brave person who spoke the minority position. I've seen disagreements that evolved to consensus and the Traditions in action. I saw that my voice mattered and that maybe Al-Anon needed me as much as I needed Al-Anon. I have made mistakes, but I've gotten another chance. I have learned the importance of welcoming anyone I did not recognize into my group.

Dynamic members willing to stretch themselves and grow will create dynamic groups that keep Al-Anon alive and relevant. Thanks to Al-Anon, I am now able to make decisions, make changes, and become more the person I want to be and that my Higher Power intended me to be.

Dru S., Missouri

Reflecting on the topic of "Dynamic Groups Today—Building Blocks for Tomorrow," I thought back to what it was like 18 years ago when I came to my first Al-Anon meeting. The counselor at my husband's treatment center suggested I try Al-Anon. I thank God that that center believed enough in family recovery to recommend Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous. Staff members said Al-Anon could help me understand alcoholism and its affects on the family.

Beginning with my father and including two husbands, I had been in three alcoholic relationships. Eventually I went to my first meeting and chose it for my home group. This meeting had its problems. A domineering member ran the group, and there was no Group Representative. Many new and old members knew something was wrong, but they didn't know how to fix it. When we talked about our problems and reasoned them out, someone suggested we invite the District Representative to help us.

We had a group conscience meeting and shortly afterward we elected a Group Representative. When we asked for volunteers to help, we elected a Treasurer, Secretary, Program Chairperson, and Chairperson. All of us experienced a spiritual awakening, and since then we have had monthly business and group conscience meetings. We continue to elect a full slate of group officers and to participate at the district level. We have had some area officers go through this process, and hopefully more are "in training."

When I think of dynamic groups, I think of healthy groups at every level of service. Dynamic groups use Conference Approved Literature, have a program chair, chairperson, and members who share recovery with newcomers and each other. Dynamic groups include a mix of longtime members, newcomers, Sponsors, and sponsees—all of whom attend meetings on a regular basis.

We need to encourage service by example, conversation, and enthusiasm. The district encourages all Group Representatives to participate and the dynamic groups show up. They are enthusiastic about service. They study the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* and use it in meetings. They also study the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service. Dynamic groups will probably have an upcoming area officer in their midst.

When I think of building blocks, I think of starting at the bottom and building up using the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts of Service. I think of a solid base that has strong sides,

just like our triangle—recovery, unity, and service that form our three Legacies. How can this be done? “Let It Begin with Me.”

Bev A., Nebraska

When I heard the theme for this year’s Conference, I thought, “My home group is dynamic.” As I thought further, I realized all the home groups I have ever belonged to have been dynamic.

My first group had structure, thanks to our Alateen Sponsor. She encouraged us to be organized, according to the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. Because of her leadership, I learned early about our three Legacies and their importance to our fellowship and to me. Due to that sponsorship, I attended area assemblies and began to get an understanding. More than just a local gathering, this group I belonged to was part of a worldwide fellowship. I also met at those assemblies the lady who would become my Sponsor when I made the transition from Alateen to Al-Anon. She walked me through the Steps and by example taught me the importance of a personal relationship with a Higher Power. She nurtured my continued journey in service and prepared me to be a building block for the future of this fellowship.

In my early Al-Anon days, my home group was an exuberant, enthusiastic, service-oriented group where I learned more about group conscience, autonomy, and Concept Four. The members practiced Concept Nine regularly, as well, since the Area Chairman and Area Delegate were from this home group.

Ten years ago, my husband and I moved to a small town in southwest Nebraska where the Al-Anon meeting had just disbanded. My Sponsor told me to get busy. I prayed, practiced attraction rather than promotion, prayed, did some Public Outreach work, prayed, and prayed some more. I started an Al-Anon meeting that grew slowly, in God’s time not mine. I now belong to an exuberant, enthusiastic, service-oriented home group. Every member has a service position. Since this is an election year for our area, they have been considering and praying about what service adventure they will stand for this fall. They are becoming the building blocks for our future.

My home group has been a source of strength for me, along with my Sponsor and the members of my previous group. I have needed that strength, as life has given me some devastating obstacles to overcome. In four and a half years, I lost my father to sickness, a sister-in-law to suicide, a brother to prison, and in October of 2000 I lost my dear mother to a car accident. In my darkest hours of grief, I found myself asking my Higher Power not to remove my pain, but for more faith, and I was elected Delegate. Thank you to my Higher Power for blessing me with service-oriented Sponsors and the privilege to participate in the greatest group in the world. It has been my lifeline.

Renee M., Nevada

Life is dynamic—always changing, always moving. There is a time and a season for everything. There was a time to be the new Delegate and now it’s time to be the outgoing Delegate. Looking back, it seems to have gone so quickly.

Service is a dynamic force in my life and in my recovery. It has helped me enjoy life’s journey. I am so grateful that my journey

has included a three-year term as Delegate to the Conference. It has not always been an easy journey. I have experienced some bumps in the road that were almost too hard to get over. The month prior to my first Conference I became quite ill. I didn’t know if I would have the physical strength to attend. Several in my area knew of my concerns and prayed I would have the strength. Their prayers were answered.

Three weeks before my second Conference I was finally diagnosed correctly. I had asked God to please grant me some answers. I didn’t want to be depressed, but I was. I had received “bad news” and I had to fight a depression that grabbed me and wouldn’t let go. I had to let go of an ego that said a longtime member shouldn’t feel this way.

I have learned to be honest with my feelings and to ask for help when I’m hurting. No matter what, I keep showing up for my recovery. Now into my third year as Delegate, I understand what commitment is all about. It’s doing something because you love it, even when it seems too hard to do. If I make a commitment, I have to keep it—even when my energy is low or my body says “No.” I have found energy in the meetings. When two or more of us are gathered, something special happens, and it has been a healing force in my life this past year. Al-Anon has taught me to make stumbling blocks into building blocks. The love, hope, and strength you share with me today is what my tomorrow is being built on.

There have been changes in my life during my term as Delegate. I don’t believe you can be a part of the Conference and not be changed by it. I now see the world as a big public outreach project, just waiting to happen, and I want to help make that happen! I want to hear the minority voice—because I’ve been the minority voice. I see the bigger “we” now. We all share a common and primary purpose—to awaken our spirits each day, allowing a Higher Power to lead us, and freely giving back what we have received. Those of us who are here today are a dynamic group, and it has been my privilege to be part of it. I hope and pray that the actions we take during Conference will be the building blocks for Al-Anon today and in the future.

Harriet F., Newfoundland/Labrador

When I came to Al-Anon, my family was definitely not a dynamic group. The disease of alcoholism had drained the life out of our central core. We went from being a happy, outgoing, united family to one that existed in a tomb of secrets, silence, and manipulation. It was a true reflection of my sickness and a poor foundation on which to build a future.

When I truly embraced the Al-Anon principles, our lives did a complete turnaround. I discovered the wonders of “me.” I discovered qualities that were so deeply buried that it took several Fourth Step inventories and the patience and love of wonderful Al-Anon members and Sponsors to help me peel away the layers of denial, mistrust, and disbelief.

As I grabbed everything Al-Anon had to offer, I began to heal and become a whole person again. Having sobriety in our home was a plus. Our lives began to change and we started our journey of healing. Time does not allow me to tell the whole process, but

it was not an overnight change. It was a journey that had severe pain as well as joy, failures as well as successes. For the first time in my life, I was part of a fellowship where that was okay. I was neither judged nor critiqued, and I was loved and accepted unconditionally.

Over a period of time, our family became a dynamic group again and together we laid a solid foundation for future growth. To be able to tell you that I just celebrated 30 years of marriage with a man I consider my best friend and that our two adult children consider us their best friends, is nothing short of a miracle. I now have a strong foundation on which to build a healthy future.

My Al-Anon home group is also my family. Our area includes groups that are growing and groups that are struggling. Our dynamic groups are comprised of Al-Anon members who walk the walk, are service minded, and whose group conscience always considers what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. By reaching out to others, these groups will serve as building blocks for tomorrow.

As I complete my term as Delegate, I am taking back to our area some valuable gifts that I have received at this Conference. The enthusiasm and sense of spirituality I encountered here will remain with me always, as will the sense of connectedness to Al-Anon as a whole. There is no *us* and *them*. There is just one big fellowship that is spread worldwide.

Implementation of the Conference themes from the past three years has done so much for Al-Anon in Newfoundland/Labrador. It has stimulated growth through our public outreach. We have vast challenges to face in our area; but as long as we have dynamic groups we will have building blocks for a positive, hopeful future.

Judi O., New Hampshire

In my wildest dreams, I never thought I'd be privileged to serve as Delegate to the World Service Conference of Al-Anon/Alateen for the state of New Hampshire. After my election, it seemed as if three years was an eternity. Now, in my third year, I wonder where the time went! There have been feelings of joy, hurt, anger, and inferiority—all of the things I felt before I came into this wonderful fellowship. During the challenging times, I handled most of the feelings in a very different manner because of the help and hope I've found in these halls.

My first year was full of excitement and awe, mixed with feelings of joy, enthusiasm, and frustration. My area adopted the new structure, but we had not tried the action committees. Change is difficult sometimes, but in Al-Anon I've learned that embracing change often comes with great rewards. You told me to trust the process. We started using action teams and enthusiasm flourished and still does—team play.

My second year was a tough one—more for me, personally, than with being Delegate. I came to terms with some physical issues and walked through yet more emotional and spiritual pain. My “Al-Anon Overflow” was spent, but my “Al-Anon Essence” held me in good stead. Mixed into God's plan was the birth of our first grandchild. I was blessed beyond words to take part in the birthing. The incredible gift of watching our son as

a parent truly makes me grateful to have been touched by the disease of alcoholism.

This year, I have found new energy. I'm not questioning “the job” I've done as Delegate most of the time. I know that as a member of the Group Services Committee, we accomplished a great deal. I feel that I've been a positive example of gentle and firm leadership by utilizing the tools I've been given that have proven to be successful. I can allow God's spirit to work in difficult situations—I don't have to have the answer.

One of the several meanings of dynamic is “of or relating to energy or to objects in motion.” Hmmmm...Groups in motion—building blocks for tomorrow. How interesting is that??!! The Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service have kept our family healthier than I ever imagined. I picture our meetings forming a foundation from which we can build up and out, finding strength in each new block. Our action teams are part of that foundation and will help our area grow.

I have great admiration for all of you here, carrying out the business of Al-Anon/Alateen. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your courage, your strength, and your commitment to our fellowship.

Rick M., New Mexico

My first impression of Al-Anon was that you all were sadists and hypocrites; that you enjoyed perverse pleasure in denying your loved ones the care, attention, and devotion they so desperately needed. Your Steps had nothing to do with helping me, they were just an excuse to stand by and watch someone die. And that God stuff. Who really believes in God? Only wimps need God—women, children, and wimps—that's all God is good for.

I came in angry, embarrassed, and ashamed. I was ashamed of my violent behavior, embarrassed by my wife's drunkenness, and angry at my ineffectiveness to change any of it. There you were with your Steps and Traditions, your quaint little sayings, lots of literature, and your opening and closing statements of purpose and behavior. You smiled, you waited patiently for each person to speak their peace or discomfort, and you gave hugs—those awful, gut wrenching hugs that I avoided for weeks.

At home I regurgitated the lessons heard at meetings to my wife, thinking that there was some good stuff from which she could benefit, if she would only listen. My behavior continued unchanged, as I was not the problem. I sulked a lot, didn't talk, and was extremely self-conscious, not wanting to be there, and mentally critiquing your faults and how I could fix them. Sometimes there would be angry outbursts over something I disagreed with. But you didn't argue, you just smiled and said, “You may be right,” or, horror of horrors, “Keep Coming Back.” Sometimes the light bulb lit up and I would be inspired. I might hear for the umpteenth time how someone “Let Go and Let God,” and it would finally register that I could do the same by going for a walk, calling a member, or pulling weeds. What a relief and sense of accomplishment to try something simple and feel a change in my mood, my state of mind, and my heart.

Doing group service work and Twelfth Step work gave me opportunities to participate in something that has become important to me, practice being helpful to others, and try tools in a safe

environment—tools that I had watched you use.

I don't know what makes a meeting work, maybe just a bunch of sick people trying to do better with a few simple guidelines to follow. Trying to prove that you were wrong was certainly one motivating factor for my coming to Al-Anon. Watching others work through adversity, which was far more difficult than my own, with grace and sometimes with not so much grace, was also a compelling attraction and still grips me. Without dynamic groups today there is no Al-Anon tomorrow, no fellowship. And okay, so I've become a wimp. At least I'm a happy wimp.

Elizabeth S., New York South

“WOW!” Remember who said this? It was Serena T. in *Links of Service!* This is what she said when she arrived at her first World Service Conference!

And that's how I felt 17 years ago. Yes, 17 years ago when I was 17 and doing my first “You're being volunteered into service” on the In-Town Alateen Committee at the World Service Office in Manhattan. That year the Alateen Committee was asked to present before the Delegates. We were told that this was a closed Al-Anon business meeting and that we were not allowed inside. That's when I first thought of our fellowship as a secret society! But when the doors opened and we walked in, all I could think was “WOW!” and I hadn't even met Serena T. yet. What a gift to be here once again!

Alateen was my first dynamic group. The service positions I held in Alateen and Al-Anon became building blocks for humbly serving my area as Delegate. I am grateful for the power of example from those who served before me, including my mom and my Service Sponsor. Their unwavering energy and relentless enthusiasm made my home group meetings and service meetings dynamic. Sometimes there were even fireworks! I have come to accept that every group has its dynamics, but not every group is necessarily dynamic. That is the greatest catch for people like me, who love to serve and inspire group members to get in the car, subway, or bus, and serve beyond the group level.

Our three Legacies of recovery through the Twelve Steps, unity through the Twelve Traditions, and service through the Twelve Concepts have built an indestructible foundation. Today I choose what I wish to build on this foundation. The love, understanding, and hugs I received from the Alateens in my Alateen home group helped me to recover my lost childhood. And the acceptance, love, and hugs I received from my Al-Anon home group when I transitioned from Alateen to Al-Anon were unforgettable; especially when they drank the undrinkable coffee I made Tuesday after Tuesday. Their humor, love, recovery, and hugs attract me Monday after Monday. And so it is that we build for tomorrow by strengthening these dynamic groups today.

Tim H., Ontario North

Before becoming a Delegate, I did a lot of reading of the Concepts of Service, but their meaning was not clear to me until after my first Conference. With the experience of the Conference, I came to understand how all the parts of Al-Anon fit together. When I went home, I wanted everyone to have this same experience; but I found that the next best thing was for me to carry the

message as well as I could back to my area.

I work as a carpenter and more and more I realize that I learn things by doing them. By coming to the World Service Conferences and doing my job as Delegate, I learn so much about Al-Anon and about myself. I attend my small meeting once a week and go to our area meetings twice a year. I see how they fit into the wider Al-Anon fellowship.

I appreciate the theme of this year's Conference and how it focuses on the group. The group is the beginning and the end of everything that happens in Al-Anon. The most important thing I can do is to apply the Traditions to keep my group healthy. I love seeing the close connection between the groups and the World Service Office. We all act in the best way we know for the benefit of Al-Anon. In this way, there is really no separation between the groups and the WSO.

I gained some humility during my passing stage as a Delegate. I do each job in the best manner I can and I see how all others do their jobs to the best of their ability. In this way we are all perfect. Some things that I thought were my vital characteristics, I have found are not. Some things that I did not appreciate about myself, I now hold dear. This is how I grow and these Conferences have helped me do this to a degree that I am only somewhat aware. In these past three years, I have grown in ways unimaginable to me a short time ago. Thank you all for being here, for being a part of my life.

Jacqueline M., Puerto Rico

Buenos dias. As I was preparing for this moment, a thousand fragments of memory flashed through my mind like an enormous decoupage of diverse colors representing parts of the past. Swirling darkness and enormous black holes represented the depth of my despair when my spirit was broken. As memories of life after the program appear, I see ever growing expansions of brilliant colors, surrounded by light, with an occasional dark thundercloud.

Today I am grateful that my life is no longer full of uncontrollable, rampaging hurricanes of devastation, carrying yesterday's fears, anger, pain, and depression. Among my mental snapshots, I find one from my first time at the Conference podium. My legs were trembling and my heart was beating wildly, just like the first time I entered the rooms of Al-Anon—only this time I trembled with anticipation, not pain.

I came to my first Conference during a severe family crisis and questioned if I should be a Delegate. Did I know enough? Had I been in the program too few years? Would I know when to express an opinion, when to listen? My Higher Power let me know that this is where I needed to be.

As I learned the ropes at the Conference, I received hope and strength by listening to members who shared experiences that they had survived, many involving their children. I heard third year Delegates who were adult children of alcoholics, speak of their feelings and experiences. They helped me understand a bit more about the crisis situations that our young adult children face. Believe it or not, one of our assignments on the Literature Committee was to review the book, *From Survival to Recovery*. My Higher Power spoke once again. He wanted me where I was,

not only to serve, but also to continue recovering. Again and again, Al-Anon reminded me it is “Progress, not Perfection.”

My family situations improved as I changed my attitudes and “Let Go and Let God.” No matter what happens in life, I know my Higher Power is with me. What I cannot do, He can. Nowadays I paint my decoupage of life in brilliant, rich colors in spite of the challenges—no darkness for me.

I thank my Higher Power, you, members of past Conferences, my Al-Anon/Alateen family, AA friends from Puerto Rico, and of course my family for loving, tolerating, and giving me the chance to grow, to contribute, to make mistakes, to pick myself up again, and to be a better person for it. All of you have helped me find a fuller and happier life, more than I ever dreamed possible a decade or so ago. I will continue to do my part to inspire those who still suffer so they might choose the path of recovery through Al-Anon.

My prayers are for your continued recovery and growth. I am counting on you to help keep the fellowship strong for those yet to come. I love you.

Diane B., Saskatchewan

When I first came to Al-Anon, I always worried about tomorrow. My career centered on decision-making and planning, so having goals and evaluating them made me think about the outcome and the “tomorrow.” However, I had overlooked the parts of the decision-making process that said to study all the alternatives, not just my alternatives, and to change the goals as the situation changed. The Al-Anon program re-taught me that, while it is good to have goals, it is more important to take the opportunities that come my way and to have real, achievable expectations. Now, I worry less about tomorrow by laying a good foundation today.

My first Al-Anon group taught me to lay the foundation on the first building block of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. If the group had a problem, members looked at the Traditions to find which Tradition or Traditions would solve it. If I had a problem, I could use the Twelve Steps to get the focus back on me and on what I needed to do! Other groups and Al-Anon members have given me other building blocks. It is important to have longtime members and newcomers in the program to provide balance—a reminder of where I am and where I am headed.

Having little money in the bank, either in the group or at home, means I have to remember how important Al-Anon is and to work hard to keep it. A tolerance of different personalities helps me in situations, over a long period of time, to become a more compassionate and understanding person. Recently, as a Delegate, I have found out how important the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* is in defining the links of service and avoiding personality issues. Rotating service positions is so important to the survival of Al-Anon because it allows everyone to participate in the fellowship. I have turned down a second term as archivist and newsletter editor, even though I would love to continue for life, but Al-Anon needs everybody, not just me.

I have admired those Al-Anon members who have gone before me for providing a block that builds everywhere you go—the block of encouragement. My Sponsors have encouraged me to

keep up the Twelve Steps for my personal recovery. My groups have encouraged me in service work, from making coffee to being their Delegate. Other members have told me how great I am doing and have overlooked my flaws. Today, I practice encouragement on myself, on my family, on other Al-Anon members, and on my colleagues. Whatever I do next in Al-Anon, I want to encourage others the way I have been encouraged.

Nancy B., South Carolina

When I came into the rooms of Al-Anon, I began to see the dynamics in the groups I attended as they carried the message of Al-Anon and Alateen to me and other newcomers. At my first meeting, I recall the warm welcome members of a dynamic group offered me. I took away a feeling of belonging, and soon I started applying “Mind Your Own Business” and detachment to my life.

As I continued to attend meetings, members showed me acceptance, hope, faith, honesty, courage, willingness, humility, unconditional love, integrity, perseverance, and serenity. Then through their actions, they showed me how to get busy and get better. As I became an active member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen, I, too, began to see the importance of being a vital part of the dynamic groups I attended.

The basic principles of our fellowship that the groups showed me in meeting after meeting started me on this wonderful journey of self-discovery. My emergence started through our slogans, Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, General Warranties, and readings from Conference Approved Literature in the dynamic groups I attended. I went from a withdrawn, isolated individual wrapped in a cocoon of lifelessness to a free spirited butterfly filled with hope.

I entered the rooms of Al-Anon as a naïve, lost, confused individual. As a result of the men and women who found the hope of Al-Anon prior to me and were willing to reach out and show me the building blocks of recovery, I started to change. Block after block, one baby step at a time, I began building a strong foundation beneath me—with the help of a Higher Power, my Sponsor, and fellow Al-Anon members who gave me guidance and loved me until I believed in myself. My improved self-worth and self-esteem are building blocks that enable me to take risks through service and to grow into the person my Higher Power wants me to be. It is with gratitude that I want to share these gifts with others as they come to Al-Anon, so that they, too, might be transformed from feelings of hopelessness to a world they never dreamed was possible.

Now it is my responsibility to carry the message to those who have not yet found the hope, so they will also have the opportunity to become happy, joyous, and free. For the fellowship to grow and be there in the years to come, it is up to me to be there and to take an active part as a building block for tomorrow. So I say, “Let It Begin with Me.”

Dawn D., South Dakota

In 1979 I attended several Al-Anon meetings for a period of six months. A lot of people seemed chipper and shared how their week was going and what was happening in their jobs. I

decided that the daily reader I had received was all that I needed and stopped attending meetings. In 1981 I came into Al-Anon to stay. I'd found a newly formed group by an Al-Anon member from Greeley, Colorado, who had recently moved to Rapid City along with her husband who was in the AA program. They both had several years of recovery. She, along with two struggling Al-Anon members from Rapid City, started this new group and devoted two nights a week to it—one to a beginners/regular meeting and one to a Step Study meeting. I was their “baby,” not because of the tears I shed, but because I would be led by baby steps out of my misery. I felt welcomed and, for once, not alone. I came to those early meetings with a lot of questions, and they were willing to share their love and hope through the early books and pamphlets. I had a two-year old boy at home and a husband whose drinking was taking me over the edge.

As small as the group was, the dynamics at work then were no different than what works today. The newcomer is still the most important person in the meeting, sponsorship is strongly recommended, and, as my Sponsor would often say, “You can't go wrong if you stick to the literature and share your own story.” The group from the “get go” had service positions to be filled, and I have filled many through the years. Whenever I was asked to serve or stand for a position, I felt that someone else believed that I could do it and eventually I began to believe in myself.

The joy I have experienced in service comes from the friendships I've made and the discipline I have obtained in taking responsibility to serve others. Some of my painful experiences have come from the interaction with others and a constant “working through it” with God's help. I learn every day to love more and want to say that I love all of you.

Sharon S., Utah

Like many people who find their way to Al-Anon, I came looking for a way to get the alcoholic in my life to stop drinking. What I found was that all the answers were within me.

My first group was a very strong group, with several individuals who all worked strong programs. The group followed the Al-Anon Traditions and guidelines. They had a Group Representative, Alternate Group Representative, Treasurer, Secretary, and a Program Chairperson. This is where I began my service in Al-Anon, first as Program Chairperson, then Alternate Group Representative, and finally, Group Representative. Everyone was so supportive that it was easy to do more. I felt good about myself when I chaired a meeting, or reported to the group what I had learned at a district meeting or a conference.

As my service positions grew, so did I. When I served as a Group Representative and attended conferences held in conjunction with AA, I would attend the combined speakers meetings. I learned to have compassion for the alcoholic in my life at these meetings. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that the alcoholic might be feeling the same things I did, like fear, self-doubt, and guilt. It felt so good to know that we had something in common after all.

When I stood for District Representative, I learned about leadership and cooperation. I found a creative side of me that I didn't know I had. It was fun to come up with new ways to

talk about the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* or the Steps and Traditions. I was able to generate a comfortable environment where the district officers and Group Representatives could work together as a team to exchange information and ideas. My confidence grew and I was less and less obsessed with the alcoholic. I learned frustration at this level too. When those who had committed to do something didn't follow through, I was disappointed and frustrated. Sometimes it was hard “to place principles above personalities,” but I knew if I was going to keep my serenity, that's what I had to do.

As Delegate, I have learned more things about myself. At the World Service Conferences I have lost a fear of being in the minority and of openly disagreeing with someone I admire and respect. I know I can voice my opinion in front of 100 people and they all still love me in that very special way.

With every position I have held, I have learned something new about myself. I have made new friends, been new places, and done things I never thought I would, all because of Al-Anon service. I love the Al-Anon program and what it has given me.

Shirley T., Wyoming

When I first shared the theme of this Conference with another member in our area, she responded, “That should be interesting. We've got some pretty wimpy groups!” I laughed, but since I had probably been a member of one of those wimpy groups, I decided this might be a good way to approach the Conference theme. We had just had a special meeting in my home district that we billed “Is Al-Anon Needed in Cheyenne?” because of what we felt was—well, *not* dynamic participation. It worked. Our meetings have grown in just the last four months.

I like that word, “dynamic.” My dad was a dynamic drunk. My husband was short and dynamic, drunk or sober. Actually, it is probably a good thing that I didn't hear that term when I came to you 21 years ago. I was trying to get rid of some of these dynamic things in my life. The hope for serenity is what I heard and what kept me coming back. You said it was my own attitude that I could change. I tried it and other changes began to occur. I learned that my anger was neither a sin nor a character defect. It was simply an emotion and my reaction to my own emotion was what determined my attitude. I was reintroduced to my God and what a dynamic God I have.

At first I was impatient when “business” took up my meeting time, but then I heard I could attend district meetings and there would be sharing there as well as business—little did I know! I was eager to spend as much time away from home as possible, so I dove in. I went to a lot of meetings for the wrong reason, but it worked in spite of me. The district needed a Treasurer. Then a new group needed a committed member for a GR. Next thing I knew they needed a District Representative. I loved the area conventions and assemblies. I learned so much about myself, others, and my feelings and reactions during that three-year term.

While there was a time when I filled my hours in order not to be home, I now found that I wanted to be home with my husband who had retired early due to his health. Although he never found the program, the drinking subsided as his diabetes and heart disease took its toll. I, too, was able to retire early and be with

him the last five years of his life. I chose to sacrifice my love of the conventions as you taught me to be a caregiver instead of a caretaker. I thought I would drop out of service altogether, but soon found that was not possible. Service is a part of my recovery and I have to share it in order to continue to grow. After my husband's death, it was dynamic groups at both the local and area levels that gave me the courage to go on. These last three

years have been a wonderful, dynamic experience. I don't know how dynamic I can be, but I know that together *we* can be very dynamic. Thanks to the tremendous help of our WSO, the blessing of those who have gone before, and those dynamic people yet to come to this program, I believe that we will continue to make dynamic groups out of those wimpy ones and strong building blocks for tomorrow.

OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVE

Maria del Carmen R., Mexico

I love being with all of you, my beloved brothers and sisters. Once again, God has allowed me to attend the World Service Conference and to be the representative of my beloved country.

When I had this same experience a year ago, it gave me a wider understanding of our fellowship. Step-by-step, I stored everything I experienced at the Conference in my mind and soul. When I went back to my country and shared the details of the Conference, I tried to communicate the whole experience with the same enthusiasm that I felt when it was happening.

It has been very touching for me to see the respect everyone shows to each other. No matter how difficult the questions are that the Delegates ask, no one ever loses composure. All are real examples of humanity to follow.

When we convened our National Conference last February with all the states of our Mexican Republic participating, a total of 62 people were present. We shared with them almost the whole program from the last World Service Conference. We even used our laptop computer and projector, which the General Service Office recently acquired.

We shared how Trustees are elected. We told them about putting on the Special Project skit and how some of the Trustees participated as characters in costumes from *The Wizard of Oz*. We even used this dramatic style to present the budget for approval of all Conference members. We distributed some ears for everyone

to wear so they would be able to hear and approve the budget. We held a three-area drawing to carry out a special project by our Executive Committee members to deliver general information about the General Service Office finances.

We presented an open Board meeting and an open Policy Committee meeting. We promoted our Fifth National Convention, which we will celebrate from July 30th through August 1st of this year. We introduced a long-term project and created a committee to buy real estate for the General Service Office.

We offered all of the outgoing Delegates a brochure expressing our gratitude for their service as faithful servants. A photograph was included. The closing ceremony was very emotional. At the conclusion we offered a tour of the General Service Office to all the Delegates who wished to see it.

It is a privilege to share these changes in our Conference with you because we realize that these changes give all of us new possibilities to grow up.

I am deeply thankful to God for letting me be here once more, with all of you. I thank the World Service Office for every courtesy. I am also grateful to our Board and to our beloved General Service Office in Mexico for the confidence they have granted to me, since my only purpose is to be a faithful and trusted servant.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Ruth B., Idaho

One of my earliest memories is watching TV with my sister, lying on the living room floor, my dad sitting at the kitchen table, drunk and screaming, and my mom bringing us a tray of fresh baked cookies, hoping to make things better. It was a recurring pattern. My dad was the angry one, raging at the world, drunk; my mom was the martyr, always asking him “Why are you doing this to us?” She was also the strong one, taking responsibility for everything, and trying to smooth things over for us. My sister was the invisible one, trying to disappear. I was the needy one, always looking for attention.

I kept thinking, if only I was smarter or prettier or funnier, my dad would notice me. I thought it was about me. I thought if he loved us, he’d quit drinking. That didn’t happen. He didn’t love me, so I hated him. There was a lot of screaming in our home. I used to go up to my dad and scream right back at him. It usually ended with mom in tears, the house in chaos, me in a rage, and my dad laughing. I was a very angry kid.

I learned the lessons well that we all learn: don’t tell, don’t trust, don’t feel. My heart was like stone at a very young age. I never cried; I didn’t want my dad to think he’d gotten to me.

There was one thing my dad and I had in common, a talent for art. When I was little, he’d taught me to draw. I was always busy copying cartoons and fashion models out of the newspaper.

When I was in high school, I decided to take an art class. I got the kind of teacher that could inspire students. I was on fire; this was definitely going to be my career path. He told me that I was really talented, and I loved the attention. He told me I was beautiful, and soon there was sexual abuse going on. I bring this up because I think that sexual abuse is definitely part of the disease of alcoholism. Each of us has had some sort of trauma or painful experience, and all of those things can be healed through the Twelve Steps. My experience with that teacher involved ongoing abuse. I had a lot of shame about it, but I adapted to it and used it. I felt I had power over him, so I didn’t always follow instructions or turn things in on time and I got A’s. And the sad part is that I thought I didn’t deserve the A’s. The reality was that I did deserve them.

A few days before graduation, my dad died from the disease of alcoholism. I hated my dad and I loved him. I don’t know how I could hate him and love him at the same time. I wished him dead so many times that my 17-year-old brain thought that somehow I had caused it, that it was my fault. I also felt relief he was gone. Our lives were much better once he wasn’t around. All of a sudden we had kind of a normal home, without a raging alcoholic. I felt a lot of confusion during that time, I was angry with God. I gave up on Him. I didn’t need Him.

That finished a chapter of my life, and I went on to major in art. It wasn’t long before I started an affair with my art professor. Once again, someone paid attention to me. He was 20 years older than me, very jealous, very possessive, and very married. His idea of “the rules” was that I wasn’t supposed to date; I was

his little bonus on the side. Of course, he had a family, so he spent his weekends with them. He also told me that, if he ever caught me with someone else, he’d kill me. So I dated every weekend while he was with his family. I loved that rush of adrenalin from this hidden relationship and the excitement that it created. My life was all about lies—layer upon layer of lies. It was very sick. The relationship lasted for nine years because I didn’t know how to get out of it.

Today I believe my Higher Power found a way out for me. He sent me this charming, intelligent, fantastic, irresistible alcoholic, and by the way, he was a barracuda. I needed a barracuda. I needed the kind of guy who could protect me, because this other one said he was gonna kill me if he caught me with another man. I fell in love immediately. He proposed on our third date, and I’m still married to him today—23 years later. We were married and within a few months we moved from Chicago to Boise, Idaho. Everyone thought we were nuts. I couldn’t find a job, so I started a small marketing and design company. He had a good job, so it didn’t matter if my business made any money. After a few months, it finally hit me that I’d married an alcoholic. I must have seen it when we were dating, but it didn’t sink in. Growing up, I swore I’d never marry an alcoholic. It just shows that I didn’t know what was good for me, because it was the best thing that ever happened to me. It led me to YOU. But it took a few years.

In less than a year, my husband lost his job and joined my company. Now the business was our only source of income, and the alcoholism was starting to have a day-to-day effect. We’d occasionally lose a client after some big blowup and I’d totally freak out and blame him. When we’d go to dinner with clients, with every drink he’d take I would get crazier. I thought people were judging me by his behavior. It took me a while in Al-Anon to figure out that I was being judged by my behavior, and my behavior was much worse than his. Clients would have much preferred to have fun with him than be with me.

I finally convinced him that he needed help and got him into treatment; in fact, several treatment programs over the next few years, and I went to those family-week sessions. At the third meeting, I finally heard the Al-Anon message. I came home on a Saturday and went to a meeting on Sunday morning. I had tried Al-Anon a few years earlier, and thought, “I’m not as sick as that!” This time, I fit right in and immediately felt like I’d found a home, that the people in the room understood me and where I was coming from. I knew I was in the right place.

Once I got into program, my life changed! I heard Step One, and there’s no doubt in my mind my life was unmanageable. It was crazy in my house, with the screaming and the using foul language and throwing things. I hated the alcoholic, but I couldn’t live without him. I got a Sponsor right away. She told me I had choices. She listened patiently to those baffling questions, “Should I stay, or should I go?” and “What can I do to make him

stop drinking?" I hated my life; I wanted to run away. Early on, she said, "Ruth, it's not time for you to leave if you're leaving in anger. You can't leave until you can leave with love." It took me a really long time to get to a point of love, so I stayed, and I'm so grateful. She also told me that every day I should ask myself, "Do I want to stay or do I want to go?" and if I decided to stay, then I should act like I wanted to be in the relationship.

I learned that whatever I wanted in my relationship I had to be willing to give first. If only he would show me some courtesy, some tenderness, be honest—just fill in the blank. But I hadn't been willing to do those things. As I started to make little changes in our home, things got better. I'm the only one going to meetings, yet my relationship was improving.

One day, he made me a romantic dinner with candles and wine. As we sat down, he lifted his wine glass and said, "Al-Anon has been very good to me!" It was funny, but he obviously saw something different in me. It was my first spiritual awakening. The literature talks about a spiritual awakening as a change of perception, and that often others see a difference in us before we see it in ourselves. Several years later I asked what was different, and he said, "You were so dark, and now I hear laughter, I've started to see something change in your face. You have friends around you and you are happy." I hadn't realized how the disease of alcoholism had affected me.

I started to see my reactions changing. My Higher Power showed me the same situation, two years apart. The first time was about a month after I started Al-Anon. My husband came to my office door and said, "An employee is not doing his job. I think you need to go back there and tell him what he's doing wrong, and if you can't do it, I'll do it for you." What I heard was, "You're totally incompetent, you don't know what you're doing, you're worthless, and you'll never amount to anything." My reaction was an angry outburst, followed by slamming the door in his face. After two years in Al-Anon, the same exact thing happened. He came to my door, and said, "He's not doing his job, you'd better go back there and tell him or I'll have to do it for you." This time I just looked at him and smiled and said, "You know, I don't agree with you. I think he is doing his job. But you're a 50/50 owner in this company, and if you feel the need to go back and talk to him, please do so." He didn't. This time I heard what he said. I didn't take it personally.

After three years in the program, I hit another bottom. I was working my program as hard as I could, meetings, Steps, service, and HE wasn't getting better. He was supposed to be sober by now! And so I started to spiral down. All I could think of was, one more time, I'm not doing it right, I'm not good enough, God doesn't care about me. I was seriously considering suicide. No one would miss me. But before I headed out to find a bridge, I had this Alateen meeting to go to. I was an Alateen Sponsor and even though I knew I was totally empty and had nothing to share, I'd made a commitment to be there, so I showed up. And it was one of those rare meetings when the kids wanted to talk about how grateful they were for Alateen and how much the Alateen Sponsors meant to them. My Higher Power was speaking to me through them and something touched my heart that night and pulled me back from the edge. Service saved my life that night.

Before long, our business was booming; the outside world saw us as the "American Dream," money, power, success, we had it all. We were doing business in Europe and my husband decided to take a business trip to Amsterdam. I was really upset because I knew what he was going to do in Amsterdam—smoke pot and drink! I thought, "How could you do this to me!" Here I was, ready to kill myself and he didn't notice. So, off he went to Amsterdam. I stayed home, in my bathrobe, didn't wash my hair, no makeup, and was miserable. After about three days, I finally thought I should call my Sponsor. She said, "You know, Ruth, this is one time you can't blame your husband. He's halfway around the world. You're going to have to take responsibility for your own misery." Boy! That really hit me hard. I was blaming him for everything and he wasn't even here. It seems the only way my Higher Power can get my attention is through pain. God works through my weaknesses, not my strengths!

That was a turning point for me—I finally got it! I was in Al-Anon for me. This time I was done. I surrendered, I gave up, I was ready to die. I thought, I don't care if he drinks, I don't care if he doesn't drink, I don't care what he does. I'm the one who's crazy. This is about ME. I started working the Steps in earnest. I understood, finally, that it wasn't about him getting better; it was about me getting better. By this time I'd gone through three Sponsors in three years, and I'd done Steps One, Two, and Three, over and over, because I was scared to death to look at myself in Step Four. It wasn't the sharing with someone else I was afraid of; I just didn't want to look at who I was.

I found a new Sponsor and started working Steps Four and Five, and miracles started to happen. I got to go back and look at that sexual abuse again. I had carried around the weight of that incident for 30 years. I discovered that I could look at what my part was. If my part was one percent and his was 99 percent, I can look at my one percent. What I saw was that I was needy; I wanted the attention. I was silent and fearful. I didn't think I had choices. I didn't tell the school, I didn't tell my mother, I didn't tell anybody. I thought it was my fault, and I didn't want to bring any more shame to my family. The big "ah-ha" for me was seeing that I did have choices. Part of my Fourth Step was to ask, "What could I have done instead?" I could have dropped out of the class, dropped art altogether, or told someone. And, somehow just knowing I had choices, made me realize that I wasn't a victim. I may have been a victim then, but I don't have to be a victim today.

As I worked Steps Six through Nine, I began letting go of my anger, blame, and hatred, and replacing them with love, forgiveness, and compassion. Part of the process was to see him as a sick man. I got to pray for him—a lot. I was able to see a part of myself in him. My own inventory revealed that I had used men in my lifetime. It was like a fix for me. I could see a part of me in him. That softened my heart, and the thought of forgiveness seemed possible. It helped to realize that forgiving isn't forgetting, and it's not condoning. Forgiveness is really for me; it's an act of self-love. It frees me from all the stuff I had been dragging around for 30 years. When I got to the point where I could see his face and could finally forgive him, an amazing thing happened. I forgave myself, too.

I don't think I could have healed this huge hurt without all three sides of the Al-Anon triangle. The Steps gave me recovery tools to change my perceptions, and my attitudes. The meetings gave me unity—I was one of you, I belonged. I felt safe, and finally trusted someone enough to be my Sponsor and help me walk through the darkness. The service part of my healing was being an Alateen Sponsor. I couldn't protect myself as a 14-year old, but I could be there for your kids. I could be a safe adult for your kids. Being an Alateen Sponsor was an amends to myself.

Elizabeth S., New York South

During a season of renewal, April is a month of significance for me. On April fifth I celebrated 17 years in this worldwide fellowship. I'm in my teen years of recovery! During my first year as Delegate, I celebrated 15 years of recovery. When I was 15 years old, my parents found recovery. Last year was my "Sweet Sixteen" in Al-Anon. When I was 16, my parents dragged me to Al-Anon and open AA meetings and anniversaries. With a capital H, I *hated* going, but the food was the big attraction. At 17, I finally felt ready to attend Alateen meetings.

I was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1970 and lived there until we moved to Manhattan in 1975. My parents worked hard and we lived well. We had an amazing apartment in a neighborhood full of artists and actors—some starving, and some even celebrities. During the summer, we traveled the world, visiting one continent every year. From the outside, we were perfect. I was in parochial school and we attended Sunday mass. The fact that everyone in the building could hear my parents fight didn't mean anything. We're Italian. That's not fighting. That's how we talk. My dad drinks, yeah, but who doesn't? It's part of our culture. It was "tradition."

Growing up, I didn't play much with toys or building blocks. My main game was to be my parents' referee. They fought over anything and everything. All my life there was the threat that my mom would leave my dad. The day of divorce never came, even though I told my mom to leave him. When I was 15, I wanted to run away, but where would I go? I never had the courage to leave, yet in my head I left a thousand times.

My mom took my dad to psychiatrists because she was convinced he was crazy. She wasn't wrong. One psychiatrist drank with my dad during the sessions. Dad liked going there! In November 1985, my mom was referred to a Spanish-speaking professional who happened to be an AA member. Right away, the professional knew the problem was alcoholism. She suggested

It helped close a big gaping hole in my heart so I could put the whole issue to rest. That was a miracle for me.

Al-Anon saved my life. On my own power, life was a living hell. You showed me the way to a Higher Power—and today I have an incredible life, filled with love and laughter and beauty. I feel so blessed. The biggest blessing is knowing that I'm not alone. I truly believe that the God of my understanding lives in the space between you and me, and the closer I get to you, the closer I get to my God. I'm so grateful that you're here.

Al-Anon, AA, and Alateen, and she recommended a location where AA and Al-Anon met at the same time. I didn't want to go.

When my parents returned from their first meeting, I asked, "How many meetings do you have to attend?" Mom replied, "They told me it's for the rest of my life." I said, "What? They're crazy. Look, I'll go with you a few times, I'll take really good notes, and you won't have to go back." My parents dived into meetings and started to change. Who were these people?

I was manipulated into going to meetings and anniversaries. It was in those meetings that I met people from Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Cuba, Peru, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. Attending those meetings was my first building block in recovery, but I still didn't attend Alateen.

I was comfortable with adults. I panicked at the thought of being with kids my own age. I was always picked on at school and was the teacher's pet, so the kids hated me. I cried every afternoon. Mom would tell me how horrible it was working with my dad 24/7, so we had our own dynamic group—Afternoon Tears! Luckily, however, I accepted my mom's bribes to go to meetings. She would manipulate me by treating me to ice cream *after* we went to a meeting, and I would try to manipulate her into treating me *before*—hoping we would miss the meeting. But that didn't happen!

My parents took me to an AA Share-a-Day that had Al-Anon and Alateen participation. When we passed the Alateen room, they asked if I wanted to go in. I said "No." After lunch, they asked again. This time I said, "Yes." For the very first time in my life, I felt welcomed by other teens. They gave me love and warmth. They listened to me and didn't make fun of me. At the end of the meeting, I learned that the chairperson had been in my homeroom in high school. She said Alateen was helping her. We hugged.

At my mom's home group anniversary, I spoke to a longtime member and told her I was ready for Alateen. She became my Alateen Sponsor. Eventually we started an Alateen meeting where my parents attended meetings. This Sponsor took me to a lunch where I met our cofounder, Lois W. I will always remember hugging Lois.

Alateen became my second building block and my Alateen Sponsor was my third. Alateen gave me a second chance at childhood. It allowed me to experience laughter, enjoy humor, and have fun. The Alateens told me it was okay to be silly and let go.

They let me be my age, not someone ten years older. When I visited another Alateen meeting, they allowed me to share, and when the meeting ended, they asked me to play basketball. I even broke a nail, and I will never forget the fun I had!

I struggled with my recovery. A page in the *Alateen—a day at a time* book tells of a girl's dog that grew calm during Alateen meetings. When I shared it with my mom, she told me when I was a baby we had a puppy that hid under the bed when my dad was coming home. This was alcoholism, I thought. The stories in *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* were so powerful they had me checking the table of contents for more. Even though it wasn't me in the stories, my fear that it could be compelled me to stay in Alateen. That book was a major building block in my willingness to accept help.

Someone volunteered me to make newcomer packets at the World Service Office. Today I am in awe when I think of all the literature that welcomes diverse people into the program. I was also lucky to serve on the Alateen In-Town Committee at the WSO and provided one of the teen voices. I still remember how we decided, approved, and rejected formats, designs, and titles for Alateen literature and materials. It remains my favorite kind of service work. When our Committee made a presentation on Alateen sponsorship before the Delegates in Stamford, Connecticut, I was such a nerd—somewhat awkward and quiet. I had no clue that one day I would return to the same Conference room as a Delegate. My Higher Power works in mysterious ways.

As a sophomore in college, the time came to make my transition from Alateen to Al-Anon. I was scared, but I kept thinking of the pamphlet, *Moving On!* I went to the meeting, shared my thoughts, and they elected me their Refreshments Coordinator. For six months, those dear ladies drank my insane coffee. I guess they figured it was one sip at a time. They gave me so much love and acceptance. I still attend that meeting. It continues to be one of my building blocks.

My personal and Service Sponsors are also my building blocks, sharing wisdom and love with me. My main building blocks in recovery are the three Legacies: recovery through the Twelve Steps; unity through the Twelve Traditions; and service through the Twelve Concepts. Without recovery there cannot be unity, and without unity there cannot be service. These blocks build my life through progress, not perfection. Let me share with you how I attempt to apply such beacons of light in all my affairs.

I am affected and powerless, but I am making an effort to be more united—especially with my father. At one time, my dad tried to rebuild our broken relationship, but I wasn't ready. With the help of my Alateen Sponsor, I started to talk *with* my father, rather than talking *to* him. My father gave me a building block, which I finally accepted. Today he takes huge risks to talk with me about a variety of subjects, and I listen and participate.

I came to believe in a Higher Power, my God. I thought everyone around me was crazy—but me crazy? I was too young to be crazy. At home, we decided to have business meetings and to follow the group conscience. I had to join in and wash dishes. Looking at myself was so difficult. Before the *Alateen*

4th Step Inventory, I used Al-Anon's *Blueprint for Progress: Al-Anon's Fourth Step Inventory*, and thought, "Oh, how easy." It's a yes-or-no answer, but I handwrote a lot of "maybes" and "sometimes." I whizzed through it. Eventually I was privileged to work on the *Alateen 4th Step Inventory*. What a fun and fearless journey that booklet offers.

Everyone around me is autonomous, and each person has his or her own Higher Power. When I visit my grandparents, I see how their lack of acceptance denies them the wisdom to know the difference. Service work has helped me break the barriers I've had with people. I was afraid of you. My Sponsors helped me become real. That's why today I love to participate in the fellowship and in my community. You taught me how to be social again and how to have harmony in my life.

In my family it was a big no-no to admit you were wrong. We would fight to the end. Service gave me the gift of admitting when I am wrong or when I don't know something. As a teen, I had the know-it-all syndrome. Every time someone said something to me, I would cut him or her sharply with, "I know." Today I know that I don't know it all. What I do know is we have but one purpose and that's to help the families and friends of alcoholics. I still feel tempted to insert the word *crazy* before "families" and before "alcoholics."

I stay focused on my recovery to avoid being diverted from these principles, and I cooperate as I see necessary for my well-being. Today I know my place at work, in community events, and in life. I can recognize and respect other's authority whether or not I agree or approve.

I learned humility in service work and in recovery I discovered the difference between being humbled and being humiliated. As an adult, I continue to be self-supporting, meeting my expenses and taking care of my affairs. I wish I could decline outside donations, but no one seems willing to donate to my cause, except my mother. I am aware that as a family member I am bound to traditional rights, and as a member of society I have legal rights. "I'm sorry" are the little words that are so hard to say sometimes, but what a relief they bring when spoken from the heart. Learning to trust those with more experience has been a liberating gift for me, just as I have come to trust the delegated authority of our Trustees and trusted servants.

I had to make direct amends with my parents, but I had to do it without hurting them or myself anymore. Today I can create chaos or crisis if I so choose, and I can even organize it by day and hour. But that would be drawing on old habits and starting new fights. Instead, I choose to organize my thoughts and to become an effective leader for my area and for the fellowship.

As I look in the mirror each day, I ask if I am taking the best care of myself mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. People might assume that I dress to impress, but I dress to impress myself, my Higher Power, and possibly the newcomers—so they will see that Al-Anon works. All of this comes from a little girl who went to school with clean clothes and dirty hair. She didn't take care of herself because she was too obsessed with her parents.

My Higher Power is my driving force today, and I pray for the courage to carry out His plans for me. As I shared my story in

high school, I had a spiritual awakening that God hadn't abandoned us. I broke my anonymity knowing that my spiritual base was to help other teenagers. Today my guiding principles lead me to safeguard my resources, exercise prudence, be humble and accepting, avoid dominance, and be wary of letting my ego control me while keeping an open mind. I am challenged each year by our Conference theme, believing that they are not merely pretty words printed on paper, but rather a call to action.

My service work has taken me from Alateen service for my group and beyond, to Al-Anon service in English and Spanish—carrying the message on radio, TV, and in high schools and young women's shelters. Coming from a sheltered home life, I ventured with my mother to the projects, the ghetto, and to high schools that employed metal detectors. Although our different lifestyles presented physical blocks, the sharing of our same pain broke down the walls and built new blocks of experience, strength, and hope.

I have served my local information services, the Spanish convention, as District Representative, and as Area Alateen Coordinator. When I was asked to continue the early development of our area's Southern New York Alateen Convention, I knew nothing. But I took the blocks given to me and with the help of other trusted servants, SNYAC was created. Soon it will turn ten years old! As a result, my mom and I have been invited to many places to share our stories as a mother and daughter in recovery.

I have served New York South as Area Chair, and even though we are tough New Yorkers I loved every second of it. I was able to help start new districts and to reactivate old ones, always follow-

ing the example of my mom. I appreciate the trust my area had in me for electing me as their Chairperson and for the past three years as their Delegate. Instead of looking at my age; they saw my principles of the program at work. My area has given me so much love and support. I am honored to serve our area and I am thrilled to follow my mom who served as Delegate before me.

Don't worry, New York's next Delegate is not related to us—except in a spiritual sense! So, this nerd is now an official NERD, since I belong to the Northeast Regional Delegates meeting. Of all the regions, it figures I'd be a NERD. Today I tell the Group Representatives to stay in service, because it can take you to the oceanfront in Virginia Beach!

My home group is my main building block. With all the building blocks I've mentioned, I like to think I have created my own palace, where Serena T. reigns and my Higher Power rules. I am but a trusted servant, enjoying the fruits of this daily labor.

We are a fellowship of many faces with many voices and many ways. The actions we take will form our image in a changing world. We are opening new doors, emerging from behind quiet shields of invisibility to create new possibilities. With the help of our dynamic groups today, and by keeping an open mind, we are strengthening our Legacies and envisioning a better tomorrow. So, the next time you see building blocks, just grab some and have some fun. After all, this is what recovery is all about. We are regaining what the disease, like a bulldozer, destroyed—our building blocks. "Let It Begin with Me" to be the best person I can be, physically, emotionally, and spiritually. "Let It Begin with Me" to build my own palace, one block at a time.

CLOSING SESSION

Judy D.,
Trustee

Gen B.,
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Ric B.,
Executive Director

The Chairperson for the Closing Remarks session invited those who will not be returning to come to the microphone and share their closing thoughts. Some were brief, simply saying thank you; others chose to say more. The following are some excerpts from their sharings:

“I’d never had a birthday party before coming to the World Service Conference. In my first year at Conference, we hung around in Bill W.’s garage on my birthday. This year the Closing Session is on my birthday. How special.”

“Nothing could have prepared me for the awesome experience of the Conference.”

“I don’t remember much about my first Conference because I didn’t think I’d be here all three years. I made it though and I want to tell the Group Representatives, remember your first assembly.”

“Al-Anon is much bigger than I ever imagined. I always wondered what kind of people put our literature together and now I know.”

“It’s hard to put my gratitude into words. Being a member of the World Service Conference is a privilege.”

“I have no desire to cry. I am so excited. I have learned so much. Life is great. I know

it is time to rotate off now that I have figured out how to do these things.”

“I don’t want to leave. I thought about making a motion to extend the Conference. To those who are new, get up to the microphone and express your opinion. No matter what we do, God will guide us through it. Bring your good ideas. I’ll be reading the *Summary* to see how you are doing.”

“When I was elected Delegate I was told it would change my life. My life did change. To the new Delegates, you will find you have grown and that it’s changed your life.”

As has been done for many years, the Executive Director and the Conference Chairperson then presented scrolls to each member of outgoing Panel 42. With all the business completed, the Conference Chairperson officially closed the 2004 World Service Conference with the Conference members joining hands and repeating the Al-Anon Declaration.

Panel 42 Delegates immediately exited the room and, burst back in wearing matching T-shirts and “creative” hats. They stood in a line, swaying back and forth, singing rhyming lyrics of fond Conference memories to the tune of *Thanks for the Memories*.

2004 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

Floor Discussions

World Service Conference motions presented from the floor that are not a part of a committee reportback are discussed here:

Discussion of Motion # 12

The Delegate proposing this motion said, "I know that the Conference does not have to affirm the Board's action regarding Alateen. The action has already been taken; a decision made. This is an issue that affects all of Al-Anon. I think having a voice would increase the unanimity. If the Conference affirms it, it will lessen the dissension." Many agreed. Most of those who spoke to this motion were in support of it and affirmed the actions of the Board. Some members said they had come to the Conference with limited background information. Listening to the discussion gave them a better understanding of the process the Board went through and the reasoning behind its decision. They came to realize that the Board did not take this decision lightly and were grateful that the time had come to address the issue. The general consensus was that passing this motion would exemplify the unity felt by the Conference members, giving them the ability to go back to their areas and say that a vote was taken and that the Conference had approved the Board's actions. In this way, it would become not only a Board decision, but also a Conference decision. The motion carried.

Discussion of Motion # 13

The Delegate who proposed this motion expressed concern regarding the perception of the general public that Al-Anon accepts donations from outside entities. The motion was to ensure that anyone who found the Al-Anon name in any fundraising directory would be aware that it has a Tradition of being self-supporting. A World Service Office staff member shared that Al-Anon is a corporation with tax-exempt status under IRS Code Section 501(c)(3). Companies regularly publish fundraising directories that list all 501(c)(3) corporations or foundations, and Al-Anon is included. The WSO does not apply to be in these directories. Many attorneys use these directories when advising their clients on estate planning issues.

The WSO has never knowingly accepted money from a non-member. Donations from nonmembers are received regularly and are returned.

The WSO does provide members who wish to donate through community campaigns with information every fall in *The Forum* and in some of its other publications. It asks that donors notify the WSO in advance if they plan to make donations. If the WSO receives a donation from an unidentified person, it takes steps to ensure that the donor is a member.

One member shared that he felt the purpose of this motion was to emphasize the need to educate the public regarding our Seventh Tradition, but did not feel this was the appropriate vehicle to attain that goal. The motion did not carry.

Discussion of Motion # 14

This motion sought to expand the discussion of Alateen safety. Several members expressed support for individual parts of the motion including its intent but were unsure that a motion was necessary. Other members took issue with specific pieces of the motion. After adequate discussion, the motion was withdrawn.

Discussion of Motion # 15

The Concepts of Service, as they were determined to be originally written, did not follow standard capitalization rules. This motion was made to correct their presentation. A Delegate said, "The intent of the Conference was to get the words right." Another Delegate said, "I don't care if it's correct. I like that this is the way they wrote it. I remember that if you wrote a sentence with capitals you gave it more power." The motion carried.

Discussion of Motion # 16

This motion was brought to the floor as to whether Motion #14 would be in the *Conference Summary*. Those in support said, "I don't think it is necessary to put withdrawn motions in the *Conference Summary*." Several others expressed that withdrawn motions "stimulate thoughts," "make me wonder why it is there," "show me how this Conference works." They felt it is important to keep documentation of what happened at the Conference. The motion was withdrawn.

MOTION #1

97 YES, 0 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 0 VOID—CARRIED

That the following persons be seated at the 2004 WSC with voice, but no vote:

David Zach
Director of Business Services
Non-Al-Anon member

Pat H.
Chairperson, Executive Committee for Real Property Management
Al-Anon member

Maria del Carmen R.
International Representative, Mexico
Al-Anon member

(See discussion on page 2.)

MOTION #2

95 YES, 0 NO, 1 ABSTENTION, 1 VOID—CARRIED

To approve the 2003 Annual Report.

(See discussion on page 5.)

MOTION #3

96 YES, 0 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 0 VOID—CARRIED

To approve the 2003 Audited Financial Report.

(See discussion on page 6.)

MOTION #4

93 YES, 0 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 1 VOID—CARRIED

To approve the 2004 Finance Committee report.

(See discussion on pages 6-8.)

MOTION #5

97 YES, 0 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 0 VOID—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 90 of the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, Public Relations: (Strikethrough is deletion, bold and underline is new text)

Posters

The Al-Anon/Alateen posters may be displayed in any public place or conveyance with the permission of the respective facility/organization. For referral, **a local Al-Anon service phone number**, P.O. Box, **Web site, e-mail, and/or office address**, may be used.

(See discussion on page 18.)

MOTION #6

91 YES, 4 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 0 VOID—CARRIED

To replace the text on page 73 of the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, Finances, Contributions to WSO-Individual, *Direct Contributions*, to read: (Strikethrough is deletion, bold and underline is new text)

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 to the WSO is \$10,000 per year.~~

In any calendar year, an Al-Anon member may contribute to the WSO up to one percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit.

(See discussion on page 18.)

MOTION #7

86 YES, 11 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 0 VOID—CARRIED

To amend the text on page 74 of the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, Finances, Contributions to WSO—Individual, *Bequests*, first sentence, to be changed to read: (Strikethrough is deletion, bold and underline is new text)

Bequests

The WSO may accept a one-time legacy from an Al-Anon member in any amount up to ~~\$100,000~~ **ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit.** (Contact the WSO for details).

(See discussion on page 18.)

MOTION #8

53 YES, 41 NO, 1 ABSTENTION, 0 VOID—NOT CARRIED

That the 2004 WSC give conceptual approval to develop a new daily reader with a focus on parents and grandparents of alcoholics.

(See discussion on page 11.)

MOTION #9

88 YES, 6 NO, 1 ABSTENTION, 0 VOID—CARRIED

In keeping with the World Service Conference's commitment to reach out to diverse populations and to expand the use of our existing materials, the Public Outreach Committee recommends that *Al-Anon Is for Men* (P-1), *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-45), and *Al-Anon Is for Gays and Lesbians* (P-85) be reclassified from Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to public outreach service tools.

(See discussion on page 19.)

MOTION #10

92 YES, 3 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 0 VOID—CARRIED

To reconsider the 1985 WSC motion regarding the Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps.

(See discussion on page 12.)

MOTION #11

93 YES, 1 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 0 VOID—CARRIED

To amend the 1985 WSC motion regarding the Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps to read as follows: (Strikethrough is deletion, bold and underline is new text)

that the Suggested Preamble to the Twelve Steps be included ~~on the copyright page of~~ **in** all Conference Approved Literature, **preferably on the copyright page**, as a statement of purpose, as follows:

The Al-Anon Family Groups are a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems. We believe alcoholism is a family illness and that changed attitudes can aid recovery.

Al-Anon is not allied with any sect, denomination, political entity, organization, or institution; does not engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. There are no dues for membership. Al-Anon is self-supporting through its own voluntary contributions.

Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps, by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics, and by giving understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic.

(See discussion on page 12.)

MOTION #12

86 YES, 6 NO, 0 ABSTENTIONS, 2 VOIDS—CARRIED

To affirm the minimum safety and behavioral requirements for Alateen that were put into effect December 8, 2003.

(See discussion on page 55.)

MOTION #13

12 YES, 80 NO, 1 ABSTENTION 1 VOID—NOT CARRIED

To recommend that the name Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc. be kept out of fundraising directories unless accompanied by a disclaimer that only Al-Anon members may contribute.

(See discussion on page 55.)

MOTION #14 – WITHDRAWN

Now, therefore, we the 2004 World Service Conference (WSC) following our theme of “Dynamic Groups Today – Building Blocks for Tomorrow” recommend that: Al-Anon group members increase their group’s awareness of at least one nearby Alateen meeting. If a group finds that no meeting exists within their community, the group could survey its members to determine if Al-Anon members have children (grandchildren, siblings or friends) that may benefit from Alateen if it were available.

If a potential need is realized, a committee could be formed to research the process of starting Alateen meetings by reading available service materials, talking with the District, Area, others active in Alateen service and with Alateens from other communities. Past Delegates, District Representatives and others who have rotated out of service positions may be approached and encouraged to become Alateen Co-Sponsors (for new groups and in existing groups that currently have only one sponsor). New groups or additional groups to serve children of other ages may become more building blocks for our future.

Alateens are part of Al-Anon FAMILY Groups because:

- teens originally approach Al-Anon and wanted to recover from the effects of alcoholism in their family.
- we see that children’s lives are dramatically effected by someone else’s drinking
- young children and teens can benefit from the same Al-Anon 12 Steps and slogans.
- children grow into adults and may become the future members of Al-Anon.
- some children from alcoholic families have found early membership in AA through participation in Alateen.
- Alateens love Alateen and say emphatically that the program improves their lives.

Where local Alateen groups do exist, neighboring Al-Anon group members are encouraged to become familiar with the group’s sponsor(s) and other Al-Anon’s involved in Alateen service. Neighboring Al-Anon group members can regularly invite Alateen groups to participate in joint meetings and other events (recommending at least two joint events each year). Neighboring groups are encouraged to give hugs, love, and support to Al-Anon’s involved in Alateen service, and to Alateens.

This interaction may:

- increase love and fellowship between members of Al-Anon and Alateen.
- increase the safety of Alateens by dissuading inappropriate conduct of adults involved in Alateen.
- provide the opportunity for Alateens to know other adults in the fellowship that they can contact if help is needed.
- discourage opportunities for adults to develop inappropriate interactions with Alateens.
- allow God to work in us all in ways we cannot yet imagine.

If an event within the community uses the Al-Anon or Alateen name in conjunction with convention(s), or any other gathering(s) and where Alateen participation is offered, the

Local groups may encourage representatives from their group to participate as Al-Anons involved in Alateen service at the event. This limited exposure may introduce more Al-Anons to the personal growth and love received by serving as Alateen sponsors. In addition, opportunities for sexual misconduct or other illegal or unsafe activities may be minimized when more adults are present. Al-Anon members attending Alateen events should be provided with copies of the event's safety and/or behavior guidelines.

Alateens and Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service are to adhere to all applicable community laws when at Alateen and Al-Anon events.

As soon as possible, but in any event, no later than December 31, 2004, and for each succeeding year, each group is encouraged to discuss in their group, at their District and Area, any concerns regarding Alateen safety and to renew their dedication to invite neighboring Alateen groups to joint participation events and to help form groups if needed.

Through the District and Area group records, information will be passed on to the World Service Office, and WSO will note in the group records for those Al-Anon groups and the corresponding Alateen group that they have agreed to invite each other to joint events. The District and Areas will try to see that every Alateen group has a connected Al-Anon group. WSO will notify Areas of any Alateen groups in WSO records that have not yet been invited to participate with an Al-Anon group.

To increase the Board of Trustees connection to Alateen, current Trustees are encouraged to attend at least 6 Alateen meetings by the end of 2004. In the future, an emphasis will be placed on selecting a majority of Trustees from candidates who have a strong background in Alateen service.

Thank you for your support as we all move forward to strengthen and sustain our fellowship by building dynamic Alateen and Al-Anon groups today and for our future.

(See discussion on page 55.)

MOTION #15

72 YES, 19 NO, 2 ABSTENTIONS, 0 VOID—CARRIED

To recommend that the Twelve Concepts of Service retain its originally printed text and punctuation (as per Motion #9, 2003 WSC), but that future printings will incorporate standard capitalization rules.

(See discussion on page 55.)

MOTION #16 – WITHDRAWN

To print in the *Conference Summary* only those motions on which the World Service Conference has voted.

(See discussion on page 55.)

THE ASK-IT-BASKET

ADMINISTRATION

1. Since the purpose of Al-Anon is spiritual growth, how do we keep the business work of the Conference mindful of the spirit of the Traditions?

Spiritual growth is our aim in our personal recovery. The purpose of the World Service Conference (WSC) is the business of Al-Anon Family Groups. At the WSC, we practice our spiritual recovery through our group conscience process in making decisions for the unity and growth of Al-Anon that are in keeping with our Traditions and Concepts of Service.

2. A recent chart, "Your Contribution Dollars at Work," was sent out with the appeal letter. This chart shows that the largest percentage of "our" contribution dollars is spent on the World Service Conference and the least on outreach. Where are salaries and benefits? Maintenance costs? Aren't our contributions helping support the entire budget?

The chart is designed to inform donors what they get for their direct contributions. We find that most members want to know what services the World Service Office provides for the money they give. The chart only shows the direct costs of providing services, because contributions, which account for about 25 percent of total revenue, only meet these costs. The revenue to meet those other costs comes from literature sales, which are an indirect form of contributions.

3. In the 2003 budget, the profit for Al-Anon is less than last year, including the areas of literature sales, contributions and income from *The Forum*. Why? What's the cause?

We believe you mean the 2004 budget. We are conservative when we estimate revenues.

It is very difficult to predict what members will buy over the next twelve months and we believe it is prudent to be cautious when we estimate revenues. We have experienced a decline in literature sales for the last two years due to the fact that we have not had a new book for sale since *Hope for Today* (B-27, B-28), which was first available in 2002.

Contributions are estimated the same as for 2003. Again, it is difficult to predict what the membership will contribute, but we have no indication that it will be higher than last year.

Forum subscription income is less than last year because renewals and new subscriptions have declined during the year.

4. What ways can we best utilize Trustees regarding area concerns (should we be differentiating between Regional and at-Large Trustees when we interact with them; are their roles different; or do all issues go directly to the WSO)?

All issues do go directly to the World Service Office and are then sent to the Board. Individual Board members, regardless of the method of nomination, are a resource for the program but have no authority in a particular situation.

5. Why did the Board feel that it needed to develop a mission and vision statement for itself? Aren't the Charter, Traditions, Concepts of Service, and Conference Summaries enough to do the long-range planning for Al-Anon?

The Board developed vision and mission statements-as part of their long-range planning process to express their role-in a concise and clear manner that integrates the resources of the Al-Anon program including the Traditions, Concepts of Service, etc. The vision and mission statements were developed as internal statements to provide focus for the Board.

6. What studies or investigation is WSO doing to analyze why so many groups (AFGs) are failing, shrinking, ending? After WSO has the analysis, it could be helpful to present it to Delegates for discussion and action.

No studies are being conducted at this time. The Board and World Service Office staff are focusing on ways to strengthen and support groups as this year's Conference theme demonstrates.

7. Is WSO and Al-Anon/Alateen vulnerable to lawsuits? How do trusted servants protect themselves?

Any organization or member can be sued. The question is whether a suit would be successful. Trusted servants can protect themselves by adhering to area guidelines and requirements. Groups are harder to sue since they have little or no structure but individual members of the group may be sued as a result of specific conduct which could give rise to legal actions.

Insurance is a common way to provide protections from legal action, especially at the Al-Anon information service and area level. The WSO and some other service arms have officers and directors liability insurance which protects individual Board members in the event they are sued for actions performed in their specific capacity.

8. In the *Service Manual* on page 65, the word “deeply” is used as a qualifier for membership in Al-Anon. Tradition Three states: “...that there be a problem...” Is the word “deeply” necessary, since this implies a degree to which a life should be affected to become a member?

This wording was approved by a previous World Service Conference.

9. Important mailings were mailed out too late to get area input (i.e. Concept Eleven text changes). Why is Concept One not being followed?

The draft for changes to the descriptive text of Concept Eleven was submitted to the Delegates as soon as possible. Concept One is being followed. Please note Concept Two, where it states that the “groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.”

10. Would you provide clarification on how/why approval was given that Al-Anon contributions can be made through United Way in light of Traditions Three, Six, Seven, Ten, Eleven, and Twelve? Is this affiliation? If so, how can this process be stopped?

No, this is not affiliation. Please see the questions and answers to 17, 18, and 19 on page 62 of the *2003 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46).

11. With all the concern about proper wording of our Legacies at last year’s Conference, are Alateen Traditions being looked into? We (Al-Anon) have the new posters for our Legacies, how come Alateen has no posters for theirs? Understanding the history of why Alateen has its own Traditions, why does Al-Anon continue to segregate Alateen?

Our research of the World Service Office Archives reveals that the Alateen Traditions have never been adopted by the World Service Conference, hence the wording is not guaranteed by the Conference Charter. The Executive Committee considered the creation of Alateen Tradition posters years ago, and again more recently. It is not financially feasible for them to be produced and sold to the fellowship for the cost of their creation. An area or group may request permission to reprint them from the WSO, as they are copyrighted. The Alateen Traditions appear in all Alateen literature when appropriate.

GROUP SERVICES

12. What parts of the *Service Manual* go through the Conference Approval process and which parts are written and updated by the WSO staff?

Any changes to the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,” “World Service Handbook,” and the descriptive text of “Al-Anon’s

Twelve Concepts of Service” (Parts 3, 4, and 5) go through the Conference for approval. The following are updated by WSO staff: Part 1, “The Al-Anon Program” and Part 2, “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work,” as well as title pages, preface, table of contents, amendments, appendix, and index.

13. What are some approaches we can use to disperse group money in order to better support our district, area, and WSO?

The pamphlet *The Seventh Tradition Suggests* (S-21), the group finances tab section of the Group Binder, and page 27 of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) provide ideas and guidelines for the distribution of the group’s funds to the local Al-Anon services, district, area, and World Service Office. Each group may practice autonomy on the amounts dispersed based on its income and expenses.

14. How do we deal with people who bring outside “rules” into Al-Anon conferences?

As in most matters, it is up to the autonomy of the body via a group conscience decision guided by the Traditions and Concepts of Service.

15. How do we define “crosstalk”? How can we deal with “crosstalk” without becoming rigid or controlling?

Does the WSO have an official stand on crosstalk? How is crosstalk defined?

It is within the autonomy of the group to define crosstalk. The World Service Office has no official stand on this practice. Reviewing the group’s definition during the group’s periodic inventory will help the group members maintain flexibility.

16. What is the difference between loving interchange and crosstalk?

A group, at its business or inventory meeting, could determine its own group conscience as to the amount of interchange appropriate for the meeting. The size of the group, the length of the meeting, and the group’s desire to hear from everyone in attendance are all factors for the group to consider. Reading and study of the “Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon” in *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4) and *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17) may help.

17. What is WSO policy concerning the use of cell phones for Al-Anon information services (AIS) and caller ID?

a) The AIS telephone number should not be a personal phone number; cell phones that are solely for AIS business use would be okay but may not be practical. An AIS using a cell phone as their main phone would also need to develop a process that maintains anonymity for the caller.

b) Another situation that may arise is when an AIS forwards the after-hours calls to a member’s home number. Where the

member receiving the calls may have caller ID, the AIS would need to develop a process regarding the use of caller ID and maintaining anonymity.

18. Should we focus more on Al-Anon adult children to off-set concerns of safety in Alateen?

The more Al-Anon members who meet the minimum safety and behavior requirements for Alateen service, the greater the opportunity for Alateen safety.

19. What is WSO doing to increase participation and commitment so more people run for area offices?

According to page 65 of the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), the World Service Office is “a clearinghouse of information, providing service to the fellowship and spreading Al-Anon’s message worldwide.” The WSO creates service tools to help attract members into service, such as *Joy of Service* (S-57) and *Links of Service* (S-28). Newsletters, guidelines, and area coordinator mailings are all services provided by the WSO. It is the role and responsibility of the areas and other service arms to make service attractive and a part of all members’ recovery programs.

20. Does Al-Anon have a Statement of Purpose for our program of recovery?

Many refer to the Preamble to the Twelve Steps as our “Statement of Purpose,” which states that “Al-Anon has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics.” The Preamble is found in all Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. There is a group “statement of purpose” included in the Group Binder (M-59/M-60). (See question #40.)

21. When is an Al-Anon meeting not officially an Al-Anon meeting? The group is registered but has no connection with the district, area, or other groups in the district. We are hesitant to recommend this group to newcomers or others. We have tried to include them, but they have refused to be part of things.

An Al-Anon meeting is not an Al-Anon meeting when it fails to abide by the Traditions, engages in outside endorsements and controversy, and fails to welcome all Al-Anon members. Participation in district/area events, while extremely desirable, cannot be mandated.

22. What are your thoughts on one member, who is also a member of AA, sponsoring at least half of the Al-Anon members at a particular meeting? This seems to be affecting those members’ participation in service work?

Consider conducting some meetings using the pamphlet *Sponsorship, What It’s All About* (P-31).

23. There was recent confusion among members in my area over the use of the terms “Co-Coordinator” and “Chairman” as office titles at area level/district level/AIS level. What is an appropriate term for each level of service—or can they be used interchangeably? (The word Coordinator is found on page 79 in the 2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, but the paragraph refers to “Chairpersons.”) Usage in the fellowship seems to lack consistency. (The word “Coordinator” is not found in the Service Manual in the index as an entry of itself.)

It is up to the area autonomy to define the terms used by the area structure.

24. Can we receive the new Alateen forms electronically?

Yes, they are available. Send an e-mail to the WSO, attn. Alateen, requesting them. They cannot be returned electronically.

25. If we start doing background checks for Alateen Sponsors, who will do them? How is anonymity kept?

See the discussion on background checks under Chosen Agenda Item No. 3 on page 34.

26. If an Alateen comes to an Al-Anon meeting because there isn’t an Alateen group, does the whole Al-Anon group have to have background checks? Sometimes only one Al-Anon member shows up for a meeting; if an Alateen comes, what then?

According to page 65 of the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), “Where there is no Alateen meeting available, young people are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings.” The Al-Anon members present are there to attend the meeting and not necessarily to be of service to Alateen and would not need to meet the area requirements for being of service to Alateen.

If the groups frequently encounter this situation, the area may want to consider addressing the question regarding what to do if only one Al-Anon member shows up and develop an area recommendation as part of their area discussion on-Alateen requirements.

27. Please define and clarify the minimum safety and behavioral requirement regarding “overt and covert sexual interaction.” Who makes the determination that overt and covert sexual interaction might be taking place?

The definition of overt is clear, obvious, open; covert is defined as hidden, secret, concealed. The area should discuss overt and covert sexual interactions in regards to Alateen in the area as part of the discussions when forming area requirements. Al-Anon

members involved in Alateen service and Alateens should all be made aware of what is regarded as appropriate behavior at all events within the area.

28. Please define and clarify the minimum safety and behavioral requirement regarding, "demonstrated emotional problems which could result in harm to Alateen members" i.e., what constitutes emotional problems, harm, and who makes the determination that an emotional problem or harm falls within the requirement?

Emotional problems are any temporary or permanent personal difficulties that could interfere with an Al-Anon member's ability to be of service to Alateen. The area determines, usually on a case-by-case basis, if an Al-Anon member is currently experiencing personal problems that would prevent that member from being of service to Alateen. The area also would determine if and when the person would again be eligible to be of service to Alateen.

29. What impact will area requirements and new policies for Alateen have on participation with AA conventions?

The new requirements are applicable to any event in which the name Alateen is used, including AA conventions. Alateen is a part of Al-Anon. As such, only Al-Anon sets requirements for Alateen participation and conduct at such events. Not all young people who attend such functions are Alateen members. AA is able to deal separately with those children and their parents.

30. Should or will the focus of Alateen be expanded to include teenagers trying to battle peer pressure to drink or those dealing with the alcoholism of their peers? New materials for addressing these concerns would seem appropriate.

No. Alateen, like Al-Anon, has but one purpose: to help families and friends affected by someone else's drinking. Alateen, like Al-Anon, cannot be all things to all people.

31. Could an "Ala-Kid" program be developed where experienced Al-Anon parents could help lead groups for pre-teens and their parents that would teach them Al-Anon's tools and recovery?

No, there is no such entity as Ala-Kid. According to page 65 of the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), "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."

32. What is the definition of an "active member"? What can we do when a district officer is not "active"?

An "active member" is someone who attends Al-Anon/Alateen meetings consistently and puts the principles of the program to work in their lives. Perhaps it is time for a district inventory on the roles and responsibility of their trusted servants. Adapting *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8) may help. Each area is autonomous on how such issues are addressed. District guidelines may be necessary. Talking to the individual may be the best place to start.

33. Could a statement be made in the next *Service Manual* that if something is not included in the *Manual*, it is therefore not an Al-Anon definition or policy and that hearsay at meetings does not make it one?

Please submit suggested language to the Policy Committee for consideration.

34. Newcomers say "yes" to service positions because they want to belong and to please. It does not seem fair to ask newcomers to assume a service responsibility that they do not yet fully understand or lack the emotional reserves to take on. Under "Suggested Group Policies" in the *Service Manual*, could a section be added that addresses stewardship responsibilities of a group? What ever happened to the piece of Conference Approved Literature that had a list pertaining to maturity?

Each member must decide when and whether he or she is ready for a service position. This is usually done in consultation with a personal Sponsor. The checklist for evaluating our maturity is found in *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4).

35. How do we bridge the gap between Alateen and Al-Anon groups with solutions?

By talking to each other and reasoning things out.

36. Attracting Alateens:

How do you keep Alateens coming to meetings?

Why does Alateen not appeal to more teens that have been affected?

The same questions can be asked of adults as well as of teens. Al-Anon/Alateen are programs of attraction, rather than promotion. Healthy groups will retain their members. Using Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature, encouraging sponsorship, and helping newer members get involved in service will help.

37. Sponsorship:

How do we encourage members to get a Sponsor or to sponsor someone?

How do we instill the importance of a Service Sponsor?

Consider holding a meeting on sponsorship using *Sponsorship, What It's All About* (P-31) and *Service Sponsorship: Working Smarter Not Harder* (P-88).

38. Can members of Twelve Step programs other than AA who are also Al-Anon members hold office beyond the group level?

The only restriction on serving is for dual members of AA and Al-Anon. Membership in other programs is not relevant to Al-Anon service. See *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, pages 123 and 127.

39. Can dual members hold Coordinator positions at the area/district level?

Areas and districts can decide which positions this relates to, provided that they do not lead to membership in the World Service Conference. See the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, pages 67-68.

40. How can we develop better relationships between AA and Al-Anon at functions?

Al-Anon members can seek out opportunities to cooperate with AA by asking what we can do. Discussions about setting boundaries and budgets in advance of the events are very helpful.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATION

41. Why are there not more references in adult Al-Anon literature to encourage members to bring their children to Alateen?

Our literature reflects the sharings of our members. If members don't share on the subject, the World Service Office can't add it.

42. Has the WSO considered more literature addressed to parents of alcoholics?

Yes, we have in the past, and a request for a daily reader for parents was under consideration by Literature Committee I and later denied by this year's Conference.

43. Can the "Group Statement of Purpose" and "Newcomers' Welcome" in the Group Binder be put through the CAL process and included in the Service Manual also?

No. The Group Binder (M-59/M-60) is a service tool developed for use at group meetings. The "Newcomers' Welcome" has been withdrawn from the Binder, and is no longer recommended for use at group meetings. The contents of the Binder,

including the "Statement of Purpose," are being reviewed this year. (See question #20.)

44. Could a bookmark be developed with the Al-Anon Declaration on it?

The World Service Office prints a wallet-size card called "Let It Begin with Me" Declaration Card (M-8), available for five cents.

45. Is the "grief piece" going to be a service piece or a larger piece? Area 35 is concerned that grief, being a clinical issue, is not part of our primary purpose. Are we now looking at a "parent piece", "incest piece", "abuse piece", etc? Reference Traditions Three and Five.

The 2003 Conference authorized this recovery piece of literature. The piece will focus on how members face grief and loss with Al-Anon.

46. Can we have service tools/pamphlets addressing the effects of alcoholism as it relates to mental illness and those who have been sexually abused?

Doubting Your Sanity? (P-89) is a service tool applicable for outreach to those affected by alcoholism and mental illness. *Living in a Shelter?* (P-82) targets persons who have been abused in alcohol-related situations. Both *From Survival to Recovery* (B-21) and *...In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You* (B-15) contain member sharings on these issues. Many articles in *The Forum* address these issues as well. If additional material is needed please submit your suggestions in writing to the Public Outreach Committee for a service tool or the Literature Committees for Conference Approved Literature.

47. How can we make the AA "big book" controversy less divisive? Why is AA's big book not CAL?

A meeting on Traditions One and Four may be of help. During the limited time at Al-Anon meetings, the unity of the group and its connection to Al-Anon as a whole is essential. Outside of a meeting, members may use any material which aids their individual recovery.

As stated in our *Service Manual*, "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section, page 84, "It is well to remember that all AA literature is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in AA and other publications can distort the Al-Anon approach, particularly for the newcomer." This is a group conscience decision of the World Service Conference. The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* is copyrighted by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (AA). It has never been approved by any World Service Conference as Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL). Al-Anon cannot edit, print, or declare it as our own CAL.

48. If the basic principles of Al-Anon are truly universal, why is special literature being developed for certain groups? Doesn't this promote the idea of "uniqueness" within the program and hinder Al-Anon from being a unified fellowship?

Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature is created when a need is expressed either to the Literature Committees or to the World Service Conference. With an affirming motion from the Conference, the piece is created. Service tools are also created based on expressed needs from the fellowship. Targeted service tools such as *Al-Anon's Path to Recovery—Al-Anon is for Native Americans/Aboriginals* (S-67) and *Al-Anon is For...African Americans...African Canadians...All People of Color* (S-68) can help these populations to identify. These outreach service tools are intended to help attract members to the fellowship who might not otherwise find us. Our behavior towards newcomers often sends the strongest message as to whether we believe that all are welcome. Tradition One promotes unity, not uniformity.

49. Some Al-Anon members in my area are seeking "in-depth" Step Study in open AA big book meetings and "a way of life" meetings. Is Al-Anon not giving us all the help we need to get full benefit from the Steps?

Al-Anon literature is written for and by Al-Anon members. If there is a need for additional pieces, a request can be sent to the Literature Committees for consideration or brought by an area Delegate to the Conference floor. Please refer to the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, pages 83-84, for more information about our policies regarding the use of outside literature.

50. Is there an initiative to change the word "God" and "Him" to more neutral terms such as "Higher Power" and "Him/Her"?

The wording of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service are the informed group conscience of Al-Anon around the world.

51. There is a concern about members changing the words of the Steps and Traditions to eliminate the words "He" and "Him" with respect to God. I have used references to the *Service Manual* and quoted from *Paths to Recovery* on the Fourth Tradition. I would like to share some of the *WSC Summary* on this issue, particularly the one that changed the percentage of groups needed to affect a change to three-fourths of all registered groups. What *Summary* issues would give me this information?

The 1966 WSC voted that the Conference Charter be presented for ratification in 1967, which it was. There has never been a change in the percentage of groups from the first drafts to the current text of the Conference Charter.

52. Can *As We Understood* be reprinted in a pamphlet form?

No, there are too many pages and it would not hold together in a pamphlet format. You may wish to consider having the spine cut off of the book and using one page at a time or clipping together smaller sections for your personal use.

53. AFG has received artwork from Alateens regarding their feelings and experiences in recovery. Since teenagers have difficulty expressing their feelings, would a new book of this artwork and poems spark discussions in Alateen groups?

All requests for literature are forwarded to the Literature Committees for consideration.

54. Could a new pamphlet or single sheet like the *Detachment* sheet be developed that explains the differences between being selfish and self-caring?

All requests for literature are forwarded to the Literature Committees for consideration.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

55. How is it that Canada is the only country in the world not to have a General Service Office (GSO) of its own while some countries have two GSOs (Belgium, Switzerland, etc.)?

Since Al-Anon's beginning, Canada and the US have been united in one structure. When Al-Anon's cofounders Lois and Anne received the 87 responses to their initial outreach to scattered groups, Canadian groups responded. Other countries such as England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales are part of one GSO, the UK and Eire. The Belgium GSOs are divided because of two languages, French and Flemish, both spoken within the country. The Swiss members also have two GSOs, one French/Italian and the other German.

56. Could Canada have its own General Service Conference(s) every year as in most countries?

No. When countries unite as the US and Canada have throughout their structure and have one service office, the WSO, they hold one Conference.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

57. How can we continue to maintain the autonomy of Al-Anon Family Groups while cooperating with professionals, churches, and treatment centers when they use Al-Anon to promote their service?

Professionals, churches, and treatment centers often refer their clients to Al-Anon and we encourage them to do so. They cannot promote the name as part of their organizational marketing, such as the "XYZ Therapy and Al-Anon Center." Please refer to *Attracting and Cooperating* (S-40) for additional information. Please contact the WSO Public Outreach Department for additional assistance if you feel an organization is using "Al-Anon to promote their service."

58. Does WSO have a Web site guideline or considerations for areas to review in creating their guidelines? The Web site template was helpful; perhaps your internal guidelines will be too!

Please refer to the service tool *Frequently Asked Questions for Al-Anon Web Sites* (S-66), available on the WSO Member site, www.al-anon.org/members. We do not have any other guidelines.

59. Al-Anon members of the local community conduct a "family meeting" every week at a local institution. The staff invited Al-Anon to introduce the program to families and friends of patients. The meeting is listed as a "closed" meeting. The institution is affiliated with a medical school and medical students do a "tour" in the addiction unit. What are your thoughts on allowing these medical students to attend this "closed" meeting so they can be introduced to the Al-Anon program without opening the meeting to the general public?

Each group is autonomous as to whether it is opened or closed. Based on this situation, group autonomy is important for the good of Al-Anon as a whole. It is preferred that institution meetings be "open" so that everyone who may need to can find our program. Institution meetings are typically newcomer meetings and many refer people to other meetings in the community for in-depth recovery. Please refer to the *2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 35.

60. In smaller communities the format for TV station PSAs is not always compatible. What can be done about this?

Contact the WSO. We can provide the TV station with the format that meets their needs.

61. What efforts is the AFG taking to address the concerns of teens regarding the alcoholism and alcohol abuse of their peers? Is this a Public Outreach opportunity for Al-Anon? What guidelines can be given so that Al-Anon does not become drawn into public controversy, but makes the community aware of what it does? Can Al-Anon respond to this type of specific situation and work together with the community on this issue?

This topic will be referred to the Public Outreach Committee.

62. With the Internet and our fast paced lives, how can we reach and keep members?

Each generation of Al-Anon members meets this challenge. Planned meetings and rotation of leadership will provide a welcoming place when newcomers arrive. This topic would be excellent for district and area workshops.

ADMINISTRATION

Ric B., Executive Director

INTRODUCTION

This report of the World Service Office's (WSO) activities is provided annually to the World Service Conference (WSC). This report is printed in the *Conference Summary* that is available to the entire membership. An abridged version of the *Summary* is sent to all registered English-speaking groups in *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* and is translated into French and Spanish.

OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) meets quarterly and is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the WSC, establishing business policies of the WSO, estimating revenue, administering service to the membership, publishing and distributing Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and 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.

AFG, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization, listed under Section 501 (c) (3) of the United States (US) Internal Revenue Code, and has been incorporated in New York State since 1954.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. has been incorporated since February 1999 as a registered charity under paragraph 149 (1) of the Income Tax Act of Canada.

The Executive Director is responsible for overall supervision of the WSO staff (currently 54 full-time employees) 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.

AFG, Inc. is committed to equal employment opportunity and is in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local fair employment laws and guidelines. AFG, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or disability status. Every effort is made to maintain a work atmosphere that is free from harassment.

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Catherine J./Cecelia L., Chairpersons

The Board approved the following interim actions of the Executive Committee at each of its quarterly meetings:

- The Communication Section focus groups.
- Staff travel to Ottawa, Ontario for follow-up with national associations contacted at the Canadian Family Recovery Luncheon, the Child Welfare League of America National Conference in Washington, DC, the Faith Healing Communities Training Session for Children of Alcoholics, the Johnson Institute Foundation, a presentation to the American Society of Addiction Medicine, the Advertising Council seminar on the "Art of Getting Attention: Secrets 2003," as well as a meeting with the Entertainment Industries Council and the Johnson Institute staff.
- Entering "Corner" PSA for National Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Bronze Anvil Award.
- Complimentary literature to 2003 National Alcohol Screening Day Site coordinators.
- The annual distribution of the 2003 "My Life" Public Service Announcement (PSA), as well as a print PSA.
- The Archives Manual for AFG, Inc. as edited.
- A Policy for Researchers Using Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (World Service Office) Archives, as well as the Application and Permission Form for Archival Research, both as edited.
- The electronic communication system (e-buddy) as outlined to the Committee.
- Reprint permission was granted for the Peru and Portugal structures.
- Printing a service tool leaflet for African-American/Black outreach.

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- Formal offsite storage for backup tapes.
 - The World Service Office (WSO) Consignment Policy for Newly Published Books.
 - Designate *Links of Service* (S-28), *Al-Anon's Path to Recovery – Al-Anon Is for Native Americans/Aboriginals* (S-67), and *Joy of Service* (S-57) as service tools that may be translated and adapted by GSOs and distributed in their structures.
 - Renew the WSO Public Outreach Pilot Project, Cooperation with the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) Affiliates, providing up to an additional 25 display racks and literature to participating areas with NCADD offices.
 - Print 5,000 four-color WSO Special Project Folios.
 - The bulk mailing list as amended.
 - Posting of the English PSAs to the Web site via streaming.
 - The Associate Director of Public Outreach—Media's meeting with Al-Anon members who work in the entertainment industry.
 - A Web Chat for Public Outreach Coordinators.
 - The Associate Director of Public Outreach—Professionals attendance at and participation in the Circles of Recovery “Strengthening Our Nation” Conference in New Mexico and also at the 2003 National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) Conference of Affiliates in Atlanta, Georgia.
 - One-year subscription to *The Forum* for groups at half price, if mailed to the current mailing address.

The Board continued work on the revisions to the descriptive text of the Twelve Concepts of Service and also the By-Laws of AFG, Inc. and AFG (Canada) Inc.

The Board approved the Budget Committee motion to have the equalized expense for the 2004 WSC remain at \$1,000 (US). The projected cost for a Delegate to attend the 2004 WSC is \$1,556. The theme, **“Dynamic Groups Today—Building Blocks for Tomorrow,”** was approved for the 2004 WSC.

The Board approved the equalized expense amount of \$1,100 (US) for the 2004 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) with the full equalized expense projected at \$1,450. The meeting site for 2004 is Sao Paulo, Brazil.

On a trial basis, the Long Range Study Panel continues to meet as part of the Board and not as a separate entity.

The Board voted to suspend the 2004 AIS/LDC workshop. Staff will rethink the effectiveness of this event and consider other potential services that may provide better long-term support.

The deadline for submission of Canada East Regional Trustee résumés was extended to February 1, 2004.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was approved as the site of the 2008 Al-Anon International Convention.

The motions of the 2003 WSC were given Board approval.

Extensive discussions regarding the safety of Alateens and Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service culminated in a Board motion requiring each area to have safety and behavioral requirements in place no later than December 31, 2004 for all events that have Alateen participation. These requirements must meet the minimum requirements as set forth by the Board of Trustees.

All nominees for Trustee at Large (TAL) as well as Board officers, Executive Committee at-Large members, at-Large members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), and the respective Chairpersons of the two Executive Committees were elected, having been given traditional approval by the Conference where required. The Chairperson of the Board announced her selections for committee chairs, which the Board approved.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Helen W./Catherine J., Chairpersons

These actions were approved and were considered by the Board:

- The Spanish translation of *Hope for Today* (B-27)
- The conversion of the *Al-Anon Speaks Out Canadian Bulletin* (S-16c) to a PDF format on the Public Outreach Web Site
- The ongoing expanded edition of the September *Forum* as an outreach tool for professionals, organizations, and facilities.

The Board delegated to the Executive Committee the review of résumés and approval of committee members. Approved were:

ALATEEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Ninette E.	Al-Anon Professional	second one-year term
Thomas D.	Transitioned Al-Anon	first one-year term
Elsa M.	Al-Anon	first one-year term
Barbara S.	Al-Anon	first one-year term
Rachel G.	Alateen	first one-year term
Franziska B.	Alateen	first one-year term
Hilary N.	Alateen	first one-year term
Rachelle M.	Alateen	first one-year term

FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Donald (Buck) D.		sixth one-year term
Jenny G.		fifth one-year term (served four years on Archives Advisory Committee)
Loretta J.		third one-year term
Mary Jo P.		second one-year term
Mae W.		first one-year term

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Doreen D.		third one-year term
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LITERATURE COMMITTEE I

Walter H.	fourth one-year term
Brenda Sue D.	second one-year term
Elizabeth H.	second one-year term
Marlene O'D.	second one-year term
Sandra Rose M.	first one-year term

LITERATURE COMMITTEE II

Jay DeV.	second one-year term
Dorena P.	second one-year term
William H.	second one-year term
Virginia L.	second one-year term
Patty T.	first one-year term

OUTREACH TO PROFESSIONALS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mary G.	second one-year term
Lyn D.	second one-year term
David B.	first one-year term
Jeffrey R.	first one-year term
Mary R.	first one-year term

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Fran G.	fifth one-year term
Kay T.	second one-year term
Audrey S.	second one-year term
Beverly H.	first one-year term

The Committee Guidelines were approved as presented or amended. The Executive Committee determined that the Spanish/French Committee, being an office/staff committee, did not need to send its guideline to the Executive Committee for approval. Volunteer oversight of its activities is provided by the Executive Committee.

It was determined that in accordance with Motion #9 of the 2003 WSC, the necessary changes to the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, and Warranties may be made in the reprinting of *One Day At A Time In Al-Anon* (B-6, B-14).

The drawings for the Special Projects took place in July, September, and November. The following 25 areas were chosen from 52 who submitted a public outreach project: Iowa, South Carolina, Minnesota (S), Saskatchewan, California (N), British Columbia/Yukon, California (S), Arkansas, Manitoba, New Mexico, Hawaii, Wisconsin, Maritime Provinces, Vermont, Oregon, Illinois (N), Massachusetts, Alberta/Northwest Territories, Nebraska, New York (N), Washington, Florida (S), Kansas, Ohio, and Montana.

The Committee reviewed the amendments to the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual.

The document entitled "Early Al-Anon Literature and the AA 'Big Book'" was reviewed and approved.

A reportback from the Public Outreach Department on US and Canadian Exhibits for 2003 was received.

**Goal One: Use up to \$100,000 set aside by the Board
for one project that is reaching beyond the known.**

COMMUNICATION AND MEMBER SERVICES SECTIONS

Caryn J. and Mary Ann K., Directors

First Quarter: The Member Services and Communication Sections met jointly four times to strategize and plan the implementation of the Special Project. In the first meeting, the staff members presented the project as they had to the Executive Committee. Time for questions and clarification of certain concepts was provided. During the second meeting, discussion focused on completion of immediate tasks such as writing the objectives and defining leadership of the project now and in the future. The next two meetings included approving the proposed objectives, planning the WSC presentation, and creating handouts for the Conference members.

Second Quarter: The Member Services and Communication Sections met weekly. A presentation giving information about the project was developed and given to the 2003 WSC by WSO volunteers and staff. Delegates were divided by area among the joint committee members so that specific staff members could answer questions about the project. A folio of resources and action materials for members attending the selected area assemblies was developed. Ideas for a PowerPoint presentation to be given to the selected areas were also discussed. Two “frequently asked questions” memos were distributed to WSC members so that both WSO volunteers and Delegates could benefit from the WSO staff responses to Delegate inquiries about the project. Eight proposals from areas were received by the end of June.

Third Quarter: The Member Services and Communication Sections continued their weekly meetings in order to finalize the staff presentation to the Board of Trustees. Recommendations from the presentation to the Board were received and incorporated into the WSO’s Concept One/“Pot Luck” PowerPoint presentation to be given in each area. The folio cover design and other materials to be provided or utilized as part of the WSO’s visit to the area assembly were completed. A format for acknowledging each area’s project was created. Staff continued to serve as “travel agents” for areas that had not yet submitted a project for the September drawing.

Fourth Quarter: Visits were made by staff, Trustees, and Executive Committee members to five assemblies: California (N), British Columbia/Yukon, South Carolina, Arizona, and California (S). Volunteers and staff who completed these trips met once with all Special Project participants to share information from the areas and on how the presentations were received.

Annual: A balance of 20 scheduled visits is to take place in 2004. Dates for the area assemblies have been finalized, with volunteers and staff assigned. Since it isn’t necessary to wait for the WSO visit, many areas are beginning their public outreach projects.

Goal Two: Develop opportunities to use two new media forms.

COMMUNICATION SECTION

Caryn J., Director

Objective: To add new means of communication on the Public Outreach Web site and Public Outreach/Fellowship Communication sections of the Member Web site. We will track “hits” to the appropriate pages to measure their effectiveness.

- Post sample chapters/paragraphs from a minimum of five books/pamphlets with an invitation for members to provide reader reviews and hyperlinks to ordering. We will monitor sales of these particular items. An increase of ten percent in sales from the previous three months will constitute success.
- Post outreach service tools on the Public Outreach Web site in downloadable PDF. As this is a new project, our baseline is zero; therefore, the number of hits per month to each tool, based on target audience, will constitute success. (For example, target number of hits per tool: Judicial tool, 25 hits; EAP/HR, 50; Educators’ tool, 50; Native American/Aboriginal, 50; new African-American/Black tool, 100.)
- Conduct one Web chat for Public Outreach service with Coordinators and Delegates. Conference calls have averaged about 15 participants; our goal is 25 participants in a Web chat format.

First Quarter: The Director of Communication and the new WSO Technology Consultant reviewed this objective with the Director of Business Services to strategize implementation. Work requests to post the service tools are in process. The Consultant is to provide options in an upcoming meeting on desirable choices for the reader response mechanisms. The Web chat will be coordinated later in the year.

Second Quarter: Four supplementary outreach pamphlets targeting professionals were posted in PDF in the Professional Resource section of the WSO Public Outreach Web site. A PDF version of the *2003 Al-Anon Speaks Out Canadian Bulletin* (S-18c) was also added to the English and French Professional Resource section.

Although statistics for the Public Outreach and Member sites are available, ways to obtain more in-depth data are being sought so that the number of hits to the supplementary outreach pamphlets can be identified. Presently, data is available for the US version of the *Al-Anon Speaks Out* (S-18) newsletter and the Member site home page. The newly posted materials for professionals are being publicized to the fellowship, which will also increase the number of hits and utilization of the materials.

Third Quarter: Due to the redesign of the WSO Web site, posting of sample chapters/paragraphs from books/pamphlets with an invitation for members to provide reader reviews and hyperlinks to ordering was not completed.

Further research regarding tracking data of PDF Public Outreach pamphlets accessed in the Professional Resources Section of the WSO was sought. Currently, only the *Al-Anon Speaks Out* newsletter statistics have been available because it is among frequently accessed pages (more than 50 hits) on the WSO site. For the first time, the PDF *Fact Sheet for Professionals* was included in the WSO Web site statistics, which indicates that it is being utilized.

A project approval was sent to the Executive Committee to conduct a Web chat with Public Outreach Coordinators. In the interim, a private chat room test site was set up on a free Web hosting site for the Public Outreach Associate Directors and the Director of Communication to practice.

Fourth Quarter: In October 2003, the Policy Committee gave staff permission to print limited excerpts from Conference Approved Literature on the site. Revised text for the WSO Public Outreach Web site is approved and in final design. The Public Outreach Department obtained Project Approval to conduct a Web chat with Public Outreach Coordinators. This will be initiated in the first quarter of 2004.

Annual: Due to delays in implementing the “shopping cart” and revised Web site, we were unable to post sample excerpts of CAL this year.

Publications available on the WSO Public Outreach site in downloadable PDF include: *Al-Anon Speaks Out* newsletter (US and Canadian English and Canadian French versions); *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37); *Information for Educators* (S-64);

Alcoholics, their Families and the Judicial System (S-65); and *Help for Employees Troubled by Someone Else's Drinking* (S-63). In a two-month period, "hits" on the Web site averaged 2,919 per month for the English *Al-Anon Speaks Out* newsletter and 553 per month for the *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37). Data on the other publications is not available.

The Public Outreach Department obtained Project Approval to conduct a Web chat with Public Outreach Coordinators. This will be initiated in 2004.

Objective: To create a model for a "click-it-forward" e-mail communication campaign with Communication Section Coordinators. We will track responses to an e-mailed survey to measure success. Mailed questionnaires to Coordinators usually result in a 30 percent or less response rate. Our goal is a 50 percent response.

- Verify Coordinator e-mail addresses and add e-buddy addresses to database where applicable.
- Send all Section Coordinator mailings via e-mail, with instructions on portions to "click forward" to districts/Al-Anon information services in their areas.

First Quarter: A strategy to implement this new delivery plan is in development following the rollout of the e-buddy program with the WSO volunteers and Conference members.

Second Quarter: No activity this quarter.

Third Quarter: A plan for a "click-it-forward" e-mail test message to Delegates was developed so that the e-mail addresses of area Public Outreach Coordinators could be obtained. The plan also incorporates the "links of service" by sending the Public Outreach Department's first message to the Delegates who in turn can forward the message to their area Public Outreach Coordinators.

Fourth Quarter: An e-mail was sent to Area Delegates on December 17 asking for Coordinator e-mail addresses or "e-buddies" for Coordinators.

Annual: In the first quarter of 2004, portions of the Public Outreach Coordinator mailing information will be sent via e-mail with the request to "click-it-forward." Other Coordinator mailings will soon follow in the same format.

MEMBER SERVICES SECTION

Mary Ann K., Director

Objective: To have 50 percent of the Conference mailings available electronically by the end of 2003.

- Become familiar with the technical difficulties that were addressed when the Board and Executive Committee began to receive information electronically.
- Follow up on the e-buddy system introduced at the WSC so that all Delegates have an electronic address.
- Begin to use the e-buddy system with the Delegates in July for Conference mailings.

First Quarter: No action was taken this quarter.

Second Quarter: After the e-buddy concept was explained to Conference members during the 2003 WSC, an agreement form was distributed to all Delegates. Sixty-six areas have returned signed agreement forms indicating their e-mail addresses or an e-buddy address.

Third Quarter: The e-buddy system was initially tested in early July with notification of the Alateen Assistant job opening. It has been used for notification of the deadline for submitting Trustee at Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) résumés, and the system was used to notify areas of the Special Project drawing results.

Fourth Quarter: The system was expanded to include Area Coordinators for some services.

Annual: While the goal of 50 percent was not reached, an "e-buddy" system for Delegates was introduced at the World Service Conference. Once agreement forms providing an electronic address were received from all 67 Delegates, the process was tested in early July and used successfully throughout the second half of the year to communicate time-sensitive information to Conference members. Feedback from the Delegates has been positive with several Delegates sharing how it has increased communication within their areas that are large and sparsely populated.

**Goal Three: Expand dialogue, including face-to-face,
with Al-Anon and Alateen, with WSO listening.**

COMMUNICATION SECTION

Caryn J., Director

Objective: To study the WSO Communication Section delivery mechanisms by creating and utilizing 10 to 15 “Communication Section Focus Groups” at regional, area, district, and information service levels. Identify up to five strengths and five weaknesses of our communication with the fellowship.

- Ask the same questions regarding communications from the Public Outreach and Fellowship Communication Departments, and listen.
- Utilize a volunteer reporter at each location to capture feedback.
- Prepare a final report on overall results.

First Quarter: Staff has identified 12 scheduled trips where Focus Groups will meet with Al-Anon members from the “grass-roots” level of service and membership. The program and questions are broken into the following categories: Overview of Focus Groups; Staying Focused; Vehicles of Communication (*The Forum, Inside Al-Anon Xtra, Area Highlights*, Catalog, Coordinator mailings, etc.); and Open Discussion. At the finale of the Focus Group, an anonymous survey will provide us with valuable information in identifying our strengths and weaknesses. Staff has developed a volunteer member’s recorder worksheet to tally the numerical responses. During the discussion, Focus Group attendees’ responses will be, recorded for later transcription.

Second Quarter: Four Focus Groups were conducted. A system for tallying the Focus Group Program, Questionnaire, and Anonymous Survey was developed.

Third Quarter: Five additional Focus Groups were completed. The first Canadian Focus Group was held in Ottawa, ON.

Fourth Quarter: The final two Focus Groups were held in November.

Annual: Eleven Focus Groups were conducted in the US and Canada by Communication Section staff. One hundred thirty-five members participated. A summary report including data on what staff and participants learned, and recommended strategies for the future, were provided to the Executive Director. Ideas for improving communications to the membership from the WSO will be explored in the coming year. The Section has requested time at the World Service Conference to do a presentation on the findings and Communication Section publications as well.

MEMBER SERVICES SECTION

Mary Ann K., Director

Objective: To create conversations with the Spanish-speaking members and those supporting the Spanish-speaking members about the issues around group registration in order to increase the number of registered Spanish groups in the US and Canada by two percent, from 413 to 421.

- Call the 18 new Spanish contacts to hear the feedback they have concerning the Spanish groups contacted.
- Send two Spanish-speaking staff members to participate at two Spanish AA Conventions with the goal of talking to and listening to the Al-Anon members in attendance.
- Listen to the Delegates share at the Spanish luncheon during the WSC about what is taking place in their communities. WSO will report the results of the Delegates’ efforts since last year. There were 341 registered Spanish groups in the US and Canada at the end of 2001 and 413 at the end of 2002.
- Allow time at the RSSs in the Northeast and South Central for the concerns of the Spanish-speaking members to be raised.

First Quarter: Staff began calling the 18 Spanish contacts and reached five. They were grateful to share their experiences helping Spanish-speaking groups register, and they shared their public outreach work in hospitals and schools with members of these groups.

Second Quarter: A letter was sent to the 18 Spanish contacts along with the Spanish *2002-2003 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (SP-24/27) and a list of all Spanish-speaking groups specific to the contact's area. Two new contacts volunteered. At the Spanish luncheon, Conference members heard how welcome English-speaking members are at Spanish-speaking meetings despite the language difference. Their presence is seen as a desire to bridge cultural differences. At the Northeast RSS, the Associate Director—International pointed out the importance of completing the registration form for Spanish-speaking groups.

Third Quarter: At the South Central RSS, attendees were asked to take Spanish translations of the Group Registration Form and Alateen Sponsor Questionnaire to Spanish-speaking members or meetings they knew of and to work with the members encouraging them to register with the WSO.

The 31st National Hispanic AA Convention with Al-Anon participation was held in Seattle, Washington, August 29-31, 2003. The Associate Director of Group Services and the Translation Services Manager attended the event where about 3,000 AA members, 60 Al-Anon members, and six Alateen members were in attendance. At the Al-Anon meetings, staff distributed Registration Forms, *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, and other leaflets/pamphlets. The Spanish Group Binder on display served as a concrete benefit of registration. The Ask-It-Basket questions provided for discussion and two requests for Alateen Registration Forms were received. One long-standing Al-Anon group, never registered with the WSO, requested forms. The Greater Seattle Information Service Office provided Spanish literature for sale at the Convention, and two Alateen Sponsors from New York and Washington sponsored the Alateen meeting. In order to be put on the AA General Session agenda, requests needed to be submitted by January 2003. Encouragement was given to longtime members to ask for time at the General Session for 2004.

Fourth Quarter: Staff talked to four Spanish contacts about their support of and growth of Spanish-speaking groups in their area. Spanish speaking members from established groups in the United States and Canada are raising similar types of questions like insurance for the facility, dominance in the group, and how to start new meetings.

Annual: As a result of the WSO visit to the 31st National Hispanic AA Convention, an Al-Anon member is working with AA to have Al-Anon on the General Session agenda for next year's Convention in Phoenix, Arizona. New relationships were established.

Spanish contacts have aided group registration in their areas. Spanish-speaking groups grew by 2% from 413 to 424 groups during 2003. New groups have formed in three areas that did not have groups before. Even with the increase and registration of new groups, WSO continues to see Spanish-speaking groups become inactive. This trend is similar to the English groups.

Objective: To begin a dialogue with the Alateen Conference Planners to share ideas and practices to increase safety at Alateen Conferences. Since this is a first-time initiative, the success would be measured by six planners willing to engage in a dialogue.

- Call the contact number when Alateen Conferences ask to have their event printed in either *The Forum* or *Alateen Talk*, explaining the procedures the WSO has initiated to improve safety.
- Ask the Conference Planners what measures they have taken for safety on the Conference site.

First Quarter: Five Alateen Conference Planners were called. All had some safety measures in place, but because the material was not readily available during the call, they committed to sending it to WSO. Some thought the safety measures we were concerned about were handled by having a nurse on site. WSO sent each planner the Safety Guidelines, the Sponsor Questionnaire, and the WSO procedure for listing Alateen Conferences in our publications.

Second Quarter: Two additional Alateen Conference Planners contacted the WSO and information was sent.

Third Quarter: Packets were sent to the New York (N) Alateen Conference, Eastern Seaboard Alateen Conference (ESAC), and the Southern California Alateen Conference (SCAC). The Associate Director of Member Services/Alateen spoke with representatives from ESAC and SCAC. There has been an increase in sharings submitted to *Alateen Talk* from conferences. Sharings from the North Carolina/Bermuda Al-Anon/Alateen Convention and the Massachusetts Alateen Conference have been received.

Fourth Quarter: As a result of conversations with the WSO, North Carolina's Assembly voted to connect to two Alateen Conferences. New Board requirements for Alateen safety, with a compliance deadline of December 2004, were sent to Alateen Coordinators and other service entities requesting that this information be passed on to members in the areas.

Annual: Implementation of the Board's requirements for Alateen safety continues to raise awareness of the responsibility of all those in Al-Anon and especially those involved in Alateen service. Eight Alateen Conference Planners were involved in communications with the WSO about safety issues.

Objective: Increase the amount of dialogue between the emerging structures and the WSO through faxes, e-mails, and calls. A formal program to initiate dialogue is new for the WSO. Success would be measured by a response to each initiative effort.

- Quarterly contact by letter, fax, e-mail, or telephone calls to the following evolving structures: China, Ecuador, Greece, Hungary, Peru, Russia, and Portugal.
- Encourage each leader in these structures to write about their activities to allow the WSO to pass on the story of their development to a worldwide audience.

First Quarter: Our US/Greek-speaking contact is to visit the groups in Athens on March 31st and report back to the WSO about where the literature is being stored and whom we can contact to work with on buying and reviewing literature. Weekly mailings of remaining Russian literature from the "To Russia With Love Project" to support the Moscow Service Committee is being sent, and e-mails indicate it is received. The Russian structure expressed gratitude for the literature, as well as the article in the fall *Area Highlights*. Peru received reprint permission for the first time. The English-speaking contact in China was sent encouragement to reach out to new groups.

Second Quarter: The WSO registered the first Chinese-speaking Al-Anon group in Beijing. Three hundred copies of the three Chinese pamphlets, *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32), were sent to the organizer of the "First Addiction Institute of China" to include in his planning for the next seminar. While visiting Athens, the WSO's Greek-American contact called to update information requested about groups. A report on the Greek inventory of literature is to be sent. The service member in the US interested in helping the Hungarian members reprint literature was informed that reprint permission was not granted due to funding issues. Contact was made with five registered groups in Hungary to update group information. Before responding to Peru's request to be listed as a General Service Office (GSO), the WSO is requiring additional information. Portugal indicated the service structure has taken action to be recognized as a legal entity. Translations are to be those done in Portuguese by the GSO of Brazil. E-mails from the WSO to the Moscow Service Committee requested confirmation of receipt of packages of Russian literature sent weekly.

Third Quarter: Al-Anon literature was sent to a Chinese physician in the Hong Zhou province through our contact with the AA GSO. At the Associate Director's request, the structure in Ecuador sent their listing of 95 registered groups. They reported that work is being done with the Quito Area Committee and an Intergroup in Guayaquil to educate members interested in service.

The WSO database indicates Greece has two English-speaking meetings and four Greek-speaking meetings registered with the WSO. A member visiting notified us that there are two English-speaking meetings and eleven Greek-speaking meetings. Additional registration information was requested from our English contacts. Peru was notified they are an approved General Service Office on a trial basis. Service materials to assist the structure have been sent. First-time reprint permission was given to Portugal, and their service center was approved for GSO structure on a trial basis. A Russian representative from the Al-Anon Information Service indicated the service structure is going well. At the request of the representative at the Al-Anon Information Service, *The Seventh Tradition Suggests*, (S-21) was sent to help the group understand the principle of self-support.

Fourth Quarter: The structure in Quito, Ecuador decided not to become a General Service Office at this time. However, their first National Convention was deemed a success. The WSO has connected with the Parthenon group in Athens, Greece that received the permission to translate and reprint *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6). Additionally, a member from the group has agreed to be the contact for the WSO.

Annual: Dialogue between emerging structures and the WSO was consistent and proved productive and an overall success in 2003 with two new General Service Offices being approved on a trial basis. As a result of WSO contact with an English-speaking member, the first Chinese-speaking group has now registered with the WSO. Efforts to establish a contact in Hungary were not as successful. However the Associate Director is exploring ways to establish contact with the groups in Hungary. While Turkey was not on the WSO list beginning in 2003, a member from Turkey visited the WSO bringing translations of several Conference Approved pieces.

Objective: To initiate conversations about alternate positions in the service structures. Sharing service responsibility encourages volunteers, and having an alternate reduces isolation in service. Success would be measured in the number of times the benefits

of having an alternate is mentioned in Delegates' Conference report backs in area newsletters.

- Begin to discuss the value of alternates at the group level in the Group Services Committee at the WSC.
- Discuss the pros and cons of alternates in the service structure at the Admissions/Handbook Committee meeting.
- Report on the response to the call for alternates to write sharings in *Area Highlights*.

First Quarter: One e-mail response from the request for sharings in the winter 2002 issue of *Area Highlights* was received. The benefit of alternate positions for the group officers is on the agenda of the Groups Service Committee. The Admissions/Handbook Committee will discuss the benefit of alternate service positions beyond the group.

Second Quarter: Admissions/Handbook Committee members discussed the pros and cons of creating alternate positions for Coordinators and officers beyond the group. Pros were that having alternate DRs and the alternate Delegate come to the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) with no voice or vote could give some involvement and ideas if they decide to stand for Delegate. Cons were that this would create a financial hardship to pay for alternates to go to the assembly, but finances should not be a factor in serving. Up to 50 percent of districts in some areas are without an alternate DR. Suggestions to support those who do not have an alternate were: relying on Action Committees and past Delegates for help; having an orientation for new officers and making more of the "turnover" meeting; having an alternate for all the Coordinators and work as a team.

Committee members who have served in alternate positions were asked to share their service stories for *Area Highlights*. No sharings were received.

Third Quarter: Calls for experience about being an alternate is mentioned in the fall *Area Highlights*.

Fourth Quarter: Two area newsletters mentioned the Admissions/Handbook Committee discussion in their Delegate's report.

Annual: While there was a lively discussion during the Admissions/Handbook Committee meeting and it was mentioned in two area newsletters, no sharings were received.

Objective: To engage newsletter editors in a conversation on the importance to the fellowship of all the sharings and information in their newsletters. Twenty areas currently send their newsletter, and 20 additional newsletters would be considered a success.

- Call newsletter editors to explain how the WSO uses the area newsletters.
- Ask to be added to the area mailing list.

First Quarter: No action was taken this quarter.

Second Quarter: How the WSO uses the area newsletters was explained to Admissions/Handbook Committee members, and they were asked to check with their area newsletter editor to be sure the WSO is on the mailing list. Five new area newsletters have been received.

Third Quarter: The information and explanation in the second quarter report was given to attendees at the US South Central RSS. No new newsletters were received.

Fourth Quarter: An explanation of how the WSO uses area newsletters was explained during a Special Project visit and mentioned at the Canada West RSS. Seven new newsletters were received.

Annual: The goal of 20 additional area newsletters was not reached. However, ongoing mentioning at area and regional events is of value in heightening awareness of newsletter editors and the membership of what *Area Highlights* is and that area newsletters are the primary means by which the WSO obtains sharings for that publication.

BUSINESS SERVICES

David Zach, Director of Business Services

BUDGET COMMITTEE

Cecelia L./Jack S., Chairpersons

David Zach, Director of Business Services (Nonmember)

All projects involving financial changes to the annual budget originate in the Budget Committee. These actions are detailed in the Board and Executive Committee portions of this report. Minutes of the Budget Committee meetings are reported to the Executive Committee. The budget report then becomes part of the Executive Committee minutes, and thus, the Board of Trustees is kept advised. All Budget Committee motions are reviewed by the Executive Committee and are either approved or denied. For matters that do not deal with day-to-day operations of the World Service Office, the Budget Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees for consideration at its next quarterly meeting.

The Budget Committee presented the 2003 Preliminary Budget to the Board of Trustees. With Board input and consideration, the proposed 2003 budget was adopted. At a special meeting of the Board of Trustees prior to the 2003 World Service Conference, the Board revised the proposed budget for presentation to the Conference. In July, the Committee revised the 2003 budget based on the first six month's revenue and expense figures.

There were monthly and quarterly reviews of the financial statements. Quarterly appeal letters were reviewed. Letters from members, directed to the Budget Committee, were reviewed and answered. Budget Committee guidelines were reviewed. The literature distribution center guidelines were reviewed and updated. The Committee reviewed the auditor's management letter and the response from the Director of Business Services. Methods to increase or stimulate income were discussed. The Committee reviewed prices of existing literature. The descriptive text of Concept Eleven was reviewed and updated. The Committee discussed possible ramifications for the World Service Office from the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act and Implications for Nonprofit Organizations that was signed into law on July 30, 2002.

The Committee spent part of a day in November and in December developing the 2004 Preliminary Budget. As needed, Directors and/or Associate Directors of each service met with the Budget Committee to discuss various aspects of the departmental budget requests. The 2004 Preliminary Budget was readied for presentation to the Board of Trustees.

AL-ANON/ALATEEN INTERNATIONALLY

Beyond the borders of the US/Canada, many service workers are active in carrying the Al-Anon message. The following is this year's summary of their activities and interaction with the WSO. Many of the countries listed below have Web sites which can be accessed through www.al-anon.org and follow the meeting information to worldwide listings. References made to the International General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in the items below refer to a biennial service-sharing meeting that took place in Virginia Beach, VA in 2002. Brazil's General Service Office will host the 2004 IAGSM in San Paulo in October.

AFRICA

South Africa: Due to financial reasons, the South African Conference decided at their June 2003 meeting to change their Conference from an annual meeting to a biennial Conference with the implication that the term of office for Area Delegates changes from the traditional three years to four years to enable attendance at two consecutive biennial Conferences.

EUROPE

Belgium (Flemish-speaking): The General Service Office now has a Web site, www.al-anonvl.be.

Belgium (French-speaking): The annual Conference held in June was a success.

Commonwealth of Independent States: A representative from the Information Service in Moscow advised that their service structure is functioning well. Their next translation project is *The Seventh Tradition Suggests* (S-21).

Denmark: A representative from the structure reported that the General Service Office held their annual Service Conference in March 2003. It was also indicated that their homepage, www.al-anon.dk, includes a meeting list. They also now have several volunteers answering the phone during the week.

Finland: The General Service Office held a 50th Anniversary celebration with the theme "Growth with Love." The celebration included a press campaign and the printing of a history of Al-Anon in their magazine, "*Tietoavain*." The book, *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) was published in December.

France: The General Service Office is continuing to explore ways to do public outreach to raise awareness about Al-Anon and Alateen.

Germany: The General Service Office printed *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps Traditions and Concepts* (B-24), and *Courage to Be Me—Living with Alcoholism* (B-23). After many years of service, the General Secretary retired in December.

Iceland: At the National Service Conference, an agreement was reached to simplify the structure on a trial basis to help work more effectively. The General Service Office organized two workshops as models for districts to incorporate.

Greece: Members report that the groups are strong, and with the assistance of a longtime member, they are trying to form a sound service structure.

Italy: The Conference in May was successful and they are exploring expanding their Web site.

Netherlands: A representative from the General Service Office indicates their Literature Committee has been active, and they are working on a number of translation projects.

Norway: The Conference held in March gave all attendees the inspiration to go on for another year.

Poland: The General Service Office now has an e-mail address.

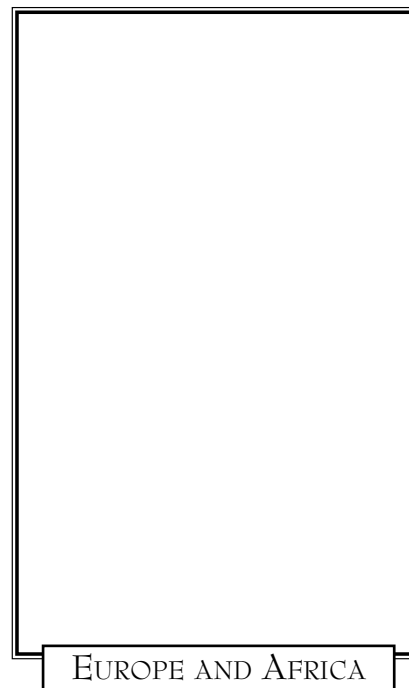
Portugal: The WSO Board of Trustees approved the structure as a General Service Office on a trial basis.

Spain: A General Service Office representative advised that a pioneer group in Spain, Group Serenidad y Amor, celebrated their 40th anniversary. In 2003, the General Service Office celebrated its 25th anniversary.

Sweden: The General Service Office advised they expanded their Web site and e-mail capabilities in an effort to reach those seeking Al-Anon on the Internet in Sweden.

Switzerland (French-speaking): The annual Conference was held for the first time for a full day instead of a half-day.

Switzerland (German-speaking): As a part of their public outreach efforts, German- and Italian-speaking citizens in Switzerland



are able to access information about Al-Anon and Alateen on the General Service Office Web site.

UK & Eire: The spring Regional Service Seminar held in Eire was a success. The theme was “From Survival to Recovery—Through Service”.

ASIA

China: In addition to the two English-speaking meetings that exist in China, there is now a registered Chinese-speaking meeting.

India: The book *Courage to Change* (B-16) was translated and printed in Hindi.

Japan: A representative from the General Service Office reported that they have been doing public outreach with human resource personnel.

Korea: The 7th Al-Anon Korea Open Conference held on May 10-11, 2003 was a success. In accordance with a Conference motion, a new paid employee was hired to work in the office.

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Australia: The General Secretary reported that members all over Australia have continued their efforts to make Al-Anon more visible. Inspiration came from the activities of the worldwide fellowship as reported from the 2002 IAGSM.

New Zealand: The General Secretary advised that as a public outreach project, the September *Forum* was distributed by a number of members to professionals within their communities.

NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Costa Rica: The General Service Office held workshops on Al-Anon guidelines, Information, organized a Regional Service Seminar, and held their Seventh National Conference.

Guatemala: A representative from the General Service Office indicates the groups are doing well. They have thirty Al-Anon groups and four Alateen groups.

Mexico: The General Secretary reported that their structure approved the purchase of a building for the General Service Office. Additionally, after a three-year trial period, their three regions will expand to five and they will increase their Regional and Trustee at Large positions.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina: The General Secretary retired after many years of service, and the Executive Committee has taken on the day-to-day responsibilities for the office.

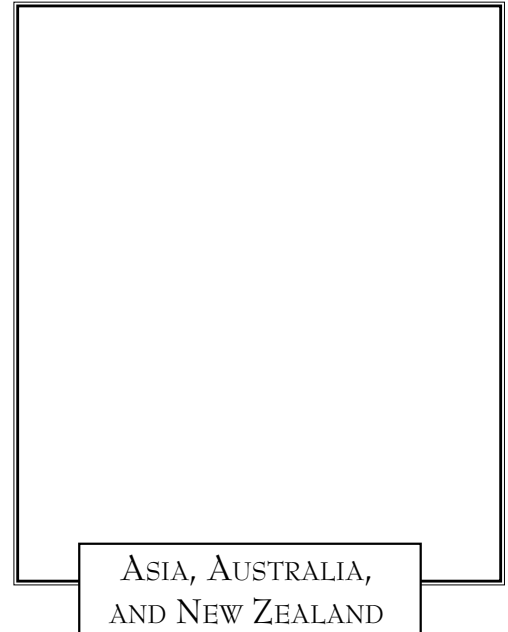
Brazil: The General Secretary reported they celebrated their 25th General Services Conference. Before the opening of the Conference, there was a session based on the 2002/2003 Service Plan: “My Group, My Home.” Brazil will host the 2004 IAGSM in Sao Paulo.

Colombia: The General Service Office is now producing a magazine three times a year called *Renacimiento*. Their Twelfth Conference was successful.

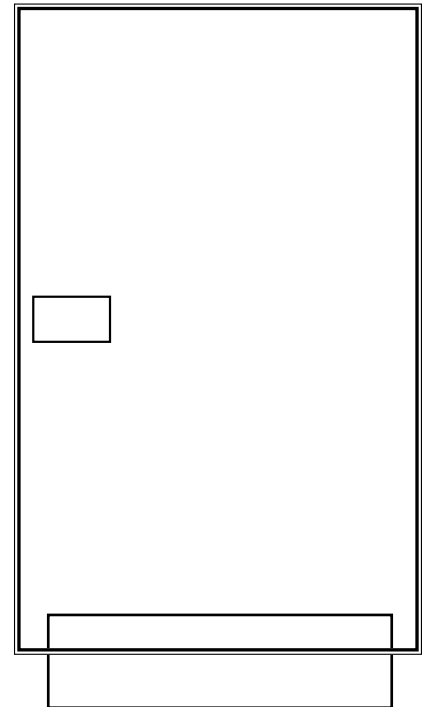
Peru: The General Secretary retired after many years of service, and the Executive Committee has taken on the day-to-day responsibilities for the office.

Uruguay: The WSO Board of Trustees approved the structure as a General Service Office on a trial basis.

Venezuela: Venezuela’s 21st National Convention was a success.



Public



Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees (December 8, 2003)

MOTION

The Alateen Advisory Committee, the Group Services Committee, the World Service Office Policy Committee, and the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. have studied the issues concerning the safety and behavior of Alateen members and individuals involved with Alateen service. The Board has reviewed the documents and actions of previous Conferences, previous Committees, and the World Service Office correspondence with legal counsel, individual members, Alateen Sponsors, Coordinators, as well as area and district officers.

The Board of Trustees has determined:

- Not all areas have written safety or behavioral requirements for Alateens and individuals involved with Alateen service.
- The WSO registration procedures and policies should support areas that have developed safety and behavioral requirements.
- The Al-Anon fellowship should take all necessary steps to provide a safe environment for Alateens and the Al-Anons involved with Alateen service.

As Tradition Four states, “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.” The Board of Trustees has determined that issues of safety and behavior by Alateens and individuals involved with Alateen service do affect every group and Al-Anon as a whole.

The Board of Trustees, under Concept Seven and Warranty Four, is entrusted with the authority and responsibility to protect the Al-Anon and Alateen names and the organizational identity.

Now, therefore, the Board of Trustees resolves:

1. As soon as possible, but in any event, no later than December 31, 2004, if an area within the World Service Conference Structure uses the Al-Anon or Alateen name in conjunction with any meeting(s), group(s), convention(s), or any other gathering(s) in the area where Alateen participation is offered, the area must have safety and behavioral requirements for all Alateen members and Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service. These safety and behavioral requirements must meet the minimum requirements of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.
2. Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service and all Alateen members must adhere to the area’s safety and behavioral requirements, or the area will notify the WSO that those members are prohibited from participating in Alateen service.
3. As soon as possible, but in any event, no later than December 31, 2004, and for each succeeding year, each area must have a process to certify, and must so certify to the WSO annually, that each Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service has met the area’s safety and behavioral requirements and has agreed to abide by them.
4. The World Service Office will register only those Alateen groups whose registration it receives through the area’s reg-

istration process. The WSO will remove from its registration list any Alateen group that the area determines does not comply with area safety and behavioral requirements. The area’s request for removal of an Alateen group must be stated in writing to the Associate Director/Alateen. This applies to all Alateen groups, whether currently registered or not.

5. If the area states in writing to the Associate Director/Alateen that a group, meeting, convention, or gathering is failing to meet the area’s safety and behavioral requirements, prior registration or interaction with the World Service Office shall not constitute any continuing right to use the Al-Anon or Alateen name.

Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements

1. Every Al-Anon member involved with Alateen service must:
 - a. be an Al-Anon member regularly attending Al-Anon meetings.
 - b. be at least 21 years old.
 - c. have at least two years in Al-Anon in addition to any time spent in Alateen.
 - d. not have been convicted of a felony, and not have been charged with child abuse or any other inappropriate sexual behavior, and not have demonstrated emotional problems which could result in harm to Alateen members.
2. There must be at least one Alateen Sponsor at every Alateen meeting.
3. The area requirements must prohibit overt or covert sexual interaction between any adult and Alateen member.
4. The area requirements must prohibit conduct contrary to applicable laws.
5. The area requirements must contain procedures for parental permission and medical care when applicable.
6. The area requirements must be reviewed by local counsel.

Other points for the areas to think about in developing their requirements:

- Requiring two Alateen Sponsors at every Alateen meeting.
- Having background checks.
- Considering behavior before, during, and after any Alateen meeting or activity of Alateens and adults involved with Alateen service.
- Connecting Alateen conferences to the area structure.
- Forming an Alateen meeting that meets at the same time and place as the Al-Anon meeting.
- Being gender conscious.
- Avoiding one-on-one interactions.
- Having an appropriate ratio of adults to Alateens at all times.
- Transporting Alateens to and from events.
- Educational training and awareness programs.

Revised By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

BY-LAWS OF AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

Effective April 30, 1988

ARTICLE I ~ NAMES

The name of this Corporation, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, is Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. In these BY-LAWS, the Corporation is sometimes referred to as the Corporation or as the World Service Office. For the purpose of these BY-LAWS, the term Corporation and the name World Service Office shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable with each other and with the name Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

1. As used in these BY-LAWS:

- a) Al-Anon group means a group of relatives and friends of alcoholics organized and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
- b) Alateen group means a group of teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics organized and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
- c) World Service Conference means the organization described in Article XI of these BY-LAWS.
- d) Trustee means a person who is or becomes a Trustee pursuant to these BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE II ~ PURPOSES

1. The purposes for which the Corporation was formed, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, are: "To encourage, assist and serve the families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with the problems concerning and attendant on alcoholism; to reinforce their efforts to understand the alcoholic and to foster his or her restoration to normal life; to disseminate information in relation thereto and to conduct, and participate in, any other classes of service to assist families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with their problems."
2. In furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Certificate of Incorporation, the World Service Office will:
 - a) Coordinate policy among the Al-Anon and Alateen groups throughout the world;
 - b) Assist Al-Anon and Alateen groups in the conduct of their activities;
 - c) Provide relatives and friends of alcoholics with information about the principles and Traditions of Al-Anon and locations of Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - d) Assist in the formation of new Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - e) Publish literature of interest to Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - f) Bring Al-Anon or Alateen groups to the attention of the concerned public;
 - g) Provide information and other assistance to persons for whom regular attendance at meetings of Al-Anon or Alateen groups is difficult or impractical;
 - h) Establish and maintain national and international public relations; and
 - i) Establish and maintain policies for the work of the World Service Office.

ARTICLE III ~ MEMBERS

1. The members of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a member upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a member upon ceasing to be a Trustee.
2. Members shall not be required to pay dues or any other compensation to the Corporation, or to any one else, as a condition of membership.

ARTICLE IV ~ TRUSTEES

1. The Directors of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a Director upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a Director upon ceasing to be a Trustee. For the purpose of these BY-LAWS, the term Director and Trustee shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable so far as necessary to conform to the Certificate of Incorporation of the Corporation which contemplates, and refers to, Directors.
2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than seven nor more than twenty-one persons of the following classifications: Trustees at Large, Regional Trustees, Lifetime Trustees, and a Sustaining Trustee, as those terms are described in these BY-LAWS. The actual number of Trustees and the composition of the Board as among the classifications referred to shall be as established by the Board from time to time and in this regard the Board will generally be guided by the directions of the World Service Conference.
3. Trustees at Large are Trustees whose nomination originates with, or with the consent of, the Board of Trustees. The total number of such Trustees shall be set by the Board of Trustees from time to time and shall always be a number evenly divisible by three. One-third of the number of Trustees at Large shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, and shall take office on the day following such meeting.
4. The Nominating Committee, prior to the next annual meeting of the Board, is charged to submit nominations for Trustee at Large positions to replace those whose term will expire. In the event a nominee for Trustee at Large is not elected by the Board of Trustees, the nominee shall be withdrawn and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 9.
5. Regional Trustees are Trustees who live in geographic areas of the United States and Canada designated as official regions by the World Service Conference. Nominees for Regional Trustee shall be designated annually by the World Service Conference in accordance with such procedures as that body may establish. The total number of Regional Trustees shall be a number evenly divisible by three and one-third of the number shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees to take office on the day following such meeting. In the event that a World Service Conference's nominee is not elected by the Board of Trustees, the nominee shall be withdrawn, and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 9.
6. The Sustaining Trustee is the person employed by the World Service Office established by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to hold the office of Executive Director of the World Service Office. The term of office of the Sustaining Trustee shall be for the same period as the person is employed by the World Service Office as Executive Director.
7. Lois W. and Anne B., the co-founders of Al-Anon, were Lifetime Trustees who served as Trustee as long as each lived.

APPENDIX II

8. Any Trustee may resign by sending written notice to the Secretary of the Corporation.
9. Any vacancy in the office of a Trustee at Large or Regional Trustee which occurs in any year between the annual meeting and the next World Service Conference may be filled by the Board of Trustees until the next annual meeting.
10. The length of time any Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee may serve on the Board is two three-year terms which may be consecutive.
11. Any Trustee may be removed from office for cause by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.
12. Trustees shall serve without remuneration but they shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.

ARTICLE V ~ POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees shall control and manage the affairs of the Corporation.
2. Without limiting the generality of the preceding paragraph, the Board of Trustees shall have the following powers:
 - a) To establish and maintain the policies of the World Service Office;
 - b) To control the property and finances of the World Service Office;
 - c) To establish plans and conduct the operations of the World Service Office; for the World Service
 - d) To authorize expenditures;
 - e) To elect the officers of the Corporation;
 - f) To elect the at-large members of the Executive Committee and appoint members of other committees in accordance with these BY-LAWS;
 - g) To appoint an Executive Director and a Director of Business Services for the World Service Office; and
 - h) To take such measures as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the World Service Office.
3. Any Trustee having a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorization by the Board of Trustees shall not vote on the matter.

ARTICLE VI ~ OFFICERS

1. The Officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer and a Secretary, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary from time to time by the Board. The Executive Director serves as the Secretary of the Corporation.
2. The President, the Vice President, and the Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting of Trustees from among the Trustees for a term of one year each.
3. The President shall also be known as the Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Chairperson), and the Vice President shall also be known as the Vice Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Vice Chairperson).
4. Any vacancy may be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the Trustees.
5. Any Officer may be removed from office by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

ARTICLE VII ~ DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. **THE PRESIDENT.** The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees, and shall perform all the necessary duties, and exercise all the customary powers incident to the office of President, including appointment of committee Chairpersons, with the exception of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The President shall have general supervision of all of the affairs of the World Service Office, and shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
2. **THE VICE PRESIDENT.** The Vice President shall be an aide to the President and shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President. The Board of Trustees shall in its sole discretion determine the matter of the President's disability. In the event the Board determines that disability has occurred, the office shall be deemed vacant. The Board of Trustees may elect a successor to serve until the next annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.
3. **THE TREASURER.** The Treasurer shall be the financial officer of the Corporation and shall provide advice to the Corporation with respect to general financial policy and ancillary matters such as the collection, custody, and control of funds of the World Service Office and maintenance of books of accounts and financial records subject to such directions as may be given by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer is responsible for having the books of account of the Corporation audited by a Certified Public Accountant at regular intervals as directed by the Board of Trustees. He may be an authorized signatory for disposition of funds of the Corporation on deposit in banks and other holding accounts. The Treasurer shall not be individually responsible for accounting procedures, security of funds, books of accounts or financial records, but does have general oversight authority respecting these matters.
4. **THE SECRETARY.** The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Corporation, shall be the custodian of books and records of the Corporation entrusted to him, and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated to him. The Secretary shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
5. The Officers of the Corporation shall each perform such other duties as may be delegated to them by the Board of Trustees as well as such other duties as shall pertain to their respective offices.

ARTICLE VIII ~ FINANCES

1. The fiscal year of the World Service Office shall begin on the first day of January in each year and end on the 31st day of December thereof.
2. Checks shall be made in the name of the Corporation and shall be signed by two officers or employees as may from time to time be designated by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE IX ~ MEETINGS

1. The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be held on the day following the World Service Conference in April of each year at such place as is designated by the Board of Trustees, except when special circumstances warrant a change of date of the Conference.
2. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held three times a year in January, July and October at a time and place designated by the Chairperson. In addition, there will be a regular meeting in April of each year on a date to be determined by the Board of Trustees.

If all the Trustees consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting, a Trustee may participate in a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and a Trustee participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.

3. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Chairperson at any time. The Chairperson shall call a special meeting upon the written application of three Trustees or upon the written application of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for the transaction of such business as may be described in such application.
4. At least fourteen days' notice of each meeting shall be given to the Trustees by mail. Forty-eight hours written notice of any meeting may be sent by electronic means. Trustees may waive notice of meetings by executing appropriate waivers.
5. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in any meeting. Each member shall have one vote. The vote of the majority of the Trustees present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is then present, shall be the act of the Board of Trustees, except as otherwise provided by law. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Trustees present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is obtained.
6. Any member unable to attend any meeting of the Board shall give advance notice of the absence to the Chairperson or Secretary of the Board and indicate the reason for the absence. Any member who fails to attend two meetings per year for reasons deemed inadequate by the Board shall be subject to dismissal by the Board for such cause. For the purposes of this paragraph, the Board of Trustees meetings during the World Service Conference shall be deemed to be one meeting.
7. Unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson, the order of business at all meetings shall be as follows:
 - a) Calling of roll;
 - b) Approval of minutes;
 - c) Report of Treasurer;
 - d) Committee reports and communications;
 - e) Elections (if such action is scheduled for such meetings);
 - f) New Business.

ARTICLE X ~ INDEMNIFICATION

1. Each individual serving or having served as Trustee or Officer, or both, of the Corporation shall be indemnified in the circumstances and to the full extent permitted by law, against any and all costs, expenses and financial consequences of whatever nature, including legal fees actually incurred in connection with any action, suit or legal proceeding of any kind in which such an individual is a defendant by reason of serving or having served as an Officer or Trustee, or both, of the corporation. This indemnification shall also extend to any individual made party defendant to any actions, suits or legal proceedings referenced in the preceding sentence by reason of the fact that his testator or intestate served as Trustee or Officer of the Corporation.
2. The foregoing indemnification shall apply also to each individual serving or having served (in his individual capacity, and not as a Trustee or officer) as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees or of any special committee as may be authorized from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XI ~ WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

1. The World Service Conference consists of the following persons:
 - a) Al-Anon Delegates from the United States and Canada;
 - b) Trustees of the Corporation;
 - c) Al-Anon members who serve as Directors and Associate Directors of the World Service Office;
 - d) The Chairpersons of committees established by the Board of Trustees;
 - e) The persons comprising the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees; and
 - f) Such other persons as deemed necessary for Conference business and representatives from countries not served by the World Service Conference Structure may be admitted by Conference vote. These persons may participate but not vote.
2. The World Service Conference shall be the permanent body empowered to express the conscience of the Al-Anon fellowship.
3. The Board of Trustees shall consult with the World Service Conference and, when required, accept its decision. However, the Board of Trustees shall continue to be vested with the full legal powers and responsibilities for the World Service Office.
4. Three-fourths of all authorized participants registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the World Service Office as or when it is deemed essential. They may request the resignation of the entire Board of Trustees and nominate a new slate of Trustees. In this regard the annual election of Trustees shall be conditional upon the understanding of each, that his resignation is required on call for the same by the Conference, subject to the further understanding that prior to any such resignation becoming effective each Trustee shall be deemed to vote for the successor slate of Trustees presented by the Conference. For the purpose of bringing about a reorganization of the World Service Office, the number of World Service Office participants voting shall be limited to one-fourth of the total Conference vote.

ARTICLE XII ~ COMMITTEES

1. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall elect at each annual meeting an Executive Committee consisting of seven persons. The Executive Committee shall include the Executive Director of the World Service Office, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee, an Al-Anon member from the administrative staff of the World Service Office, and three Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees. The Executive Committee shall meet at such times as the Board of Trustees may direct and shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees.
The Committee shall report all such action to the full Board no later than the next meeting of the Board. The Board of Trustees shall elect one volunteer member of the Executive Committee as the Chairperson. The Executive Director is the Secretary.
The President, an ex officio member, shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee in that person's absence.
2. **FINANCE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Finance Committee consisting of the following members: the Treasurer of the Corporation, the President, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, one other Trustee designated by the President, and the Executive Director. The Treasurer shall be the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The Executive Director is the Secretary. The Finance Committee shall plan the yearly budget of the World Service Office and shall render such other services as may be requested by the Board of Trustees.
The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee in the absence of the Treasurer.
3. **POLICY COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Policy Committee consisting of the following members: Trustees, Executive Committee members, the Chairpersons of all committees of the World Service Office, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff. The Chairperson of the Policy Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Board of Trustees. The Policy Committee shall consider Al-Anon

APPENDIX II AND APPENDIX III

policies particularly in relation to Al-Anon's Traditions, make recommendations to the Board of Trustees, and render such other services as the Board of Trustees may request.

The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Policy Committee in that person's absence.

4. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** At each annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board appoints the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, with Board approval. After the annual meeting, the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board, appoints the members of the Nominating Committee.
5. The Board of Trustees may appoint such other committees as they may from time to time determine appropriate.
6. Committee members shall hold office for a term of one (1) year.
7. Committee members shall serve without remuneration but shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.
8. Any Committee member may be removed from office for cause by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

ARTICLE XIII ~ AMENDMENTS

The Board of Trustees shall have the power to amend or alter these BY-LAWS in whole or in part by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees at a meeting called for the purpose of amending the BY-LAWS.

Amended: January 27, 2004

Revised By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc.

BY-LAWS NO.1 OF AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS (CANADA) INC.

Effective March 9, 1999

ARTICLE I

NAMES

1. (a) The name of this Corporation, as set forth in its Letters Patent of Incorporation, is Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. In these BY-LAWS, the Corporation is sometimes referred to as the Corporation or as Canada Service Office. For the purpose of these BY-LAWS, the term Corporation and the name Canada Service Office shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable with each other and with the name Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc.
- (b) The Corporation is associated with Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc. of Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA and it has been incorporated to carry on, in Canada, the work of the United States corporation.
2. As used in these BY-LAWS:
 - (a) Al-Anon group means a group of relatives and friends of alcoholics organized and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
 - (b) Alateen group means a group of teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics organized and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
 - (c) World Service Conference means the organization described in Article XI of these BY-LAWS.
 - (d) Trustee means a person who is or becomes a Trustee pursuant to these BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSES

1. The purposes for which the Corporation was formed, as set forth in its Letters Patent of Incorporation, are: "To encourage, assist and serve the families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with the problems concerning and attendant on alcoholism; to reinforce their efforts to understand the alcoholic and to foster his or her restoration to normal life; to disseminate information in relation thereto and to conduct, and participate in, any other classes of service to assist families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with their problems."
2. In furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Letters Patent of Incorporation, the Canada Service Office assisted by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. will:
 - (a) Coordinate policy among the Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - (b) Assist Al-Anon and Alateen groups in the conduct of their activities;
 - (c) Provide relatives and friends of alcoholics with information about the principles and Traditions of Al-Anon and locations of Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - (d) Assist in the formation of new Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - (e) Publish literature of interest to Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - (f) Bring Al-Anon or Alateen groups to the attention of the concerned public;
 - (g) Provide information and other assistance to persons for whom regular attendance at meetings of Al-Anon or Alateen groups is difficult or impractical;
 - (h) Establish and maintain national public relations; and
 - (i) Establish and maintain policies for the work of the Canada Service Office.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERS

1. The members of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a member upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a member upon ceasing to be a Trustee.
2. Members shall not be required to pay dues or any other compensation to the Corporation, or to anyone else, as a condition of membership.

ARTICLE IV
TRUSTEES

1. The Directors of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a Director upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a Director upon ceasing to be a Trustee. For the purpose of these BY-LAWS, the term Director and Trustee shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable so far as necessary to conform to the Letters Patent of Incorporation of the Corporation which contemplates, and refers to, Directors.
2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than seven nor more than twenty-one persons of the following classifications: Trustees at Large, Regional Trustees, and a Sustaining Trustee as those terms are described in these BY-LAWS. The actual number of Trustees and the composition of the Board as among the classifications referred to shall be as established by the Board from time to time and in this regard the Board will generally be guided by the directions of the World Service Conference.
3. Trustees at Large are Trustees whose nomination originates with, or with the consent of, the Board of Trustees. The total number of such Trustees shall be set by the Board of Trustees from time to time and shall always be a number evenly divisible by three. One-third of the number of Trustees at Large shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, and shall take office on the day following such meeting.
4. The Nominating Committee, prior to the next annual meeting of the Board, is charged to submit nominations for Trustee at Large positions to replace those whose term will expire. In the event a nominee for Trustee at Large is not elected by the Board of Trustees, the nominee shall be withdrawn and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 8.
5. Regional Trustees are Trustees who live in geographic areas of the United States and Canada designated as official regions by the World Service Conference. Nominees for Regional Trustee shall be designated annually by the World Service Conference in accordance with such procedures as that body may establish. The total number of Regional Trustees shall be a number evenly divisible by three, and one-third of the number shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees to take office on the day following such meeting. In the event that a World Service Conference's nominee is not elected by the Board of Trustees, the nominee shall be withdrawn, and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 8.
6. The Sustaining Trustee is the person employed by the World Service Office established by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to hold the office of Executive Director of the World Service Office. The term of office of the Sustaining Trustee shall be for the same period as the person is employed by the World Service Office as Executive Director.
7. Any Trustee may resign by sending written notice to the Secretary of the Corporation.
8. Any vacancy in the office of a Trustee at Large or Regional Trustee which occurs in any year between the annual meeting and the next World Service Conference may be filled by the Board of Trustees until the next annual meeting.
9. The length of time any Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee may serve on the Board is two three-year terms which may be consecutive.
10. Any Trustee may be removed from office for cause by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.
11. Trustees shall serve without remuneration but they shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.

ARTICLE V
POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees shall control and manage the affairs of the Corporation.
2. Without limiting the generality of the preceding paragraph, the Board of Trustees shall have the following powers:
 - (a) To adopt and maintain the policies of the World Service Office;
 - (b) To control the property and finances of the Corporation;
 - (c) To establish plans and conduct the operations of the Corporation;
 - (d) To authorize expenditures;
 - (e) To elect the officers of the Corporation;
 - (f) To elect the at-large members of the Executive Committee and appoint members of other committees in accordance with these BY-LAWS;
 - (g) To take such measures as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the World Service Office.
3. Any Trustee having a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorization by the Board of Trustees shall not vote on the matter.

ARTICLE VI
OFFICERS

1. The Officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer and a Secretary, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary from time to time by the Board. The Executive Director serves as the Secretary of the Corporation.
2. The President, the Vice President, and the Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting of Trustees from among the Trustees for a term of one year each.
3. The President shall also be known as the Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Chairperson), and the Vice President shall also be known as the Vice Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Vice Chairperson).
4. Any vacancy may be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the Trustees.
5. Any Officer may be removed from office by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

ARTICLE VII
DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. **THE PRESIDENT.** The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees, and shall perform all the necessary duties, and exercise all the customary powers incident to the office of President, including appointment of committee Chairpersons, with the exception of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The President shall have general supervision of all of the affairs of the Canada Service Office, and shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees.
2. **THE VICE PRESIDENT.** The Vice President shall be an aide to the President and shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President. The Board of Trustees shall in its sole discretion determine the matter of the President's disability. In the event the Board determines that disability has occurred, the office shall be deemed vacant. The Board of Trustees may elect a successor to serve until the next

APPENDIX III

annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.

3. THE TREASURER. The Treasurer shall be the financial officer of the Corporation and shall provide advice to the Corporation with respect to general financial policy and ancillary matters such as the collection, custody, and control of funds and maintenance of books of accounts and financial records subject to such directions as may be given by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer is responsible for having the books of account of the Corporation audited by a Chartered Accountant at regular intervals as directed by the Board of Trustees. He may be an authorized signatory for disposition of funds of the Corporation on deposit in banks and other holding accounts. The Treasurer shall not be individually responsible for accounting procedures, security of funds, books of accounts or financial records, but does have general oversight authority respecting these matters.
4. THE SECRETARY. The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Corporation, shall be the custodian of books and records of the Corporation entrusted to him, shall have custody of the corporate seal and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated to him. The Secretary shall be an *ex officio* member of all committees.
5. The Officers of the Corporation shall each perform such other duties as may be delegated to them by the Board of Trustees as well as such other duties as shall pertain to their respective offices.

ARTICLE VIII FINANCES

1. The fiscal year of the Canada Service Office shall begin on the first day of January in each year and end on the 31st day of December thereof.
2. Cheques shall be made in the name of the Corporation and shall be signed by two officers or employees as may from time to time be designated by the Board of Trustees.
3. The Board of Trustees shall at each annual meeting appoint an auditor to audit the accounts of the Corporation for report to the Trustees at the next annual meeting. The auditor shall hold office until the next annual meeting provided that the Trustees may fill any casual vacancy in the office of auditor. The remuneration of the auditor shall be fixed by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE IX MEETINGS

1. The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be held on the day following the World Service Conference in April of each year at such place as is designated by the Board of Trustees, except when special circumstances warrant a change of date of the Conference. Annual meetings may be held in the United States of America if approved by resolution of the Board of Trustees.
2. If all the Trustees consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting, a Trustee may participate in a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and a Trustee participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.
3. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Chairperson at any time. The Chairperson shall call a special meeting upon the written application of three Trustees or upon the written application of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for the transaction of such business as may be described in such application.
4. At least fourteen days' notice of each meeting shall be given to the Trustees by mail. Forty-eight hours written notice of any meeting may be sent by electronic means. Trustees may waive notice of meetings by executing appropriate waivers.
5. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in any meeting. Each member shall have one vote. The vote of the majority of the Trustees present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is then present, shall be the act of the Board of Trustees, except as otherwise provided by law. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Trustees present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is obtained.
6. Any member unable to attend any meeting of the Board shall give advance notice of the absence to the Chairperson or Secretary of the Board and indicate the reason for the absence. Any member who fails to attend two meetings per year for reasons deemed inadequate by the Board, shall be subject to dismissal by the Board for such cause. For the purposes of this paragraph, the Board of Trustees meetings during the World Service Conference shall be deemed to be one meeting.
7. Unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson, the order of business at all meetings shall be as follows:
 - (a) Calling of roll;
 - (b) Approval of minutes;
 - (c) Report of Treasurer;
 - (d) Committee reports and communications;
 - (e) Elections (if such action is scheduled for such meetings);
 - (f) New Business.

ARTICLE X INDEMNIFICATION

1. Each individual serving or having served as Trustee or Officer, or both, of the Corporation shall be indemnified in the circumstances and to the full extent permitted by law, against any and all costs, expenses and financial consequences of whatever nature, including legal fees actually incurred in connection with any action, suit, or legal proceeding of any kind in which such an individual is a defendant by reason of serving or having served as an Officer or Trustee, or both, of the Corporation. This indemnification shall also extend to any individual made party defendant to any action, suit, or legal proceeding referenced in the preceding sentence by reason of the fact that his testator or intestate served as Trustee or Officer of the Corporation.
2. The foregoing indemnification shall apply also to each individual serving or having served (in his individual capacity, and not as a Trustee or Officer) as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees or of any special committee as may be authorized from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XI WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

1. The World Service Conference consists of the following persons:
 - (a) Al-Anon Delegates from Canada and the United States;
 - (b) Trustees of the Corporation;

- (c) AI-Anon members who serve as Directors and Associate Directors of the World Service Office;
 - (d) The Chairpersons of committees established by the Board of Trustees;
 - (e) The persons comprising the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees; and
 - (f) Such other persons as deemed necessary for Conference business and representatives from countries not served by the World Service Conference Structure may be admitted by Conference vote. These persons may participate but not vote.
2. The World Service Conference shall be the permanent body empowered to express the conscience of the AI-Anon fellowship.
 3. The Board of Trustees of the Corporation shall consult with the World Service Conference and, when required, accept its decision. However, the Board of Trustees shall continue to be vested with the full legal powers and responsibilities for the Canada Service Office.
 4. Three-fourths of all authorized participants registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the Canada Service Office as or when it is deemed essential. They may request the resignation of the entire Board of Trustees and nominate a new slate of Trustees. In this regard the annual election of Trustees shall be conditional upon the understanding of each, that his resignation is required on call for the same by the Conference, subject to the further understanding that prior to any such resignation becoming effective each Trustee shall be deemed to vote for the successor slate of Trustees presented by the Conference. For the purpose of bringing about a reorganization of the Canada Service Office, the number of World Service Office participants voting shall be limited to one-fourth of the total Conference vote.

ARTICLE XII

COMMITTEES

1. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall elect at each annual meeting an Executive Committee consisting of seven persons. The Executive Committee shall include the Executive Director of the World Service Office, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee, an AI-Anon member from the administrative staff of the World Service Office, and three AI-Anon members, preferably not Trustees. The Executive Committee shall meet at such times as the Board of Trustees may direct and shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees.
The Committee shall report all such action to the full Board no later than the next meeting of the Board. The Board of Trustees shall elect one volunteer member of the Executive Committee as the Chairperson. The Executive Director is the Secretary.
The President, an *ex officio* member, shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee in that person's absence.
2. **FINANCE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Finance Committee consisting of the following members: the Treasurer of the Corporation, the President, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, one other Trustee designated by the President, and the Executive Director. The Treasurer shall be the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The Executive Director is the Secretary. The Finance Committee shall plan the yearly budget of the World Service Office, including the activities of the Canada Service Office, and shall render such other services as may be requested by the Board of Trustees.
The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee in the absence of the Treasurer.
3. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** At each annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board appoints the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, with Board approval. After the annual meeting, the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board, appoints the members of the Nominating Committee.
4. The Board of Trustees may appoint such other committees as they may from time to time determine appropriate.
5. Committee members shall hold office for a term of one (1) year.
6. Committee members shall serve without remuneration but shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.
7. Any Committee member may be removed from office for cause by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

ARTICLE XIII

EXECUTION OF DOCUMENTS

1. Contracts, documents or any instruments in writing requiring the signature of the Corporation, shall be signed by any two officers and all contracts, documents and instruments in writing so signed shall be binding upon the Corporation without any further authorization or formality. The Trustees shall have power from time to time by resolution to appoint an officer or officers on behalf of the Corporation to sign specific contracts, documents and instruments in writing. The Trustees may give the Corporation's power of attorney to any registered dealer in securities for the purposes of the transferring of and dealing with any stocks, bonds, and other securities of the Corporation. The seal of the Corporation when required may be affixed to contracts, documents and instruments in writing signed as aforesaid or by any officer or officers appointed by resolution of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XIV

CORPORATE SEAL

1. The seal, an impression whereof is stamped in the margin hereof, shall be the seal of the Corporation.

ARTICLE XV

HEAD OFFICE

1. The Head Office of the Corporation shall be in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, Province of Ontario.

ARTICLE XVI

AMENDMENTS

1. The Board of Trustees shall have the power to amend or repeal these BY-LAWS in whole or in part by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees at a meeting called for the purpose of amending the BY-LAWS, provided that the repeal or amendment of such BY-LAWS shall not be enforced or acted upon until the approval of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs has been obtained.

ENACTED AND CONFIRMED on the 9th day of March, 1999.

Helen R., President

Richard B., Secretary

Amended: January 27, 2004

– BOARD OF TRUSTEES –

Trustees-at-Large

Judith P.
Jack S.
Peggy S.
Liz W.
Ora B.
Gen B.
Zelda R.
Lynda E.
Bidge B.

Regional Trustees

Skip A., US Southeast
Cecelia L., US Northeast
Colleen R., US North Central
Carolyn W., US South Central
Winnie S., US Southwest
Judy D., US Northwest
Julie F., Canada West

**EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE**

Catherine J., Member at Large,
Chairperson
Ric B., Executive Director
Cecelia L., Board Chairperson
(ex-officio)
Jack S., Treasurer
Judith P., Policy Chairperson
Howdy R., Member at Large
Syntha E., Member at Large
Mary Ann K., Staff Member

**NON-TRUSTEE
COMMITTEE
CHAIRPERSON**

Pat H., ECRPM Chairperson**

- WORLD SERVICE OFFICE CONFERENCE STAFF MEMBERS -

Ric B., Executive Director
Caryn J., Director of Communication
Mary Ann K., Director of Member Services
David Zach, Director of Business Services*
Tom C., Associate Director of Fellowship Communication—
Literature II/Newsletters
Cynthia H., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference

Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Public Outreach—Media
Barbara O., Associate Director of Member Services/Alateen
Pat Q., Associate Director of Fellowship Communication—
Literature I/Forum
Claire R., Associate Director of Public Outreach—Professionals
Dolores T., Associate Director of Group Services
Marsha W., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International

- AREA DELEGATES -

Janie J., Alabama
Bonnie T., Alaska (Alternate)
Marilyn M., Alberta/Northwest Territories
Cindy M., Arizona
Jerie S., Arkansas
Kal T., British Columbia/Yukon
Vicki H., California (North)
Miriam McK., California (South)
Carol C., Colorado
Taffy P., Connecticut
Denise M., Delaware
Lucy R., Florida (North)
Stuart M., Florida (South)
Debbie F., Georgia
Ethel B., Hawaii
Ruth B., Idaho
Fran K., Illinois (North)
Pat R., Illinois (South)
Mari Lee W., Indiana
Carol V., Iowa
Mary K., Kansas
Carolyn L., Kentucky
Jay P., Louisiana

Jennie McC., Maine
Ruth H., Manitoba
Mickie Z., Maritime Provinces
Julie M., Maryland/District of Columbia
Ann F-S., Massachusetts
Sue B., Michigan
JoAnne H., Minnesota (North)
Carol F., Minnesota (South)
Fran A., Mississippi
Dru S., Missouri
Kay R., Montana
Bev A., Nebraska
Renee M., Nevada
Harriet F., Newfoundland/Labrador
Judith O., New Hampshire
Kathy B., New Jersey
Rick M., New Mexico
Connie D., New York (North)
Elizabeth S., New York (South)
Paula B., North Carolina
Shirley J., North Dakota
Geri H., Ohio
Debbie P., Oklahoma

Tim H., Ontario (North)
Gail C., Ontario (South)
Susan G., Oregon
Jeanine S., Pennsylvania
Jacqueline M., Puerto Rico
Elaine L., Quebec (East)
Pierrette G., Quebec (West)
Denise R., Rhode Island
Diane B., Saskatchewan
Nancy B., South Carolina
Dawn D., South Dakota
Jane L., Tennessee
Jan H., Texas (East)
Margie R., Texas (West)
Sharon S., Utah
John McL., Vermont
Phyllis S-T., Virginia
Ruth H., Washington
Nancy C., West Virginia
Jim S., Wisconsin
Shirley T., Wyoming

- INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE -

Maria del Carmen R., Mexico**

*Nonmember, non-voting

**Non-voting