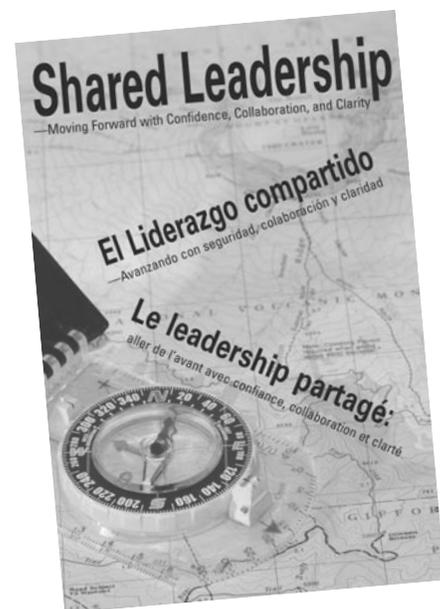


2006 CONFERENCE SUMMARY

Al-Anon Family Groups 2006 World Service Conference

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April 24-28, 2006

Shared Leadership—Moving Forward with Confidence, Collaboration, and Clarity

El liderazgo compartido—Avanzando con seguridad, colaboración y claridad

Le leadership partagé: aller de l'avant avec confiance, collaboration et clarté

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

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

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

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

2004/2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), page 157

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Concept Two

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

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Each year, Delegates gather on the evening before the official opening of the Conference to share their Areas' successes, concerns, and projects with each other. This year, the Delegates submitted their responses to the following questions:

- How has your Area grown in *confidence* – what successes have you experienced this past year?
- How has your Area improved *collaboration* within and outside the fellowship this past year?
- How has your Area improved the *clarity* of the Al-Anon/Alateen message this past year?

The following are some of their answers:

Confidence through Successes

- From Prescription Al-Anon we now have relationships with a variety of professionals in our community. Our Area has grown in confidence knowing that the community is interested and requests our help.
- At the Assembly, we needed more chairs and nearly ran out due to the high number of first-time participants.
- Using the e-buddy process brought new people into service—even newer members.
- We hold a bilingual district meeting each month.
- A “Delegate’s Corner” link was added on two of our Web sites.
- Even if an outreach project failed at the first attempt, that doesn’t mean it will fail if tried again.
- Alateen mini-conference planned, the first in many years.
- Certification has strengthened support for Alateen - gone from six registered Alateen groups to twelve.

Collaboration within and outside the Fellowship

- We started an orientation before the Assembly for new Group Representatives.
- Brainstorming ideas of how the Assembly could help the Group Representatives be successful created unity within the Area.
- Experimenting with three-way and conference calling was a way for geographically isolated groups to participate in the Assembly.
- Job descriptions were posted on the Area Web site prior to the election Assembly.
- Members attending their first Assembly are recognized, given a hug by the Delegate, and receive a small gift (a pin or bookmark) and are given a *Service Manual* at their second Assembly.
- The Area held a workshop on “What is my job and how do I do it?” for incoming officers and service positions.
- We convinced a grocery chain to print information from the “Crying House” bookmark on their bags.
- Districts have begun jail meetings, which have helped inmates transition to local meetings when released.
- Districts have small, good-hearted competitions on the most inventive public outreach ideas.

- All districts in the Area participated in “Leave Hope.” Several groups found this was such a simple project that they plan to continue it on a regular basis.
- At Assembly we focused on educating the membership by discussing how to use the *Conference Summary* and *Service Manual* in our groups.
- We explored ways to increase participation of Spanish-speaking members at Assembly and purchased translation equipment, in addition to translating the Area minutes, newsletter and event registration forms.
- Groups are “adopting” Metro buses carrying Al-Anon posters.
- The Al-Anon Information Service printed business cards with a local phone number and “Are you concerned with someone’s drinking?” for public distribution.
- We are collaborating with the Delegates, Area Chairs, and Alateen Coordinators in our region to build a healthy region-wide Alateen program.

Improving Clarity

- A member is assigned to take “bullets” at our Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings. At the end of the meeting they are read back and everyone has an opportunity to clarify the information so that a unified message is passed on.
- The Assembly is having more discussion before finalizing the wording of a motion to clarify the terms in the motion and decrease the amending.
- We held service seminars in conjunction with AWSC meetings/Assembly meetings, presenting service topics and workshops in a fun way to members.
- Text messaging was used to announce new meeting times and places.
- Area business is conducted with a “consent agenda” to leave more time for action committees and other activities.
- We created a rotation system for Action committees so that all groups have a chance to participate in all committees
- We assigned temporary service sponsors to first-time Assembly attendees.
- The AWSC used ad hoc committees to deal with specific Area issues.
- Action committees interviewed the outgoing panel, created job descriptions, and wrote personal invitations to groups to attend the Assembly.
- The Area voted to add fingerprinting for Sponsors/helpers. Last year there was dissension; this year there was almost total acceptance and confidence in the process.
- The Area Alateen requirements have helped the Area to grow and thrive—what they were meant to do.
- A Web site for Sponsors has helped Alateen groups, Sponsors, District Representatives, and the Area feel connected and supported.

CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

The 2006 Conference theme, “Shared Leadership—Moving Forward with Confidence, Collaboration, and Clarity” in English, Spanish, and French, created a lot of discussion and enthusiasm during the 46th World Service Conference, held at the Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 24-28, 2006. The theme was reflected in all of the actions, ideas, and presentations throughout the week. Conference members were asked to consider this theme in their meetings and individual discussions.

Although the official opening of the Conference was not until Monday, there were several pre-Conference activities held on Sunday. At an expanded orientation for new Conference members in the afternoon, the Chairperson of the Board said, “Shared leadership, with our Higher Power and each other, is far more effective than doing it alone. We hope this Conference will serve as a model for you to take back to your Areas when you leave here.” The Opening Dinner on the eve of the Conference brought everyone together for the first time to get to know one another. In her welcoming remarks, the Conference Chairperson said that there were going to be some changes this year—that some of the features from past Conferences would become new again and that there would be shared leadership at all Conference sessions. The “pinning” of new Delegates by their Conference Sponsors began the program. After dinner, two “roving reporters” from the “Buckaroo Gazette” arrived in the room and asked experienced Delegates to share with the new Conference members one thing that would help them have a successful Conference. Here’s a sample of what they had to say: “Everyone is rooting for you and wants you to succeed.” “Don’t be afraid to ask questions.” “Don’t be afraid to be your own Delegate.” “Don’t take yourself too seriously.” “Trust the process.” “Be sure to have lots of paper and take lots of notes.” “Keep it fun!”

As at every Conference, after the official opening with the Serenity Prayer, the first order of business was approval of a motion presented by the Admissions/Handbook Committee to seat certain persons who can provide critical information to the Confer-

Gen B.
*Conference
Chairperson,
Trustee*

Mary G.
*Conference
Co-Chairperson,
Trustee*

ence. The following persons were seated:

With voice, but no vote:

- David Zach, Director of Business Services (Non-AI-Anon member)
- Nydia Julia M., International Representative—Mexico (AI-Anon member)
- Emily S., International Representative—UK & Eire (AI-Anon member)

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

- Beth K., Chairperson, Executive Committee for Real Property Management (AI-Anon member)

With voice limited to Conference processes and procedures as they relate to the knowledge-based decision-making process, in the role as Conference Consultant, but no vote:

- Nancy Ackermann Cole, Consultant to the Conference (Non-AI-Anon member)

With no voice and no vote:

- Robert S., Director of Communication Services (AI-Anon member)

The motion carried. (See WSC Motion #1, page 65.)

Following the motion, the Chairperson called the roll. Policies and procedures of the Conference were reviewed. The taking of still pictures was approved by a show of hands. Videotaping was not permitted at any time. It was approved by a show of hands that “substantial unanimity” would be two-thirds of the votes cast and that, with limited exceptions, all subsequent voting would be done by closed ballot. Voting procedures were reviewed, including the procedure for creating and submitting a motion.

The Chairperson stated that “This year is the beginning of the new model, a new process, which will evolve over time. The goal is to make the quality of the decision more important than who makes it.” With that, there was a brief introduction to the knowledge-based decision-making process, with the assurance that more information would be available throughout the week. The Conference Co-Chairperson introduced the meeting rules including the two-minute, one time at the microphone limit per topic. Each morning she reviewed the Conference rules with participation from Conference members.



WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

“Welcome to the 46th World Service Conference (WSC) where we all share in the leadership of Al-Anon. In 1951, Lois W. and Anne B. probably never thought of themselves as leaders, much less as sharing leadership, but look what they started. They did something they believed in, and look what we have today.

“*Paths to Recovery* tells us, ‘Each and every member of Al-Anon has the potential to become a leader.’ Did you join Al-Anon to become a leader? I know I didn’t, but here I am. Here we all are today, sharing leadership for Al-Anon. Our voice this week will be heard around the world, in places we only dreamed one day Al-Anon might be, in languages many of us have never heard, and with faces we will never see. Have you ever thought how big that is?

“At the 1980 International Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, Lois said, ‘Anyone can start something, but it takes many people to keep it going.’ That is what we are doing; we are keeping Al-Anon going for those that still suffer from someone else’s drinking, so that Al-Anon will be here for our children, our grandchildren, and their children. We are all stepping forward to do our part in the shared leadership of Al-Anon.

“Perhaps you have never thought of yourself as a leader, but obviously someone did, or you wouldn’t be here. My hope is, when this Conference closes, we will all have the knowledge, confidence, and a renewed enthusiasm to move forward in sharing the leadership for Al-Anon.

“It is with much love and gratitude for you all that I open by reading our Traditions.”

Judy P.
*Chairperson,
Board of Trustees*

STARTING TOGETHER: ORIENTATION AND REVIEW

The purpose of the Orientation session was to have all Conference members start with a common understanding of how the World Service Conference (WSC) would be conducted. The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees began the Orientation noting that the Board set two goals for itself. One was to have the spiritual tone of the WSC prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and accountable conduct of its members. The other was to have Conference members understand the purpose of the Conference relationships within the structure and be able to articulate the Conference decisions. As a result, some changes were made to the Conference format to help further the concept of shared leadership. The changes included having a Chair and Co-chair for every Conference session and changing the mentor selection process. A “Hot Topic” form was provided with the Conference Notebook as an aid for Delegates to make notes of information and discussions that they would report back to their Areas in their Delegate reports. At the end of each day, there was a time set aside for summarizing or synthesizing the discussions. If clarity was not evident, the discussion would continue until it was clear and the members had all the information they needed. Members were encouraged to collaborate, to “talk to each other to strengthen our fellowship, so we can move forward with confidence.”

The microphone protocol for discussions and the voting procedures were reviewed by the Conference Chairperson after which the Co-Chairperson reviewed the general rules under which Conference members agreed to conduct its business.

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees then shared her experience of how the knowledge-based decision-making process has worked for the Board and her vision of how it could work at the Conference. She remarked that “Everything old is new again, because I believe that making decisions in this way is not something new. It was always around, but Al-Anon joined the rest of the world in getting hung up on Robert’s Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure. The Board has chosen to adopt the knowledge-based process in its decision making because it realigns the Conference with its original

Judy P.
*Chairperson,
Board of Trustees*

Genevieve B.
*Conference
Chairperson,
Trustee*

Mary G.
*Conference
Co-Chairperson,
Trustee*

Nancy
Ackermann Cole
*Consultant to the
Conference*

purpose and process.” To illustrate this, portions of the first *Conference Summary* were read, revealing similarities between the Conference then and now.

The Conference Consultant was introduced and she clarified her role at this Conference. She remarked that in her study of the Concepts of Service, she found that this process was returning AI-Anon to its roots. “At the early Conferences, it was understood that everyone’s input was important and that everyone had something to offer. This Board believes that each Conference member is a valuable resource for the good of AI-Anon as a whole. The Board is inviting everyone to be a part of the big thinking, to collaborate with confidence and to help clarify the vision and mission of AI-Anon. The AI-Anon communication process is clearly circular within the organization, as described in the *Service Manual*. (See diagram on page 7.) It’s how leaders make their decisions. It’s about knowing what you need to know to make a decision. You must be informed because your primary role is to bring your expertise to the Conference, come to an understanding of the information being provided, and then be able to articulate it. It is important that Conference members use each other as a resource. It’s about trust.” In closing she quoted the last paragraph from Bill W.’s essay on leadership in Concept Nine: “Thank God that so many of our service leaders at all levels of operation are blessed with the attributes of tolerance, responsibility, flexibility, and vision.”

Knowledge-Based Decision Making: The Process

Members of the Executive Committee who had each been a part of the knowledge-based decision-making process from the beginning of its use by the Board defined the process as looking at a topic through certain agreed-upon criteria to see if it is something that the group wants to pursue. The idea is talked about first to see if the group agrees with all or part of it. If so, pertinent background information is gathered and shared with those responsible for making the decision. Then, if it is decided that the idea is something that is worthwhile, a decision can be made through motion and vote.

Knowledge-based decision-making has four essential elements based on a philosophy of: open communication between leadership and membership; dialogue before deliberation; all decision makers having common access to full information; and it exists in a culture of trust.

Catherine J.
*Executive
Committee
Chairperson*

Cecelia L.
*Executive
Committee
member at-large*

Marge S.
*Executive
Committee
member at-large*

How does this relate to the Twelve Concepts of Service?

It is based on the following:

- mutual trust
- designated authority—traditional and legal
- participation
- leadership
- The Right of Decision
- our spiritual foundation

Why is it a good model?

- It allows thorough examination of mega issues without an end in mind.
- It allows those who make the decision to become far less important than the fact that a good decision is made.
- It is a process for ongoing strategic thinking and strategy development.
- It allows us to develop a reputation for value and nimbleness in carrying the message.

What does this mean for AI-Anon as a whole?

It provides AI-Anon with:

- Recognition as a credible organization
- A reputation for value
- A culture built on trust and communication

The Board has used this process in its meetings since members were first introduced to it by the Chairperson of the Board. There were some members who were unclear as to how it was different from the way decisions had been made in the past. The chart on page 7 shows some comparisons between the traditional value and the knowledge-based value.

With this process, it is not necessary to choose sides or develop evidence with an end in mind. Rather, it provides for open dialogue, so everyone’s needs are heard, expectations and preferences are acknowledged, and ethical dimensions are considered, being ever aware of the likely evolution of the environment in which members live. The benefits of this process are great:

- Group members are more likely to support the decision made
- Group effort is more likely to yield better results
- Participants become part of the process, more voices are heard, more solutions generated
- Recognition that responsibility for action rests on everyone
- Actions tend to lean toward the greater good for the organization
- Negativity is diffused

After the presentation, Conference members shared their thoughts, experiences, and ideas for using this process. Some of their experience follows:

At one Area’s World Service Committee meetings, a District Representative is assigned to write down and bullet the items that evolve from the discussion and, at the end of the discussion, the ideas are reviewed. If clarifi-

	TRADITIONAL VALUE	KNOWLEDGE-BASED VALUE
LEADERSHIP	Take pride in making good decisions	Take pride in seeing good decisions being made
RESOURCE ALLOCATION	Better to miss an opportunity than make a mistake	Doing what's right doesn't necessarily require great resources. It's not prudent to wait when dealing with strategically important issues
WHAT WE DO	Lots of activities; reward loyalty and hard work	Think critically and analytically to achieve agreed-upon results
COMMUNICATION	Leaders are responsible for influencing the beliefs and behaviors of others; we avoid mistakes	Make effective use of information and engage in open dialogue before deliberating or decision-making

ation is needed on anything, members are encouraged to ask questions or share their interpretation of the discussion. One Delegate announced that her Area was using this process and didn't realize it! Another Delegate shared that "this is really an informed group conscience." One more said, "This can be used in my personal life. It's about opening our minds and being willing to learn new things."

Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service all work together. They're one integrated piece that can't be pulled apart." Since people are their most creative when they are clear about their roles, the Consultant asked members of each group, the World Service Office Administrative staff, the Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, and the Delegates to give examples of their role.

Shared Leadership Presentation

"All Conference members are leaders and trusted servants and they are at the Conference for one primary purpose—the good of the whole of Al-Anon." A circular schematic was projected on the screen showing how communication flows from the groups to the Conference through the Area Delegates and how the Conference decisions are communicated through the Delegates to the groups through their trusted servants, the District Representatives, and Group Representatives. A second circle illustrated the communication necessary among the four groups that comprise the Conference—Area Delegates, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee members, and members of the WSO Administrative staff.

Nancy Ackermann Cole
Consultant to the Conference

The Consultant remarked, "This is an incredible mosaic of a Conference. You're here to continue the work of the many Conferences that came before you and you're also here to safeguard the continuance of Al-Anon Family Groups. You're part of a long conversation. Your inheritance is as rich as rich can be. The

WSO Administrative Staff members:

- Act as a clearing house, listening and communicating with the Areas, districts, and groups
- Do public outreach at the national level
- Serve as a liaison and bring the international voice of Al-Anon members not linked to a structure to the Conference
- Serve as a communication link between Conference members
- Function as the hub—a center of information for the fellowship
- Provide the continuity with our history
- Implement plans and report trends
- Provide support in the development of literature and service tools
- Carry out the will of the Conference



"A circular flow of communication"

Executive Committee:

- Oversee the daily operations of the World Service Office (WSO)
- Has delegated authority to act for the Board of Trustees
- Reports its actions and WSO activities to the Board
- Reviews monthly financial statements
- Tracks adherence to the budget

Board of Trustees:

- Develops a strategic plan; has a vision and mission, and looks to the future
- Makes sure resources are available
- Thinks creatively; collaborates on issues from many perspectives
- Guardians of the three Legacies
- Hires the Executive Director and Director of Business Services
- Approves final agenda topics for WSC
- Is the legal link between the spiritual group conscience of WSC and organization of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.
- Affirms WSC actions at its annual meeting linking implementation to the WSO

Delegates:

- Facilitate the circle of information and feedback to and from the Conference, WSO, and the Area to preserve worldwide unity
- Learn how to become a better communicator to articulate the issues
- Bring back new and innovative ideas to help the Area
- Read all the background information
- Bring enthusiasm and take it back; visionaries and leaders
- Think with a global perspective
- Understand and articulate the issues
- Communicate and articulate the vision of where Al-Anon is going
- Report back the essence of the Conference discussions, deliberations, and decisions

Each Conference member, regardless of their role, reflects the perspectives of Al-Anon Family Groups. The Conference is the voice of worldwide Al-Anon and has the duty to preserve the unity and promote the growth of Al-Anon Family Groups. It was hoped that this new approach would increase the confidence of the membership in the Conference and its decisions, encourage collaboration, bring clarity to the matters before the Conference, and provide resources (meaning all members of the Conference) to further the message of Al-Anon.

APPROVALS

2005 Annual Report

Several years ago, the Annual Report provided by the World Service Office (WSO) to the Conference changed its format. It now provides more general information regarding the progress being made toward the vision and mission of the Board of Trustees and its role in helping Al-Anon Family Groups as a whole to increase its public presence. The Board constantly challenges the WSO staff members to assist them in this vision and mission.

Since the report was provided to all Conference members in advance, the Executive Director made only a few opening remarks, then opened the floor for discussion.

One of the goals of the WSO is to investigate the feasibility of using credible professionals to provide research data on the effects of alcoholism on non-alcoholics. The question arose as to why this information was necessary. A WSO staff member elaborated that, in order to get recognition in the professional community, it is mandatory that Al-Anon provide statistical data supporting its successes or failures. Without it, most agencies will not consider Al-Anon as a credible resource. The professional community requires evidence-based research. Statistics validate whether something is effective and opens the door to the professional community. Al-Anon members' stories can provide further validation of that evidence.

One member asked if the "Leave Hope" campaign was going to be done annually. A staff member reported that it was a very successful outreach tool, with widespread participation at all levels of the fellowship. Areas are encouraged to continue its use. Another member asked about the timeline for the availability of the Spanish and French *Service Manual*, and was told that it was now on-line in all three languages in searchable format. All subsequent changes approved by the Conference will be made to the on-line versions as they are approved by the Conference. Later in the week, Del-

Ric B.
Executive Director

egates received copies of the Spanish and French versions of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

The Executive Director concluded: "This report is the collaborative effort with WSO staff members that has made it possible to make this report transition happen. As we share that leadership, we will be able to provide more clarity, be more collaborative with you, and inspire confidence in you and the membership at home. We want the members to know that the WSO is not the bottom or the top, but the hub through which the information passes. We want to continue to reflect back to the fellowship the shared experience you have sent to us."

A motion to approve the 2005 WSO Annual Report was carried. (See WSC Motion #4, page 65. The complete report can be found on pages 67-77.)

2005 Auditor's Report

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the opinion letter of the independent auditors and their report was forwarded to all Conference members for their consideration. At the Conference, the Director of Business Services gave an overview of each paragraph of the letter and reviewed the statements and accompanying notes in the report on the financial status of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Again this year, the corporation received an "unqualified" opinion. After reviewing all the materials provided, the auditors found that the financial statements were prepared in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States. It is the best opinion that a corporation can receive.

At December 31, 2005, our World Service Office had total assets of \$9,903,897 and liabilities of \$2,048,402, leaving net assets of \$7,855,495 among three funds: General, Reserve, and Building. The Reserve Fund had a balance of \$4,454,644 at year-end, after recording investments at market value and estimating the cost of post-retirement health benefits. The Building Fund, established in 1995 to record the purchase of the World Service Office, showed the cost of the land, building, and building improvements after depreciation at \$2,298,146. There was \$85,167 of contractual reserve for the retirement of bonds.

Income from operations totaled \$4,383,457 in 2005 and expenses for the year were \$4,491,572. As a result, the General Fund balance was reduced by

Zelda R.
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach
*Director of
Business Services*

\$108,115. A gross profit of \$2,552,157 was realized on literature sales, and contributions were \$1,421,196. Subscription income from *The Forum* totaled \$291,633. Beginning in 1999, interest and dividend income from the Reserve Fund and the Building Fund accrues to the benefit of the General Fund. Investment income in the General Fund for 2005 was \$118,471. Net income of \$10,009 was recorded in the Reserve Fund. Special project and other unusual, non-recurring expenses totaling \$36,350 and estimated post-retirement health benefits cost of \$162,711 were recorded in the Reserve Fund in 2005. Building expenses are charged to the General Fund through occupancy costs.

When the floor was opened for discussion, a suggestion was made that a column be added along the margin identifying percentages corresponding to the figures provided. This will be taken to the Finance Committee for consideration.

One member asked for clarification on the corporation's reserve. It was explained that the goal is to have one year's operating expense available. Another question concerned how much savings is being realized by paying the building off six years in advance. Because the bonds are based on a market rate for tax-free bonds, and the rate changes weekly, the WSO cannot calculate to the penny, but projections are done and follow trends. One member asked, considering the \$98,000 shortfall expected, if the fellowship is in trouble. It was explained that provided the trend is not long-term, the fellowship is not in trouble. In the long run however, expenses can't exceed income without consequences. Another member wanted to know how much it costs for the WSO to service each group. In 2005, the average cost to service each group was \$235.41.

A motion was made and carried to approve the report. (See WSC Motion #2, page 65.)

2006 Budget

The budget report for 2006 was presented by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. It showed that expenses were estimated to exceed revenue by \$45,000. Overall expenses were budgeted to increase by \$172,000 and payroll costs were expected to increase by \$114,000, due to cost-of-living raises and increases in the cost of employee benefits. Occupancy expenses were projected to be \$8,000 less than last year. Increases in shipping and handling fees should cover the rising costs of postage and freight. With regard to Public Outreach, funds have been included for projects that may become available during the year for both the US and Canada. Estimated income from literature sales

Zelda R.
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach
*Director of
Business Services
(Nonmember)*

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

Schedule 1

	2006	Preliminary 2006	2005
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries (includes Temp Help)	2,151,000	2,151,000	2,080,152
Payroll Taxes	176,000	176,000	164,396
Employee Benefits	582,000	582,000	550,616
Total Labor Costs	2,909,000	2,909,000	2,795,164
Building Occupancy	266,000	266,000	274,527
Packing & Shipping (Net)	(2,000)	(2,000)	25,451
Postage	232,000	232,000	226,193
Telephone	53,000	53,000	63,120
Stationery & Office Supplies	92,000	92,000	69,723
Outreach Activities	94,000	114,000	48,436
Office Services & Expenses	159,000	135,000	161,434
Repairs & Maintenance	7,000	7,000	4,615
Travel & Meetings	234,000	244,000	248,285
Direct Conference Costs (Net)	75,000	72,000	72,658
General Service Meeting	40,000	40,000	
Regional Service Seminars	19,000	19,000	27,155
Legal & Audit	36,000	36,000	36,247
Printing	131,000	130,000	164,532
Canadian Public Information	25,000	50,000	19,511
In-Office Volunteers	4,000	4,000	2,730
PSA Campaign	100,000	99,000	93,634
Miscellaneous	26,000	26,000	36,735
Total Operating Expense	4,500,000	4,526,000	4,370,150
Membership Survey	23,000	20,000	
Depreciation & Amortization (Exc. Bldg.)	140,000	140,000	121,422
Total Expense	\$4,663,000	\$4,686,000	\$4,491,572
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>			
Literature Sales less cost of printing	2,758,000	2,758,000	2,552,157
Contributions	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,421,196
Forum Subscriptions	240,000	240,000	291,633
Interest	120,000	120,000	118,471
Funds from General Fund *	45,000	68,000	108,115
Total Estimated Revenue	\$4,663,000	\$4,686,000	\$4,491,572

* To be used only if necessary revenue is not received

was projected to be higher because of the average 20 percent increase in prices. *The Forum* subscription income is projected to decrease from 2005. Anticipated contributions from the fellowship were budgeted at \$1,500,000, which is \$80,000 more than last year. Investment income should remain about the same.

After the presentation, there was time to ask questions. One Delegate asked if the price increase set to go into effect on June 1, 2006, would make our literature unaffordable for newcomers. She was advised that literature sales decreased last year and that the last increase in the price of literature was on April 1, 1998, on 11 books. Research was done to determine if our literature prices were out of line with the price of non-AI-Anon books. Our literature actually sells for less than most outside books. Since prices hadn't been adjusted for a long time, this increase seems substantial. Pricing will now be reviewed more often. It was suggested that this was a good opportunity for individuals to do outreach by providing literature to those less fortunate.

A review of *The Forum* subscription costs pointed out that the price of the magazine had not been increased, but that postage, especially to Canada, has increased dramatically and become a big concern for members as well as the WSO.

Included with the financial reports was an exhibit showing the 2005 contributions for the US and Canada by Area or province. One Delegate asked about the category noted as "undesigned" and asked if it could be more clearly defined in future reports. That suggestion will be taken to the Finance Committee for further consideration.



"Director of Business Services as 'Mr Money Bags' in WSC Warranties skit."

TRIENNIAL REPORT-EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT (ECRPM)

In 1994, the World Service Conference (WSC) passed Motion #12, which empowered the Board of Trustees to purchase property for occupancy by AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The motion provided for a 15-year trial period and had several contingencies.

One condition set forth in the motion was that during the trial period, the Board of Trustees would "establish a subsidiary corporation or a separate Executive Committee in order to insure that the management of the real property be done in a prudent manner and not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the spiritual parts of the program, *i.e.*, service to the groups, individuals, or AI-Anon as a whole."

To fulfill that condition, a motion to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was approved by the WSC in 1995. This separate Committee was preferred for its simplicity and its ability to reduce the number of additional forms required to be filed annually with the Internal Revenue Service. The Committee consists of three at-large AI-Anon members, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and the Director of Business Services. The Committee first met June 15, 1996, and has met twice a year since then.

Another condition contained in Motion #12 was that the Board of Trustees would "report triennially as to the financial feasibility of the ownership of real property, the compliance with the spirit and letter of this resolution, and the negative impact, if any, that the purchase of property has had on the fellowship as a whole."

The Board of Trustees reported the following:

1. Has ownership of property been financially feasible?

The Board of Trustees reports that ownership of property has been a very good step

Zelda R.
Treasurer, Trustee

Beth K.
Chairperson

financially. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., received tax-exempt financing and thus a lower rate of interest due to its not-for-profit status. A savings of at least \$550,000 a year has been realized by owning property in Virginia versus leasing it in New York*. The gap between the costs of ownership and the costs of leasing is expected to widen as costs of ownership decrease and costs of leasing increase.

2. Are we complying with the spirit and letter of the resolution?

The Board of Trustees concerns itself with ownership of real property only to the extent that it insures that it is financially feasible and that the spirit and intent of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service are maintained. The Board reports that, with the management of the property being the business of the ECRPM, property management is kept separate from the primary spiritual aim of Al-Anon Family Groups. The Executive Director is able to focus entirely on assisting the groups in the primary spiritual aim of Al-Anon, helping families and friends of alcoholics. The need for WSO staff members to be concerned with the frequent search for office space and to deal with the day-in and day-out maintenance of commercial property has been eliminated.



"Lobby of the World Service Office"

3. Has there been any negative impact on the fellowship as a whole?

After reviewing the last nine years of real property ownership, the Board has no negative impact to report. A small minority of groups attempted to tie the Alateen requirements established by the Board to the ownership of real property. The only assets the Board was protecting were our younger members and the Al-Anon name. The ECRPM is a committee separate from all other committees. It is separate from the work and business of the WSO, and in turn, the primary spiritual aim of the fellowship. This separation is what allows ownership of real property to function as well as it does.

During discussion of this report, a concern was expressed regarding the negative impact on Al-Anon's financial stability if legal action were taken against it. Conference members were assured that the building was adequately insured against any type of loss.

A Delegate raised the issue of groups withholding contributions to the WSO because of the real property ownership issue. She asked if there had been any recent comparisons done of rent versus ownership in the Virginia Beach area. She was told that there had not been any recent comparisons.

In 1994, there were discussions regarding leasing versus purchasing, and it was proven that it was more financially prudent to buy than to lease. Even if the building was sold, Motion #12 of the 1994 WSC stated that any money received from such sale could be used only for future occupancy costs. It was requested that a comparison showing the cost of leasing versus owning in the Virginia Beach area be provided. That request was referred to the ECRPM for further consideration.

A question was asked about the criteria used in determining whether owning real property was having a negative impact on the fellowship as a whole. In reply, it was stated that the Committee looks at the whole picture of Al-Anon, financial as well as spiritual, in making its determination, and there were no factors pointing to a negative impact.

*Please see budget line item "Building Occupancy" in Schedule 1 of the Budget Report for the actual yearly costs of ownership.



SELECTED COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Committee	Panel 44 (2004-2006)	Panel 45 (2005-2007)	Panel 46 (2006-2008)
Admissions/ Handbook	Mickie Z., MP Ruth H., WA John McL., VT Carol C., CO	Connie H., IA Joyce B., UT Susan R., AR	Joyce R., TN Mary M., CA (S) Georgia C., FL (S) Libby D., IL (N)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Ann F-S., MA Janie J., AL JoAnne H., MN (N)	Gayle McN., NM Sheila K., NF/LB Sharon C., ON (N)	Sandi C., CA (N) Sue E., TX (W) Mary R., PA Barbara W., OH Laurel L., KS
Group Services	Paula B., NC/BM Nancy C., WV Elaine L., QC (E) Debbie P., OK	Marlene R., AK Tricia B., WY Susan L., SC Reen R., ME	Bruce F., KY Mike B., MI Pam L., DE Lisa P., FL (N)
Literature I	Kal T., BC/YT Debbie F., GA Marilyn M., AB/NT	Ellie L., CT Carmin T-M., PR Dorothy B., NE Cecilia S., ID	Pat S., MN (S) Rick P., MB Bennie P., TX (E) Bob C., NY (N)
Literature II	Cindy M., AZ Kathy B., NJ Jim S., WI Susan G., OR	Tina B., NV Cherri N., SD Donna E-H., MO Lois K., SK	Joan P., ON (S) Karen L., MD/DC Barbara M., RI
Public Outreach	Fran A., MS Phyliss S-T., VA Jeanne H., MT Shirley J., ND	Betsy C., IL (S) Lida K., NH Joan L., NY (S) Clara E., LA	Yvette D., PQ (W) Cecily C., HI Faye S., IN

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATION

Archives Advisory Committee

The primary purpose of the Archives Department of the World Service Office (WSO) is to preserve records through systematic record retention, to provide research services to the WSO staff members, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, the Delegates, and Area Coordinators, and to display pertinent items reflecting Al-Anon's history.

In 2003, the Board of Trustees approved a three-year trial suspension of the Archives Advisory Committee. Since that date, the members of the WSO staff have provided updates to the Board Chairperson and the Executive Committee regarding the work carried out in the

Liz W.
*Chairperson,
Trustee*
Joe T.
*WSO Archives
Coordinator*



*WSO Archives
Display*

Archives. Staff members continue to preserve the minutes and other historical records on the Laser Fiche imaging system, improving the ability to search files electronically. This capability has been extremely helpful for the Board this year as it researched the original intent of the World Service Conference (WSC), the original formulation of the Regional Trustee Plan, and various documents regarding the Alateen Traditions in preparation for WSC discussion. With the implementation of the knowledge-based decision-making process, there is a need to rely on documents from the past so mistakes are not repeated and better care can be taken to plan for the future.

Cataloging the collection is ongoing. Several inventories were completed this year, which will assist members desiring to provide the WSO with older editions of our books, booklets, and pamphlets. The audio reels from the 1961 through 1971 WSCs have been converted to CD. Two original photos of the 24th Street Clubhouse were provided after a visit to the A.A. General Service Office Archives in New York City this year. Prints have been made for display and the digital photo will be integrated into the WSO PowerPoint presentation given at Regional Service Seminars. Work continues on documenting the overseas trips of our early pioneers as well as recent trips. Mailings to Archive Coordinators contain copies of decisions from our past, about which questions continue to arise at Area Assemblies. It was hoped that, by providing the history, previous decisions would be better understood and members would realize the benefits of maintaining Area archives for support.

As the trial suspension is now at the three-year mark, and no gaps have been identified that could occur from the Committee's absence, the Board of Trustees voted to end the trial and dissolve the Archives Advisory Committee. Direct volunteer oversight will continue to be performed by the Executive Committee.

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee

This past year, the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee set specific goals in keeping with the Board's Strategic Plan. Those goals included communicating the results of the Readership Survey and increasing the number of published sharings written by members outside of the World Service Conference (WSC) structure. Committee members also set the goal to ask the fellowship for more specific, in-depth stories.

The January *Forum* included *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, which the World Service Office mailed to the current mailing address of all English-speaking groups in the US and Canada. Beginning with the

Bidge B.
Chairperson,
Trustee

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

Suzanne M.
Fellowship
Communication
Coordinator



New... "Time for a Laugh" humor department

May issue and continuing each month, a complimentary subscription to *The Forum* will be mailed to all registered English-speaking groups in the Conference structure. *The Forum* will incorporate *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* newsletter material into each issue of the magazine to keep Al-Anon/Alateen groups informed. Special reports on Al-Anon's annual World Service Conference will appear during July and August in *The Forum*. A new humor department, "Time for a Laugh," debuts in May.

Literature Committee I

The primary work of Literature Committee I in the past year has focused on the development of a piece of literature on relationships in recovery and the in-depth exploration of the notion of electronic literature.

The project to develop OUR RECOVERY IN RELATIONSHIPS (working title) included manuscript reviews and multiple brainstorming sessions leading to the development of a new project

Mary G.
Chairperson,
Trustee

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



Read Al-Anon on the Web,
www.al-anon.alateen.org/members

outline designed to provide guidance to the author. Attempts to deal with the challenges inherent in constructing a book on a subject so broad have been unsuccessful so far. The Committee reaffirmed its opinion that such a piece of literature is wanted and needed by the fellowship, and it will continue to consider ways to approach the subject using the many excellent sharings submitted by the fellowship.

The second topic discussed in depth has been the consideration of electronic-literature (referred to by the members as e-CAL). Brainstorming sessions, research, a survey done by the Committee, and the Committee's first-ever telephone conference call covered a broad range of thought-provoking questions and exciting ideas. Discussions culminated in the enthusiastic consensus to ask the World Service Conference to consider an e-CAL trial period. (See the discussion on page 27).

In other actions, Committee defined the need to make housekeeping changes in the pamphlet inventory. It had a preliminary discussion on new ways of formatting pamphlets that would make them more attractive and interesting in an attempt to reach wider audiences who would find a varied approach more engaging.

The Committee also clarified and revised specific wording in the Literature Review Procedures to provide more accurate guidance to the Committee members in completing their assignments.

At the request of a member, the Committee reviewed the pamphlet *Sponsorship, What It's All About* (P-31) and recommended minor revisions. The Committee also voted to recommend retaining *Al-Anon Is for Men* (P-1) as a piece of recovery literature.

During the past year, the Committee also considered several requests from Al-Anon members to reprint or develop new pieces of literature. There were no motions from the Committee in support of these requests.

Literature Committee II

This past year, the Committee's minor revision recommendations for the book . . . *In All Our Affairs* (B-15) and the pamphlet *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17) were completed, approved, and included in the latest printings. In addition to discussion of literature designed specifically for electronic publication, or "e-CAL," the Committee's major project has been *FACING GRIEF & LOSS WITH AL-ANON* (working title), which follows a motion from the 2003 World Service Conference. The Committee reviewed a revised outline and 100 pages of the first draft of the manuscript. The draft contains narrative text that the professional writer/editor, who is also an Al-Anon member, has derived from the shared written experience of over 600 members. It also contains specific quotes and personal stories from these members. The Committee also considered several requests from Al-Anon members for the development of new literature or changes to existing pieces. The Committee declined to recommend any of these as motions to the Conference at this time. However, they did recommend a change in the subtitle of *3 Views of Al-Anon* (P-15) to the Policy Committee.

At their meeting of Delegate and at-Large members during the Conference, the Committee reviewed the process for developing Conference Approved Literature, Committee roles and responsibilities, and the literature review procedures. They further discussed the Conference presentation on e-CAL, continued reviewing draft materials for the grief and loss piece, and revisited a request for new literature that had been previously tabled.

At the second meeting, held after a motion for developing e-CAL was carried (see WSC Motion #5, page 65), Delegates shared their ideas on what it could look like and also did strategic planning on goals for the Committee. (See also E-CAL Discussion on page 27.)

Mary Ann R.
Chairperson,
Trustee

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



“Over 600 Sharings Received on Grief & Loss So Far.”

GROUP SERVICES

Group Services Committee

Worldwide Al-Anon and Alateen Group Count

By the end of 2005, 919 Alateen groups had re-registered, Areas identified 425 as “inactive” (some of these had not been meeting for up to three years), and 110 Alateen groups remained in disbanded status. These groups are being contacted by members in the Areas to assist with compliance to the Area’s Safety and Behavior guidelines and explain what their noncompliance means to them and the fellowship as a whole.

Alateen is asking for more experience, strength, and hope from Al-Anon members. Alateens would like to see all Al-Anon groups help celebrate Alateen’s 50th birthday in 2007. “Alateen Web Talk,” an on-line bulletin board meeting for members and newcomers ages 13 to 18, has been set up on a trial basis by the World Service Office (WSO). Safety concerns are extremely important and face-to-face meetings will continue to be recommended.

The final issue of the *The Lone Member Letter Box* will be mailed in the fall. Lone Member sharings have decreased to the point where there are not enough sharings to produce the publication.

Frank R.
Chairperson,
Trustee

Dolores T.
Associate Director
of Group Services

Doris W.
Chairperson
Alateen Advisory
Committee,
Trustee

Barbara O.
Associate Director
of Member
Services/Alateen



2007:
Alateen's
50th
birthday

However, the WSO will continue serving Lone Members by mailing *The Forum* free for the first year after they register. Quarterly mailings from the WSO and correspondence with their Lone Member Contacts will keep the Lone Members connected to Al-Anon worldwide.

The Committee brainstormed ideas on how Group Services can support the Board’s Vision and Mission Statements. This topic will be an ongoing conversation for goals and a timeline.

The Committee discussed: “How can the Group Services Committee use existing resources to educate members about Alateen?” The following pamphlets were suggested for use when chairing Al-Anon meetings: *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4), *How Can I Help My Children?* (P-9), *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (P-21), and *Moving On* (P-59). The discussion produced the following ideas: Combine Al-Anon and Alateen meetings once a month; Bring the Alateen message of hope to the neighborhood schools as a public outreach project; Announce the location of the nearest Alateen meeting at each Al-Anon meeting and explain how Alateen is part of Al-Anon.

The WSO received a large number of responses to the article in the January 2006 issue of *The Forum* titled, “I Felt Abandoned,” which described sponsorship in a group as controlling and “cult-like.” The draft of a bookmark to address what sponsorship is and is not was put on hold, since the Executive Committee asked that it be discussed further. The Group Services Committee is creating a task force of members outside the WSO to provide feedback about the value of this piece. In addition to sharings in the May issue of *The Forum*, additional responses on the topic were posted on the Members’ Web site.

The WSO “Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form” will be revised in order to eliminate multiple designations of special focus groups. This change will increase the accuracy of the WSO Group Records. These changes may result in asking members to include a focus in their group name, such as “Step Study.” All Group Records Coordinators and affected groups will be notified.

The following chart indicates the worldwide Al-Anon/Alateen group count as of December 31, 2005:

	US	Canada *	Outside WSC Structure	Total
Al-Anon	12,564	1,469	9,939	23,972
Alateen**	869	50	851	1,770
Total	13,433	1,519	10,790	25,742

*Corrected count (under reported by 500 groups in 2004 Conference Summary).

** On December 31, 2004, all “active” and “suspended” status Alateen groups in US and Canada were temporarily placed in disbanded status until they re-registered through their Area Alateen process.

Admissions/Handbook Committee

The Admissions/Handbook Committee is a subcommittee of the Conference Committee. It has two specific responsibilities relative to the World Service Conference (WSC). It reviews and makes decisions on all requests for seating non-voting participants at the Conference and makes recommendations for changes to the “World Service Handbook” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) to accurately reflect the links of service.

When the proposed “World Service Handbook” text revisions were sent to Conference members for review prior to the 2005 Conference, the Committee received a number of suggestions for wording preferences, along with questions and comments. During the 2005 WSC revisions process, it was agreed that rather than delay printing of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, suggestions would be considered by the Committee before the subsequent printing. The Committee spent the majority of its meeting time this past year reviewing these suggestions and wording preferences. Three motions, based on the 2005 suggestions, were presented to this year’s Conference. These motions updated the World Service Handbook to more accurately reflect today’s fellowship and what the World Service Office does. The three motions passed. (See Motions #10 - #12). Further review is ongoing.

The Committee discussed ideas that would support the goal Everyone/Everywhere in the Board’s Strategic Plan. Among the Committee’s goals was to have 100 percent Committee participation/responses to homework assignments and the WSO surveys within one year, to immediately begin modeling application of the Handbook.

During the meeting of the full Committee at this Conference, the members assessed their roles on the Committee, and the value of the Committee to the Conference and to the fellowship. The Committee also continued its discussion on the current policy that allows a populous Area to divide only once. The pros,

Marge S.
*Chairperson,
Executive
Committee*

Liz W.
*Co-Chairperson,
Trustee*

Cynthia H.
*Associate
Director—
Conference*



“Use the binocular icon to do a word search of the on-line Service Manual.”

cons, and implications of changing that policy were discussed. The Committee discussed whether requiring an Area to have 400 groups in order to divide is still reasonable today. Archival research of past Conference discussions will be done and the discussion will continue.

International Coordination Committee

At the AA International Convention in Toronto, an invitation-only reception was held for international members and their guests. Approximately 100 people attended. An informal program about service and a handout giving general statistical information about the thirty-two Al-Anon General Service Offices currently within our structure was shared with the attendees.

Planning for the 2006 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) began. The meeting will take place October 4th through 7th at the Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The theme is “Al-Anon Worldwide: Creating a Universal Culture of Trust.”

Information brought back from travels to Romania and requests from members in Iran identified the need for Al-Anon literature in those countries. The Com-

Doreen D.
*Chairperson,
Trustee*

Marsha W.
*Associate Director
of Membership
Outreach—
International*



IAGSM 2006
Virginia Beach

mittee is aware that members in neither country can financially support the costs for translating and printing literature at this time. Additionally, neither country has the financial resources to register the copyright. After doing the research and having the discussions, the Committee made the following two recommendations to the Board of Trustees:

1. That three pamphlets, *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32), as well as “Al-Anon/Alateen Groups at Work” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), be translated in Farsi and Romanian and given to evolving structures in Iran and Romania.
2. That three pamphlets, *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32), as well as the “Al-Anon/Alateen Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual*, be translated at the World Service Office’s (WSO’s) expense into languages recommended by the International Coordination Committee for evolving structures and that this be done on an ongoing basis.

Both recommendations were approved.

The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International was invited by members working in service to attend and participate in their second service meeting and second Al-Anon Convention in Camaguey, Cuba, March 14 -18, 2006. She was accompanied by the WSO Spanish Translator. As a result of this visit, we found out that the materials sent by the WSO were being used by the members to help with their understating of how a service structure can work in Cuba. The Associate Director conducted a workshop at the convention on “Responsibility.” There were approximately 80 members in attendance.

International Conventions Updates

2008 International Convention with Alcoholics Anonymous Participation

“Pittsburgh will be great in 2008!” was the greeting given by the Delegate from Pennsylvania during this year’s Conference. She was proud and excited that her Area was chosen to host Al-Anon’s Fourth International Convention from July 4th through 6th, 2008. The theme for the Convention is “Connecting People Around the World—Al-Anon Family Groups.” The World Service Office (WSO) has contracted with several of the local hotels, which have blocked out rooms for this event. Members are urged to make their reservations on the official registration form, which will be mailed out in the fall of 2007, so that

Ric B.
Chairperson

Marsha W.
Coordinator, 2008; Co-Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

Dolores T.
Co-Coordinator, 2008; Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

Cynthia H.
Co-Coordinator, 2010 and 2013



“Pittsburgh will be great in 2008!”

Al-Anon Family Groups will receive credit toward the room block. This will make Al-Anon more credible for future convention sites.

2010 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous with Al-Anon Participation

The WSO accepted A.A.’s invitation to participate at the International Convention in San Antonio, Texas July 2nd - 4th, 2010. This will be a worldwide gathering of Al-Anon members celebrating recovery with Alcoholics Anonymous. There will be



“San Antonio in 2010” daytime Al-Anon meetings and workshops on Friday and Saturday. The evenings will be shared with our friends in A.A. at the big meetings.

Al-Anon’s Fifth International Convention—Join the Dream in 2013

Conference members were asked to “join the dream” in 2013 as the World Service Office (WSO) began preparations for Al-Anon Family Groups’ Fifth International Convention. Prior to the 2006 World Service Conference, each Conference member received a letter from the Executive Director and a draft copy of the bid form. The WSO is asking for bids from host cities in the United States and Canada for July 5-7, 2013. The deadline for bid forms is December 31, 2006.

A Convention Site Selection Committee will be selected from among the 2007 Area Delegates who do not submit a bid from their Area, Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Administrative staff members. After the 2007 World Service Conference ends, Area Delegates with bids will be asked to present their bid to the Convention Site Selection Committee. Delegates were encouraged to ask the Convention and Visitors Bureau to send a representative at the Bureau’s expense to this meeting to answer questions. Costs for audio/visual equipment rental related to the presentation are the Area’s responsibility. After the presentations, the Convention Site Selection Committee will decide on its top three choices. WSO staff will notify those cities not chosen.



“2013”

Regional Service Seminars (RSS)

The RSS Committee has been experimenting with reducing the number of face-to-face meetings per year. It divided itself into four small ad hoc committees and each worked on one of the following questions utilizing conference calls, e-mail, and small group meetings:

- What is the value of RSSs?
- Does the WSO want to encourage fundraising for RSSs?
- What do Conference members need to know about RSSs?
- How could the pamphlet RSS-1 be revised?

In addition to the work of the ad hoc committees, four RSSs were held. Attendees' evaluations were also considered in the work of the ad hoc committees.

There has been a slight drop in attendance at RSSs, so the Committee decided to broaden the scope of the conversation to include the Delegates during the RSS breakout sessions at the WSC. Any decisions of the RSS Committee will be reported to the 2007 World Service Conference.

Claudette D.
*Chairperson,
Trustee*

Mary Ann K.
*Director of
Member Services*

Want hope?

Take a Bite Out of Service

White Plains, New York

Service is



Deep in the Heart

Irving, Texas

CWRSS MOOSE JAW 2006



STRENGTH THROUGH SERVICE

Moose Jaw,
Saskatchewan

2007 World Service Conference Site

The 2007 World Service Conference (WSC) will again be held in the Virginia Beach area. In searching for a site, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room and meals costs, religious holidays, and the need for time to prepare financial reports were factored into the selection of dates and location.

The dates selected for the 2007 WSC are April 22nd through 26th, 2007. It will convene at the Ramada Plaza Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach. Conference members will again have the opportunity to visit the World Service Office during this annual meeting.

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



"Location of the 2007 Conference"

POLICIES

Policy Committee

Conference members were reminded that quarterly Policy Committee updates are on the Members' Web site under the title, "Inside the WSO, from the Board of Trustees."

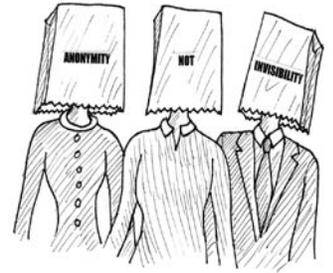
The Committee has discussed the issue of on-line meetings for several years. Because on-line meetings have no geographic boundaries, they do not have a Group Representative. At this Conference, members voted for text to be added to the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Service Manual*, under the title "Electronic Meetings," that sums up all the Committee discussions. These meetings are connected to the fellowship directly through the World Service Office (WSO). In their deliberations, the Committee suggested using the term "electronic meetings" as a way of including current and future electronic telecommunication meetings. Current telephone meetings requesting registration use Al-Anon books to set the meeting topics. The costs for participation come through their cell phone minutes or their personal phone bill.

When the floor was opened for discussion there were concerns about how to protect Alateens; controlling the age of participants; how to keep these electronic meetings informed (where do they get their mail?); and how participants pay the costs to participate in the telephone meetings. Currently, the WSO does not permit Alateen meetings on-line. However, an on-line bulletin board project is in the planning stage where sharings from Alateens would come through a password protected site. Then they will be reviewed by an "Al-Anon member involved in Alateen service" who has been through the Area certification process. This Alateen on-line bulletin board meeting will be available for 13 to 18 year-olds. All those attending the WSO Alateen bulletin board meeting are to agree to the safety and behavior guidelines to protect each other as well as the adult Al-Anon members involved in Alateen service who participate. (See WSC Motion # 6 page 65).

Colleen R.
*Policy
Chairperson,
Trustee*

Mary Ann K.
*Director of
Member Services,
Policy Secretary*

"Anonymity at the public level (press, radio, films, TV, and Internet)"



Each year an Open Policy Committee meeting is held for Conference members to attend. Observing the Policy Committee, made up of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Administrative staff, gives the Delegates an opportunity to see how the Committee discusses and deliberates policy issues. The first item on the agenda, "Anonymity and the Media," began at last year's Open Policy Meeting, which discussed the current World Service Conference (WSC) policy, which does not allow WSO staff members to appear in the media with full face, full name, and organizational position title. No decision was made to change the policy, but the conversation continued. At the July 2005 Committee meeting, the following decision was made: "By consensus, the Policy Committee agreed not to bring the issue of reconsideration of the media policy for staff to the World Service Conference." However, the Committee did ask the Public Outreach Department to formulate a broader question about anonymity. "How can Al-Anon Family Groups' policies on anonymity be made clearer to the fellowship and what can the WSO (Board, Executive Committee, and staff) do to increase and enhance our media opportunities without violating Tradition Eleven?" Extensive background was provided to all Conference members.

Education about the true meaning of the spiritual principle of anonymity in the Areas as well as adding some language to the Policy Digest were offered as ways to clear up members' hesitation to do public outreach. Al-Anon's policy on anonymity is located in several different places in the *Service Manual*. Al-Anon members are anonymous only at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. The fellowship seems to be clear about this part of anonymity, but members' confusion is about personal anonymity and when it is appropriate to reveal their membership in Al-Anon. The fellowship itself is not anonymous, but for many years the words "Al-Anon is anonymous fellowship," were in our Suggested Welcome. The Policy Committee revised the Suggested Welcome in the *2004-2006 Service Manual* to read: "Anonymity is an important principle of the Al-Anon/Alateen program." The previous wording may have led some to think Al-Anon is a secret society.

There are many myths surrounding outreach to the media. Often, even Al-Anon members who work in media fields do not understand that they can help attain Al-Anon coverage without revealing their personal membership. Newspapers are becoming more strict about anonymous sources. One suggestion was to get



Meetings without borders

some professionals to help us.

A Committee member elaborated on past Board discussions around inviting nonmembers to serve on an advisory committee or perhaps even seating them on the Board. As nonmembers, they could make public appearances on behalf of Al-Anon. A.A. has had nonmembers on their Board since its early years. It was suggested that it may be time for Al-Anon to look at this possibility again. Some professionals have expressed a willingness to support Al-Anon without personal recognition. A member said, "It is something different and it does not violate the Traditions. Al-Anon is not seeking public recognition for personal reasons. If we don't get our message out, we are helping to keep people in pain."

One member said that having professionals with credentials speak for Al-Anon enhances our media opportunities without violating our Traditions. One member witnessed the value of a nonalcoholic Trustee speaking for AA while on a trip overseas with members from the A.A. General Service Office. The nonalcoholic Trustee spoke about A.A. to the media, but there was no nonmember to talk about Al-Anon. The conversation will continue.

The second topic also began at the 2005 WSC with the question: "What would make the Policy Digest more effective?" One suggestion was to include a statement on whether or not it was permissible to use last names on the Internet.

In researching what is being done today on the Internet staff members found that there is no consistency in Area Web sites about the use of last names. Some Web Masters

have chosen to list members' last names. It was discovered that search engines can connect individuals' last names to Al-Anon if they are listed on a site.

On page 48 of the "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" section of the *Service Manual* it states under *Anonymity*, "By Tradition, the principle of personal anonymity at the public level is a safeguard for the Al-Anon fellowship. This means that, at the level of press, radio, TV, and the Internet, all Al-Anon and Alateen members are anonymous." Members want to be faithful to the principle of anonymity at the public level, so increasing awareness of the meaning of "public level" may be needed. Also, it may be time to amend the anonymity statement on page 74 of the *Service Manual* to include the Internet.

Suggestions from other Committee members included putting the service position or job title on the Web site instead of the person's name. That would serve two purposes: do away with the need to update it whenever there was a change and provide more security for the individual. A concern was voiced that using full names might reduce the number of people willing to be of service if they knew their name would be listed on the Internet. The WSO does not put last names on the Public Outreach site. Since the Members' site is password protected, the WSO does use last names. The conversation will continue at the next Policy Committee Meeting.

It was suggested that members use the full name Al-Anon Family Groups, whenever appropriate, to help the public differentiate Al-Anon from A.A. and gain a better understanding of what we do.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public Outreach Committee

Over the past year, the Committee has approved the 2006-2007 public service announcement (PSA), titled "What It's Like." Our goal is to continue to reach out to the friends and family members who have not yet found Al-Anon, as well as to educate the general public that Al-Anon is available to those in need.

Since the 2004 World Service Conference voted to reclassify the pamphlets *Al-Anon Is for Men* (P-1), *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-45), and *Al-Anon Is for Gays and Lesbians* (P-85) from CAL to outreach service tools, the Public Outreach Committee, staff, and three ad hoc committees have been working on revisions to these targeted outreach leaflets. After review, all agreed that two of the three are not suitable for an outreach service tool, and the Conference will be asked to reconsider the 2004 motion. Background information was distributed to the WSC. (See WSC Motions #7 - 9, page 66 and discussion, page 28).

The two newest outreach tools, the "Crying House" bookmark (M-76) and the Professional Referral Pad (M-77) have proved very popular. We have distributed over 700,000 bookmarks, and have gone to reprint on the referral pads. The new annual outreach magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007*, will be available in English, French, and Spanish. The deadline is July 14th for bulk orders. Members in at least 43 Areas have embraced "Prescription Al-Anon." Reportbacks on the projects are due at the WSO by September 30th. Those submitting reports will be entered in a drawing for additional outreach literature and a visit from a WSO Trustee. Currently 60 of the 67 Areas have Area Web sites.

The Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee provides input to the Public Outreach Committee on Canadian outreach activities and ensures that Canadian needs are addressed. English and French orders of the "Crying House Bookmark" and Professional Referral Pad show Canadian members are finding these service tools useful. Electronic

Juanita P./Lynda E./Jo-Anne L.
*Chairpersons,
Trustees*

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

Jo-Anne L.
*Canadian
Public Outreach
Subcommittee,
Chairperson,
Trustee*

Cecelia L.
*Outreach to
Professionals
Advisory
Committee,
Chairperson,
Executive
Committee*

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



Over
700,000
bookmarks
distributed

tracking of PSAs in Canada shows that airplays there exceed 11 percent of the total number of airplays for the US and Canada.

The Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee focused on developing ideas to increase awareness of Al-Anon by encouraging professionals to write articles for the WSO or organizational publications, and identifying who could make presentations at conferences for professionals. The expertise of members who are professionals or know of professionals is a resource that needs to be explored. Seeking new ways to communicate information about Al-Anon, particularly through the use of technology, has the potential of broadening awareness of our program and its benefits to clients/patients. The WSO Public Outreach Department's model of communicating and maintaining relationships with state/provincial and local professional organizations is another means of increasing the availability of Al-Anon as a resource to professionals.

The Committee also heard from the new Director of Communication Services, regarding ongoing staff discussions on how better to market Al-Anon Family Groups.

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

2006 Regional Trustee Nominating Process

In her opening remarks regarding the Regional Trustee Nominating Process, the Board Chairperson outlined some of the duties and responsibilities of those elected to the Board of Trustees. She stated that, among other things, the Trustees provide general oversight of the business operations of the World Service Office (WSO), in accordance with the By-Laws of both corporations. They are also charged with guarding the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship against those who may try to profit from Al-Anon's ever-growing public acceptance and with protecting Al-Anon's principles from distortion and dilution. In general, the Board acts as the chief service arm of the World Service Conference (WSC) and the guardian of Al-Anon's Twelve

Judy P.
*Chairperson,
Board of Trustees*

Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Conference Charter. It was clarified that, even though a Trustee resides within a particular Region, he or she does not represent that Region. While he or she comes from various geographic sections of the WSC structure, Trustees serve Al-Anon as a whole.

General oversight of the business operations includes:

- Establishing and maintaining policies of the WSO
- Controlling its property and finances
- Making long range plans
- Authorizing expenditures
- Appointing the Executive Committee and other committees
- Appointing an Executive Director and Director of Business Services for the WSO
- Approving the final agenda for the WSC

(Please refer to pages 114-115 in the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P-24/27] for more information on the Board of Trustees.)

The Regional Trustee Nominating Process for the five regions in the WSC structure actually started at the 2005 WSC. The term of the Trustee for three of those Regions was due to expire in 2006 and two positions had been left vacant. The Delegates in those five Regions were given résumé forms and Areas were asked to provide a candidate and an alternate who are qualified to serve as Trustee. Those résumés had to be turned in to the WSO by January 1, 2006.

At the 2006 WSC, the Conference members voted to consider, on a trial basis, a revision to the current process of electing Regional Trustees. (Please refer to the Regional Trustee Plan Revisions Discussion on page 27 for details.) This trial will start with the 2007 WSC and complete its first selection process at the 2008 WSC.

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

As a new Delegate, I received a list of selected committees that I could choose to serve on during my three-year term as Delegate. Upon reviewing the list, there was one for which I was not aware of its purpose—the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT). I asked past Delegates from my Area to share their committee experience. After that discussion and talking with my Sponsor, I realized that no past Delegate from my Area had served on the CCT and that doing so could be a good experience for me. I was right. I have learned that this Committee is a subcommittee of the Nominating Committee. Currently, there are eleven voting members. These Delegates have a responsibility to review and score

Janie J.
*Alabama, Panel
44, Chairperson*

Ric B.
Executive Director

Judy D.
*Nominating
Committee
Chairperson,
Trustee*

résumés of candidates submitted for Trustee at Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). Each CCT member's ranking is sent to the Delegate Chairperson who forwards all rankings and comments anonymously to the World Service Office and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees Nominating Committee.

Résumé forms for the TAL and ECRPM were revised and were distributed to all Delegates in time for submission by the August 15th deadline. The discussion of "leadership development modules" continued from last year. Presently no Trustees or Delegates have any specific or consistent training before taking their positions. One common thread through the discussion was that sponsoring is a key to training.

Affirmation of the Chairperson-Elect as Chairperson and election of a new Chairperson-Elect took place during the CCT Committee meeting.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee met with the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) during the Conference (WSC). The Chairperson explained the ranking process of candidates for Trustee at Large and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). A PowerPoint presentation explaining the role and interaction of the two Committees was shown. This presentation was also shown to the Regional Trustee Nominating process. A shortened version of the presentation will be developed so that Delegates can use it for explaining the job requirements of Trustees and

Judy D.
*Chairperson,
Trustee*

Ric B.
Executive Director



Work at the WSC 2006

ECRPM members as a part of their efforts to find suitable candidates.

At the beginning of the affirmation process, the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee began with a brief explanation of how the Board came into being and the purpose of the affirmation session.

“The cofounders, Lois W. and Anne B. wrote to the existing groups in 1951. They asked whether they wanted to form a clearing house to connect the groups. They also asked whether the groups wanted to adapt the Twelve Steps and later the Twelve Traditions for their personal recovery. They considered the name A.A. Family Groups, but after consulting with A.A. found that A.A. was willing to share everything but their name. It was at this time that Lois came up with the “Al-Anon Family Groups” name by taking the first parts of “Alcoholics” and “Anonymous” and making a new word. So they kept the connection with A.A. through our name even though it remained separate.

“By 1954, Lois recognized that the Clearing House needed to have a legal basis to operate. While the groups as such ought never be organized, she understood that the Clearing House needed to provide structure or it would be of no value to the groups. It was in 1954 that she, along with Henrietta S. and another member, incorporated Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. A Board of Directors was created to oversee this new corporation, whose goal it was to serve and connect the individuals and groups that were growing throughout the world. A Nominating Committee as provided in the original By-Laws nominated the original Directors. Often these first Directors were friends of Lois or Anne who attended meetings in the New York Metropolitan area. As the organization grew, it applied for not-for-profit status in 1956 and amended its By-Laws in 1964 to create Trustees instead of Directors. In 1961, the first trial Conference was formed and Lois and the Trustees tried to find a way to link the groups through the Conference with the Board and the organization. Ultimately, as the Concepts of Service developed, the process of the Conference affirming the nominees to fill the vacancies arose. In the backup material provided to Conference members, it was explained that in the mid-60’s, a plan to add regional participation on the Board was developed and the first Regional Trustee selection process began. In 1986, the Conference Committee on Trustees was created to provide input from Conference members to the Nominating Committee as it nominated the at-Large Trustees. The tradition of affirmation gives the concurrence of the whole Conference to the various nominees and Board officers. At the annual meeting, the Board elects those nominees that received traditional affirmation. This process allows the voice of the fellowship to be heard through the Conference as the Board elects these Trustees to serve the organization and Al-Anon as a whole.”

The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2006 WSC:

Trustee at Large:

Bidge B., 2nd three-year term
 Judy A., 1st three-year term
 Mirta S., 1st three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Claudette D., Canada East, 2nd three-year term
 Jo-Anne L., Canada Central, 2nd three-year term
 Lorraine F., Canada West, 1st three-year term
 Lyn D., US Southeast, 3rd year of 1st three-year term
 Hazel (Winnie) S., US Southwest, 2nd year of 2nd three-year term

Board Officers:

Judy P., Chairperson
 Mary G., Vice-Chairperson
 Zelda R., Treasurer

Executive Committee for Real Property Management:

Annette T., three-year term
 Carole M., 2nd year of a three-year term

The Board announced Annette T., Chairperson, ECRPM

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2006-2007:

Cecelia L., 3rd one-year term, Chairperson
 Marge S., 2nd one-year term
 Julie F., 1st one-year term

2007 Regional Trustee (RT) Candidate Selection Process

“Regional Trustee candidates submit qualifying résumés to, and are nominated by, their respective Areas. At the World Service Conference (WSC), the nominee is selected by members of the WSC Nominating Committee, which is composed of Delegates from the region, Delegates chosen by lot from outside the region, and members of the Board of Trustees, who are chosen by lot.” (2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, p.114). This process assures that the Board is geographically diverse.

At the 2007 WSC, RT nominees will be selected from the US Northeast, US Southeast, and US North Central Regions. Nominating packets were distributed to the Delegates from these three regions at the end of the 2006 WSC RT Nominating Process.

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

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.
- They encourage Delegates in their Regions to nominate qualified candidates from their Areas.

Immediately following the selection of a candidate by the Area, the Delegate is asked to send the nominating information (or notification that there is no candidate) to the WSO, postmarked no later than January 1, 2007. Failure to meet this deadline constitutes forfeiture.

In June, following this year’s WSC, each Area Chairperson in the nominating Areas will receive a packet identical to the one distributed to the Delegates. This is to alert them to the procedure for nominating RT candidates by the Area and 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 2007, when all résumés have been received, the profiles will be mailed to WSC members for review prior to the 2007 WSC.

The following WSC first- and second-year Delegates were selected by lot from outside the Regions to participate in the RT elections for US Northeast, US Southeast, and US North Central:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Voting</u>	<u>Alternate</u>
US Northeast	Mary M., Panel 46, CA (S) Lois K., Panel 45, SK Bruce F., Panel 46, KY	Joan P., Panel 46, ON (S) Bennie P., Panel 46, TX (E)
US Southeast	Lida K., Panel 45, NH Laurel L., Panel 46, KS Sandi C., Panel 46, CA (N)	Dorothy B., Panel 45, NE Joan L., Panel 45, NY (S)
US North Central	Reen R., Panel 45, ME Donna E-H., Panel 45, MO Yvette D., Panel 46, QC (W)	Barbara M., Panel 46, RI Georgia C., Panel 46, FL (S)

At the January 2007 meeting of the Board, three members of the Board and an Alternate will be selected to vote in each Region.

ALATEEN TRADITIONS DISCUSSION

The Board of Trustees has, over the last few years, considered several policy items that directly affect Al-Anon as a whole. The Alateen Traditions is one of those items. In researching the history of Alateen, as part of Al-Anon, it was discovered that the World Service Conference (WSC) had never approved the Alateen Traditions.

Background information was sent to Conference members prior to the Conference. The Board Chairperson opened the floor for discussion. One member stated that the archives currently available at the World Service Office (WSO) started in 1978. There is no documentation available prior to that date, which makes it impossible to provide a flawless “paper trail” on this topic. She said, “Lois understood the need for Traditions, but there is an incomplete audit trail. We don’t know the why or when because of the lack of archival documents.” The WSO was able to create a reasonably accurate time line with the information available.

It was acknowledged that the Alateen Traditions were not presented to the Conference. If the WSC chooses to adopt them, it can use whatever wording it wishes. In 1994 and 1995, a committee wanted to change the word “teenage,” but it decided not to do so. The only documented polling was of the California Alateen groups around 1957.

One member shared that there is a strong adult children presence in her Area and they didn’t like the idea of separate Traditions for Alateen. “Family Groups” seem to fit Alateen just as well.

A question arose out of the discussion regarding whether the WSC has the authority to accept the Alateen Traditions without going to the groups. Conference members were urged to discuss this within the Areas in preparation for a continuation of the topic at future WSCs.

Judy P.
Chairperson,
Board of Trustees

CONCEPT REVISIONS DISCUSSION

The current policy at the World Service Office (WSO) is to provide Conference members in advance the same information on any topic being presented for discussion at the Conference. This allows all Conference members to all start at the same place when a topic is brought to the floor for discussion. This practice is part of the knowledge-based decision-making process and worked well this year as the members reviewed the suggested changes to the Introduction to the Concepts of Service and the descriptive text of Concepts One through Seven found in the “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

In her opening remarks, the Board Chairperson said that this update has been in process for several years. Two separate ad hoc committees, the Board of Trustees, the Policy Committee, and a copy editor had reviewed the final text before it was sent to the Conference members for their comments.

During the Conference, members reviewed the suggested changes and agreed with all but a few of them. They discussed removal of a reference to the A.A. Auxiliary and “Coffee and Cake” groups in the description of Concept One. Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship, and this phrase is not well-known outside of our structure. Even within it, the term has lost its meaning in most places. The historical value of it is not lost, since all original wording of the descriptive text of the Concepts of Service will be set out in the Amendment section of the Appendix. After some discussion, the consensus of the Conference was to accept the change.

Conference members also asked for clarifications in the descriptive text of Concept Four. To whom does the term “volunteer” refer, and are the terms “Board of Trustees,” “a Trustee,” and “the Board” interchangeable? Concept Four refers to members of the World Service Conference (WSC). Other than selected WSO staff members, all other voting members of the Conference are volunteers. When there is reference to the Board of Trustees or the Board, it refers to a group of persons who, together, have the corporate power of the organization. When speaking of a Trustee alone, as an individual, that per-

Judy P.
Chairperson,
Board of Trustees

son has no power to act on behalf of the entire Board.

Members also discussed the meaning of “appeal” and “petition” in the descriptive text of Concept Five, and how they are distinguished from one another.

A motion was made to approve the rewording of the Introduction and descriptive text of Concepts One through Seven. Motion carried. (See Motion #14, page 66)

E-CAL DISCUSSION

At the 2002 World Service Conference, the Board of Trustees allowed time on the Conference agenda for “Talking with the Delegates.” In those breakout sessions, one of the concerns expressed by the Delegates was “keeping up with technology without losing the essence of our face-to-face fellowship.”

Since that time, there has been ongoing, separate discussion at meetings of Literature Committees on the topic of the electronic creation and distribution of new Conference Approved Literature (referred to by the Committees as “e-CAL”). Both Committees have been attaining all the information they could on the possibilities of providing this service to the fellowship. Per their discussions, e-CAL was defined as *new* literature created specifically for electronic media. It would also be developed through a Delegate Committee on-line. It would not include putting the entire text of existing books on-line. It could attract potential members to AI-Anon and provide additional recovery material to existing members. The concept of e-CAL supports the Board’s Vision and Mission Statements and has the potential of attracting young people as well as those with special needs to our fellowship. After thorough discussions, the Committees believed it was time to share their information with Conference members.

Several members of the Literature Com-

Mary Ann R.
*Literature II
Chairperson,
Trustee*

Mary G.
*Literature I
Chairperson,
Trustee*

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

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

mittees shared that they were very excited about e-CAL’s potential. One member said, “For some people out there, this could be what they need.” Another member shared that her Area had been discussing the need for electronic literature for a long time and that some members were going to other sites for daily reflections.

The following are additional thoughts that were generated during the discussion:

- This is a golden opportunity to branch out and reach newcomers, especially young people.
- With the decline in AI-Anon membership, this might be a good solution for getting them back.
- We don’t want to play catch up, we want to be on the cutting edge.
- The Internet has the ability to reach members and potential members at all times. It’s just one more technology we can use. We are taking a risk, but without risk we don’t move forward. It can serve as outreach to people outside and inside AI-Anon.
- We will be reaching out to the next generation. I like the idea that it will be developed on-line.
- Some members and potential members are illiterate. Interactive literature could reach them.
- How can we afford not to do it?
- I have spoken to ten to 15 people a month who have special needs. They have been begging for tools.

By the end of the discussion, several motions for developing e-CAL on a trial basis were presented to the Conference Chairperson. These were later consolidated into one motion, which was carried with substantial unanimity. (See Conference Motion #5 on page 65.)

REGIONAL TRUSTEE PLAN REVISIONS DISCUSSION

During the 2005 World Service Conference (WSC), each of the Board members attended a session called “Talking with the Delegates.” The questions, ideas, concerns, and visions noted during those sessions were considered in the planning of this year’s Conference. One of the common threads that ran through each of the breakout groups was the Regional Trustee Nominating Process.

After the 2005 Conference, the Board Chairperson appointed an ad hoc committee to review the current process, consider the ideas submitted, and formulate a proposal for presentation at the 2006 WSC. The committee gathered all available archival information to better understand the origin and evolution of the current RT plan. Having this information available, they considered

Colleen R.
Trustee



“Electronic literature is
on the way”

the ideas submitted in light of the current plan. After much discussion, they were able to create a proposed plan, which included the formation of a Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT). The proposed plan is as follows:

- Areas within the Region submit candidate résumés to the WSO by August 15th of the year preceding selection.
- The résumés will be scored independently by the RCT and the Nominating Committee by using tally sheets. Composition of the RCT:
- All Delegates from the Areas within the Region
- Pre-selected Delegates from outside the Regions (out-of-Region Delegates are chosen by lot at the previous WSC)
- At the WSC prior to the Region becoming eligible for submitting résumés, the RCT will appoint a Chairperson who will be responsible to tally the scores. An Alternate will be chosen in the event that the Chairperson is unable to fulfill this responsibility during the year.
- Voting members of the RCT will review and score candidate résumés and submit tally sheets by September 30 to the RCT Chairperson. The Board of Trustees will retain the option of submitting an incumbent résumé for scoring if the Area did not submit the incumbent.
- The RCT Chairperson will combine the tally sheets and then forward the combined scores to the Executive Director prior to the deadline in October.
- In October, the Nominating Committee, with the input from the RCT, will select two candidates from the Region.
- The Nominating Committee will forward the names of the two candidates to the RCT Chairperson. The Chairperson will then send names of the two candidates to the Delegate members of the RCT. Any member of the RCT may file an objection by December 15. The Nominating Committee, in collaboration with the RCT Chairperson, will consider all objections.
- In January, the Board of Trustees, in consideration of the Board's needs, will select one of the two candidates as the Regional Nominee.
- The selected nominee name will be presented to the World Service Conference for traditional approval.
- Regional Trustee nominees will be elected at the Annual Board meeting, following the Conference.
- The proposed plan is for a three-year trial period.

After a discussion about details regarding implementation, a motion was made and carried to affirm the trial implementation of the Regional Committee on Trustees. (See WSC Motion #13, page 66.)



PUBLIC OUTREACH PAMPHLET RECLASSIFICATION DISCUSSION

Two years ago, the World Service Conference (WSC) approved reclassifying three pamphlets from Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to public outreach service tools: *Al-Anon Is for Men* (P-1), *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-45), and *Al-Anon Is for Gays and Lesbians* (P-85). Since then, the Public Outreach Committee reviewed each of these three pamphlets to assess the viability of their content for use as a service tool. An ad hoc committee was formed for each pamphlet. After careful review and much discussion, general consensus was that while most of the existing text of *Al-Anon Is for Gays and Lesbians* was appropriate as a service tool, the other two pamphlets should remain as CAL. Outreach tools for men and A.A. members who also qualify for Al-Anon are being developed. Service tools do not require Conference approval.

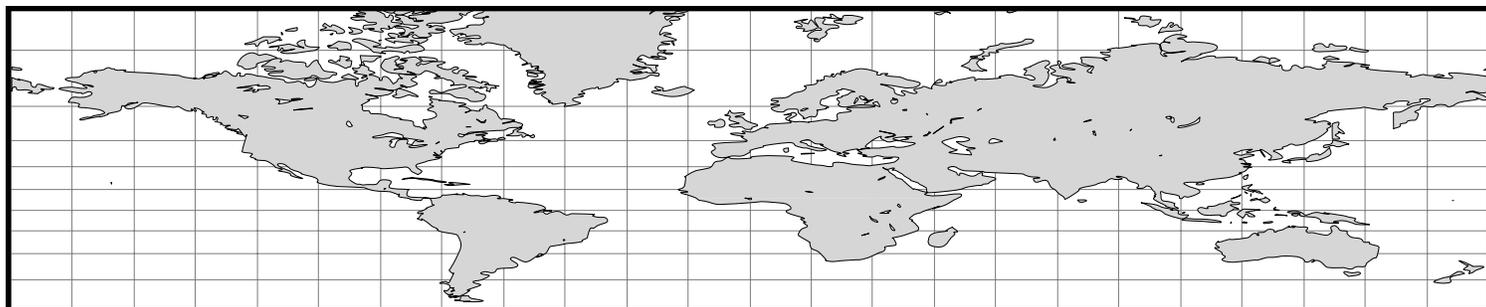
Therefore, the Public Outreach Committee gave Conference members background material and asked the WSC to reconsider Motion #9 from the 2004 World Service Conference, which reads, “In keeping with the World Service Conference’s commitment to reach out to diverse populations and to expand the use of our 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.”

A motion was made and carried to reconsider Motion #9 from the 2004 WSC. (See WSC Motion #7, page 66.) Next, by consensus, it was agreed to strike the entire motion and substitute text. (See WSC Motion #8, page 66.) Finally, a motion was made and carried to reclassify *Al-Anon Is for Gays and Lesbians* (P-85) as a service tool. (See WSC Motion #9, page 66.)

Jo-Anne L.
Public Outreach
Committee
Chairperson,
Trustee

Mary Lou M.
Associate
Director of Public
Outreach—Media

Rethinking our service tools



“Connecting Members Worldwide”

2005 WORLDWIDE TRAVEL PRESENTATION

“On behalf of the members in each of these countries, thank you to the members of the World Service Conference structure who fund carrying the Al-Anon message to these structures with your voluntary contributions and the purchase of Conference Approved Literature.” This was the final paragraph in the report given by the Executive Director at this year’s Conference. His report expressed the need and desire of the General Service Offices (GSO) around the world to partner with the World Service Office (WSO) as a mentor.

Judy P.
*Chairperson,
Board of Trustees*

Ric B.
Executive Director

Mary Ann R.
Trustee

Marsha W.
*Associate Director
of Membership
Outreach—
International*

South Africa

The Board approved a return trip to South Africa in 2006 for the Executive Director with two goals in mind: To attend the A.A. Sub-Saharan Africa Zonal Meeting in Johannesburg; and to plan a similar Al-Anon meeting for this part of the world. A.A. Zonal meetings are used to connect emerging or evolving structures within a Zone until they are able to participate at the world meetings. After discussions with the A.A. GSO in New York, it was decided not to attend the Zonal meeting, as having too many visitors to this meeting might overwhelm the delegates.

Since the South African Al-Anon GSO was expecting a WSO representative to visit their conference, it was felt that the trip should proceed. It was a good opportunity to continue the discussion of the “Into Africa” project.

During his visit, the Executive Director was able to clear up some misconceptions and misinformation about the role of groups, Delegates, the Conference, and the Trustees. As a result of the visit and clarification of the equalized expense, the South African Conference voted to send at least one Delegate to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in 2006.

New Zealand

The last time anyone from the WSO went to New Zealand was over 30 years ago when Lois and a friend paid a visit. The GSO expressed gratitude that the WSO recognized the need for face-to-face communication. A series of discussions were held, utilizing the Al-Anon principle of talking to each other to reason things out. The GSO leaders were having problems finding Board members, partially due to their selection process and partially because of conflicts. It was suggested that their Board and Executive Committee might collaborate to look for solutions to their process for selecting and utilizing volunteer leaders. These ideas could be implemented on a trial basis.

Australia

The Executive Director and the Chairperson of the Board visited the Australian GSO. There they attended a Conference Committee meeting, an Executive Committee meeting, an Al-Anon recovery meeting, and an Area service inventory. In a meeting with members of their Board, the WSO Chairperson of the Board was able to share about the knowledge-based decision-making process the Board has adopted, about the Board’s Strategic Plan with Vision and Mission Statements, and how these are working. They were also interested in the theme from the Strategic Plan, “Unlimited Abundant Resources.”

Another purpose of the visit to Australia was to observe the Sub-Oceanic Zonal Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Good information was obtained at the meeting that can be used if the time comes to form these types of meetings in Al-Anon. This particular Zone includes Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, China, India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Thailand. English is the spoken language at this Zonal meeting. Individual countries pay for translations as needed. Personal contacts were made and information was given to attendees from Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Poland

The goal set for the visit to Poland was to reconnect with service members of their GSO and encourage participation from the structure at the 2006 IAGSM. Their GSO was established in 1991. While in Funka, the site of Polish Al-Anon's 25th Anniversary celebration, the WSO representatives had a two-hour meeting with the GSO, with approximately 20 people attending. As a result of this visit, the GSO is sending a representative to the 2006 IAGSM.

Austria

There is no official GSO in Austria at this time, but the goal of this visit was to encourage service members to move in that direction. A member in Ruette, Austria, who is in charge of the Al-Anon Information and Literature Distribution Center there, hosted the WSO members. As a result of a number of discussions, there is more insight into sharing service experience. There are currently 34 Al-Anon groups and two Alateen groups in Austria. The service structure has an annual service meeting that includes Trustee representation from three regions.

Hungary

Through the attendance at two scheduled service meetings with members, it was realized that the membership is not financially ready to support an Al-Anon Information Service. The WSO was able to explain the policy for the translating and reprinting of Conference Approved Literature.

Romania

Al-Anon has existed in Bucharest since 1995. With the visit of the WSO representatives, it gave the members a physical connection. Members are unable to move ahead in supporting the costs of translating and printing literature because of financial hardships. At their January meeting, the Board of Trustees approved a recommendation from the International Coordination Committee to print three pieces of Conference Approved Literature in Romanian at the WSO's expense.

For more information on efforts to carry the message in other countries, refer to the Addendum to the 2005 Annual Report, on page 75.

One thing that always needs to be remembered is that Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship and that what happens at the World Service Conference directly affects Al-Anon as a whole. When changes are being made to any piece of literature, the question needs to be asked, "How will this affect Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide?"

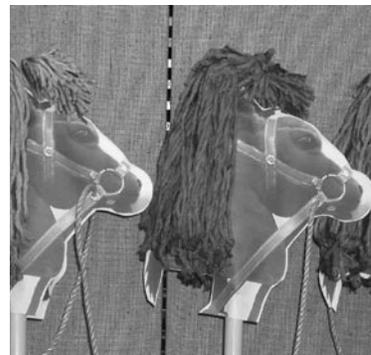
ANONYMITY PRESENTATION

The principle of anonymity within and outside the fellowship has been a misunderstood, distorted subject of debate for many years. Al-Anon has been around for 55 years and our guidelines for anonymity have remained unchanged. Yet, the understanding and application of the principle is still unclear to many. In 1979, on page 194 of *Lois Remembers*, Lois referred to Tradition Eleven as follows: "Nothing is said about maintaining anonymity within our group, our family, and our circle of friends. Let us not mistake anonymity for secrecy. The degree of anonymity we practice is a personal matter. Most of us, I believe, do not wish to be anonymous within our own Fellowships. Anonymity here hinders our availability to help our fellow members."

She further stated: "Our survival depends upon growth—growth in spirit more than number. We believe the principles upon which A.A. and Al-Anon are founded are fundamental for all times and all people. Our individual acceptance and application of these principles must continue to grow or we as societies will perish. For stagnation is retrogression—there is no standing still!"

Doris W.
Trustee

Liz W.
Trustee



"Be a Myth-Buster"

Anonymity within the fellowship is a matter of personal choice. However, Tradition Eleven affords members the opportunity to carry the Al-Anon message at the level of press, radio, films, TV, and today, the Internet with the stipulation that individual Al-Anon membership is not divulged. Educating and informing the public and professional community about Al-Anon is the Twelfth Step in action and not a violation of Tradition Eleven. The principle is intended to keep individuals anonymous at the public

level (press, radio, films, TV, and Internet), not to keep the Al-Anon program anonymous. If members continue to keep the Al-Anon program and meetings a secret, Al-Anon Family Groups will, as Lois said, “perish as a society.”

Al-Anon is still unknown to the public and professional community in spite of years of doing public outreach. As members and as an organization we need to reach out to people affected by someone else’s drinking so they can find help and recovery. As leaders, we need to collaborate with the professional community and help them understand that Al-Anon is a resource for anyone whose life has been affected by the disease of alcoholism.

To help dispel the myths and share the truths of anonymity, the Trustees, members of the Executive Committee, and WSO staff performed a skit, starring Ana Nimity. She and the “Myth Busters,” who came riding into “town” on their stick horses to rescue Ana Nimity from the “weird” group meeting in the basement of a local church, helped Conference members identify myths:

- Al-Anon members can never show their full faces
- Al-Anon members can’t give anyone, anywhere their last names
- We must never tell anyone, anywhere that we are in Al-Anon
- Al-Anon is an anonymous fellowship
- Putting our meeting lists in newspapers or on a Web site breaks anonymity
- Al-Anon should never be mentioned in the media
- Letters to professionals should be signed with first name only
- Members staffing an exhibit open to the public are breaking anonymity
- When the Al-Anon name is on a building it violates the anonymity of any member who volunteers or is employed there
- Al-Anon’s name appearing on a hotel marquee breaks the anonymity of all attending
- Wearing a name badge in a hotel lobby breaks the anonymity of all members attending
- Having the word “Al-Anon” printed on the cover of *The Forum* breaks the anonymity of all subscribers
- An Al-Anon member breaks anonymity by writing about Al-Anon and making a profit

Conference members were given “myth busting” kits and divided into groups to “bust” these myths of anonymity. They reported the following ideas.

- We can show our full faces in certain situations; presentations to groups can be done face-to-face.
- Pages 73 and 74 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* explain when we can use our last name; it is important to keep newcomers informed as to when and why we use our full name.
- Don’t use the last name when writing as a member for an outside publication; last names can be used in meetings and with Al-Anon friends; the choice is up to the individual within the fellowship.

- Anonymity is a personal choice within and outside the fellowship except at the public level (press, radio, films, TV, and Internet).
- Page 91 of the *Service Manual* explains the rules for paid ads.
- Page 92 of the *Service Manual* explains the policy on Public Service Announcements.
- If approached at the public level (press, radio, films, TV, and Internet), keep the conversation in the third person—no one will know we’re members unless we tell them.
- I can disclose my full name but not my membership; I can disclose my membership but not my full name at the public level (press, radio, films, TV and Internet).
- We don’t assume that a columnist is a member because she writes about Al-Anon in her column.

To help end the myths surrounding anonymity, all Conference members were asked to go back to their Areas and have a “myth busting” discussion, pass out “myth buster” pins, and “myth buster” certificates to their newly informed members.

Tradition Eleven:
The principle of
anonymity

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Ideas generated by the Public Outreach Committee are passed along to the company producing the public service announcement (PSA). The vendor then finds the words and pictures to make these ideas come alive. For 2006, the Committee wanted to focus on showing the effects that result from living and/or working with someone suffering from the disease of alcoholism. The 2006-2007 PSA is titled “What It’s Like,” which made its debut during the Conference.

New this year, members can purchase one tape with the new PSA and three previous PSAs in BetaSP format. Radio and TV stations will now have programming choices.

At the Conference, members were provided with a DVD copy of TV PSAs, and were encouraged to pass them on to their Area Public Information and/or Public Outreach Coordinator. After Conference, WSO radio/TV distribution lists will be sent to those Coordina-

Mary Lou M.
Associate
Director of Public
Outreach—Media



tors, along with “how to” information. In June, the tapes/CDs will be available to the fellowship.

Radio and TV stations rely on feedback from the public in considering how to use their public air time. Members are encouraged to write thank you notes to the stations that play our PSAs.

WEB SITE PRESENTATION

Over the last year, the two Web sites, one for public outreach (www.al-anon.alateen.org) and one for members (www.al-anon.alateen.org/members), have undergone changes. In a PowerPoint presentation, upgrades were noted and members informed about all of the information they were missing by not regularly visiting the sites. A goal has been set to increase the number of visitors to the Public Outreach site by 10 percent and the Members' site by 100 percent between April 2006 and March 2007.

After the presentation, members were asked to share their ideas on how they are going to let members and the public know about the Web sites. One member said she announces the Web site at every meeting. Another has made up bookmarks, business cards, and stickers including the Web address, and also prints the information in the Area newsletter. A Delegate intends to propose a challenge to the groups to document every visit to the Web site, giving the group with the most visits a prize. One Delegate, who admitted to being “computer illiterate,” said she was going to visit both sites and take the information back to her Area. She said, “If I can do it, anybody can.” One suggestion was to make up a tent card and put it on the table at your group. If you have the necessary equipment, do a live demonstration during your report. One member suggested reminding the groups that the *Service Manual* is on the site and that it's searchable. Sending an e-mail to members in the Area with a link to the Members' site was also suggested.

Mary Ann K.
Director of
Member Services

Mary Lou M.
Associate
Director of Public
Outreach—Media



“Our Public Outreach and Members' Web sites”

SPANISH/FRENCH PRESENTATION

In 2002, the “gorilla of change” visited the World Service Conference (WSC). He warned that change is necessary to be open to new possibilities. Al-Anon members agreed that the methods of carrying the message could change, provided the core values of Al-Anon did not change. This year, in place of the Spanish Luncheon and a working dinner for Delegates with French-speaking groups, the Board agreed to have the entire Conference hear from the staff about the tools and services provided to those whose primary language is not English.

The fact that a member only speaks one language does not limit the ability to perform outreach activities to members who speak other languages. An Al-Anon “passport” was distributed to reinforce how this could be done. It listed Areas where meetings are held in languages other than English. In the WSC structure, there are meetings in nine languages other than English, French, and Spanish. English-speaking members who have crossed the language barrier by visiting these groups report that other members will be welcome at these meetings.

The Associate Directors introduced a new public outreach tool, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007*, which will be available in English, Spanish, and French. This tool contains members' personal recovery stories, testimonials from professionals about Al-Anon, and basic information to introduce newcomers and professionals to Al-Anon. It will be available again in the spring. Members can purchase bulk orders for their public outreach efforts. An order form is printed on the inside back cover of the May issue of *The Forum*.

After the presentation, members shared ideas on how they will pass the message across the language barriers in their Areas.

Mary Ann K.
Director of
Member Services

Marsha W.
Associate Director
of Membership
Outreach—
International

Dolores T.
Associate Director
of Group Services



“New public outreach tool available in English, Spanish, and French”

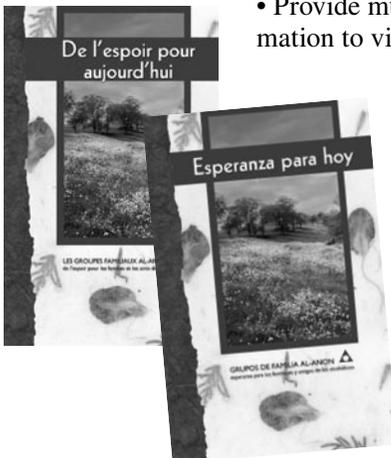
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE WORKSHOP



“Crossing the language barrier”

Their ideas included:

- Carrying literature in other languages with you, so you have literature to share
- Challenge districts to pass out the new outreach tool and have books available in other languages at meetings
- Donate copies of books in other languages to a traveling display to inform professionals as to what literature is available and in what languages
- Put an article in your newsletter that *Hope for Today* is now available in Spanish and French
- Put Spanish and French books in libraries
- Donate Spanish and French books to a new meeting
- If you don't have Spanish- or French-speaking people, target other non-English-speaking cultures and let them know there is literature available
- Use excess group funds to purchase Spanish and French literature and distribute it to professionals
- Donate books to multicultural senior centers
- Approach hospital staff and collaborate on getting literature out
- Provide multi-lingual public information to visitor information centers



At the end of the program, the new Spanish *Service Manual* was distributed to all the Delegates and Trustees from the US and the French *Service Manual* was distributed to all the Delegates and Trustees from Canada.

“...the garden of Al-Anon they came upon statues of the Five Warranties...”

This year, Conference members went in search of the “pearls of wisdom” found in the five Warranties of Article XII of the Charter. Unlike the first eleven Articles, which are able to be amended, the Warranties in Article XII of the Charter are privileged and protected from trends or self-serving interests. The Warranties are guaranteed the same status as the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service in that no changes can be made without the written consent of three-fourths of the Al-Anon groups. The Warranties are principles instituted by the Al-Anon pioneers and ensure that in all its proceedings, the World Service Conference (WSC) observes the spirit of the Traditions. These Warranties address the potentially destructive human temptations of wealth, prestige, and power that could endanger Al-Anon's survival as a fellowship.

The session began with a visit to the Conference by Lois and Anne. As they strolled through the garden of Al-Anon they came upon statues of the Five Warranties, played by Trustees and World Service Office (WSO) staff members dressed in togas with wreaths of olive branches on their heads. Upon questioning by Lois and Anne, each statue explained its purpose. Conference members were guided to their discussion groups by Delegate moderators who were also dressed in togas. There they discussed those “pearls of wisdom, our spiritual foundation,” in each of the Five Warranties. Those spiritual principles counsel prudence, being wise in handling practical matters, and exercising good judgment and common sense. The following are some of those “pearls”:

- The Warranties encompass and clarify all three of the Legacies and the spiritual aspect of our program—it's Al-Anon in a nutshell. The real power of the Conference reminds us that we make decisions for worldwide Al-Anon. That's so big and spiritual!
- The Warranties give us a foundation that is not set in concrete and, with that, freedom,

equality, and the confidence that a Higher Power is guiding us in making decisions.

- The positive focus and spiritual base of the Warranties keep us from going off the path. They point us away from greed, arrogance, dominance, and gossip, and lead us toward self-support, humility, and prudence.

- The spirituality of the Warranties keeps us focused on our primary purpose.

- The whole program is spiritual. The spirit of the Traditions is observed through the Warranties. They are spiritual guideposts which do not change.

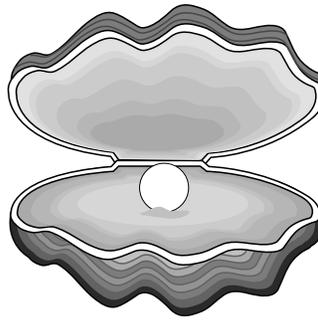


Warranty One: That only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle.

- It is about balance and being an adult. Keeping the focus on recovery and not money relieves us of a fear of scarcity.
- Greed brings control issues and loss of spirituality. With “only sufficient funds,” as our guide, we are assured that we will not lose ourselves in business.
- We don’t need to fear money. An ample reserve is the safety net that helps us find the balance between the present and ensuring Al-Anon’s future. If our reserve falls short, we can gain unity through raising funds.
- Operating funds are sometimes about paying for necessary manpower, not just accumulating money.
- Stewardship of money is spiritual. What we are doing with what God has provided is helping people worldwide—that makes it spiritual.
- It seems the more you give away, the more you get, so think big. Help to educate the groups—plant the seed that money is my messenger to send the Al-Anon message to places I cannot be.

Warranty Two: That no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members.

- The ideas that we are all equal and everyone is valuable are important spiritual principles. We respect all ideas and do not tolerate domination. Lois modeled this when she did not want to be held higher than anyone else.
- Everyone has the right of participation but we need to look at what is best for the whole. There is a Higher Power in our midst and rotation of trusted servants ensures that there is no Mr. or Mrs. Al-Anon. A dominating person can damage growth. If no one is above us, we can focus on our Higher Power. This leads us to Concept Four, “Participation is the key to harmony,” because we gain so much by participating. Action committees encourage others to participate and to feel needed and capable and included. Because we have these principles, we are able to practice what they say. All of us are in this together.
- Trust and the group conscience are important spiritual principles. Qualified authority means trusting that our trusted servants are doing their job and trusting in God.
- We are all leaders and have the collective wisdom from every member of the group and from a Higher Power in our decisions. Leaders provide information but do not dictate. We all have value. Everyone is encouraged to have opinions and express them. Openness allows the majority opinion to emerge. It is not important who makes the decision but that a good decision is made.
- Tradition Two allows a Higher Power into decisions and leadership. Leaders have more information, not more value. Every voice is important and interdependent. Leaders are but trusted servants—God is in charge.



“The Warranties—
pearls of wisdom”

Warranty Three: That all decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible by unanimity.

- The idea that everyone participates is a spiritual principle. Our knowledge-based decision-making process models this principle. The minority opinion is respected and there is ample opportunity for sharing. It is the right of every group to determine what unanimity is for themselves. The common goal of everyone is to do what is best for Al-Anon.
- If there is not enough information on an issue, keep talking until there is enough to make an informed decision. Appreciate the dissenting opinion but when a group conscience is taken, support it fully. The group conscience is what is best for the majority. Everyone is heard so that we can support the decisions whether we agree or not.
- The knowledge-based decision-making process gives us the freedom to make decisions easier. The outcome is not as important as the way we got there (discussion and an environment that encourages healthy thinking). With enough discussion, a member can accept the group conscience even if it is not what the member thought.
- Informed group conscience is the spirituality of the program. Whether we agree with the group conscience or not, God is in the group conscience. The need for substantial unanimity keeps us talking longer. Everyone can feel that they have been heard. We learn the importance of speaking up and feel safe in doing it. Our votes count, and we take time to hear and respect the minority viewpoint. When we are more informed, we can make a better decision.

Warranty Four: That no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.

- This promotes harmony and good will within our fellowship and outside as well. It allows us to find spiritual solutions to conflict and can help both sides of a conflict take responsibility and grow. We can acknowledge controversy without engaging in it. Principles above personalities can be maintained even in controversy.
- Nothing is personal in Al-Anon—principles above personalities. Misinformation can cause problems. Being principle-based preserves good will. We all want to do the right thing. Demonstrate respect, as in Bill’s essay. Each of us has the right to express an opinion and be provided with an environment where we can feel free to express our opinions. Any action of the Conference is collective—therefore, no one person can be blamed. Mistakes are also growth. This understanding relieves us of the burden of perfectionism.
- Humility, harmony, substantial unanimity, boundaries without hierarchy, and faith are spiritual principles of this Warranty.
- Ego deflation is an equalizer that encourages us to exchange ideas, be courteous, not hold resentments, give unconditional love, and find common ground for a better whole—unity. We sometimes have to sacrifice a cherished idea to avoid public controversy.
- We learn humility—that no one is greater or lesser. To be

punitive would cause dissention, and our Higher Power works in each of us to prevent that. Harmony only works if each person sings their own part. We all make mistakes, we do the best we can and are not punished. We don't have to be perfect. We get better results by practicing our principles.

Warranty Five: That though the Conference serves Al-Anon, it shall never perform any act of government; and that like the fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups which it serves, it shall remain democratic in thought and action.

- Substantial unanimity maintains unity. There is no one member or group that holds authority over the entire Conference. It remains democratic with checks and balances that were developed over time. Changes are so small that we have to look at the picture over a long period of time to see the really big changes. Our democratic ideals balance the spiritual and the legal to preserve the integrity of the program. In our groups, we each have a voice and a vote. When everyone is participating in the decisions, they feel valued, which makes it more democratic.
- Our spiritual principles are woven throughout the Legacies. We respect the minority, respect the majority, and work to protect the unity of the fellowship. Membership is by choice. We can choose to serve our fellowship. We don't operate on the basis of money-hoarding or seeking personal power. Our goal is to find common understanding, which we do by sharing information. This leads right into knowledge-based decision-making.

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

Chosen Agenda Items Process

Prior to this year's World Service Conference (WSC), Conference members were invited to submit questions of a general nature regarding topics that pertain to Al-Anon worldwide. The questions were combined into a single document and sent back to the Conference members. From this list, Conference members selected two questions for one-hour discussions. The votes were tallied, and the topics receiving the most votes were placed on the agenda. Two Conference members were each invited to give a brief presentation on one of the topics, followed by open discussion.

In addition, members voted for two additional topics for half hour open discussion sessions. The remaining topics were discussed in small group workshops. A report of the workshop discussions, presentations, and open discussions follows.

Cynthia H.
Associate Director
of Membership
Outreach—
Conference

OPEN DISCUSSIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Chosen Agenda Item No. 1

Spiritual Principles and Good Business Practices

Is Al-Anon still a spiritual fellowship or are we moving towards being a not-for-profit business?

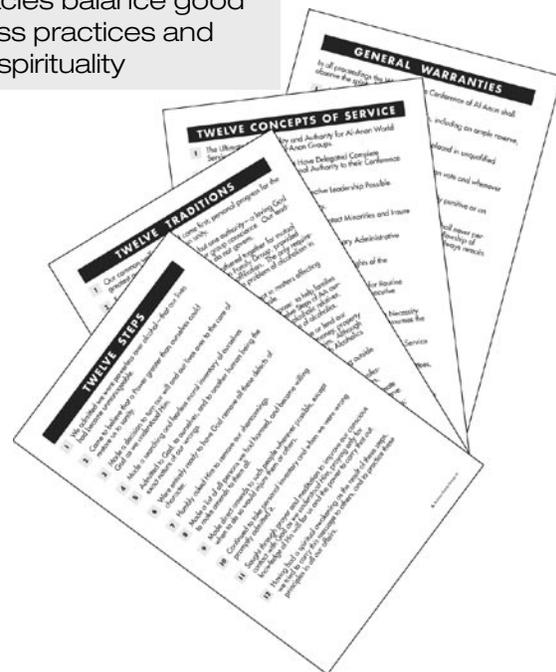
How do we face the inevitable changes to the program in our changing world while staying true to the Traditions and Concepts? With that, how can we best keep our focus on this being a spiritual fellowship above it being a business?

How can we reassure those members who are concerned that Al-Anon has become focused on acquiring and protecting money and property rather than trusting our fellowship's future to a Higher Power? What spiritual principles are regularly used to ensure that there is always a balance between good business management and the spirituality of our program of recovery?

Mickie Z., the Panel 44 Delegate from the Maritime Provinces, introduced the topic:

“Questions regarding good business practices have been raised previously at World Service Conferences (WSCs): In 1991 (*Save Our Services* workshop), 1993, 1995, 1996

Our Legacies balance good business practices and spirituality



(Are we a publishing company?), 1994 (purchase of property), and, 2002 (finances and investments). Questions regarding Al-Anon's spirituality are not new either. In 1986, a WSC workshop asked "Are we becoming less spiritual by focusing on psychological and sociological factors in Al-Anon?" There were further queries in 2004 (financial liabilities) and 2005 (resolving disagreement around Board Decisions).

"Those who question Al-Anon's spirituality may find comfort in the three Legacies. They complete the balance between good business management and the spirituality of Al-Anon's program of recovery, and outline a spiritual path for all members. Al-Anon is a spiritual program. Every activity can have a spiritual motive, including business.

"In the Steps, we are guided to get to know and believe in a Power greater than ourselves that will guide us and help us in our personal recovery. Steps Two, Three, Eleven, and Twelve speak directly to me about using that Power in all my affairs within my life and to recover from the effects of family alcoholism.

"In the Traditions, I am given instructions on getting along with and working with others that not only work in my group, but also guide me in service work, within my family, and in life outside of Al-Anon. They are good sound principles that, when followed, keep me on that spiritual path. For me, the Traditions are about unity, belonging, serving, attraction, and spirituality. Most importantly, Tradition Two reminds me that the ultimate authority for my group is also the same Higher Power as I understand Him from working the Steps.

"The Concepts of Service show us how to practice Al-Anon principles in business affairs. They provide methods to address issues, hear opinions, and give balance between service entities. There is guidance on how to avoid business and program pitfalls that still leave room for growth and interpretation, reminding us that our business is different. It is based on a spiritual program. We aim for spiritual growth for the greatest number rather than financial gain, power, or prestige for a few. The Concepts, for me, are about trust, authority, responsibility, prudence, and spirituality.

"Concepts One, Two, Three, Six, and Seven all have a requirement of trust—in ourselves, other members, and our trusted servants, as well as the Conference members, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and the World Service staff members—to do what is right and responsible for Al-Anon. We can look to the World Service Conference Charter for the guidance to fulfill that responsibility.

"The Conference Charter is the informal agreement between all of Al-Anon and its World Services. It outlines principles and relationships through which Al-Anon as a whole can function. The Charter provides a method for members to work together with the WSO to provide services to members and groups. The Charter is the guardian of Al-Anon's World Services and contains a tradition-

al framework for the Conference to function. It specifies the relationships and provides a link from the Al-Anon member to Assembly, the World Service Conference, the World Service Office, and the Board of Trustees. The Charter directs the Conference to observe the spirit of Al-Anon's Traditions and links the Concepts by way of the General Warranties of the Conference.

"These relationships and our three Legacies provide a balance between good business practices and Al-Anon's spiritual principles for all Al-Anon members. The upside down triangle demonstrates this: The groups elect trusted servants in the Area, who choose a Delegate who attends the World Service Conference. Conference members discuss the business of Al-Anon and provide direction to the Board of Trustees and the World Service Office staff members. The World Service Office works to provide services to members and groups.

"Since the early days of the Clearing House, when Lois entered group contact information on index cards and wrote to the groups asking for contributions, Al-Anon has been a business. As in any good business, the WSO has a responsibility to all of us—to me, my group, my district, and my Area, as well as worldwide Al-Anon, to utilize and maintain good business practices. Looking after my interests as a member is spiritual to me.

"The WSO communicates with thousands of groups worldwide, prints literature and periodicals, has complex accounting practices, and is subject to federal and state laws due to its not-for-profit status. The annual budget of Al-Anon Family Groups Inc. is in the millions of dollars. The WSO must have salaried staff members, compensated fairly for the jobs they perform, and must operate as efficiently as they can while providing services demanded by the fellowship and meeting our always changing needs. An accountant must manage the money while administrators oversee individual departments responsible for different service areas to groups—all with a single Executive Director who works with the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees to ensure the services all run smoothly. Anything less would be irresponsible to members.

"In 1990, Al-Anon's financial picture showed that literature and *Forum* price increases combined with predicted contribution increases might be enough to offset rising costs. Evidently this was not the case as shown by the *Save Our Services* (SOS) workshop held at the WSC in 1991. The panel reported cost-cutting measures that had been developed to offset the shortfalls. What had occurred was a decline in income and an increase in costs. It was recognized that a failure to improve would lead to cuts in services to the fellowship. The workshop gave Delegates the opportunity to join the discussion about how to turn this situation around and they directed the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and World Service Office to streamline processes to cut costs where practical.

"In 1994, the decision of the Conference to allow the purchase of property was a good business decision. It was

in the form of a well thought out motion that included several checks and balances to ensure that it was not detrimental to our fellowship as a whole and could be reversed if found this was a result. Our trusted servants of the day participated in a long, emotional discussion that examined every possible concern that was raised. I remember my Delegate coming back to the Area and tearfully sharing points of the discussion with us at Assembly. I felt as if I had been there with her and I trusted their decision. As it turns out, ownership of the World Service Office has been less costly than anticipated, so more funds have been able to be utilized to provide services to members and groups.

“Just like the WSO, I am responsible to myself and my family to follow good business practices. I work to receive a salary from which I am expected to provide essential services to my family. If I were to spend it unwisely, then my family would do without and probably be upset with me. To live within my means and meet all my family’s expectations is responsible and correct. I can use the three Legacies, as well as the Conference Charter, to guide and help me manage my own affairs wisely and prudently.

“Al-Anon is both a spiritual program of recovery and a not-for-profit business. We have to adapt and change to changing times. Failure to do this would hurt our program. I believe it is possible to stay true to the principles our founders laid out for us while conducting our business by vigilantly observing our three Legacies and the Conference Charter within all our service arms as well as in our own personal lives. I do not believe that our spirituality will suffer in observing good business practices. But I do believe it is possible if we do not.”

Then the Conference Chairperson moderated an open discussion: “I have a sponsee who comes from the business world. If he could hear this discussion, he would laugh. We don’t do anything like a business does,” one member said. “If it were just about dollars and cents, we would have the business done and be loading the car to go home in two days, not five,” another Delegate remarked. “I don’t see how it can be anything but spiritual,” remarked another member, when comparing the purpose of business (to make more money) and that of Al-Anon (to carry the message). Most of those who shared agreed that there needs to be a balance between the business side and the spiritual side of Al-Anon.

Other comments included:

“There are Steps for recovery, Traditions for unity, and Concepts for service, all of which are spiritually based.” Al-Anon’s primary purpose was another thread that ran through the discussions. “Tradition Five says that we have but one purpose. When work is done at Assemblies, is it not for the good of our one purpose?” “If at least one dollar is made and with that dollar we reached out to friends and families of alcoholics, is that not furthering our primary purpose? If the answer is yes, then we are balancing the business with the spiritual.” “We are supporting our one purpose. It costs money to run

a nonprofit business. There are expenses involved with spreading the message around the world, including travel to other countries, producing literature for those who cannot translate and produce their own, and maintaining group and General Service Office records. God is felt in the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service, and to share the program it costs money.” “We need to trust our Higher Power, but we need to do the footwork. If we don’t, it won’t get done.” “Step Twelve says to practice these principles in our affairs, business and personal.” “The Delegates now come to the Conference with more experience and the Conference has become more efficient through the use of technology which may be construed as businesslike.” The spiritual principles embodied in the Concepts of Service ensure the balance between good business and spiritual practices, so that there is no need to choose between them. “Our Traditions and Concepts *are* spiritual.” While there are “businesslike” words in the Concepts, those words have a spiritual depth to them. “We have to watch the dollars and cents to carry out our primary purpose, but how we come to decisions about money is spiritual.” “Step Twelve tells me to ‘practice these principles in all my affairs’ and that means business—there is no way to separate them.”

Trusting in a Higher Power was another thread of the discussion. “I saw the spirituality in our business today as the Regional Nominating Committee trusted in a loving God to know what is best for the fellowship when they agreed to let go and let God choose their Regional Trustee nominee.” “It takes courage to trust in a Higher Power but when we do, it allows us to trust the group, Area, and World Service Conference—our trusted servants.

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEM NO. 2

How does the fellowship help newcomers understand that Al-Anon sponsorship does not include:

Pyramid sponsorship—Sponsor, grand-sponsor, great grand-sponsor

Need for prior approval to be in a group

Being told not to attend other meetings

Fear of leaving a group, alienation, snubbing, or ridicule

Joyce B., the Panel 45 Delegate from Utah, introduced this topic with a brief presentation. Her comments follow:

“I was excited when I received the e-mail inviting me to introduce this chosen agenda item. However, preparing was more difficult than I anticipated. The process reminded me of being in a sharing meeting with my husband when the topic was sex.

“To me sponsorship is a very special and intimate re-

lationship. The following is on page 12 of *Sponsorship, What It's All About* (P-31), 'Often, a Sponsor is the first person to give us unconditional love.'

"Most of us come into the program discouraged and defeated by our encounter with alcoholism. Some of us grew up in alcoholism and have always lived with its effects. Others encountered it in adulthood. No matter when it started, the pain was so great that we were willing to do anything to recover. That's good and necessary. However, it can be personally devastating to have someone use that trust and willingness for his or her own purposes.

"Some of you may be or have been involved in a pyramid sponsorship relationship. You may know of groups in your Area where there are specific requirements about who can attend and how to work the program. My goal today is to increase awareness.

"A friend of mine has given me permission to share some of her early Al-Anon experiences. More than 20 years ago, she was part of a group of young, attractive women who were expected to "get in the car," go to meetings, and get involved in service. As the years went on, things changed. My friend's Sponsor had so many sponsees that she scheduled days and times for telephone calls. My friend's assigned time was 6 o'clock in the morning. Choices were taken away from the individual members. My friend and others left that group and started going to other meetings. Some stopped attending Al-Anon altogether. She told me her friends who left Al-Anon felt 'broken, bitter, and angry.' My friend has a strong background in working the Steps and a commitment to Al-Anon service as a result of her early experience in the program. However, it doesn't work that way for everyone.

"Here are some references to recent discussions about sponsorship relationships. I believe increased awareness leads to resolution. On page 14 in the *2005 World Service Conference Summary* there is a discussion the Group Services Committee had on 'cult-like' groups and sponsorship.

"Last year, one of the Chosen Agenda Item Workshops (of which I was a participant) was 'In what ways can we support and/or protect those members affected by the increasing number of high-pressure groups (dictatorship rather than sponsorship)?' At that point, I was surprised to learn that there are an increasing number of groups throughout the United States who practice sponsorship in this way. Highlights of that workshop can be found on page 41 of the *2005 Conference Summary*.

"In the 'Talk to Each Other' section of the January 2006 issue of *The Forum*, an anonymous writer describes her experience in a pyramid sponsorship relationship. The WSO has received over 75 responses to that article. Many people were shocked that this is happening, while others shared their personal experiences of being involved



Clarifying Sponsorship

in these groups and sponsorship relationships. Some replies will be published in the May 2006 issue of *The Forum*.

"Sponsorship is a vital part of our program and of our recovery. In *Paths to Recovery* (B-24), almost every Step and Tradition has a reference to sponsorship, and many of the Concepts of Service refer to Service Sponsors. The same is true of the revised *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (B-8). The following is on page 92 in the discussion of Tradition Two:

"Another source of difficulty can arise with sponsorship. It is important to make clear the distinction between guidance and advice. Guidance comes through sharing, listening, explaining the program, and pointing out choices available. Guidance never imposes a decision on someone else or dictates a course of action. The use of this Tradition will prevent a Sponsor from assuming authority over the member being

sponsored; it offers protection to them both.'

"In addition to the unconditional love we find in Al-Anon, we learn that we have choices. As we grow and change, we may find a need for a new Sponsor and/or a new group. That change can and should be made without hard feelings. The following is on page 11 of *Sponsorship, What It's All About* (P-31), 'Most relationships between Sponsor and sponsored turn into friendships that do not really end at any definite point. A successful Sponsor relationship creates a special bond, remembered gratefully on both sides, even if the two are no longer close.'

"As leaders in this fellowship, what can we do to insure that healthy Al-Anon groups and sponsorship relationships as we know them will continue to be available and safe for newcomers 'when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help'?"

When the topic was opened for discussion, one comment was that, "This is just the beginning of a very important conversation." Many of those who shared were very emotional, some even tearful. They had experienced this type of sponsorship and had suffered emotionally as a result. One Delegate shared, "I have a sponsee who was part of one of those groups and now she is very wary and doesn't trust."

What is sponsorship? Al-Anon's pamphlet, *Sponsorship, What It's All About* (P-31), provides guidance on choosing and being a Sponsor. It contains general information about sponsorship. Many who shared on this topic had experiences that were much different than those described in the pamphlet. There is also good information in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

What is pyramid sponsorship? There appears to be many different facets to it. What was shared included the following: There were cliques. They wear the same shirts, travel in the same vans, and are very service-ori-

entated. One member said she wanted to be a part of one of these groups, but was told that since the right person didn't sponsor her, they wouldn't let her in. It could be detrimental to those in the group. It's hard to speak up because they are so tightly knit. Another member shared that, "At one point, there was an attempt to 'instruct' me on being a Delegate." Some are told that they had to meet with one of their "trained facilitators" before joining the group. At Assemblies, they tend to vote in a block.

"Pyramid sponsorship is the most prevalent abuse of sponsorship. Sponsees are called 'babies' and as a Sponsor, it is important how many you have," said a Conference member. Another remarked that, "It was a nurturing environment, you're sisters. I needed that when I came into Al-Anon. My Sponsor always gave instructions."

One Conference member said that he had been invited to join one of these groups. "I was fortunate to dodge those bullets. The solution is to turn on the light and share the information."

Solutions included having conversations and dialog at Area Assemblies and district meetings. "Since a lot of these groups are service-oriented, it would be prudent to address the problem where it shows up." Another was that the Board and World Service Office staff develop a presentation and provide leadership in sharing it with the fellowship. Board members or WSO staff members could go out and talk about sponsorship.

If a group is not using Conference Approved Literature and is not reading Al-Anon's Twelve Steps, invite them to attend a district meeting. As a last resort, the district and the Area Information Service can take the meeting off the list. One member shared, "My responsibility [as Delegate] is to preserve the purity of the program."

Some had not experienced this type of sponsorship. One member said, "Silence is enabling. This problem needs to get out in the open and be addressed. Just because it isn't brought up, doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Maybe that's why we're losing people."

Most Al-Anon members don't like conflict. The tendency is to ignore the "elephant in the living room." A Delegate said, "There is a network going on. Who are you inviting to be your speakers?"

One Area had never had this problem until a speaker came and bought her entourage. She was able to get the Convention Committee to replace all of the workshop panel members with her people. The Area Assembly is looking at developing a profile of a healthy group and encouraging workshops on sponsorship at the Area level.

The Forum continues to welcome sharings regarding this issue, as well as possible solutions.

Chosen Agenda Item No. 3

Attracting New Members:

How can we increase Al-Anon public awareness?

Is the Al-Anon message clear to everyone in need?

How can we attract more members? How can we better understand that members are anonymous and Al-Anon is not anonymous? How do we get the people here who are still suffering?

Many good ideas were generated during this discussion time. Here are a few:

- Put an ad in a kid's magazine.
- Ask the WSO staff members to help when attempting to place a full-page ad in magazine.
- Put an ad in the local newspaper, specifying an Al-Anon meeting.
- Put the "20 Questions" in the newspaper, along with short anonymous personal stories.
- Log onto friendly Web sites and say a few words about Al-Anon.
- Write letters to the editor when an alcohol-related accident happens.
- Put signs in the local transit buses.
- Contact movie theaters to place a small ad that shows before the movie starts.
- Make sure your meeting is safe and easy to find. Ask yourself if it is accessible and if it is inviting.
- Buy an ad in the back of a school year book.
- When traveling and asked where you've been, say you're representing an Area. Then provide an explanation of what Al-Anon is and is not. You don't have to say you're a member.
- Create Al-Anon business cards and bookmarks with addresses.
- Put Web site address on stickers and stick on literature.
- Use the full name of Al-Anon Family Groups when traveling internationally and mark your visit as "business" instead of "personal."
- Cooperate with and educate A.A. members so they might encourage their family members to attend Al-Anon.
- When starting a new meeting, come prepared with literature in case there are questions.
- Most magazines have Web sites; go on and use them as an opportunity to answer someone's question.
- Keep meeting lists in your car in case you need one.
- Use the "Leave Hope" project all year round.
- Subscribe to *The Forum* for your family physician.
- At Al-Anon conventions and conferences, have hotel put our name, Al-Anon Family Groups, on the marquee.

One Delegate shared that she was in a bank, changing the signature cards of the checking account, when the bank clerk asked about AI-Anon. The conversation lasted for over two hours. “We just need to be more public about AI-Anon and what it is.” One Area has undertaken a project to put the Crying House bookmark on grocery bags.

One Delegate helped start a new meeting. When she was meeting with the board of the church, she learned that one of the church’s members had attended AI-Anon years ago, one had gone to a meeting, and one said that she had found her spirituality through AI-Anon.

Open Discussion No. 4

Membership:

Is membership decreasing? If so, what can we do about it?

If every alcoholic affects at least four people as is often stated, why is AI-Anon attendance dropping? How can we maximize our cooperation with A.A. to attract more members to AI-Anon?

Why are groups closing?

One Delegate shared: “There are so many choices today. There are Twelve Steps for just about anything. We have to be more attractive so newcomers can make a better choice.” “We need to ask ourselves, What am I doing to welcome people to my group? Welcoming them to service, educating them about the literature, giving hugs, and introducing them to sponsorship are all ways to show the group cares. What am I doing to introduce newcomers to the loving interchange?”

To increase membership, we need to suggest that our groups become more proactive and take every opportunity that comes to them to break out of the misunderstandings about anonymity. “It is necessary to step out of the comfort zone and let people know what and where AI-Anon is.”

One Delegate shared that her group’s membership had been steadily declining until the Area appointed an active and enthusiastic Public Outreach Coordinator. The Coordinator has worked very hard and now this group has newcomers regularly—one night there were ten. Newcomers need to know that we want them to stay and be a part of AI-Anon.

Looking at healthy groups to see what they are doing can provide tips for use in all meetings. We need to ask ourselves, “What are they doing right? What has kept the longtime members coming back? Why are they still around?” It was suggested that sponsorship be promoted and that newcomers be encouraged to follow the program.

One group is following the lead of members of long ago, making contact between meetings, offering to pro-

vide transportation, and encouraging newcomers to go to a lot of meetings. Newcomers need to feel like they are a part of the group.

Having every member of the group involved in some sort of service keeps people coming back. “A simple project, such as taking literature to libraries and doctors’ offices and leaving it there, is one way to reach out. It’s surprising how excited they are when they report back to the meeting about what they did.”

“When I lived in a big city, we had lots of newcomers. I now live in a town of 144 people. They had a wonderful network of A.A. people. At my first AI-Anon meeting, there were four people. I cried. I went to open A.A. meetings and discovered a lot of spouses that didn’t know where to go. Several A.A. members thought AI-Anon told their spouse to divorce them. I decided to talk about AI-Anon when and if I got called on. Modeling is the answer.”

“Cooperating with A.A. on conferences helped to bridge the gap that had existed between the fellowships for a long time. After that involvement, we weren’t so scary.”

“We had groups closing and diminishing. We took a *Service Manual* to meetings and handed them out.”

“I assisted in killing a group at one time because of my ego.”

Chosen Agenda Items Workshop Highlights

The following are topics discussed in workshops, along with a summary of members’ comments:

Seventh Tradition:

How can our worldwide fellowship break out of the “buck in a basket” image and encourage members to donate what they are able to donate?

Why do we continue to promote “fundraisers” when our Seventh Tradition clearly says we are self-supporting and we cannot take outside contributions? So is it only our own money we are circulating?

We are concerned about the financial issue facing groups, districts, and beyond due to rents, insurance, and expenses increasing. How will we be able to offer this program to all?

What can we do as a fellowship to ensure that the importance of service and financial support, when possible, are emphasized as a common theme from the very first welcome packet through group, Area, and worldwide publications and events?

- Have a periodic group conscience on Tradition Seven.
- Explain to newcomers how the money is used.

- The best way to bring about change is to lead by example.
- Talk about finances—use examples from personal life (price of coffee, cake, etc.).
- How much is your recovery worth?
- Make sure all ways to contribute are known including quarterly appeal letter for individuals.
- Some people like to donate in different ways: fund raisers, raffles etc., but do fundraisers give the impression that we are about money? They can get more people involved but it can take away from where the money needs to go.
- Fundraisers could help groups meet increasing costs of rent and insurance. Goals need to be set because priorities can become distorted.
- The Seventh Tradition is not all about money.

How can we convey the message: “Service is an expression of love” as a way to give and receive love?

- Talk about how much fun service can be and the friendships you make.
- Take members with you so they can see service in action.
- Service is at all levels and is not separated from recovery.
- Encourage people, be supportive of those doing their first service job, encourage going to Assemblies so they can see how it works.
- Have workshops on service at all levels and thank everyone for what they do.

From the *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* it is clear that “the term of office for Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee is three years; they may serve two terms, which may be consecutive.” Is it possible for a Regional Trustee to serve two terms and then be elected as a Trustee at Large and serve two more terms? Is it possible for a Trustee to serve two terms and then become a member of the Executive Committee? Why is it acceptable for Trustees to serve six consecutive years while other members of AI-Anon/Alateen are encouraged to rotate service positions after three years? Doesn't this extended term in a position undermine the basic philosophy of AI-Anon/Alateen that we are all equals?

- A Trustee can serve a maximum of six years in any combination of Trustee at Large and/or Regional Trustee.
- If only part of a term is completed, that counts as one term. Why wouldn't we want to keep experienced people active? There are not that many experienced service people available for WSO positions.

- The Executive Committee term is only one year at a time up to three years.

Does the language of all of our literature still contain the heart of AI-Anon or have we lost heart in favor of more business-like and concise wording?

- Literature Committees at the WSO go to great lengths to make sure our literature is AI-Anon. Any member who is active keeps the heart in our literature.
- Member sharings keep the heart in our literature.

What techniques can we use to more readily gain access to professionals (social workers, teachers, doctors, judges, etc.) and to society at large to educate them about AI-Anon and the affects of alcoholism on families?

- Contact universities, medical societies, the professional communities, and court systems
- Share your personal experiences
- Reach out and cooperate with A.A. (lunches, workshops)
- Search for and connect to opportunities to share information

How do we practice “principles above personalities” when Area officers fail to perform the functions necessary for the Area's existence?

- Communicate. Continue to do our own job, be courteous, and have open discussions at Assembly with directness and honesty.
- Address the Area needs by looking at the Area principle not the personality.
- Use a pro-active approach—do an Area inventory.
- Hold workshops on role descriptions and leadership prior to election.
- Help each other, have an alternate plan and structure and use it.
- Utilize the power of prayer—avoid criticism and approach capable members to serve.

How do Delegates develop a working relationship with their Area Chair?

- Serve and let serve
- Communicate
- Support each other and work together
- Recognize common goals
- Work your program
- Think united

How can we educate and convey to the membership that we, as Delegates, are not authorities and ought not to be placed

on pedestals? When our three-year term as Delegate concludes, how can we best serve our Areas, sharing the knowledge and experience we have gained through our broadened perspective?

- Designate questions to the appropriate service arm
- Lead by example and maintain humility
- Rotate service and embrace past experience; share experience
- Refer to the *Service Manual* rather than talking from memory
- Stay active and current on information
- Continue to attend service meetings
- Be willing to be utilized and voice your willingness
- Serve in the background

How do we keep our primary purpose in our Al-Anon meetings?

- Have an orientation for newcomers and be sure to use Conference Approved Literature (CAL)
- Have meetings on the Traditions and read all of the Traditions at every meeting
- Be an example and talk about ourselves
- Read the Al-Anon welcome and preamble and use the pamphlet *Al-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53)
- Have a format to stay on topic
- Do a regular group inventory
- Share from the heart to reach a heart
- Display the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service
- When people cannot identify, we deal with the impact of the disease, not the person
- Newcomers may not realize we can help unless they stay around. Educate dual members and others—tell them to stick to the subject of the meeting
- Relate sharings with solutions using the Steps and Traditions
- Talk to people one-on-one who are causing the problems

How can the World Service Conference address the perception that the decisions are coming from the World Service Office to groups as policy, instead of the groups directing the WSO?

- Look at how the membership perceives the structure and how we present information
- Take care of issues or we smolder
- Take the entire conversation to the Area
- When people contact the WSO, be sure to get the answers
- Use available literature, *Area Highlights*, “Inside Al-Anon,” etc.
- Be sure of the details. Check our perceptions. Be careful of misinformation on the Internet.
- The WSO is a clearing house. Present the facts as coming from the World Service Conference (WSC), not the World Service Office (WSO)

- Take information to the Area before the Conference. People feel included by having some participation. Give the report at smaller groups (districts or groups)
- The WSC is an extension of the group meetings
- The *Conference Summary* is for the groups. They can use it in small announcements. It gives the groups ownership
- Some things have to be decided by the Board of Trustees. They have to cover the legalities of the business of the WSO. Trustees are concerned with our legal responsibilities and bring direction to the Conference for traditional approval
- Delegates need to take back both the reality and the spiritual aspects to educate the members

How do we build collaboration between ourselves and Alateen at all levels of service including the Board of Trustees?

- Include Alateens in the conversation about the Alateen Traditions
- Use Alateens in workshops and timely topics
- Collaborate on Area level—need to bridge the gap to WSC
- They need to be involved in service above the group level—as District Representatives, assistant Alateen Coordinator etc.
- Communicate about positions on the Alateen Advisory Committee
- Let Alateens make their own decisions when it is their job

Are we, as a fellowship, competing for the same dollar contributions and literature sales? Are we pushing groups to decrease support from one to help another?

- Lead by example—increase your personal contribution.
- Educate—explain the Budget and Treasurer’s Reports—have meetings on financial recovery.
- Support the budget passed by Area, groups, districts.
- Buy a book and place more than \$1.00 in the basket; place books in the community.
- Small segments of the fellowship may be pulling monies from groups that may need to go to other service arms (ie., A.A. Conference, round robins, hospitality rooms).
- Give reports at Assembly, go to conferences, round-ups, and other gatherings, and donate the excess to the WSO.
- Literature Distribution Centers (LDCs) need to service a geographic Area and should not overlap.
- Use existing LDCs to show literature at Assembly.
- It is Area/district autonomy on how LDCs are run. Buying from LDCs supports the WSO.
- All monies benefit Al-Anon, not some other purpose.
- Think abundantly—we will have all we need to purchase books and support groups.

Minorities/Diversity:

How can we make the public service announcements (PSAs) more diverse and address the following topics: low monetary families, single parents, gays and lesbians, mixed racial couples

Why are we not using our PSA's to affirm our unconditional love stance for all (potential) AI-Anon members? Are we letting ourselves be dictated to and be victims of others' limitations? By not addressing these issues, what is the implied message that is not being said on these issues?

Is the AI-Anon message reaching everyone who still suffers (single, divorced, parents, men, etc.)?

Why is so much emphasis being placed on attracting minorities? Does this imply we need to change our program to keep minorities coming back if they don't like what they hear?

How can we affect more change and help our Native Americans to start their own meetings?

Have we lost unity trying to be all things to all people, by targeting specific ethnic, age, and sexual orientation groups in our outreach tools such as "AI-Anon Is for" pamphlets?

- The majority culture continues to think "one size fits all"
- How can we develop what a minority feels/needs if we are not part of the minority?
- Look for the similarities rather than the differences
- Geographic isolation is a barrier
- How do we get them in the door?
- Attract by specific posters, e.g. a picture of a black family in a black area
- It can be like "culture shock" for a minority member
- Our prejudices limit us
- Tailor messages of pamphlets, PSAs to target the audience
- Make message familiar
- Use resources to get the message out, leave the results to a Higher Power
- The Board has diversified with Spanish- and French-speaking members
- Contact tribal councils and ask how we can encourage them to start groups and become part of groups

What do we do about illiteracy in the fellowship and how do we help the newcomer?

- Record material for those with a handicap i.e. illiteracy as a service project

- Communicate/help someone who has trouble reading on an individual basis

When and how do we establish the role of the Delegate with confidence at the Area level? At the Conference level?

- Convey successes by e-mail
- The World Service Conference is work—not a vacation
- Sometimes the trips (World Service Office [WSO] and Stepping Stones) attract those who only want the title, not the job
- Be brief about fun and fellowship
- Show what work you have done
- Talk about the dedication of everyone
- Conference sponsorship helps before and supports during WSC. Encourages Delegates when they feel overwhelmed
- Know the role—read the Delegate's role in the Handbook and understand your responsibility
- Pass on feedback from the WSC
- Have Coordinators do portions of the report back
- The Area had confidence in you—they elected you

Are Areas storing records on the Internet (or Web site) for the membership to retrieve (i.e. budgets, minutes, guidelines, etc.)?

- The WSO has financial information (current budget and audit) on the Members' site—demonstrates openness
- Shopping cart for literature, guidelines, public information, calendar of events
- Some list Area positions using last names – others definitely don't for safety reasons
- Others want guidance as to whether to use last names and/or phone numbers or protect anonymity

What checks and balances can we introduce to better assure a constant and accurate communication of important information flow from the WSO to the Area to groups and to individual members?

- Knowledge-based information is a tool that Delegates can use to move the fellowship forward.
- E-mail is a means of making communication more efficient.
- Ask District Representatives to confirm e-mail addresses in their districts.
- Use Area e-mail and telephone lists to share AI-Anon information—e-mail addresses can go in the blind copy line.

How can we get members to volunteer at AI-Anon groups and higher level service positions in our Areas? More and more dual members raise their hands for service.

- Have Sponsors ask their sponsees to help them in a

service position so the sponsee sees their Sponsor modeling recovery through service

- Use the enthusiasm of the newcomers to get them involved in service work
- Have “Sponsors on the Spot” to give Sponsors a chance to have responsibility for newcomers
- Dual members could have *Service Manual* study meetings. Suggest dual members work as Committee Chairpersons
- Suggestions could be made for dual members to be greeters or make coffee at the groups
- Divide some positions to create service jobs for dual members

Why is there discussion of religion and personal religious beliefs in meetings? How can this be discouraged when some people are very adamant about their beliefs and say they have the right to express “their” opinion in meetings?

- The “Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon” should be read in meetings. Some of this information is found on pages 39 and 52 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).
- Conference Approved Literature is a means of letting people know that we do not mix religion and spirituality together.
- Look up definitions of the words in the dictionary. Be gentle when talking about the differences.
- Groups can talk about the “God of my understanding” or use the term “Higher Power” as a more gentle approach.
- Step study meetings can help.

Are issues more important than recovery in groups?

- Have business meetings once a month to talk about issues
- Gently remind members who are sharing on outside issues not to go on and on
- Stay in the present in our sharings
- Sharing should be a release of some of our emotional secrets
- Meetings on Steps One, Two, and Three and one-on-one meetings really help

What action do we take when a member displays a pattern of behavior (discussing violent acts against others, carrying a weapon, being under the influence, outbursts of yelling, physically threatening others, sexually inappropriate behavior) that creates an unsafe meeting environment? How can we protect other members without violating the principles of the program? Is it gossip if members of one group relate this person’s

behavior to other groups? Can a group that the person has never attended (or has and not displayed these behaviors) have a group conscience and send a letter asking him/her not to come to their group? Do we need some specific guidelines in dealing with a member who could be potentially dangerous?

- The unity of the group has to come first. When a threatening circumstance occurs we need to protect the membership. Longtime members can often address the problem and speak to the offender.
- Talk to each other and reason things out. If it becomes necessary to go to the police, it can be reported as a concerned citizen to stay within the Traditions.
- None of us likes conflict, but we grow by confronting a problem and finding a solution together.
- Do not hesitate to use the links of service and experience of the Delegates and the WSO to sound things out.
- A guideline is not the answer. Answers are already in our literature. Refer to Tradition One in *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17) pamphlet which provides guidance on this issue.
- Support the person being abused.
- When we report a “fact,” be sure it is not gossip (Tradition Four).

What can we do to ensure that Alateen continues into the future? If we can’t, how can we include these teenagers in our regular meetings?

- Be willing to be a Sponsor or Coordinator.
- Include Alateen information in the Delegate’s report.
- Make Alateens welcome at Al-Anon—we are after all Al-Anon Family Groups.
- Use Alateen literature at regular Al-Anon meetings once a month or more often if Alateens are present.
- Educate the membership wherever we can (Round-ups, conferences, open meetings).
- Submit Al-Anon Members Involved In Alateen Service form to be prepared if the opportunity arises to serve.
- The WSO is working on making it possible to have safe meetings available on the Internet for Alateen.
- Always have Alateen literature at Al-Anon meetings.

How can we educate and suggest to our membership that the meeting format their group is using may no longer be consistent with the suggested format in the current *Service Manual*?

- District Representatives (DRs) need to be an *active* link
- Have DR training at Assemblies
- Use the current *Service Manual* to chair meetings
- It is an individual responsibility—“Let It Begin with Me”

NEXT STEPS

Since 2002, the Board of Trustees has sought an opportunity to hear from Conference members in a more informal, unstructured setting. These sessions had previously been called “Talking with the Delegates.” Each group of Delegates meets with a Board of Trustees or Executive Committee member facilitator, scribe, and listener to discuss a series of questions that the Board would like to have feedback on from the Delegates. This year’s session was called “Next Steps” with the goal of soliciting ideas from Delegates as to what additional steps could be taken to move the Conference forward to a more collaborative, deliberative body that would discuss and consider the bigger questions facing AI-Anon Family Groups in the future. As the knowledge-based decision-making process was utilized this year in many of the discussions, Delegates were asked what was most helpful about this year’s Conference, what they would like changed, and what else they would need to be successful in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Their comments included:

Most helpful:

- Clarity of roles of each group of Conference members
- New ideas and forward thinking about technology
- Openness of Board and WSO staff members
- Openness to ask questions and transparency of answers
- Conference Consultant in dealing with conflict resolution

Would like changed:

- More time to network during meals
- Pre-mail Committee reports rather than reading from the podium
- Conference Consultant took up too much of the agenda time
- Expand role of technology
- Create a “consent agenda”

The Board of Trustees will review all of the comments and ideas expressed. Those appropriate to the duties of the Conference Committee will be passed on for discussion. Everyone will work together during the year to make the 2007 Conference a great success.



“Discussions on the Next Steps for the Conference”

DELEGATES (PANEL 44)

The theme for this year's Conference reminds me that Al-Anon is a fellowship of sharing one's experience, strength, and hope. From my first meeting, I saw leadership being shared by members willing to be of service, from the Chairperson to the Treasurer, and especially the coffee makers and the members who opened the door. Sharing with you means I am not alone. Together, we can walk the path of changing our will and our life with the help of a Power greater than ourselves. Tradition Two provides the guidance regarding leadership in Al-Anon. It states that "Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern." This Tradition keeps my leadership role in perspective and reminds me that the ultimate authority is a loving God, expressed through the group conscience, and not me.

Today, my leadership role has brought me to the World Service Conference as the Delegate of Area 64, Alabama. Being Delegate does not make me special; serving at any level broadens my horizon and increases my gratitude. I have had the privilege these past three years of serving with Delegates from throughout the US and Canada, sharing our Al-Anon programs with each other and working together to keep Al-Anon alive for the future friends and families of alcoholics.

I know today that my Al-Anon program would not be where it is without service. Our Legacies of recovery, unity, and service are threefold. I believe service is the foundation of our program and without it I am not complete. With service, the rest of my program has a strong framework to support any unforeseen disaster that may strike, because I will not be standing alone when the storms of life blow in. You are and will be there with me along with my Higher Power. The Traditions and Concepts of Service come to life during service and I have again had to work through all my character defects, at a different level, especially to keep the focus on principles and not personalities. Service provided the opportunity for me to move ahead, out of the problem and toward the solution. That is why, in sharing my pain and struggles, I can identify with your pain. By sharing my gratitude, I can understand your peace.

Janie J.
Alabama

By sharing your example, I have come to believe that I do deserve the gifts my God has blessed me with.

An alcoholic brought me to the rooms of Al-Anon, but that is not what has kept me here. Continuing to attend meetings and being of service in Al-Anon is purely selfish. I like who I am, I know what I like, and I have clarity (most of the time), and a peace and serenity beyond all measure. These are the gifts I get from working the Twelve Steps, having a Sponsor, opening the doors of my home group, and being willing to be a member and not an "attender." I still arrive 30 minutes before a meeting and stay after the meeting. I have gotten to know the members of my group this way, especially the newcomers.

Al-Anon allowed me the privilege of being the caregiver to my husband and recently my mom. Al-Anon taught me that I was powerless over their illness and death, that I could be with them without trying to heal them, and to accept and love them just as they were that day. Even in their illness, they were still children of God and deserved the same respect and dignity as anyone else. In being the best daughter or wife that I could be, I could be a part of their life—one day at a time, one moment at a time. Life is a very precious gift.

One important lesson Al-Anon gave me was unconditional love. Today, I can give that love to my parents who never told me they loved me. Today, I can say I love you to my family with no expectations. Any gifts I receive are from my High Power and for this I am truly grateful.

I am truly blessed to be part of this conversation that, over the past 55 years, has helped move this program forward with confidence, collaboration, and clarity! I was angry, lonely, and frustrated when I came to my first Al-Anon meeting. I just wanted him to stop drinking so I would be fine! The effects of alcoholism on my life included insecurity, isolation, and a sense of inequality. Desperation led me to ask someone to be my Sponsor, someone to work the Steps with. Redefining *my* Higher Power, taking *my* inventory, and continuing to focus on *my* relationship with *my* Higher Power led me into service at the group level. I was a Treasurer, a Literature Chairperson, and an Alateen Sponsor. I am no longer insecure. By working the Steps, I am moving forward with confidence. I know who I am, what I like, what I do well, and when I should ask for help.

Studying the Traditions taught me how

Cindy M.
Arizona

to be “a part of.” As I continued to move forward in my recovery, I found service beyond the group level. As a Group Representative, I went to Assemblies where I learned how to share a minority opinion and accept the group conscience. My Service Sponsor encouraged me to share my story at halfway houses, women’s shelters, and mental health hospitals. Being part of a district, an Intergroup, and an Area made me realize I was no longer alone. By working the Traditions, I have learned not to isolate but to collaborate—to talk to each other and reason things out, to share my ideas with others, and to listen to what others have to share.

By working the Concepts of Service, I have been given clarity—how all our spiritual principles support our primary purpose. The most important principle is equality—I am a member, no greater than and no less than any other member. I must not look up at anyone or look down at anyone, as we are all equal. Together, we can make a difference in this worldwide fellowship!

I can do my part as a trusted servant and share in the leadership of this program. I know that serving as Delegate has been the biggest learning experience for me yet. I have grown so much these past three years. From the Alateen motion, to the Southwest Regional Trustee Nomination process, to our friends on the gulf coast, and knowledge-based decision-making, I have learned how to practice these principles in all my affairs. By giving, I have received so much, and I am confident that those who come after me will keep our program moving forward by continuing the conversation!

When I became the Delegate for the British Columbia/Yukon Territory of Canada, I had been a member for over 35 years. It was an honor to be selected and I felt I could do the job, since I had served in my earliest years in various positions: Group Representative, District Representative, Central Services Liaison, and Alternate Delegate.

I have always enjoyed reading anything that’s about Al-Anon and have made a point of keeping abreast of what is going on through *Area Highlights*, “Inside Al-Anon,” and as a special worker at our Central Services—I think I read every piece of literature over those seven years!

Assemblies and Area World Service weekends were always highlights. The five Regional Service Seminars, four international A.A. conventions with Al-Anon participation and, especially, our first stand-alone Al-Anon International in Salt Lake City, all brought home to me the tremendous work that has been done since our

Kal T.
*British Columbia/
Yukon Territory*

program began.

This year’s theme has been demonstrated to me over the years in my small home group and on the larger world stage. That simple act of sharing our common story with someone affected by the disease of alcoholism and offering the hand of help and hope is what has kept us moving forward worldwide.

Confidence came about for me as I became willing to give service a try. When I did, those who went before me encouraged me and I pray I can, by example, encourage others to step up and give it a try. There was always collaboration in any project, as long as I was willing to ask for help and, when necessary, clarity. My motto has always been: “There is more knowledge in several heads than in my little head alone!”

This past summer, my husband of 47 years died unexpectedly. It was a stunning experience, but I never once thought of “resigning,” because I have learned over the years that when I make a commitment, I keep it and carry on while asking for help, in the knowledge that I would not be alone. The program and my Higher Power are always there for me.

Being a Delegate and attending the three World Service Conferences have been very rewarding. It was especially fun to be on the Literature Committee, since I am so fond of CAL, our Conference Approved Literature. I just happen to spell my Kal with a K! I hope to continue serving Al-Anon in some capacity for the rest of my life.

I thank God everyday for bringing me here! I am honored to be among all of you who have so much wisdom. When I came through the doors of Al-Anon on March 12, 1989, I never, ever believed that I would be anywhere but in the depths of the despair I felt at that moment. I was broken and in pain to the core of my being. I cried in sorrow and fear. I was ravaged from living in the family disease of alcoholism. You quickly gave me hope that I might find some comfort and help among you. Little did I know.

In this fellowship, I’ve found an incredible legacy of leadership begun by Lois and Anne, all those many years ago. They didn’t tell the early members “how to.” Instead, they asked *them* “how shall we.” They led by example—true Sponsors and leaders.

The legacy of leadership begins with personal sponsorship. My Sponsor kept me moving forward with confidence when life felt hopeless. I’m grateful, too, for all those in the program who led me along the way:

Carol C.
Colorado

the woman who asked me to help her put the chairs away after a meeting when I was so distraught all I could do was cry; the woman who taught me that my life is none of my business, it's my Higher Powers; the man who said, "Carol, learn to live life on life's terms"; the woman who let me model my Higher Power after hers; and so many others. You all sponsored and led me. Now, I get to lead others along the path.

The legacy of leadership continues with service. My Sponsor gently persuaded me into service by sharing her leadership skills with me. There were my friends who distracted me during an election Assembly that inadvertently led to my "standing" (or not sitting down) for Area Secretary, the past Delegates who gave me confidence and showed me how to have the courage to stand for this position, and the wonderful woman who became my Sponsor here at the Conference. I've learned to trust myself, because you were willing to trust me and I've learned to trust and have confidence in our trusted servants. You've helped me build confidence and trust by loving me when I didn't do it perfectly. You encouraged me to just keep *doing*. It's so healthy, healing, and rewarding to practice these principles with people who know what they mean and how important they are. Best of all, I get to share my new confidence and clarity with those who will follow.

I believe Al-Anon will keep moving forward as we talk it over and reason things out together, because that gives us clarity and that, in turn, fosters trust. At the end of this year, when I pass the Delegate hat on, I will continue to share with confidence because of my time spent with the members of Panels 42 through 46. Those who went before me said being Delegate would be "the journey of a lifetime." They were so right.

This year's theme kept eluding me. The well was dry. I wanted to say something important, something everyone would remember. Finally, the light got through and I realized that all I had to do was share what this theme meant to me.

When I first came to Al-Anon in 1981, I was emotionally at the lowest point in my life. I didn't care if there were leaders or how the groups were run. Service work was a foreign concept.

As I continued to attend meetings, and read, understand, and work the Steps, Traditions, and finally, the dreaded Concepts of Service, I gained a greater understanding of many things. I came to realize that leadership isn't just about being a Group Representative, District Representative, or Area officer, but about being a member of a fellowship that encourages each of us to

Debbie F.
Georgia

share our opinions and perspectives as well as our concerns. When we do this, we can discuss issues. It's this discussion that brings clarity—understanding our goal and knowing where we want to go. Sometimes, when an issue isn't clear, we need to get input from the World Service Office (WSO). Once we have clarity, we can continue to work together to decide the best way to put that goal into action. When we have clarity and we know where we want to go, then we can move forward with confidence. Sometimes, there's a lot of collaborating before there's any clarity; but, ultimately, the path becomes clear. It's the same for me in my personal recovery. Talking with my Sponsor, a WSO staff member, or a longtime member and getting different perspectives helps bring clarity to whatever is troubling me and helps me know in what direction I need to move or, sometimes, not move. When I have this clarity, I have the self-confidence to do or not do what's needed for my personal recovery.

Shared leadership has many different voices and each voice is essential to insure that the message of hope reaches those in need. I pray that our many voices never fall silent.

My journey began when I stepped into my first Al-Anon meeting so many years ago. Unable to speak for myself, I was filled with fear and anxiety. Alone in my head, I hung onto every word spoken as if my life depended on it, not knowing how much it really did. By opening my heart and mind, I began to slowly learn about living, just for today. The more I opened myself to this fellowship, the less anxiety I had. By trusting in the process and with the help of my Higher Power, meetings, and a Sponsor, I began to change. I had been given the tools of the program and, by using each one, I was assured that I would continue to grow, one day at a time. I didn't have to do this alone.

"When the teacher is ready, the student appears." The first time I heard this, it moved my spirit. Little did I know how much this would help, as my journey of service began to unfold. If it had not been for the encouragement I received from members of my group, I would not be standing here today. I heard, "You can do it. We will help." My Service Sponsor continues to encourage me. Each time I move forward with confidence, I gain help in all areas of my life. When a dear friend needed help, I was able to collaborate with the family

Ann F.- S.
Massachusetts

and doctors, stretching myself beyond my comfort level. I felt the guidance of a Higher Power all the way through this, with a new clarity of what it means to be part of the family of Al-Anon.

The Alateen requirements—what fun that was. I thought, “What am I doing here?” But, I took the message back to my Area. We shared, we listened, we reasoned things out, and I shared the amends that the Delegates received the second year. The sharing of information, so valuable to the growth of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon/Alateen’s shared leadership, showed me that I am not alone and that the thread of each of us is what holds us together. I have been given a great gift.

When I first read our theme for this year, I thought it seemed . . . long. I started thinking about shared leadership. One of the first things I learned in Al-Anon was that this isn’t about the alcoholic on one side and me on the other, as though we were opposing each other. We are both on the same side. That’s what “shared leadership” means to me. We are all on the same side, doing our best to protect Al-Anon and help Al-Anon grow in this ever-changing world.

I once heard a speaker repeat several times that “The only pain in change is our resistance to it.” I have remembered those words over the years and found them to be very true. The world is changing around us all the time and we can work together to meet these changes with grace and dignity. Because the world is changing all the time, we have the choice to fall behind or move forward. I am glad that I belong to a fellowship that wants to move forward. We can look back and take what was valuable with us, but we must keep moving forward or the world will go on and we will become something of the past.

It is important to have confidence in our fellow Al-Anon members and remember that we are all here because we love this program, this way of life, and we want it to be here in the future for others. We can have collaboration when we work together for the common good. This is about all of us addressing current issues and finding what is best for Al-Anon as a whole, not for one member or Area. I believe that God and Lois have been watching our proceed-

JoAnne H.
Minnesota North

ings and have decided to get us ready, not only for our theme this year, but also for the concept of knowledge-based decision-making as well.

The Alateen requirements made it necessary for our Area to do a lot of talking and working together and figuring things out before we ever took a vote. By the time we did take a vote, we had worked out all our questions and were clear about what was being decided. The vote was simple. Our ad hoc committee was trusted, our Assembly had confidence, and we all worked together for what was best for Minnesota North.

This also played itself out in my personal life. My husband and I were driving down the freeway one day and I saw campers coming towards us. I suggested to him that we should buy a camper so we could go on vacations around the country. He said he thought that was a great idea. Now, I’ve been married to this man long enough to know that whenever we agree on something that easily, it means that one of us doesn’t have clarity on the conversation. So I asked him if he was looking at the cute little pull-behind camper. He said that he was looking at the RV’s. I asked why he would want a gas-hog like that. He pointed out that we can’t pull a camper and a boat. I said, “What boat?” He said that we wouldn’t want to go on a vacation to someplace where he couldn’t fish. I knew right away we didn’t have clarity about vacations at all and that we were going to have to do some collaboration on the subject before I would have the confidence to go on a shared vacation. Of course, I didn’t know at the time that this would be our Conference theme this year, but I do believe that God knew. I believe that God was showing me this, so that when I learned the Conference theme, I would have a good understanding about what it can mean at our Assemblies and in my personal life. I am grateful for this opportunity to again grow in understanding.

As I read this year’s Conference theme, I thought, “Well, hasn’t this been what my whole life has been about?” My dictionary tells me that confidence is a state of trust, collaboration is working together, and clarity is clearness of meaning.

Twelve Step programs first entered my life when I was six years old. They had been familiar to me for a long time, so when my mom bribed me to go to Alateen, I went. When I arrived, I was a confused teenager, who just knew things weren’t working anymore. The coping skills I had learned didn’t work with the alcoholics and others inside and outside my family. I had little trust in anyone, including myself; could not depend on anyone, except myself; and was in a fog.

Mickie Z.
*Maritime
Provinces*

I didn't know who I was or what I wanted and didn't know how to figure that out. I did know that people around me in this program seemed to have this and I wanted it. So, I stayed and did the things I was told to do in order to get better.

My life started to move forward in this program. Service was one consistent thing I was asked to do, and I agreed to do it because I didn't want to let you down and wanted you to like me. I told myself that you had faith in me to do this job, so I must be able to. I gained confidence and self-esteem with every job I did. I noticed you never asked me to do more than I was capable of. You always helped me when I needed it and, you never fired me when I wasn't perfect or made mistakes. Doing service taught me about Mickie—what I like and what I am like, what I want for myself and what I would find acceptable or not from those around me. I learned that I could apply all the things I've learned in this program to myself, my family, co-workers, and others. Al-Anon has become a living program for me the more I live it.

Today, I have confidence in myself, in you, and in this program we share. I am confident we will do what is best for Al-Anon at this Conference. I trust this collaborative process will work this week, as I have seen it work the past two Conferences. I have clarity—I can see myself for what I am. I am a perfectionist Delegate, who is not yet perfect, working with others for the good of a program that we all love. My Area sees me as a leader. Today, I know that is true and that all of us here are leaders within Al-Anon. It has been a fun, rewarding, sometimes frustrating, and busy, learning adventure to serve as Delegate for the Maritime Provinces. I am so grateful to Alateen, Al-Anon, and you for giving me a life that has been, and continues to be, amazing in so many ways.

I have shared my life with the disease of alcoholism since birth and what a journey it has been. By the time I reached Al-Anon in 1976, I certainly had no confidence nor was there clarity in my thinking.

My only thought as I entered the doors of Al-Anon was to “get” the alcoholics to do what I thought was best. By this time, a family program had made me realize that I also needed to “get” better. Clarity overcame my denial and made me see that my loved ones suffered from an illness, which I did not cause and could not control or cure. My first group loved me until I had the confidence to chair a meeting. With their support, I entered the realm of service, which, unbeknownst to me at the time, is leadership by serving.

At the district and Area levels, I saw leadership and collaboration in action as

Fran A.
Mississippi

we worked jointly and in support of each other on issues. I gained clarity to see reality in situations and gained enough confidence and courage to share my thoughts and ideas. I began to give back the gifts I had received from Al-Anon.

My Area, Mississippi, has just recently seen our Conference theme in action. After Katrina hit, people saw the need to supply literature to our stricken area. One person had the clarity to step forward and be the leader in receiving and distributing the literature where it was needed. She had confidence that we, as members of Al-Anon, would collaborate and get the job done. The literature was “moved forward” to members in need.

Our members on the coast also shared leadership and collaboration. They had to find new meeting places, because theirs had been destroyed. Meeting times had to be changed because of dusk to dawn curfews. All this was done with no power, telephone, or mail service!

Another area in which I have seen our theme in action is here at the Conference. When I was a first-year Delegate, I left the Conference feeling resentful over the Alateen guidelines. I felt the Board of Trustees had made a decision on the guidelines without communicating their intentions and had not included the fellowship in the decision making. I left with a feeling of “them vs. us.” It did not seem to be shared leadership.

Last year, an apology was made, not for putting the guidelines in place, but for the manner in which the decision was made and implemented. Creating a culture of trust was discussed. I became immediately aware of a change in attitude, which created a more trusting and cooperative atmosphere. We were being asked to share leadership and to have trust in each other so we can continue to carry our message of experience, strength, and hope.

Serving as Delegate has been a growth experience through which I have gained confidence in all of us, as trusted servants, knowing that each of us wants what is best for Al-Anon. I have seen us use “principles above personalities,” as we've faced dissension, and “Let It Begin with Me,” as we've searched for clarity and acceptance.

As I looked at this year's Conference theme, I saw my growth in a whole new light. My service to this program began when I started going to Area Assembly with my husband. He invited me to “come along” and maybe get involved with Al-Anon service while he was at the A.A. assembly. I did enjoy going, but isolated in our hotel room when meetings were not going on. I was afraid to socialize, as I did not believe that I was good enough. My self-esteem was at rock bottom. With

Jeanne H.
Montana

little steps, I gradually got to know a few people and over the years held several service positions. I was moving forward, although confidence still did not come easily for me. Even when members said that I was doing a great job, I discounted what they said and beat myself up anyway. I prayed for God's help, but then I had trouble trusting that He would be there for me. Sometimes, I could turn things over, but then I would take everything back.

Today, I believe God continually challenges me, so I can learn to be the best person I can be. My faith has grown in leaps and bounds—I have so very much to be thankful for. As my faith grows, so does my confidence. My life is full of serenity and I have a wonderful loving family. My experience as a Delegate has been very rewarding. I truly am blessed with Al-Anon friends and I am enriched with being a part of the leadership of worldwide Al-Anon. I am able to share in its growth through collaboration with other members. As informed decisions are made, I can be confident that we are sending a clear message regarding the help and hope that Al-Anon offers to the friends and families of alcoholics everywhere.

The Conference theme reminds me of “back to basics.” After all, I am told in the suggested closing to Al-Anon meetings to “Talk to each other, reason things out with someone else . . .” I am encouraged to collaborate with another person. Frequently, that person is my Sponsor, or sometimes it's the group as a whole, and, very often, it is my Higher Power. It is through listening with an open mind that I gain new insights and clarity into my problem or situation. Once I have these new insights, I can move forward and take the necessary steps, with the confidence and courage to look at the facts and the reality facing me and do what I think is right and honorable at that moment. I know that, when I share my experience, strength, and hope with another, I am practicing the principles of the program, just as they are expanding their perspective, and so there is shared leadership. When the teacher is ready the student will appear.

Prior to Al-Anon, I rarely gave my opinion. Instead, I was quiet and reserved and always did my best not to rock the boat. I accepted other peoples' opinions as truth and never endeavored to find my truth or the clarity in the message or situation. I

Paula B.
North Carolina/
Bermuda

didn't collaborate because I didn't feel as though my opinions or thoughts had value. I had no confidence.

Once I came to Al-Anon and heard in the closing that I needed to talk to another and reason things out, I got a Sponsor. I called her almost daily. It was miraculous that someone else wanted to know and hear my explanations (sometimes justifications) for my behavior. She shared her insights and it was in that collaboration that I got to know myself better and have more clarity into the effects of having grown up in an alcoholic home and being married to an alcoholic.

When I began service work, I was encouraged to get a Service Sponsor. Again, I had the opportunity of collaborating with someone who held the position previously. It was in that collaboration that I found my own style of being a trusted servant. I came to understand the importance of our longtime members and past trusted servants and the experience and history they could share. It was through listening and collaborating that I gained the necessary insight and clarity to be a leader.

The Legacies of our program will remain strong as members apply the ideals of the Conference theme. The theme is a culmination of all the feelings and experiences I've had as a Delegate. I have grown in confidence through collaborating and seeking clarity. Through the shared leadership with my fellow Delegates, we have moved this fellowship forward in many ways.

So, back to basics. I take with me from this Conference theme another set of three Cs.

When I first saw this year's theme, I thought, that will make for a little thinking about my three-minute talk. What I have learned in my Al-Anon journey is to THINK and take “baby steps” if need be. So, I decided to work on this theme, one word at a time.

“Shared:” Prior to Al-Anon, I didn't share much with anyone, especially those close to me. I didn't share feelings; I didn't even know where to start. After recovery began, I could sort my feelings. They were either from my head, my heart, or my gut. Having a Sponsor helped tremendously in “sharing” these feelings with those I loved and cared about. I also learned to share responsibilities.

“Leadership:” I was always a good leader rather than a follower, but in Al-Anon I learned to lead in a healthy way. I didn't have to be a super leader. I could even be a follower. I learned to share my leadership

Shirley J.
North Dakota

skills with people I sponsored so they, too, could become leaders.

“Moving:” Before Al-Anon, my life was pretty much at a standstill. I was consumed with the disease. I learned to move forward and not dwell on the past. I began moving in a positive direction, which also helped my family move forward.

“Forward:” This was a scary place for me when I was new in the program. I was so used to saying “what if,” that many times I was frozen in the present and could not move forward out of fear. I learned to trust God, Al-Anon members, and my Sponsor. I began to take risks, moving forward and not looking back and analyzing what I could have done differently. I learned to “Live and Let Live” and “Let Go and Let God” and my life became much more manageable.

“Confidence:” When I got to the rooms of Al-Anon, I had a hard time looking people in eye. I had no self-worth or confidence. The more my Sponsor believed in me and mentored me into service, the more confidence I got and could now begin to collaborate at other levels. I was now willing to work with people at the district and Area levels.

“Clarity:” Thanks to this program of recovery, I can see clearly now. I was so confused when I entered the doors and the sad part was that I didn’t even know how I got there, as I didn’t grow up in alcoholism. Thanks to Al-Anon, I have learned to share my leadership skills and to move forward with confidence, collaboration, and clarity.

As I think about this year’s theme, I need to first remember that, when I first walked into Al-Anon, I had none of these qualities. I was absorbed by uncertainty, worked alone because I “knew all,” and didn’t trust anyone. Situations and my life were distorted.

When I began to work the Steps and talk with a Sponsor and other Al-Anon friends, I began to understand that I was not alone and how, together, we can help each other grow by sharing ourselves openly and honestly. I soon started to feel better and was getting clarity as the fog lifted. I realized that I needed more than the one meeting a week I was attending. Because my son was still small, it was the first time in years that my husband and I actually sat and negotiated on how I was going to get to more meetings and we could both work on our recovery. Go figure, we had started the process of collaboration that continues today. Sometimes, I reflect back to the days when it was “my way or the highway” and remember that today I am part of a team.

Kathy B.
New Jersey

When the opportunity to serve Al-Anon found me, because I wasn’t looking for it, I was scared to death. I didn’t feel prepared or confident that I could handle the responsibility. My first experience beyond the group was chairing the Al-Anon participation at an A.A. convention where I was introduced to, and worked with, the Al-Anon Delegate. That was all it took and he got me more involved.

The more I work on myself and give back to Al-Anon, the more I grow. How do I get confidence? As long as I do my best and remember to bring my recovery and my Higher Power with me, I become more confident in myself. Collaboration? Sitting in business meetings and Assemblies, listening to others, and making decisions based on what is good for Al-Anon as a whole helps me to collaborate. Clarity? Sometimes I don’t feel clear at all, but do the next thing. Other times, I can see exactly where the next step is and I take it.

In closing, this journey has helped me walk through fear and uncertainty whether I wanted to or not. It has also given me pleasure, humor, and humility. Finally, the Alateen requirements helped me to remember (again) that when someone shares their opinion with me, I don’t have to respond! I look forward to my future service to Al-Anon and how it will enhance my personal growth; I would not have traded this for anything. For me to continue to grow, I need to continue giving.

When I came to Al-Anon, the idea of shared leadership was totally foreign. The concept that I needed help from anyone to make my family and everyone I knew behave in the proper manner was ridiculous. I was the boss and you had better believe it! The world would be a better place if I were in charge.

At my first meeting, they told me that I could have a peaceful and contented life, if I wanted it enough. At the time, I felt that my circumstances were different; this type of recovery was not possible for me. Of course, my hopeless situation was worse than anything they could know. How could that possibly be bettered?

During the meetings, they laughed and talked of having better relationships with their families and I wanted that. What I came to understand was that their lives were better, but not through changes in the other people in their families. They changed within themselves, which made them more accepting of their loved ones.

The first experience that I noticed and

Debbie P.
Oklahoma

remembered was when they kept asking me to keep coming back and really seemed to mean it. At the time, my family would have preferred that I be anywhere but at home with them. I realized that I was unable to blame my family. I did not want to be around them either. I liked the feelings I was experiencing and began to attend more meetings on a regular basis. My home life was a mess, but in Al-Anon I felt that I was beginning to belong. The people I met seemed to care if I attended meetings, and I began to feel a part of something special.

In a short time, I was asked to attend district meetings and Area Assembly. I was unsure about what was happening at these functions. I just felt safe going anywhere with the people I was beginning to trust. The trips to and from the meetings were like a whole new world. These people were eager to share their secrets. They wanted to share what they had learned, and I was ready to absorb everything they wanted to give me. I was becoming more aware of how to share myself by learning the workings of our beautiful fellowship.

I was asked to become our group's Intergroup Service Representative and Alternate Group Representative. The honor and fear of failure warred within me. The current Group Representative (also my personal Sponsor) encouraged me to get more involved and offered to help me do the best job I could.

The journey started slowly. I was not aware of all the changes that were becoming second nature in my life. My love of service work, all that I have received because of this fellowship, and the people I have met along the way are part of the miracle that keeps me coming back to Al-Anon.

So, through the ideas of sharing leadership, especially with the God of my understanding, growing in confidence, trusting and looking to myself, collaborating with others through conversations, study, and service, and understanding and getting clarity about myself, I feel that I am becoming the person I would like to be and that the God of my understanding wishes me to be.

Over 24 years ago, I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting looking for help on how to live with an active alcoholic. From that very first meeting so many years ago, with God's help, I began to change. In Al-Anon, I found friends that were willing to listen when I began to share what was happening in my life. Friends like I'd never had before.

I was not a leader, had no confidence in myself, and knew how to work with others at work, but was unsure of what I wanted. Al-Anon has changed all that for me. I found the courage when the time was right to say

Susan G.
Oregon

“yes,” I'd help start a new meeting in the little town where I lived which, at that time, only had one meeting a week. In time, I found the courage and confidence to leave a marriage where my life and the lives of my two children were in danger. I found clarity about what I knew I needed to do.

As my recovery in Al-Anon slowly moved on, I began to grow in service. Susan, the wallflower working behind the scenes, was slowly coming out of her cocoon, growing in confidence. In order to work with others, I had to become willing to work with a Sponsor, to let someone else know about Susan. For me, that was a difficult task. The fear was so deep that if you really knew me you would not like me, much less love me. All growth for me has happened in God's time. At 16 years in the program, I knew I needed a new Sponsor, someone who would help me go back to the deep dark secrets of the past, my childhood. No matter how bad I thought I was, she still loved me. I was like the Velveteen Rabbit, I was torn apart and became the beautiful lady I am today.

When I became the District Representative, I shared this leadership role with my Alternate, and began a new era of working with others in service. I did not have to do this on my own. I clearly knew it was okay to ask for help.

In 2003, I became willing and won the vote to stand before this Conference as a Delegate. I became willing to share this leadership role, moving forward with confidence, collaboration, and clarity. Today, I know where I have come from, with God's help and with Al-Anon.

I am the eighth of a 14-member family. During my childhood, my brothers and sisters overprotected me because I was a frail child. I then became very dependent. I also developed very poor self-esteem with a lack of initiative, a lot of fears, and, most of all, shame for myself.

I thought for a long time that I was a follower and, unconsciously, to fill my own shortcomings, I chose a spouse with strong leadership. But this spouse is also an alcoholic and a dominating man. That is what brought me to Al-Anon.

I soon loved this program. When I was hearing, “. . . let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time,” I knew I was experiencing recovery.

Today, after almost 20 years of continuous service in Al-Anon, I am no more a follower. I am a leader. Most of the time, I am facing my fears in doing tasks that were frightening to me at the beginning. Serving

Elaine L.
Quebec East

as Delegate has helped me to share leadership and to move forward with collaboration, confidence, and clarity. During my first Conference, I could voice my opinion in French, but not easily in English. This year, at my last Conference, I accepted an offer to co-chair a workshop. I have also accepted an offer to serve as the editor of the Canadian Delegates' Newsletter. What a fruitful experience this was!

In my opinion, the most important word of this inspiring theme is "clarity." Clarity means quality of being clearly explained. It also means transparency, integrity, and honesty. My poor self-esteem, my fear of being ridiculous, and my fear of being rejected often prevented me from sharing real feelings or from giving my opinion on a subject. I am practicing clarity as often as possible when communicating with others. Communicating then becomes easier and very fulfilling!

Thank you, Al-Anon! Thank you to all of you for having helped me to become a better person, a more mature woman! Thank you, also, to my Higher Power for having strengthened my leadership skills and intensified my interest for this fellowship at the worldwide level.

Upon reading this year's Conference theme, I thought of what service has done for me. Service has taught me how to feel confident, how to collaborate with others, and how to use program tools to find clarity in decision making. I lacked these three essential abilities when I entered my first Al-Anon meeting.

I grew up in the chaos of alcoholism. I didn't learn how to think clearly. My belief was that if I was better my family life would improve, my mother would return, my father would stop drinking, and I would not be responsible for my siblings. When I failed to fix my family, my self-esteem and confidence plummeted. I shut everyone out. I would not collaborate with any adult, ever.

I survived into adulthood. While I knew my father was a drunk, I denied it. I denied that it caused me any problems. I was bigger, more powerful than alcoholism. I fell in love and the world became a rose garden. Years later, the blossoms faded and fell to the earth. Again, I was buried in alcoholism's chaos and pain. I didn't know what to do. I could not think clearly and I could not talk to anyone about it. After years of being consumed by alcohol, my wife found sobriety. Al-Anon found me.

John McL.
Vermont

Frightened and lonely, I entered my first meeting. The Steps and Traditions were read. Tradition Five hit home, I was not alone. I sat there amazed as person after person, week after week, told parts of my story. Months later, I trusted you enough to begin telling my own story. Slowly, I began to do things for the group. Confident trusted servants inspired me. I watched them collaborate with others to address and solve group, district, and Area issues. I followed their clarity of thought. I found a Sponsor and other healthy members to emulate, who took an interest in their own recovery and in the recovery of others. I wanted what they had, so I asked for help and guidance, and received it.

Today, I have confidence in my ability to share leadership, because you have shown confidence in me by allowing me to serve to the best of my ability. I know how to work with others, from your collaboration with me. Thanks to Al-Anon, I can quiet my mind and focus on the issue at hand. Today, I bring clarity to discussions and decisions. Hopefully, I will be moving forward with new service opportunities at the end of this year. I will bring the hope, inspiration, and love you have given me into whatever life opens for me.

This is one of the hardest things I have had to do as a Delegate. It is hard because another chapter of my life is about to change and I will be moving on to something else. The Conference theme has made me wonder where my life is going.

I have so much gratitude for any and all information I have acquired as a Delegate. My journey as Delegate has been incredible. The leadership qualities I have seen as we discussed the Alateen issues and then taking the message back to the Area was such growth for me. Part of the Twelfth Tradition, "placing principles above personalities," always came to me when I listened to people express their views on the subject. I guess I would call these my collaboration and clarity moments.

My "shared leadership" came when our Area stood as a unit and presented our guidelines. It was reassuring for me to be part of a united front. Then, Virginia's Alateen participants asked if they could participate in writing the guidelines. I saw the democratic process work in our Area. Our state began to move forward and we were all reading the same page, one person at a time.

There are some important things that I

Phyllis S-T.
Virginia

will carry with me for the rest of my life. First, the newly gained friendships I acquired. This year's Southeast Regional Delegates meeting was great because I had an opportunity to meet and talk with newly elected Delegates from other Areas.

I have acquired a fondness for how the process works. Delegates, the World Service Office staff members, and the Board of Trustees did the process with clarity and collaboration at my first two Conferences and I am grateful for the experience.

In reviewing my time as Delegate, I have been enhanced by living this experience. I have learned how to collaborate with clarity on things I can change and leave the rest alone. My shared leadership experience will allow me to put my learned knowledge to use in arenas that are unrelated to Al-Anon.

I have so much gratitude for my personal and spiritual growth over the last three years. As a result of being Delegate, I will work on improving my ability to share my leadership skills while moving forward with confidence, collaboration, and clarity. None of this would have been possible without the help, experience, and knowledge received as a Panel 44 Delegate.

"Why did you do this all yourself? We would have been glad to do something to help." My interpretation: I did not do a good enough job.

Three years later, when it was again my district's turn to chair, it was someone else's position. This gal went to meetings, announced a planning meeting, and invited anyone interested in helping or sharing experience, strength, and hope to attend. I was shocked when I walked into the room to see at least 20 people. She went through the list of duties and asked who was willing to take on each job. To my amazement, people were willing. She spent her energy coordinating the project rather than running around doing it all. Each person had fewer chores and put their creativity to work. Each planning meeting brought us all together with much anticipation and excitement. The lesson was perfect; I did not have to be alone anymore.

Shared leadership means working together, hand in hand, trusting each other, and being trustworthy for one another. Confident in the direction, decisions are discussed until a plan is confirmed and then, with a clear purpose, we all work toward the same goal and not against one another.

"You do not have to be alone anymore." These words, spoken to me at my first meeting, still ring true today, almost 28 years later. Whenever I asked for help (sometimes I did not ask), another member offered guidance, experience, strength, hope and, on occasion, confusion and frustration.

I grew up an only child. Responsibility for things gone wrong stopped with me. So, when asked to do Al-Anon service, I took the "if I did not do it, no one would" attitude with me. To say this caused some trouble would be an understatement.

As a District Representative, I was informed that it was the district's turn to plan the Al-Anon portion of a local Assembly. What I heard was that it was MY job. I was to attend the A.A. organizational meeting, I was to create a flyer and get it distributed, I was to set up the workshops, I was to get people to chair them, I was to create a skit, and then, be the problem solver for the day. It never occurred to me to ask how.

Growing up, it was assumed I should know. All questions were stupid questions. I do not even remember talking about this with my Sponsor. Somehow, the entire thing worked out. I was exhausted. The day of the event several people said things like,

Ruth H.
Washington

Our Conference theme, at first, seemed to apply to my service adventures. I thought of the first year of my term for each position and how I certainly lacked confidence. I thought of how I slowly gained confidence and, by the second year, employed collaboration with others to accomplish my goals. Then, through my third year, it all seemed so easy and clear as to what I was expected to do and perform. When the next position came along, the same cycle appeared.

Today, I attend meetings and, when a discussion of service positions or Assemblies elicits a frown from others, I wonder if I have been confident enough to convey the importance of service to my recovery. When our group is involved in a particularly difficult problem, have I displayed how collaboration and cooperation are used to move beyond the seemingly overwhelming problem and on to a solution we can all live with? Have I been clear in expressing my understanding of my program and how I have used it daily in all of my affairs? All of the service positions I have held are my opportunity to attract others to our program and encourage them to become members willing to expand their horizons.

I entered this program flawed and contin-

Jim S.
Wisconsin

ue through life attempting to correct those faults and remove those shortcomings. Meeting attendance was only the beginning of my journey. I needed involvement in the service side of our program if I was ever going to improve my life. There were years as a Group Representative and District Representative that I never would have envisioned my attending Conferences, Assemblies, and district meetings and looking forward to long days and nights of discussions and efforts to carry on the work of Al-Anon. These opportunities gave me a chance to focus on myself and my gifts and away from the lives I was intent on controlling and living for others. The skills embodied in “confidence, collaboration, and clarity” are mine to use outside of our program. They are not meant to be hidden away, to be used only in my relations with loved ones. I try to employ them all the time, as I have committed myself to the transformation of my shortcomings into my assets.

Much like individuals, our fellowship also must present confidence, collaboration, and clarity if it is to be taken seriously. Every step we take toward more transparency in the business side of our efforts offers another level of clarity to our purpose. Members outside of our service structure often question the overall direction of our program. Sharing our thought processes through knowledge-based decision-making and disclosing our financial data helps to clarify that direction. We are many individuals working as one to correct our faults and remove our shortcomings. I thank my Higher Power that I was allowed this opportunity to be involved in my recovery.

Before Al-Anon and well into my first few years in the program, I never thought of myself as a leader, because that would invoke too much power and show too much ego and too much confidence. Leaders were important people, such as politicians, employers, teachers, and others who had power of authority. Growing up, I had no voice, no say, and no vote in anything I did. Children were to be seen, not heard. Being raised in this environment, I reacted by becoming a people pleaser. If I did what others (especially my parents) expected, I received the attention and recognition I craved. I became the responsible one, the one you could depend on, the reliable one, and yes, at times, the leader, the one in charge. This way of living and thinking worked fine until alcohol was added to my life, because, as time went on, I carried these behaviors to extremes and they became defects. As I changed, what-

Nancy C.
West Virginia

ever self-esteem I had diminished.

When I walked into those early Al-Anon meetings, I would show up just as the meeting started and leave right after the “amen.” I had no desires, thoughts, or plans of being a leader, but within six months, I was involved in service. People encouraged me to attend workshops, district meetings, and institution meetings with them. Shared leadership was what I needed. They took me with them and showed me what to do. I didn’t have to do it alone.

At times, I couldn’t understand how people attended Assembly, had disagreements, collaborated with one another, but hugged each other afterwards. What a great concept! So, I observed and learned by example how meetings were conducted. I had people who had gone before me, especially my Sponsor, that I could turn to with whatever questions or concerns I had. I learned by reading the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* to make confidence-based decisions. I received clarity through working, studying, and using the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service in my life.

In these past three years, my Higher Power has given me all of you to share this leadership in service. I can honestly say I didn’t feel this way when I first became a Delegate. Everyone else acted as if they knew what they were doing and I didn’t have a clue. Those old tapes started playing in my head—I wasn’t good enough, I wasn’t smart enough, and I didn’t belong. But once again, I was loved in service. You reached out your arms and hugged me, shared with me your experience, strength, and hope, and I made it “One Day at a Time.” I have learned so much about Al-Anon and myself and am so full of gratitude. The theme this year is so positive that I can see Al-Anon not only getting stronger, but also growing, thriving, and moving forward into the future with confidence and assurance.



“Listening to the Delegates”

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

I am a member of Al-Anon because God loves me and He wanted me to arrive at this spiritual program that has given me the courage to overcome obstacles and the wisdom to exchange my disillusion for hope and joy to live.

When I arrived at the Al-Anon group, I felt very happy and I thought to myself, "I found what I was looking for." I was happy to learn and to attend the meetings, but when I was going to be named the Group Representative, I didn't want to because I thought, "I don't want them to vote for me because I don't have time and I have many things to do: my work, my home, my husband, and my children to take care of." Obstinate as I was, I recognized it, but with God nobody wins but Him! He pushed me, insistently, and my life was transformed because it was service that I needed to fill the emptiness in my spirit, to increase the value, the self-esteem, and the confidence that I much needed.

Now that I belong to the Board of Trustees of the General Service Office and I have a great responsibility, I know that I must prepare more, study, participate, and share with love everything that I have received.

In service, I have found some difficulties, but God has also sent me a lot of blessings along the way. For example, some very special people who are like angels. One of them is the previous International Representative who, with enthusiasm and love, has shared with us all that she lived and learned, thus contributing to the positive changes for our dear country, México.

We have approximately 3,200 groups and 36 areas. During 2004 and 2005, we carried out the "Special Project." Three states of the Mexican Republic, chosen by drawing, one for each Panel, have been visited by two Trustees (members of our Executive Committee), so that more members could learn more about the finances of the GSO. Again the Special Project will be carried out on a third occasion this year, as we will visit Tabasco, Tamaulipas and Nayarit.

In November 2005, for the first time, the Board of Trustees had personal interviews with four candidates for Trustee at-large. This helped us make the best decisions. Two of them were chosen.

Nydia Julia M.
México

In February 2006 we had our National Service Assembly/Conference where all the Areas were represented by 35 Delegates and one representative from Quintana Roo, an area in pro-structure.

In this Assembly, two members of Al-Anon, non Trustees who belong to the Executive Committee on Real Property Management, were approved in the plenary session, for a period of three years. We explained to the Assembly the advances and the progress that we have made toward our Project: "Purchase of the House" for our office and that in 2005 contributions toward this project increased 30 percent in relation to the previous year. We continue working to acquire land or a house, whichever is more convenient.

We also carried out the 2005 Conference Committee skit and workshop, which we called "In search of the treasure," with the special message that the treasure is our World Service Handbook and in particular the World Service Conference Charter.

In general, the Board of Trustees thanked God for having made our 33rd Assembly/Conference one of harmony and peace, that the changes and new projects were accepted with substantial unanimity, and finally that the Delegates returned to their Areas with great enthusiasm and enough work to do.

Today, a beautiful dream has become a fact and I have reached a long-term goal because nothing is impossible for God. Thanks to the Board of Trustees and the World Service Office for your encouraging words, for all your kindness and for allowing me to participate. Thanks to all the people present for listening to me and thanks to the Administrative Trustee, the GSO, and to my country for trusting me.

As most of you know, I am the General Secretary of the United Kingdom and Eire (Southern Ireland) General Service Office. So I'm a "mini Ric." First, I'd like to share a little history. Our first group opened in 1951. Our first General Secretary took up the post in 1983. We had 670 groups. By 1992, we had 1000 groups. Today, we have 850 – about the same number as California South.

I came to our General Service Office in 1998 as the "Girl Friday." They joke at our Regional Service Seminars that I became (in 2001) the General Secretary and no longer much of a "girl." Sheila, my predecessor, was a hard act to follow. In those

Emily S.
UK & Eire

years, the office went from no computers to five stand-alones. This year, we have had our computers networked, installed broadband, and revamped the Web site. Last year, after a lot of thought, we decided to “spring clean” the office. Some volunteers were alarmed when the dumpster arrived, but it was all planned in consultation with the Executive Committee. We threw out some amazing stuff—three typewriters, a mechanical comptometer, and reams of duplicate paperwork.

So why am I telling you all those domestic details? Well, it’s a sort of metaphor (and like any ex-preacher, I like metaphors), for CHANGE. I asked to come here because I had read about change in your last few *Conference Summaries*, but I wanted to get a feel for it. I certainly have this week! Not all the feelings were good, but filling that dumpster was pretty hard work too!

We’ve made other changes too, a lot like you. We’ve revised our *Service Manual* radically (no band aids). Our Board used to have a session at the end of the agenda for “forward thinking” if there was time. Now we have whole evening workshops with permission to think the unthinkable and speak the unspeakable. We, too, are reviewing our Regional Trustee selection procedure.

In all of this, we have found that change requires thought, discussion, and hard work. Sorting the program’s “essentials” from “optionals” isn’t easy. One member’s “essential” is another member’s “optional.” But we know that if we stick with the Legacies, we can consider changing anything else. This releases so much energy, optimism, creativity, and enthusiasm—it brings fun back into it.

I’d like to finish by quoting from the explanatory text of Concept Six. It relates to the Conference Charter, but it’s a good general principle: “However satisfactory and right our present arrangements are, the future may require changes that we do not yet envision. New conditions may require refinements or even considerable alterations. . . . If later we do make changes that happen to work out poorly, the experience of the past will provide . . . a point of safe return to tested procedure.”

We are so lucky to be able to enjoy the benefits of this fellowship—serenity, joy, challenge, purpose, fun in security, personal safety, and the safety of Al-Anon. Thank you for allowing me to be here and participate. I’ve experienced so many good things, but most important of all, kindness (in the shape of tea bags so I could have tea in bed at night, and gloves to keep my hands warm in the General Session Room). The words and ideas have been great, but I suspect it’s the tea bags and gloves I’ll always remember!

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Cindy M.
Arizona

My journey of recovery has spanned a mere 18 years, so I have a long way to go! I did not grow up in active alcoholism. However, I do believe both my parents were affected by the disease of alcoholism, as my home was not normal. I grew up in the 60’s and 70’s and drinking on Friday night was the norm. I met my husband-to-be on one of those Friday nights at the high school dance. We had both been drinking and I, in my hot pants, thought he was the cutest thing alive! We dated for three years and, when I was 19 and he was 20, we married. We had fun hosting parties and going places on the spur of the moment for about three years. When I got pregnant with our first son, I stopped “having fun” to be a mom, but he kept going. When I objected, he took his drinking out of the house and into the bars. I became angry and resentful and he just kept drinking, using, and staying away from home for days at a time.

I became a raging, crazy woman, and said and did things that I am not proud of. There was a time that the police came to our house. They should have been checking my husband out. Instead, they were checking me out. I was the one screaming and yelling, “I’m going to kill you!” at the top of my lungs while chasing him around the house with a butcher knife. I also chased him from bar to bar, thinking he would come home. He became the focus of my life, while I neglected our son. I even tried joining him when I couldn’t beat him into submission!

There was a period of about nine months when he stayed dry and I thought everything was just great. That’s when our second son was conceived! Before I gave birth, my husband was back out at the bars. We moved, but soon things were just as bad as they had been before. I convinced my husband to go to a treatment center and it was there that a counselor suggested I try Al-Anon. I figured if it helped him stay sober, it was worth a try. I also had lunch with a friend who was in the program and suggested that, if I was ready to change and stop the insanity, I should try a few meetings.

So, I went to my first meeting on January 28, 1988, in Van Nuys, California. It was a newcomers’ meeting held before the regu-

lar meeting, and I was invited to stay for the regular meeting. I was amazed to be invited to the regular meeting, so I stayed. I remember that the topic was “anger” and someone shared about throwing ice cubes against the brick wall—no mess, no clean up! I was also indoctrinated into service. The Area convention was the following week and they asked for volunteers to call the people who had signed up to bring something to the hospitality room and remind them. The lady sitting next to me elbowed me as the papers came by and said, “Take one, it will be good for you!” I did and it showed me that I could be “a part of” and that service was easy!

At the second meeting I attended, I was shocked when I walked into the room and directly in front of me was someone from where I worked. I couldn’t run since she had seen me already, but I was afraid that everyone would know my secret—as if they didn’t already know! The treatment center was not my husband’s idea, so naturally it did not work! However, Al-Anon worked for me and when he went back to drinking, desperation led me to ask that friend from work if she would be my Sponsor. She said yes, and we began a journey of working the Steps. I knew my life was unmanageable, but I still wasn’t sure I was powerless over alcohol. I still thought that if I did just the right thing or said the right thing, he would stop.

The first time I read the Twelve Steps in a meeting, I was applying them to him and looking forward to his spiritual awakening, when he would make amends to me! My Sponsor helped me to focus on me and my relationship with my Higher Power, which I now choose to call God. I had to redefine my God in order to work the Second Step, and I have come to believe in an unconditional, loving, ever-present entity that is with me, around me, and inside of me always. I would not have been able to turn my will and my life over to God in the Third Step if I had not come to believe in the God of my understanding.

When I had been attending Al-Anon for about eight months, my Sponsor, who was also an Alateen Sponsor, had her Co-Sponsor quit. She could not find anyone who had at least a year of time in the program, so I became her Co-Sponsor. We were to attend the Alateen Conference the following year together, but she broke her ankle and sent me by myself! I wasn’t sure that service was so easy then! God was in charge and I enjoyed myself and met other Sponsors from around the Area.

The first time I did the Fourth and Fifth Steps, I wrote out my autobiography and shared it with my Sponsor. She helped me to become entirely ready to have God remove my defects of character by having me continue to work on my relationship with my Higher Power in Steps Six and Seven. About this time, my Sponsor moved and I found my life unmanageable once again. I attended a Fourth Step meeting and I became the Group Representative so I would have a reason to keep coming back.

One of my close friends there became my Service Sponsor, since she was involved in the district as well as the Area. She took me to Assemblies and asked me from time to time if I was busy on a certain night. When I said no, she said, “Great! You

can come with me to...(fill in the blank).” We went to halfway houses, women’s shelters, and mental health hospitals to carry the message of hope. She would get me in the car and then tell me that I could share my story when we got there! At first, I didn’t think I had anything to share and I had butterflies in my stomach, but my God was always there to calm me and put the right words in my mouth.

She was also responsible for my becoming the district Treasurer and then the Alternate District Representative. I used service to keep me out of the house and I started back to school with a friend from work. I thought I was practicing “When I Got Busy, I Got Better” and, if I stayed busy, things at home would get better. They did not. We separated two years later and I moved into my friend’s house. My husband went back to A.A. and convinced me to come home after about four months. Things were good for awhile and we thought we were going to become Mr. A. A. and Mrs. Al-Anon until we got into an argument on the way home from Las Vegas and I hit him while he was driving. Another time, when he was talking bad about my program, I landed a right cross on his jaw and broke my hand. I had to come to meetings and explain what I had done to my hand, since it was in a half-cast. I refer to it as my humility break!

I continued to stay busy in Al-Anon and I even went to a workshop that revisited the first eight Steps in one day. My Ninth Step amends have led to changed behavior by focusing on the person God would have me be. I try to promptly admit my wrongs today to keep my side of the street clean by taking a daily Tenth Step inventory.

In the 90’s, my company decided to relocate to Arizona, my husband’s company went bankrupt, and his truck was repossessed. We had to file for personal bankruptcy as his company was not incorporated and I was told that my job classification was probably too low to be considered for a relocation package. I once again worked on improving my conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation. I was offered a relocation package and allowed to finish my core classes by flying back to California three times after we moved. I planned to move by myself but left the choice up to my husband and he decided to try another geographic. House prices were at an all time low and we left our house unsold and planned to allow it to go into foreclosure. Our house sold by the grace of God and our Al-Anon realtor worked out all the details that allowed us to walk away from it just two months before the 1994 earthquake. We rented a house in Tucson and when my company changed their relocation rules, we were allowed to use the relocation money to buy a house.

When I got to Tucson, I checked out the Al-Anon meetings but found them to be different from Southern California. I didn’t like them at first and had trouble finding a good meeting. A friend had given me someone’s phone number and when I finally called her, she lived within five minutes of me and took me to a good meeting. She went to daytime meetings so I didn’t see her much, but when she went through a divorce after 40 years of marriage, I admired her courage and how she shared that she was like a newcomer once again. I felt the same way when my oldest son started acting out. He

was arrested for shoplifting and for driving under the influence within three months of each other. When I picked up his jacket one Sunday morning I found a bottle of whiskey in the lining and bullets and a razor in the pocket. He was confronted at a counselor's office and unbeknown to us, he had his father's gun in his pocket. He was admitted to a treatment center but ended up in the psychiatric ward because of the gun. I had plans to attend a convention in California and was told to keep my plans. My husband called and told hotel security that my son had committed suicide. They tracked me down and took me to the office and had me call home. I knew when I heard his voice that he had been drinking and was just trying to make me come home, so I went to my room and confirmed that my son was safe. Unfortunately, he was released by his father against medical advice and never received any further treatment.

When things started getting crazy at home again, I looked into being of service and attended an Intergroup meeting where I ran into someone else from work! She and I started a meeting during lunch and it gave me someone to talk to. I became Corresponding Secretary and then Treasurer of the Intergroup and when Tucson bid on the Area convention, I became Treasurer for the convention. I also became Group Representative for a new group that was formed which is now my home group. Before I moved out of the house and filed for divorce, I asked that woman who ended a 40-year marriage to be my Sponsor. She even came with me to the lawyer's office the day I was to meet with my soon to be ex and his lawyer. She sat right outside the office where I could see her and remember that God was present and that everything would be OK.

When it was time for Area elections, I went with the new Group Representative to the Area Assembly. We sat in the second row from the back, right in front of two people who were former Delegates and Trustees. They asked me where I was from, and being a smart aleck, I answered "from my mother!" They encouraged me to stand for a position since I was qualified in the Arizona Area as they said, "All you have to be is willing!" So I ended up standing for every position except Recording Secretary and lost each time until no one stood up for Treasurer and I was elected! The lady that became Alternate Delegate was also from Tucson and we began riding together to Area events. I liked her program, especially her willingness to be of service, so I asked her to be my Service Sponsor, to help me work the Twelfth Step. She said no because she used her personal Sponsor as her Service Sponsor, so when my Sponsor moved back to California, I asked her to be my Sponsor and she said yes!

During my term as Treasurer, my divorce became final and I decided to go after my master's degree. I was a single mom, going to school, working full time, and doing registration for the convention—my life was once again unmanageable! My new Sponsor and I worked on the Steps again and we spent nearly three years on Step One until I saw how I was trying to make things happen instead of allowing God to work in my life. This time through the Steps, I became closer to my Higher Power.

My youngest son has been in trouble since he was nine years

old and he had gotten into trouble once again with drugs. So, when my term was up, I decided to put more effort into being a mom and not run for another office. However, God was in charge and a year later our Treasurer quit. They asked me to train the new one. I agreed, but before the officer's meeting was held, the Area Chairperson resigned. At the meeting, which was held the day after my son was sentenced to juvenile prison, the Alternate Delegate offered to be the Chairperson and I was asked to be the Alternate Delegate. Of course, we had to be nominated and elected, and we were. I now had plenty of time on my hands to be of service and God knew that keeping busy would be good for me!

While my youngest son was still in prison, my oldest son became a father, making me a grandmother! They have had their share of troubles and I continue to invite them to the program, but they choose not to attend. In December 2004, my granddaughter was born and I finally have a girl to spoil! I love being a grandmother and I'm learning to let my children live their own lives while I concentrate on living mine. Two years ago, I received a package in the mail that was not mine. As it turns out, the person it was addressed to had received my package. I returned his to the post office, but he accidentally opened mine. He then decided to call me and return it in person. To make a long story short, we've been dating ever since! My God has such a sense of humor, as I had planned to stay busy with work and Al-Anon service!

My Sponsor and I worked through the Traditions before I decided, through much prayer and meditation, to stand for Delegate. This is where I learned that anonymity is so much more than keeping our identities confidential. It is about equality. We are all equal and we all have the same spiritual potential! My growth these past three years is because of all of you! I love this program and I love being a part of this shared leadership team. I love my Sponsors, my sponsees, and all of you. Today I have "confidence" in myself and in this program; I enjoy "collaborating" with others and plan to continue to "be part of." The "clarity" I have gained by being here and being an equal member of this fellowship is sometimes overwhelming. As a member of this fellowship, my responsibility is to "Let It Begin with Me," so we can continue to move forward.

I would like to end with my favorite miracle story: my Al-Anon earrings. I bought them in Santa Fe to take to my first Conference. When I got home, my luggage had been searched, my jewelry was all over my suitcase, and I was missing three earrings. Then I went to Hawaii with an Al-Anon friend the following month, where I packed, unpacked, and then went to re-pack my suitcase on our last day. When I opened it there was one of my earrings. I started to explain the story to my friend and as I looked down I saw the second earring. I started to cry and told my friend that if I looked down and saw the third earring I would lose it. It was not there but when I lifted the lining, there it was. I take this as an example of how God works miracles in my life and a reminder that His plans are so much better than mine if I just let His unfold. Remember to invite your Higher Power into all your discussions and I will continue to pray for this wonderful fellowship!

Memories of my childhood were mostly good. Our family camped all over Canada, picked berries, and fished from Dad's boat. Appreciation of the wilderness was a gift my dad instilled in me. I have always admired him. My mom was always there for us baking, cooking, sewing, and cleaning just like a dream mom. They occasionally had parties at our house with plenty of music and drinking and fun.

I was the middle child of six, and by the time I was about twelve years old, I remember feeling a little disconnected and lonely. My dad, whom I loved, seemed to start acting differently toward me. Of course, I never asked him why or discussed this with anyone. My oldest sister had been forced to leave home a few years earlier and my next oldest sister was getting married about this time. I did well in school; it was never hard to pull off good marks with a little studying. As a young teenager, I was desperate to be accepted by the other kids, but I felt awkward and didn't know how to act. No one told me to just be myself. I was a pretty good art student, so I asked my parents if I could go to an art school. Sadly, there was not enough money for a special school and I just shrugged it off. There had already been many little disappointments for me and this was just another one. We moved every two or three years as a Canadian military family, so leaving friends behind was a constant, reoccurring disappointment for me. I didn't complain. It was just part of life for military families and we had to accept it.

Life went on and I wasn't very happy, but I didn't know why. No one ever talked about bad stuff that happened, such as when I did things I wasn't supposed to do. I don't remember getting in much trouble for staying out late or for sneaking out in the middle of the night. I envied the officer's daughters for their clothes, and my mom called me a great actress when I cried to try to get what I wanted. She was very strong, which set a good example to me for later when I had teenagers.

I met my husband in 1969. He was 15 and I was going on 14, and I fell in love with him at first sight. He never had a chance. Our first date should have been a warning to me. A healthy person might have seen what was coming. He was 45 minutes late and he had been drinking. One thing led to another and we began to see each other

Marilyn M.
*Alberta/Northwest
Territories*

as much as possible. He was really cool and I felt accepted by his friends too. Drinking was part of his life and it didn't seem out of line to me. After six months, his dad was transferred across the country. I was devastated and, at least deep down, sort of mad. It was happening again. I proceeded to act out, to try to fit in with the gang by doing things that were not very good for me. That caused my family and me a lot of shame. I wonder if I would have acted differently if I had known how to express my sadness and anger. I continued doing well in school for the next year, thinking I would never see "him" again.

Then, through a series of events, I ran away. I arrived in Calgary and he came to pick me up. The vision before me was not what I had expected, not exactly my knight in shining armor. He was missing a front tooth, his beat up '63 Chevy was covered in red primer spots, and he was only wearing socks, no shoes! But my heart said this would have to do. Somehow things would have to work out. I was 15 going on 16 and trying to be responsible. I got a series of temporary jobs to try to support myself and we moved in together. I asked him to marry me a couple months later. "Sure" he replied, "I guess...why not?" How could I feel like a victim? I got myself into this. Talking about all this seems so strange to me now. When I look back, it is as if I'm looking at someone else's life, not mine.

We partied and struggled to pay the bills (we were both high school dropouts) and managed to survive—just! We had to ask for help from his parents a time or two. I didn't know anything about alcoholism. I got really sick in the months leading up to our wedding in the fall of 1972. Looking back, all the warning signs of the burgeoning disease were there: My illness for which there was no apparent physical cause, feeling sorry for myself and crying a lot, worrying about our future while he just partied. I never told anyone. I thought I was supposed to "just handle it." We couldn't communicate. It was anger from him and whining from me. How I jumped on this merry-go-round of denial was a mystery to me. Too bad I had never seen that little booklet then. Don't face the problem; it might just go away if I ignore it. Kind of a Scarlet O'Hara story based on nothing but fantasy.

Now the insanity grows. Maybe we should have children, he said. That proposition really scared me. At only 20 years old, I felt like a child myself and our life was barely stable. He had a better job, learning a trade, and we could afford a little better place to live. But we still lived pay cheque to pay cheque with no money to spare. Whiskey and Koolaid wasn't that bad. This was the beginning of my wondering if I was crazy and why I couldn't get this marriage to work the way I thought a marriage should. After completing high school and post secondary education, I landed a pretty good job. I know he always wondered what I was up to in that office high-rise, because his jealousy ruled him and he ruled me. I liked working, despite my preoccupation with his behavior, but he didn't seem to care about that. Anyway, I prepared to be a mom. I never could express my fears about this because every time I tried, it ended in a fight and tears, and me giving in just to

keep the peace. After several months of running to the bathroom with morning sickness, my working career ended and I became a full-time mom. I wasn't really good at that office job anyway; always making mistakes and excuses. The truth was, I was preoccupied with the disease of alcoholism and didn't have a clue what I was facing.

Our first little child, a girl, was born in September of 1976 and like all new parents, our lives changed. But I had imagined something totally different than what we got! No trips to the zoo or any of those other little girl dreams. We continued to party, with our daughter in tow. She was a colicky baby and we spent many nights up late. I am pretty sure that our unsettled lifestyle was the major reason for our poor little girl's woes. When she was 18 months old, we decided to have another child and nine months later ended up with two! We were blessed with very healthy and happy identical boys. It was a difficult time though. You see, after the twins were born, my husband's drinking escalated and so did his anger. It may have been the responsibility of supporting such a big family, but drinking must have been much more attractive than staying home. He stayed out all night more and more often. I was really losing all respect for him and more importantly for myself. I became resentful and self-righteous. The situation wreaked havoc with my mind. Love or hate? I tried to figure out which. Desperately trying to fix him and me, I read self-help books and tried to analyze his problems. I lied to his boss and to his clients to cover up for his hangovers. Inwardly, I began to be ashamed of myself for my own lying, my resorting to manipulating, and my failure as a wife. My own moral self-image became severely degraded. I was numb because I was so hopeless.

Then one day, after he appeared in court for impaired driving, I looked in a 1955 medical encyclopedia to find out what the blood alcohol levels meant. High enough to be in a coma? And he was driving home? This was the very beginning of my education about alcoholism. I had a lot to learn and after coercing him into calling A.A. after a bad drinking episode a few weeks later, I got to read the A.A. Big Book. More enlightenment for me, yet a powerful underlying denial held me as well. Sure, he was well on his way down the path, but what did I do to deserve to be married to an alcoholic? Anyway, during his ninety days of staying sober and going to A.A. meetings in the fall of 1979, I decided to go to Al-Anon. After all, if I were to be of any help to him at all, I would have to find out all about it and learn how to support him in recovery.

Enter the Al-Anon meeting. Secretiveness was deeply etched into my personality by now and I was so worried that someone would see me there because there was such a lack of trust in my life. There turned out to be a lady there that I knew, but I soon learned from her sharing that she was in the same boat as I was, as were the other ladies at "New Beginnings." She told me how she had tried to fit her husband into the mould she had imagined for him and how that had caused no end of problems. They said that Al-Anon was for me, but I really didn't hear that. I needed a healthy family for my kids to grow up in and I was hoping I would learn how to make

him sober. I didn't tell him I was going to Al-Anon at first. He got angry at everything in those days, and the fact that I tricked him into calling A.A. didn't really help my case. I did it for love, *honestly*. Was I fearful? Extremely, and actually, as I learned later, I did it for security, not love. He was the breadwinner and I needed him working, not dead in a drunk driving accident. Selfish? Yes I was. But right then, I was thinking about how I could fix the cause of all my problems. Blaming? Yes I was. After all, you should have been there. Poor me. Poor kids.

A short time later, my husband took up drinking again with a great amount of control, so much so that inside of a week, he had me convinced there was no problem. Amazing, powerful denial. I fell for it and stopped going to Al-Anon. He said there was no need since he was fine now and I was desperate for us to have a "normal" family, so I went along with it. In a short time, I was back at Al-Anon because his drinking had become worse than ever before. I clung to my *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* book and I began to look forward to the meetings where I cried and sputtered in utter confusion about what was happening at home. I was desperate for help. I began to listen and the "keep an open mind" in the closing at every meeting resonated deep in my consciousness. The Serenity Prayer and "Live and Let Live" became my way of connecting to peace of mind. Now I began to see that my obsession was with his behavior and I began to see how unmanageable my life was. Even my children were being neglected because all I could do was worry and try to calculate what to do next. Man, was I sick! How could I ever have denied all those crazy things I thought about? Listening to the others started to give me a little hope that I, too, could be restored to sanity.

What was amazing was the power of that group. The kindness and understanding the members showed to me was over the top. I didn't really appreciate it at the time, but it was their love and concern that kept me coming back. How many times did I phone one of them at two in the morning, in great distress about the whereabouts of my husband? I was met with patience and gentle reminders that I might soon need to decide what I was going to do about it. I think I wanted pity and I'm grateful to say that I didn't get it.

For the next two years his drinking got worse, but with the help of three groups on a weekly basis and all the Al-Anon literature I could find time to read, I slowly learned how to change my attitude. I began to understand that my husband had a disease and that our whole family was suffering. He needed my compassion, not my judgment and self-righteousness.

I did a little service at my group. I tried to tell the new person walking in the door a little about why I was there, hoping they would feel just a little more comfortable. It was a little thing but a huge step for me to open up and share my secrets. Our literature told me I needed to help others in order to recover myself and the healthy members of this group showed me that by example. Helping set up and cleanup made me feel better. This was the great hope of my first two years in Al-Anon—that I too could become "a useful person of the

universe.”

My concept of a Higher Power started to develop during this time too. The group talked of my worrying as “projecting,” meaning that I was acting as if I knew the future and that it just doesn’t work that way. When I shared about my huge worry of an upcoming wedding, they told me to try to “Let Go and Let God.” This was a way for me to test it out, because I had no faith yet. Every time I caught myself beginning to worry, I would repeat “Let Go and Let God” over and over. We went to the wedding, hundreds of miles away, babies in tow. I felt strangely in control of my emotions and myself, even though I was physically not in control of the situation. I made a back-up plan just in case. It was the first time I felt I could make a decision to take care of the kids and myself without worrying about his reaction. I was using the tools and my Higher Power was already working for me. Funny thing, the whole thing went well—not a disaster like I had imagined for months before. This was just one of the many awakenings that were to occur to me during my first years in Al-Anon. I learned that the Higher Power was there, right in my Al-Anon group. All I had to do was to “Listen and Learn.” I began to believe.

Now it was time for Step Three. I had to get it! Determination did not get me there, the reverse, letting go, did. I had to accept that I was not destined for perfection and that acceptance of myself, as I was, warts and all, as they say, was the key to happiness. Oh yeah, did I mention, all I ever wanted was to be happy? The promise of freedom and happiness was really the motivation for me to let go of all my old ideas of the way things should be. Like me being perfect. Like the crazy notion that I was responsible to fix my husband’s problems and to shape the perfect family all on my own. It became easy to make the decision to turn my life and will over to a Higher Power that completely accepts me the way I am today.

The little bit of service I had done soon showed up as little benefits. I wanted more. So I then volunteered to be Alternate Group Representative for a new group forming in 1982. Al-Anon information service and area followed. Over these next few years, Al-Anon service became an integral part of my recovery. It was the impetus for me to learn about myself, so I could be more useful. The optimism of my early days, I found out while doing my inventory, was more of a denial of life in an alcoholic family.

After attending Al-Anon for several years, I began to become more aware of how I had behaved as a teenager. I don’t know how I could have blanked out all that bad behavior, but as it is said, denial is very powerful. I remembered that my dad would come home drunk sometimes and I started to recall abuse that happened in my family. I had no conscious idea for many years this had happened. I think the subconscious distance between my dad and me as a teenager might have been as a result of what had happened earlier with my sister. And all that turmoil and secretiveness may have made me feel disconnected and needy, which led, in part to my unhealthy behaviors. I would love to describe in detail all the amazing things that I have learned which have led to my continuing recovery, but I just wouldn’t know where to start

or end.

I can tell you that I know that if love is my motivation, I am usually happy and the world just feels right. When I drop into fear, I start to resent people and their actions. I have learned that everyone has value and sometimes even people I don’t like can be right. I stopped judging and began accepting. I learned that I have to take responsibility for my feelings and actions and that can be a challenge still. Practicing the Steps is still a struggle sometimes, but I am comforted by the knowledge that I will never be perfect and that my Higher Power is always happy with me, just the way I am. Who knows what changes the future will bring about in me?

I first attended meetings when I was 24 years old and have now spent over half my life learning in Al-Anon. I am still married, over 33 years now. My husband won’t mind me telling you he has been sober and active in A.A. for 23 years. The A.A. program working in his life has certainly been a huge inspiration for me. Our little daughter, who was active in Alateen for several years, is married to a wonderful man and they have our delightful grandsons, with another on the way. The twins are 27 now. They are happy and so far unmarried, but one is engaged. They both have full lives, working in their dad’s trade and volunteering for the Alberta Speleological Society. I have learned that being a part of you gives me a connectedness that is necessary for me to have a healthy, happy life. A sense of belonging is what I was searching for all along. You have given me countless tools for living and I know that my family has benefited, just like I wished for at the very beginning of my journey of recovery. The only way I can possibly thank you is it to keep passing it on!

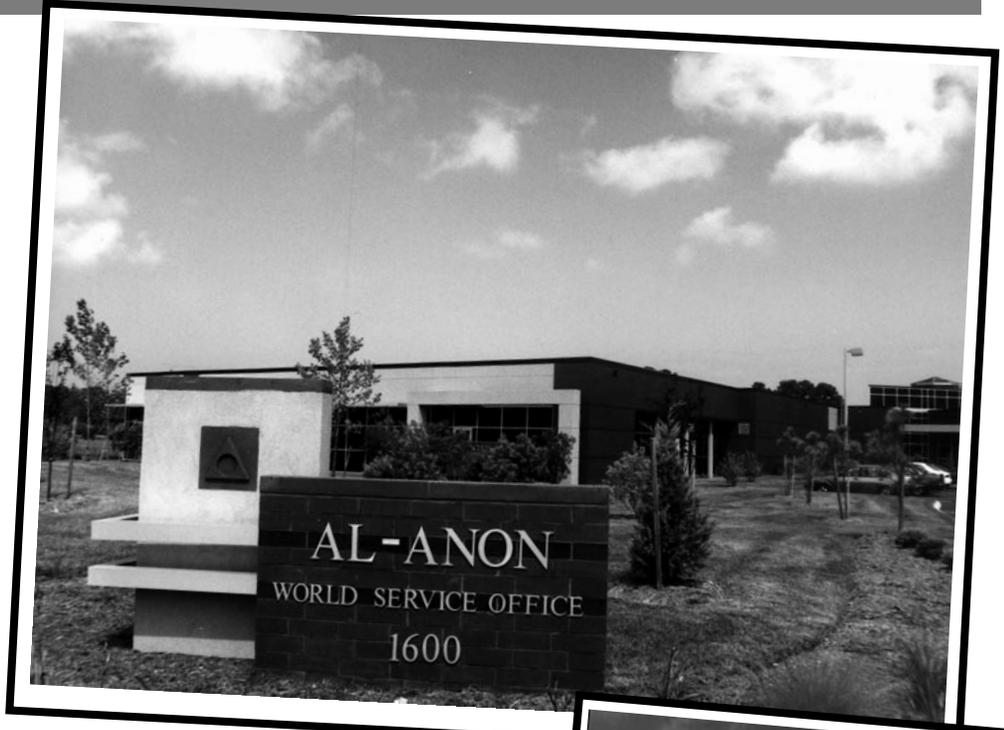
Many thanks to all of you for making this journey so life-enriching and so spiritually enlightening. I hope to meet you down the road. It is a small and loving world when Al-Anon is working in our lives.

After the last workshop of the day on the fifth day of the Conference, the Conference members gathered for the concluding meal. After dinner, Conference members and their guests listened to the Spiritual Speakers. (See pages 58-63.) In Conference tradition, the Executive Director and the Conference Chairperson then presented scrolls to each of the outgoing Panel 44 Delegates.

VISIT TO THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

On Saturday, the day after the Conference, members boarded buses for a trip to the World Service Office (WSO) just a few miles from the hotel. As they arrived, Delegates and their guests were greeted by a double column of applauding 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. One of the most popular stops on the tour was the Archives room. There members saw memorabilia of our pioneers and records of Al-Anon's early years on display. Following the tour, a luncheon was served and Delegates had the opportunity to stroll around the grounds, taking pictures to share with their Areas.



"The WSO"



"Literature Around the World"



2006 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

MOTION #1

(92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

CARRIED

That the following persons be seated at the 2006 World Service Conference as follows:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach Director of Business Services
Non-AI-Anon Member

Nydia Julia M. International Representative –
Mexico
AI-Anon Member

Emily S. International Representative –
UK & Eire
AI-Anon Member

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

Beth K. Chairperson, Executive
Committee for Real Property
Management
AI-Anon Member

With voice limited to Conference processes and procedures as they relate to Knowledge-Based Decision-Making, in the role as Conference Consultant, but no vote:

Nancy Ackermann Cole Conference Consultant
Non-AI-Anon Member

With no voice and no vote:

Robert S. Director of Communication
Services
AI-Anon Member

(See discussion on page 4.)

MOTION #2

(95 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

CARRIED

To approve the 2005 Audited Financial Report.

(See discussion on page 9.)

MOTION #3

(95 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

CARRIED

To approve the 2006 Finance Committee Report.

(See discussion on page 10.)

MOTION #4

(94 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

CARRIED

To approve the 2005 Annual Report.

(See discussion on page 8.)

MOTION #5

(93 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 0 void)

CARRIED

That the 2006 World Service Conference give conceptual approval to develop electronic literature (e-CAL) on a three year trial basis consistent with the current CAL process.

(See discussion on page 27.)

MOTION #6

(88 yes, 6 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

CARRIED

To amend the text of the 2004-2006 *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Policy Digest section, page 71, *Meetings*, following *Open/Closed Meetings* by adding the following section read (new is bold and underlined, strikethrough is deletion):

Electronic Meetings

The Internet and other electronic telecommunication media are tools for carrying and sharing the AI-Anon program of hope and recovery around the world. These electronic meetings occur globally as well as locally without geographic restrictions. Consequently, electronic meetings do not have a Group Representative and are not part of any structure. They do, however, have a Meeting Contact.

When electronic meetings form, they register with the World Service Office (WSO) in order to use the AI-Anon name. Upon registration, they receive support from and have their voices heard and represented through the WSO. Registered meetings may request a license from the WSO to use in text format the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, Suggested Welcome, Suggested Closing, and excerpts from Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

(See discussion on page 20-21.)

MOTION #7

(85 yes, 9 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

CARRIED

To reconsider Motion #9 of the 2004 World Service Conference which reads: 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 28.)

MOTION #9

(91 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions, 2 void)

CARRIED

To reclassify *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians* (P-85) from Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to a public outreach service tool.

(See discussion on page 28.)

MOTION #10

(94 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

CARRIED

To amend the descriptive text on page 110 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, World Service Handbook section, "Terms Used In Al-Anon", sub-heading "Volunteer Selected Committees" to read (new is bold and underlined, strikethrough is deletion)

Consists of Al-Anon/Alateen members with a broad understanding of our program who concentrate on one of the elements of our fellowship, such as Alateen or literature. (See "World Service Office, How It Is Structured" section and Concept Eleven).

MOTION #11

(95 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

CARRIED

To amend the text on page 111 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, World Service Handbook section, "World Service Office," sub-heading, "What It Does," bullet 2 to read (new is bold and underlined, strikethrough is deletion)

- registers Lone Members, new groups, **electronic meetings**, Information Services, and Literature Distribution Centers; provides them with literature, information, and help

MOTION #12

(92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 3 void)

CARRIED

To amend the text on page 126 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, World Service Handbook section, "Conference Procedures," sub-heading, "At the District Level," sub-section "~~Finances~~" to read (strikethrough is deletion)

Finances. The DR's expenses to attend Assemblies and Area World Service Committee meetings are shared by the groups within the district. When the DR is also a GR, the Assembly expenses are normally paid by the group he represents. Money for this purpose may also be raised by special events such as ~~round-robins~~, district workshops, potluck suppers, rummage sales, and other cooperative ventures. The DR's expenses may be paid directly from such funds or may be reimbursed by the Assembly Treasurer. The Coordinators' expense may also be covered from, a portion of any surplus funds accumulated by the district and sent to the Area Treasurer.

MOTION #13

(94 yes, 0 no, 0 abstain, 1 void)

CARRIED

That the 2006 World Service Conference affirms the Board of Trustees trial implementation of the Regional Committee on Trustees for three years beginning with the 2008 Regional Selection which begins at the 2007 WSC. Said implementation to follow the details of the Regional Committee on Trustees as discussed.

(See discussion on page 27.)

MOTION #14

(94 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

CARRIED

To approve rewording of the descriptive text of the Introduction and Concepts One–Seven on pages 152–168 in the *2004 – 2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service section as amended.

(See Appendix on page 26.)

CONSENSUS**MOTION #8 – (95 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions)**

To amend Motion #9 from the 2004 World Service Conference by striking out the entire motion and substituting the following: To reclassify *Al-Anon is for Gays and Lesbians* (P-85) from Conference Approved Literature (CAL) to a public outreach service tool.

(See discussion on page 28.)

ADMINISTRATION

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 World Service Conference (WSC), establishing business policies of the World Service Office (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.

Ric B.
Executive Director

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Judy P.
Chairperson

The Board approved Interim Actions of the Executive Committee:

- Discontinue the Service Plan as a tool from the WSO.
- Discontinue the booklet *Homeward Bound* (P-8).
- Revise the Process for Developing Conference Approved Literature (CAL).
- Purchase translation equipment for use at Regional Service Seminars (RSSs) and any other WSO meetings where more than one language will be spoken.
- Publish 2,500 copies of *Courage to Change* (B-16) in a compact, copyright protected, read-only disc (CD-ROM), to be sold for \$15.00 each.
- Extend the Public Health Service Network (PHSN) 2004 contract for one month.
- Establish a timeline and implementation process for the Alateen Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Oversight for this process was referred to the Executive Committee. All 67 Areas have now complied with the Alateen Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements. The Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34) were revised and approved.
- Print the "Crying House" Bookmark (M-76) in English, French, and Spanish. The bookmarks are a Public Outreach tool and are distributed for mailing costs only, at this time. In addition, the artwork for the bookmark will be available for all service entities to add local contact information.
- Utilize the Members' Web site to broaden distribution of information available for members: Post the 2002-2004 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual in English, Spanish, and French, the Chairperson of the Board Quarterly report to Conference Members, and various Financial Records—including the US and Canadian Tax Filings and the Annual Audit.
- Withdraw \$1,200,000 from the Building Fund for redemption of additional bonds

- on April 1, 2005 in addition to the annual redemption of \$105,000 due the same date. Due to the early redemption, the balance due on the mortgage is \$570,000, and should be paid by April of 2010. The original maturity date for these bonds was April 1, 2016.
- Create and distribute within the fellowship a flyer encouraging members to write personal recovery stories (without violating confidentiality or anonymity) and submit them to the commercial media.
 - Exhibit at the 2005 Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) Conference, the 2005 National Black Administrators of Child Welfare (BACW) Conference, the 15th Annual National Nurse Managers' Update Conference, the 2005 American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) Conference, the White Bison Fifth Annual Wellbriety Conference, the Seventh International Family Nursing Conference, the Early Childhood Association National Conference, the Canadian Psychological Association's 66th Annual Convention, the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP) 11th Annual Drug Court Training Conference, the Alberta Centenary Celebration Conference, the 2005 American Psychological Association 113th Annual Convention, the 2005 Canadian Public Health Association 96th Annual Conference, the 2005 Family Service Canada Conference, the 2005 Making Gains Conference, and the 2005 Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine Conference. In addition to the above exhibits, a "Take One" Table at the National Foster Parent Association 35th Annual National Education Conference was approved.
 - End the trial period and dissolve the Long Range Study Panel. Strategic Planning will be a permanent responsibility of the Board of Trustees.
 - Increase Al-Anon's international presence and support evolving and existing structures with
 - ☑ A visit from the Executive Director to South Africa to attend a meeting in preparation for Al-Anon's 2007 Sub-Sahara Zonal Planning Meeting and to attend and participate in the General Service Conference in South Africa
 - ☑ A visit to Australia for one WSO staff member and one WSO volunteer to attend the Sixth Asia-Oceania A.A. Service Meeting as observers and to visit the General Service Offices (GSOs) in New Zealand and Australia as an opportunity to maintain and continue improving communication
 - ☑ A trip to Poland, Austria, Romania and Hungary for one staff member and one volunteer to further Al-Anon growth in these existing and evolving structures
 - ☑ Creation of an outreach packet of existing pamphlets in English or French for sale to members traveling into or within Africa
 - Approve the 2005 revised Budget.
 - To encourage wider participation and to increase *The Forum* magazine subscriptions, the following special offers were approved:
 - ☑ Distribute coupons good for a free one-year group *Forum* subscription to every new group registering with the WSO for a trial period of one year
 - ☑ Offer ten copies of past issues of the *Forum* to the first 400 *Forum* readers who return a completed *Forum* 2005 Readership Survey by July 15, 2005
 - ☑ Offer complimentary *Forum* subscriptions to the first 12 members whose humorous sharings are published in a new magazine department of *The Forum*, "Time for a Laugh"
 - Approve staff travel to:
 - ☑ Attend and present at the Spanish National Al-Anon Convention in Chicago, IL
 - ☑ Attend and present at the Families and Addiction Conference sponsored by the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) and the Caron Foundation in Werner, Pennsylvania
 - ☑ Attend the National Leadership Forum, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) in Washington, D. C.
 - ☑ Give a presentation to the employees of the National Clearinghouse of Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI)
 - ☑ Give an Al-Anon presentation at the 2005 International Conference on Addiction (ICA) in Montgomery, Alabama
 - ☑ Attend and present at the 11th Spanish National Al-Anon Adult Children of Alcoholics Meeting in San Diego, California
 - ☑ Attend and present at the 2005 National Leadership Forum sponsored by the Community Anti-Drug Coalition (CADCA), US Journal Training, Inc.'s Ninth Renewal Conference on Adult Children Recovery and Trauma in Las Vegas, Nevada
 - ☑ Meet with Independent Television Service (ITVS) to give information on Al-Anon/Alateen as a resource
 - ☑ Attend the Rush Center of Johnson Institute's "Religious Leaders Summit"
 - ☑ Attend the Circles of Recovery "Strengthening our Nation" Conference
 - ☑ Attend The Manisses Communications Group, Inc.'s Third Annual Providence Summit on Addictions
 - ☑ Conduct a workshop at the 2005 American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)
 - ☑ Attend the closing luncheon for the 2005 National Child Welfare League of America, which was sponsored by Al-Anon Family Groups
 - Cooperate with independent Television Service (ITVS) around the "Country Boys" PBS Frontline series
 - Print:
 - ☑ The Table Anonymity Card (S-9) in Spanish and include it in the Spanish Group Binder for all new Spanish groups registering
 - ☑ 5,000 copies of *Hope for Today* (B-27) in Spanish and 3,000 copies in French

☑ 20,000 (18,000 English, 1,000 Spanish, and 1,000 French) professional outreach leaflets bound into referral pads to sell for \$.50 each. The artwork for the referral pads will be available for all service entities to add local contact information.

The Board approved the Finance Committee motion to set the equalized expense for the 2006 WSC at \$1,100 US. The projected cost for a Delegate to attend the WSC is \$1,612 US. The theme "Shared Leadership—Moving Forward with Confidence, Collaboration, and Clarity" was approved for the 2006 WSC.

All nominees for Trustee at Large (TAL) as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee at-Large members, 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 selection for committee chairs, which the Board approved.

The Board has continued to work on updating the text to the Concepts section of the *Service Manual*. They will present the recommended revised text to the WSC for the Introduction and Concepts One through Seven.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

At its monthly meetings the Executive Committee receives a report from the Executive Director and each of the Directors within the WSO.

Catherine J.
Chairperson

The following actions from November and December 2005 will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at the January 2006 meeting:

- Study costs and marketing plans for the production of an annual magazine in English, Spanish, and French for public outreach purposes to be made available at bulk rates in September and in April.
- Have a conference call for new Alateen Coordinators in order to develop a relationship and respond to their Alateen requirement concerns and questions.
- Exhibit at seven conferences in the US.

The Board of Trustees delegated to the Executive Committee the review of résumés and approval of at-large and advisory committee members. Approved were:

Alateen Advisory Committee

Franziska B.	Alateen	third one-year term
Hilary N.	Alateen	third one-year term
Tanner A.	Alateen	first one-year term
Zack C.	Alateen	first one-year term
Sarah P.	Transitioning Al-Anon	second one-year term
Ellen D.	Al-Anon Professional	second one-year term
Shanna G.	Al-Anon Member	first one-year term
	Involved in Alateen Service/Sponsor	
Brandon E.	Al-Anon Member	first one-year term
	Involved in Alateen Service/Sponsor	

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee

Blondel R.	second one-year term
Mae W.	third one-year term
Mary Jo P.	fourth one-year term
Loretta J.	fifth one-year term

International Coordination Advisory Committee

Mirta S.	second one-year term
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Literature Committee I

Walter H.	sixth one-year term
Brenda Sue D.	fourth one-year term
Elizabeth H.	fourth one-year term
Sandra M.	third one-year term
Dorothy S.	first one-year term



The Board of Trustees participating in a skit on Anonymity ask:

"Do you know the myths?"

Literature Committee II

Jay D.	fourth one-year term
Dorena P.	fourth one-year term
William H.	fourth one-year term
Virginia L.	fourth one-year term
Kay T.	first one-year term

Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee

Lyn D.	fifth one-year term
Mary R.	third one-year term
Jeffrey R.	third one-year term
Mark H.	second one-year term

Public Outreach Committee

Audrey S.	fourth one-year term
Beverly H.	third one-year term
Joan D.	first one-year term
Sue N.	first one-year term
Connie H.	first one-year term

GOALS

Goals for the WSO were set by the Board in the Strategic Plan. The Annual Report confirms the status, progress, and activities of each goal. The administrative staff was asked to set objectives within the scope of their responsibilities that support each goal. Cross departmental work groups implemented the objectives, and these work group reports follow each objective. The Board's report on status, progress, and activities immediately follows each goal, prior to the supporting objectives. Written reports for each quarter were not submitted unless there was some action to report.

Theme #1: Everyone/Everywhere

Goal #1: The Board and the staff will be catalysts to bring together potential partners to explore our commonality in how we can make a difference in the lives of those affected by someone else's drinking.

Third Quarter:

The Board and the staff will continue to reach out to International countries. This includes countries established with GSOs and those that are in the process of getting a structure set up with either an Al-Anon Information Ser-

vice (AIS) or a GSO. The Board and the staff will continue to make connections with countries that have minimal or no Al-Anon Groups identified.

In addition, Board members are making themselves available to Area Assemblies within the WSC structure. The visits to Areas will be used to provide information requested and/or leadership-type presentations. In May, a Trustee and staff member attended the Ohio Area Assembly and two Trustees attended the ON (S) Area World Service Committee Meeting.

Fourth Quarter:

Board and staff members continue to make themselves available for US and Canadian Area Assemblies and Area-wide service functions. Four Areas requested Trustee visits this quarter; other Areas are initiating plans for Trustee visits during 2006. In addition, initial planning for 2006 for outreach continues by staff and volunteer participation at international events focusing on family recovery. The Board and staff will identify GSOs and potential service structures which would benefit from a WSO visit. In cooperation with A.A., WSO staff and volunteers continue to identify countries in need of contact by our fellowships. A staff member and Trustee attended the Ontario (S) Assembly at the request of the Area Delegate.

Objective:

Encourage Al-Anon members to write personal recovery stories (without violating confidences or anonymity) and then to submit them to the commercial media. Collect manuscripts from at least 12 members.

First Quarter:

The team is preparing to submit a project approval form regarding the creation of a one-sheet flyer inviting Al-Anon members who are experienced writers to submit their personal recovery stories to the commercial media. The proposed flyer would help define appropriate publications and ways to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. Proposed distribution of the flyer includes Conference members and all Public Outreach, Literature, and Forum Coordinators, as well as Area Newsletter Editors. It would also be posted on the Members' Web site and inserted into upcoming issues of *Area Highlights*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, and *The Forum*.

Second Quarter:

A project approval to create a one-sheet flyer inviting Al-Anon members to submit their personal recovery stories to the commercial media was approved. The team is writing copy for a two-sided flyer. One side will address Al-Anon members who are professional writers; the other side will focus on members interested in writing.

Third Quarter:

Copy for a one-sheet, two-sided flyer titled, "Writers Reaching Out," inviting Al-Anon members to submit their

personal recovery stories to the commercial media was submitted by the Publications Department for design and printing. This flyer was inserted in the fall issue of *Area Highlights* and was also posted on the Members' Web site in English, French, and Spanish. Copies of the flyer were also mailed to several members who had previously received reprint permission to include excerpts from Al-Anon literature in books they wrote about their personal recovery.

Fourth Quarter:

A short article on the "Writers Reaching Out" project was submitted for the January issue of *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* in *The Forum*. The project was featured for a second time in *Area Highlights* (Winter issue). Members who are professionals were encouraged to write articles for their industry publications in the Winter *Area Highlights*. The flyer for this project was mailed to all Area Literature Coordinators. As of early December, the WSO has received two manuscripts from members in response to the flyer, and one published article in a regional professional journal. Visitors to the flyer on Members' Web site totaled 72 for September, October, and November.

Annual:

We believe it was unrealistic to expect to receive 12 manuscripts by the end of 2005. We have accomplished the first part of the goal by creating the flyer and disseminating it through the links of service, our newsletters, and the Members' Web site. This was completed in the third quarter, and that is not sufficient time for the membership to hear of it and act on it. We have had several phone calls and e-mails asking for more information and/or a copy of the flyer and have received four manuscripts. We would like to continue the evaluation of this goal into 2006.

Objective:

Increase the number of hits by 10% on the Spanish Web sites (both PO and Members') by alerting Conference members when new material is posted on the Spanish Web site and by writing articles in *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*, *Area Highlights*, *The Forum*, and *Acción*.

First Quarter:

The Web work request for both sites was approved. Articles were written and submitted for publication in the summer issues of *Area Highlights*, and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*. The Associate Director of Group Services announced the availability of the Spanish Web sites at the XI Annual Meeting of Spanish Al-Anon Adult Children in San Diego, California.

Second Quarter:

The Spanish Members' Web site went up May 5, 2005, and a total of 106 visitors and 635 hits (number of pages visited) were recorded. 16,613 visitors and 370,461 hits (number of pages visited) to the Spanish Public Outreach site were recorded for the quarter.*

The Delegates and Conference members were notified electronically on May 6 when the Spanish Members Web site went up. Office staff was asked to add a tagline to their e-mail signatures and the Chairman of the Board asked the Trustees to do the same.

Articles and announcements about the Spanish Web sites were written for publication in *Area Highlights*, *The Forum*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*—Conference Issue, and *Acción*.

Third Quarter:

Starting with the week ending July 1, 2005 and ending with the September 27, 2005, there were 158 visitors and 1,132 hits (number of pages visited) to the Spanish Members Web site. During the same period there were 18,306 visitors and 427,871 hits (number of pages visited) to the Spanish Public Outreach site during this quarter.

The Group Records staff and Trustees have been using a tag line in their e-mail signatures informing members about the address and its availability in all three languages.

The Associate Director of Group Services took a poster sign with the Web site address to the Chicago Spanish Convention in September and encouraged members to visit the site.

Articles and announcements about the Spanish Web sites were written for publication in *Area Highlights*, *The Forum*, *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*—Conference Issue, and *Acción*.

Fourth Quarter:

From 9/27/2005 to 12/12/2005 there were 168 visitors and 1,225 hits (number of pages visited) to the Spanish Members' Web site. The objective was met during this quarter by an increase of 48% over the second quarter numbers.

The Spanish Public Outreach site continued to receive a high volume of visitors and hits. The total number of visitors for this quarter was 18,118 and the total number of hits was 453,939 (number of pages visited). This site increased the number of hits by 18.4% when compared to the second quarter.

Annual:

Since the Spanish Members' Web site went up on May 5, 2005 through December 12, 2005 there were 432 visitors (number of people) and 2,992 hits (number of pages visited). In the preparation for this report we found that previous quarterly reports were in error. The number of hits and visitors was revised in the final text. The objective to increase the number of hits for both sites by 10% was met.

*Figures adjusted for a full quarter.

Goal #2: At each Quarterly Meeting, the Board of Trustees will have a priority focus of spending 80% of its time in forward thinking, strategic work and 20% in evaluation, having an annual evaluation of the WSO's activities.

First Quarter:

At each quarterly Board meeting, the agenda has progressively increased the time spent in forward thinking. In order to free up more time, the Board has agreed to let go of several functions and tasks they realized were not strategic work. At each Board meeting, time is designated on the agenda to discuss and identify "possible items, tasks, or behaviors" that members could agree were not Board functions.

With identifying several areas to change, the focus of the agenda is at approximately 65% in forward thinking for strategic work.

For the Third Quarter Board meeting, the evaluation will be initiated on the agenda.

Second Quarter:

The Board continued its efforts to think strategically and introduced some of their new skills during the Conference and at the quarterly Board Meeting, which is open to all Conference members.

Third Quarter:

The Board continued efforts for strategic thinking by introducing the many different areas the Board has identified for review. This was an opportunity to bring the new Trustees on board with common information regarding the Board's thinking.

Before closing, the Board determined priorities for the different areas that are in need of discussion. Members agreed to work in small ad hoc committees between Board meetings. This will accomplish some of the tasks required which will provide input for Board discussions to be more meaningful and to be able to continue with forward thinking at the next Board meeting.

In addition, the Board will be spending some Board Development time in self-evaluation to explore possibilities so that it can perform as a more effective Board.

Theme #2:
Universal Understanding of Recovery

Goal #1: Educate the Board of Trustees in preparation to go out into the fellowship to articulate the goals and direction of the Board.

First Quarter:

The Board members held a brainstorming session identifying the training they felt was needed as members of the Board to articulate the goals and direction of the Board.

A tool identified as "Point Papers" has been initiated. A "Point Paper" is a synopsis of information pertaining to a subject that seems to be asked about frequently or a topic misunderstood by AI-Anon members. It is through this tool that all members of the Board receive the same information to be passed on to the fellowship.

To better articulate the goals and direction of the Board to the fellowship, the quarterly Chairperson of the Board letters to Conference members will be posted on the Members' Web site.

Second Quarter:

Discussions regarding specific skills continued. A facilitation workshop was presented in preparation for the "Talking with the Delegates" session at the Conference. Additional skills needed were identified, and working sessions will be included during Board Development sessions at each meeting.

Third Quarter:

Several additional point papers were created and distributed to Board members for their information.

A recommendation was made for Board members to hold a meeting using the "Town Hall" format when they are requested to visit an Assembly. General guidance was provided.

Goal #2: To have credible comprehensive, professional research data available on the effects of alcoholism on non-alcoholics.

Objective:

Identify five credible funding sources and/or associations/organizations that could commission research and publish results.

First Quarter:

Staff concluded that there are multiple categories of entities that need to be explored. These include US and Canadian government agencies, foundations, corporations, organizations, non-profit associations, universities, and colleges. Staff members have assigned themselves categories to research.

Second Quarter:

Staff explored US and Canadian government agencies, foundations, corporations, organizations, non-profit associations, universities, and colleges and compiled a partial list of one Canadian and five US credible funding sources and/or associations/organizations that could commission research and publish results.

Third Quarter:

Staff continued its research and added two Canadian and

two US funding sources to its list of credible funding sources and/or associations/organizations that could commission research and publish results.

Fourth Quarter:

Staff finalized its list of credible funding sources and/or associations/organizations that could commission research and publish results by adding three Canadian funding sources and two US researchers to its list. Staff then refined the list to 13 and categorized the list into three categories—funding, research, and funding/research.

Annual:

Staff surpassed its goal of identifying five credible funding sources and/or associations/organizations that could commission research and publish results by identifying five funding sources in Canada, four funding sources in the US, two researchers in the US, and two funding/research sources in the US.

Theme #3: Unlimited, Abundant Resources

Goal #1: Model and operate in a reality of unlimited, abundant resources.

Second Quarter:

Abundant resources have been explored by the Board. During these discussions, we have identified resource categories and will be identifying how to better use the resources available to us.

- Members willing to be available for special service projects are being identified.
- Our ability to reach around the world through technology.
- Personal interaction of staff and volunteers making on-site visits to current GSOs and to countries needing assistance in getting Al-Anon to those that still suffer is continuing to be effective.

The Board is currently working to identify resources within the Board for training and Board development. (See Theme 2, Goal 1.)

Additionally, the Board of Trustees has identified the following needs of the fellowship and will ensure the resources are available:

- Leadership training at all levels.
- A better means of communication between the Board, the WSO, and the fellowship.

Third Quarter:

The Chairperson of the Board initiated holding a meeting prior to each RSS with current and former Conference members. The purpose is to bring them into the loop with

discussions about the Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission, Knowledge-Based Decision-Making, as well as identifying them as the abundant resources. Two meetings were held this quarter with positive results.

The December issue of “Inside Al-Anon” will include an article by the Chairperson of the Board. The article discusses the Board’s responsibility to plan for Al-Anon’s future and introduced the Board’s Vision and Mission Statements and Strategic Plan. This article will broaden the audience and hopefully attract more resources.

Goal #2: Discover and use universal resources.

Objective:

Identify and create a database of 20 new resources (vendors, volunteers, contributors, types of research, and organizations) with whom to partner/cooperate.

First Quarter:

We have found 48 new potential resources and plan to continue to search for more Canadian resources.

Second Quarter:

We have identified the national resources within our first list of new resources and have found more additional resources within Canada and United States. A copy of this list was given to the Leadership Team. We clarified the objective of this goal and plan to work with the Public Outreach Department to create a contact letter to send to our new potential resources to see if they are willing to partner and cooperate with Al-Anon.

Third Quarter:

We have developed a new list of potential resources from our extended research. We have now a total of 79 resources within our list from the combination of both United States and Canada.

Fourth Quarter:

We have categorized our list of new resources into these categories: Gender, Religion, Ethnic Groups, Youth, Research/University, Health Institution, Foundations, Volunteers, Family and Social Work. We will pass this list on to Public Outreach to contact and develop partnerships if appropriate.

Annual:

Within our extensive research and with the help of the Associate Directors of Public Outreach, our group was able to achieve the goal and surpass the required objective. We now have a list of 79 potential new resources in the US and Canada that may partner and cooperate with Al-Anon.

Objective:

Request members worldwide to create a campaign to leave ("forget") Conference Approved Literature in public places in remembrance of Lois's birthday on March 4, 2006. Ask those who create a campaign to inform the WSO of what they are planning and publicize their responses on the Members' Web site.

First Quarter:

A "Leave Hope" campaign was developed. As the first phase of the project, a handout and text introductions were submitted to, and received approval from, the Executive Committee.

Second Quarter:

A "Leave Hope" campaign was introduced at the 2005 WSC. A logo was developed and printed on invitations attached to a piece of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) "forgotten" at each attendee's place. An informational skit was presented inviting areas to participate by creating local campaigns. General Service Offices (GSOs) have been invited to participate, and the project was mentioned in *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* and during the recent trip to South Africa.

Third Quarter:

Short "blurbs" were written for the fall issue of *Area Highlights* and for *The Forum*. A "tagline" about the project appears on the bottom of each Conference mailing memo page, and the "Leave Hope" logo was made available in a jpeg file in all three languages with a suggestion that it could be used for local flyers and in area newsletters. To date, six Area Delegates have requested a copy of the logo.

Fourth Quarter:

A short "blurb" was written for *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* and the Spring 2006 issue of *Area Highlights*. The "Leave Hope" logo was offered to Conference members in three languages to use in their Area newsletters and in flyers for campaigns the Areas might create. Eleven Area Delegates requested it. The "Leave Hope" idea was mentioned in five Area newsletters. The logo in three languages was made available to the Public Outreach Department to use in their Coordinator mailings. One Delegate reported using the campaign logo to create sheets of logos of varying sizes and also business cards in English and French for members to share in their groups to help them remember the project.

Annual:

Based on Area newsletters and a project plan received during the fourth quarter, local campaigns are beginning to form.

BUSINESS SERVICES

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Zelda R.,
Chairperson

David Zach,
Director of Business Services (non-member)

David Zach
Director of
Business Services

All projects involving financial changes to the annual Budget originate in the Finance Committee. These actions are detailed in the Board and Executive portions of this report. Minutes of the Finance Committee meetings are reported to the Executive Committee. The finance report then becomes part of the Executive Committee minutes, and thus the Board of Trustees is kept advised. All Finance 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 Finance Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees for consideration at its next quarterly meeting.

The Finance Committee presented the 2005 Preliminary Budget to the Board of Trustees. With Board input and consideration, the proposed 2005 budget was adopted. At a special meeting of the Board of Trustees, prior to the 2005 World Service Conference, the Board revised the proposed budget for presentation to the Conference. In July, the Committee revised the 2005 budget based on the first six months' 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 Finance Committee, were reviewed and answered. Finance Committee guidelines were reviewed. Methods to increase or stimulate income were discussed. The Committee discussed the current pricing policy for books, pamphlets and other items sold by the WSO. Due to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina, collection on accounts were temporarily suspended in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama until it was determined to what extent Literature Distribution Centers in those Areas were impacted by the storm.

The Committee spent part of a day in November and in December developing the 2006 Preliminary Budget. As needed, Directors and/or Associate Directors of each service met with the Finance Committee to discuss various aspects of the departmental budget requests. The 2006 Preliminary Budget will be adjusted for presentation to the Board of Trustees.

ADDENDUM TO THE 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

Al-Anon/Alateen Internationally

AFRICA

South Africa: The General Service Office was pleased that the WSO Executive Director attended and participated in their 40th National Conference at their invitation.

EUROPE

Austria: The Associate Director—International and a Trustee member met with the Coordinator for the Al-Anon Information Service in Reutte.

Belgium (Flemish-speaking): The General Service Office has a Web site which received positive response as a public outreach tool.

Belgium (French-speaking): The General Service Office has started a new Web site.

Commonwealth of Independent States (formally the Soviet Union): The service structure in Moscow has started a new Alateen group.

Denmark: The Literature Committee has started work on a translation of the book *Paths to Recovery* and hopes to publish sometime in 2006.

Finland: The General Service Office has started an Al-Anon “helping hands” volunteer phone line as a public outreach tool in cooperation with A.A.

France: New Board of Trustee members were elected and are working to strengthen their structure within.

Germany: The General Service Office plans to send two Delegates to the 2006 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

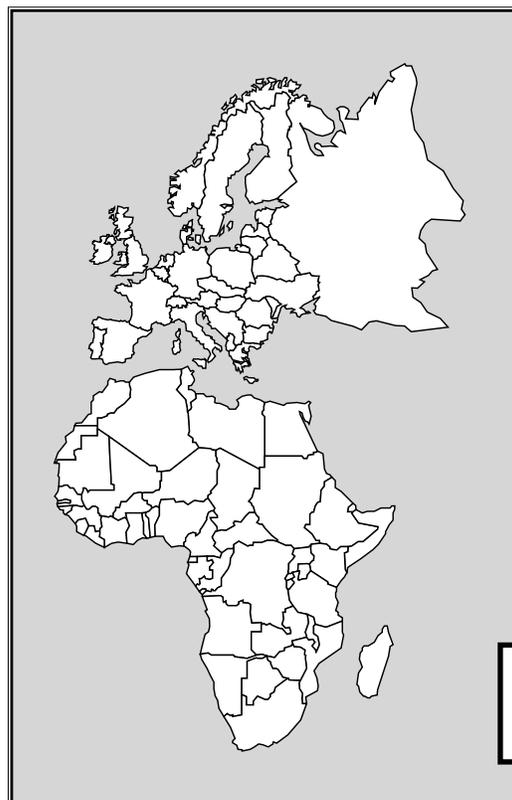
Greece: Members of the Literature Committee translated and printed *Courage to Change: One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II*. An Al-Anon Information Service located in Athens was registered with the WSO.

Hungary: The Associate Director—International and a Trustee member attended and participated in an A.A. service conference with Al-Anon participation in Kecskemet.

Iceland: The General Service Office advised 2005 was a year of highs and lows. The office had an unplanned move which has ultimately resulted in a better situation. Six new groups were started.

Italy: The Eleventh National Service Conference was very positive and successful. The service structure added a new Area which increases the Areas to 15 in that country.

Netherlands: The structure had a very positive service year. Al-Anon meetings appear to be stable and doing well.



AFRICA
and
EUROPE

Norway: Although the number of groups decreased, Al-Anon activity is on the rise. As a result of members not applying for service positions beyond the group and district levels, the Board of Trustees came up with a plan to invite members to a “service seminar” on the Saturday before the formal Board of Trustees meeting to meet the Trustees and share experience, strength, and hope about the joy of service.

Poland: The Associate Director—International and a Trustee member attended and participated in the 25 year celebration of Al-Anon held in Funka, Poland. Over 750 Al-Anon, Alateen, and AA members attended.

Portugal: The annual service meeting was positive and members continue to be excited about service.

Romania: The Associate Director—International and a Trustee member met with service members in Bucharest.

Spain: The General Service Office was invited to participate with Alcoholics Anonymous on the occasion of A.A.’s 50th anniversary, in a public outreach seminar that included public officials and national media. The event was very positive.

Sweden: The service structure is growing and they are hoping to translate more literature in the near future.

Switzerland (French-speaking): Their annual service conference in September went very well and as a result they expect increased service activity in 2006.

Switzerland (German-speaking): A team was organized to update and revise internal guidelines for the service structure. Al-Anon and A.A. are cooperating to maintain a 24-hour hotline that has separate numbers for both fellowships.

UK & Eire: A decision was made to send the General Secretary to the 2006 World Service Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

ASIA

China: WSO received contact from an Al-Anon member as a result of A.A.’s visit in 2005. The member advised she and others would review existing Chinese literature to help the WSO with future updates.

India: Members at the Al-Anon Information Service in Kolkata informed the WSO they are moving ahead to organize a service meeting to explore forming a national service structure.



Japan: The General Service Office celebrated the 25th anniversary of Al-Anon in September and in honor of this celebration published *Hope for Today*. The General Service Office moved to a new office in December.

Korea: The Al-Anon Intergroup, which is the national service structure, reported that the Literature Committee is active and is exploring translating new literature pieces.

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Australia: The WSO Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board visited the General Service Office in August enroute to attend the A.A. Oceania–Asia Zonal meeting held on the Gold Coast. While in Melbourne the WSO visitors attended an open meeting, participated in a day-long forum, and shared ideas regarding structure and the Alateen Safety and Behavior Guidelines.



New Zealand: The General Secretary resigned. The Executive Committee will fill in until a replacement is found. The WSO Executive Director visited the office in August and met with the Executive Committee and individual Board members and participated in an open forum with members in Auckland.

NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Costa Rica: The General Service Office was very pleased with the Regional Service Seminar held in March. As a result more members seem involved in service.

Cuba: Members working with the service structure advise that there are 34 groups. WSO continues to share with those involved in service through telephone communication when possible.

Guatemala: The service structure continues to cooperate and share experience with other structures in North and Central America.

Mexico: The Executive Committee is working towards purchasing space to house the General Service Office. The Nominating Committee interviewed, for the first time, candidates for the position of Trustee.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina: The General Service Office hired a new General Secretary.

Brazil: The General Service Office hired a new General Secretary, additional employees, and have restructured responsibilities internally. In addition, the book *Hope for Today* was translated and published. The structure also held their 17th Regional Service Seminar.

Colombia: The structure contacted school administration to explore ways to have Alateen meetings in schools in order to pass the message on to potential younger members.

El Salvador: The membership is no longer able to support a national service structure for that country.

Peru: In 2005 the structure celebrated recovery in that country using the theme "Al-Anon Peru: 40 Years Building Our Recovery."

Uruguay: Through their study of the *Service Manual*, plans were made to structure their annual Conference in 2006 more like the World Service Conference.

Venezuela: The General Service Office continued to share with members the positive benefits of service; as a result, a convention in a problematic area was held and the General Service Office participated.

Revised Descriptive Text of Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service:
Introduction and Concepts One through Seven

(Bold and underline is new text, strikethrough is deleted.)

INTRODUCTION

The Al-Anon Concepts of Service record the “why” of our service structure in such a way that the valuable experience of the past and the lessons drawn from that experience can never be forgotten or lost.

Each new generation of world servants quite rightly will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will perhaps show up in time. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. These contingencies should be squarely met, and suitable alterations effected.

When structural change does seem advisable, its advocates need only present a strong case for such a change to both the Trustees and the World Service Conference for consideration. This is no more than would be required for the transaction and passage of any other piece of Al-Anon business.

For an appropriate period, any far-reaching structural change should be labeled a “experimental trial,” and such changes, as well as lesser ones, shall on final approval be entered in the body of this *Manual*. The original text will be set out ~~at the back~~ in an appendix, leaving the original draft of the Twelve Concepts as a record of former experience. ††*

Change does not necessarily spell progress. Innovations may produce little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes. These Concepts, it is hoped, will forestall such repetition by holding the experience of the past clearly before us. If a mistaken departure is nevertheless made, they provide a ready means of safe return to an operating balance that otherwise might take years of floundering to rediscover.

The Concepts include a number of principles that have become traditional to our services but that have never been clearly defined and put into writing. For example: *Right of Decision* gives our service leaders proper discretion and latitude. The *Right of Participation* gives each world servant voting status commensurate with ~~his~~ the member's responsibility and guarantees that each service board and committee will always possess the elements and talents that ensure effective functioning. The *Right of Appeal* protects and encourages minority opinion. The *Right of Petition* makes certain that grievances will be heard and properly acted upon. These general principles can, of course, be used to good effect throughout our entire structure locally, nationally, and internationally.

The Concepts also delineate those important traditions, customs, relationships, and legal arrangements that weld the Board of Trustees into working harmony with the Executive

Committee and staff, ~~the Forum Committee,~~ and the primary selected committees of the World Service Office.

Great emphasis is placed on the need for a high order of personal leadership, careful induction methods for all incoming personnel, and the best possible relations among those who work in our services. The Concepts portray a structure in which all may labor to good effect with minimum possibility of friction. This is accomplished by a fair and balanced relationship of our workers to their work and to one another.

In service organizations, there is generally a choice between authoritarian structure, in which one person or group of persons has unqualified authority, and the democratic, which calls for checks and balances. It is human nature to try to enhance one's own authority and prestige when in the saddle. But when someone else holds the reins, we tend to resist heavy-handed management. Many of us can recognize these traits in ourselves.

The Concepts define working relations that can be friendly yet efficient. They ~~would~~ especially restrain a tendency to concentrate on money and power, this being an underlying, though not always conscious, motivation.

It is ~~to be~~ hoped that these Twelve Concepts will be a welcome document for the use of our Trustees, the World Service Office, and the members of the Conference, and that ~~it~~ the document will prove to be a reliable working guide in years to come.

*Bracketed numbers refer to original text, found in Amendments.

CONCEPT ONE

The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.

Tradition Two declares, “For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” This clearly implies that the groups are to be the final authority, that our leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only.

The Al-Anon groups today hold the ultimate responsibility and authority for our world services, those special elements of overall service activity that make it possible for our fellowship to function as a whole.

Our first move toward the creation of a service structure for Al-Anon was the formation, in 1951, of a central office or Clearing House, as it was then called. This Clearing House was designed to ~~inaugurate~~ **initiate** and maintain those special services for Al-Anon as a whole that could not ~~well~~ be performed by single groups or Areas, ~~such as~~ **This included** writing uniform literature, ~~the development of~~ **developing** a sound public relations policy, and ~~the handling of~~ large numbers of pleas for help. We hoped to encourage and aid new groups to form, and to furnish them with counsel based upon experience of older and already successful groups. We thought there might be a need for a monthly magazine, and perhaps later, for translations of our literature into other languages.

If Annie S., A₂A₂ Doctor Bob's wife, had lived until 1951, she would undoubtedly have given great moral support to the efforts to open a service office. Her death in Akron, Ohio, in 1949 was a great loss to us all, for Annie had carried the message to many an alcoholic's relative. A₂A₂ families in Akron consulted her constantly, and whenever she visited A₂A₂ groups with Doctor Bob, she always told the wives how she had adopted the A₂A₂ principles as a way of life for herself; and urged them to do likewise. A number of Al-Anon groups ~~in the Midwest~~ were started in this manner, ~~as were many in the East, where~~ **W**wives of early AAs traveled from group to group and talked about their experiences and needs.

When Bill W. was trying to inspire the formation of an A₂A₂ conference of delegates in 1950 by visiting many groups throughout the United States and Canada, he ran across quite a few groups of wives of AAs who met for a variety of purposes. Upon his return, he mentioned that these groups needed a unifying center to which they could write for information and suggested that his wife, Lois, establish such an office.

Thereupon Lois and another Anne, Anne B., working in the ~~former's~~ **Lois's** home in the suburbs, began by asking A₂A₂ whether they had the names of any A₂A₂ wives' groups. Surprisingly, there were 87 names of families and groups of wives who had asked A₂A₂ for help. Lois and Anne wrote to them, and 50 registered immediately. As correspondence increased, the office was moved to New York City, where more help was available.

At its start, the Clearing House polled the groups on the major questions of name, purpose, and method of support for our fellowship, and the adoption of A₂A₂'s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, slightly modified for Al-Anon's use.

In 1954, the Clearing House was incorporated as a nonprofit unit under the title Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., directed by a Board of Trustees consisting of volunteer Al-Anon members.*

By 1960, many of our dreams for world service had come true. In nine years, Al-Anon membership had jumped from 50 groups to nearly 1,500. Unity of purpose had pretty much re-

placed the early dissimilarity of groups. ~~The AA Auxiliary and "Coffee and Cake" groups had fallen away or been changed to real Al-Anon, as had many of the early AA wives' groups.~~ The basis for membership had broadened. Membership in many groups was 50 percent or more of families of alcoholics who did not belong to A₂A₂ and perhaps never would. National publicity had brought in hundreds of members who had no contact with Alcoholics Anonymous. Al-Anons were confidently united in their purpose of helping themselves in order to help others—and indirectly the alcoholic—and to do this through the use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

As Al-Anon entered its second decade, polling groups on important issues became impractical. The procedure was slow and cumbersome, and because many groups did not respond to letters, polls were ~~ineffectual~~ **ineffective** and sometimes inaccurate. There were also constant questions of policy that could not be settled by a poll and on which wrong decisions might lead to ~~ultimate~~ disaster. The group conscience had to point a way on these matters.

~~It was i~~In order to meet this need, ~~that~~ the Al-Anon groups in 1960 voted for the formation of the Al-Anon World Service Conference.

* For details of the structure of the World Service Office, see Concept Eleven.

CONCEPT TWO

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

The many Al-Anon groups scattered all over the world hold in their hands the group conscience.

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

Our World Service Office (**WSO**) had taken on a crucial meaning for Al-Anon's future. If this vital center were to collapse or bog down, our unity within—and the carrying of our message to innumerable potential members without—would suffer serious and perhaps irreparable damage. Were we ready to take the precautions A₂A₂ had taken to guard against impairment and to establish a Conference of Al-Anon Delegates to whom our service headquarters would be accountable?

Many of us thought we were ready. Also, we recognized that the average member, preoccupied with group life and personal Twelfth Step work, knew little if anything about Al-Anon's worldwide activities. Few Al-Anons realized how much their group membership and unity were due to the little-noticed activities of our headquarters office.

A few at headquarters felt this attitude showed a lack of faith in Al-Anon. They said: "Why change? Things are going fine. We poll the groups' opinion on any important question. Delegates from all over the country will mean expense and politics. We don't want either; let's keep it simple."

However, the decision lay with the groups. In 1960, Al-Anon held a meeting at the A.A. International Convention in Long Beach, California. There this matter was discussed. Al-Anons from all over the United States and Canada ~~had come~~ came to this convention. Their vote on the question would represent a cross-section of ~~an~~ Al-Anon. Those present voted unanimously to set up an annual Conference of Delegates on a trial basis for three years. This action was later confirmed by a poll of the groups.

Some years after the Conference had become a permanent foundation for Al-Anon world services, we found that our fears had been largely groundless. Its success ~~has had~~ exceeded our highest expectations. It proved that the Al-Anon groups can and will take the final responsibility for their world services.

Our World Service Conference (WSC) is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.

We believe our fellowship is a spiritual society characterized by enough enlightenment, responsibility, and love for God and man to ensure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions. We rely confidently on Tradition Two, our group conscience, and our trusted servants. Hence; it is with a sense of great security that we ~~old-timers now~~ are assured that Al-Anon's ~~World Service Conference~~ WSC will use its vested authority for giving shape to the destiny that God is holding in store for us all.

CONCEPT THREE

The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.

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 should decide which matters they may properly dispose of and upon which they will report, consult, or ask specific directions. By tradition, ~~Our~~ world servants should be trusted with these discretions, otherwise no effective lead-

ership is possible. Let us consider why the Right of Decision is imperative for our leaders. Let us examine this principle in its practical application to all levels of our world service structure.

The World Service Conference (WSC) Charter of the Conference and the Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., define in broad terms the responsibility of the Conference to act on behalf of Al-Anon as a whole. In these two documents, a large area of delegated service authority and responsibility has been spelled out. These instruments describe the relationships between the groups, the WSC Conference, the Trustees, and ~~the active service units~~ other service arms. These broad definitions and descriptions are an indispensable frame of reference; we could not function without them.

Nevertheless, it has long been evident that the Bylaws and the WSC Charter and the Bylaws, important as they are, cannot by themselves ensure smooth functioning and proper leadership at the various levels of service. For example, knowing that they have the final authority, the groups may be tempted to instruct their Delegates exactly how to vote. There is no doubt that the Al-Anon groups have the right to do this. They can give directives to their Delegates on any and all Al-Anon matters.

But good management seldom means the full exercise of ultimate rights. Were the groups to carry their instruction of Delegates to extremes, we would be proceeding on the false premise that a group's opinion could be superior to Conference opinion. As a practical matter, this could almost never be the case. How could "instructed" Delegates settle a question as well as WSC Conference members acting freely with full facts to guide them? It is understood that complete reporting of WSC Conference actions is always desirable. So is full consultation with District Representatives and Group Representatives. Nevertheless, the "instructed" Delegate who cannot act according to his own conscience on a final WSC Conference vote would not be a "trusted servant" at all but a messenger.

The Conference WSC Charter does not actually solve typical problems like these. It is a broad document that can be construed in various ways. Under one interpretation, the groups can instruct the Delegates as much as they like. Under another, the Delegates and Trustees can actually go counter to such instructions, *whenever new information gives them reason to change their point of view*.

Let us look at another illustration: In matters of policy, principles, and program procedures, the Conference WSC has practically complete authority over the Board of Trustees consistent with the ~~individual~~ legal obligations of the individual Trustees and the Board as a whole respecting corporate business transactions.^[2] It surely would not be practical for the Conference WSC to issue hasty and flat directives to the Board of Trustees on matters about which the Trustees would be far more knowledgeable than the Delegates.

Again, this same kind of confusion could beset the relations of the **Board of Trustees** to the Executive Committee and to committees directed by non-Trustee volunteers and paid service workers. The Board of Trustees certainly does have authority to control these entities; its authority is final. Yet if the **Board of Trustees** were to constantly exert their full and absolute authority and attempt to manage these operating entities in detail, then the volunteers and staff members would quickly become demoralized; they would be turned into buck-passers and rubber stamps; their only choice would be to rebel and resign or to submit and smolder.

Therefore, some traditional and practical principle must be applied that at all levels will continuously balance relations between ultimate authority and delegated responsibility. How then shall we accomplish this?

The AI-Anon solution to these questions is to be found in Tradition Two, which refers to “trusted servants.” 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.

There will always be plenty of ultimate authority to correct inefficiency, ineffectiveness, or abuse. If the Conference WSC does not function well, the groups are free to choose better Delegates to represent them. If the **Board of Trustees** gets badly out of line, the Conference WSC can censure them or even reorganize their **Board**. If Headquarters World Service Office (WSO) services should sour, the **Board of Trustees** can appoint a more effective Executive Committee and hire better help. These remedies are direct and adequate. But for so long as our world services function reasonably well, then “trust” must be our watchword, otherwise we shall wind up leaderless.

The above reasons show why our service bodies and people-members should have a traditional Right of Decision, which could be practically applied as follows:

a. The Conference WSC always should be able to decide which matters it will fully dispose of on its own responsibility and which questions it will refer to the AI-Anon groups or, more usually, to their Area eCommittee or GRs. Therefore, it ought to be clearly understood and agreed that our Conference WSC Delegates are primarily the world servants of AI-Anon as a whole. Only in a secondary sense do they represent their respective areas. Consequently they should, on final decisions, be entitled to cast their votes in the World Service Conference WSC according to the dictates of their own judgment and conscience.

b. 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.

c. Within the scope of their defined or implied responsibilities, the ~~headquarters corporation~~ **WSO**, its committees, staff, or executives; should each have the right to decide when to act wholly on their own and when to refer a problem to the next higher authority.

This Right of Decision should never be **used as** an excuse for **faili**ngure to render proper reports of all significant actions taken, or ~~used as a reason~~ for exceeding a clearly defined authority, or for repeatedly **faili**ngure to consult those who are entitled to be consulted before an important decision or action is taken.

Our entire AI-Anon program rests squarely on the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust AI-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.

CONCEPT FOUR

Participation is the key to harmony.

The Principle of Participation has been built into our whole service structure. If all authority were to be assigned to one group and virtually all responsibility to another, we would seriously handicap efficiency of operation and real harmony.

The World Service Conference (WSC) Charter specifically provides that the **Board of Trustees** of our ~~service corporation~~, AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. shall always be voting members of the World Service Conference WSC, **as shall be the World Service Office (WSO) Policy Committee, Executive Committee, and members of the WSO administrative staff**, and further, leaves the door open for other Headquarters members as they may be needed. As indicated in Concept Three, if the groups, sensing their great power, should try to overexercise **it that power** by directing their Delegates how to vote at the Conference WSC, those Delegates would feel they were neither participants nor trusted servants. If, in turn, the Delegates overexercise their power, they could make the Trustees mere rubber stamps.

Though it may seem inconsistent for service workers and Trustees to participate in voting on reports of their own activities, these reports constitute only a fraction of the business of the Conference WSC, which is far more concerned with policies, plans, and actions to take effect in the future. The Conference WSC needs the votes of such knowledgeable people as the Trustees and other members of the Headquarters WSO.

Since our Conference **WSC**, unlike the U.S. Congress **governmental bodies**, cannot be constantly in session, there is good reason not to give Delegates absolute voting authority over Trustees, staff members, and Committee Chairpersons. They **Delegates** meet **once a year** for **only** a few days ~~only~~, ~~once a year~~, and cannot have firsthand knowledge of many problems on which they are expected to vote. This is all the more reason for allowing the often better-informed minority of Trustees and Headquarters **WSO** people **staff and volunteers** the privilege of balloting.

Some Delegates may object that, on close votes in the Conference **WSC**, the combined ballots of the Trustees and service workers may decide a particular question. But their greater familiarity through experience fully justifies this. It should also be noted that they are not likely to vote in a bloc. Differences of opinion among them may be as sharp and considerable as those to be found among the Delegates.

The same concept is borne in mind when our Board of Trustees elects a Chairperson and members of the Executive Committee. If it wished, the Board could appoint its own members to most of these positions, but this, ~~of course~~, is not done, because it would nullify the Principle of Participation.

The active management of the ~~World Service Office~~ **WSO**, previously called the Headquarters Office, is vested in the Executive Committee, whose duty is to see that all projects are carefully carried out. ~~The Executive Committee is composed of the Treasurer and the Executive Director, [4] both of whom are trustees; three members-at-large, who contribute their advice and professional experience; [5] a person from the administrative staff of the World Service Office; and the chairperson of the Policy Committee. For timely communication linkage, a member of the Forum Editorial and/or the Forum Business Operations Committee may be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings without vote. [6] Its seven members include the Executive Director, a member of the WSO administrative staff, the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees, and three qualified Al-Anon members. From time to time, others may be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings without vote.~~

Whenever the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees appoints a Chairperson to the **standing selected** committees, ~~he considers~~ the same Principle of Participation **is considered**. Trustees or non-Trustee volunteers comprise these committees, which have staff Administrators ~~[7]~~ to do much of the detail work.

These arrangements permit a proper degree of voting participation. No class is set in absolute authority over another. Thus, in the **participating participatory** method of doing business, there are no superiors and no inferiors, as distinguished from the institutional, military, or governmental method.

However, other than the Executive Director, no paid staff worker should become a Trustee. First, it would interfere with

the rotation of the Board, which already has one nonrotating member. Second, if ever ~~the headquarters corporation~~ **the Board of Trustees** had to be reorganized by the Conference **WSC**, paid Trustees in a bloc might prove a vested interest difficult to dislodge. ~~[8]~~

Our **Board of** Trustees may, however, invite paid staff members, accountants, and any others whose reports or advice may be required, to attend quarterly meetings of the Board, where they would have voice but no vote. When staff members are thus placed in direct communication with the Trustees, they realize they are wanted and needed.

Perhaps new generations of Delegates or Trustees may wish to weaken, modify, or eliminate the Principle of Participation. Occasionally a few Delegates may question the right of the Executive Committee, the staff, and even the Trustees to vote in the ~~Conference~~ **WSC**. New volunteer members of the Executive Committee may ask why any paid staff members should be on this business management committee. Every now and then a move may be made to abolish the Executive Committee as a separate entity so that the **Board of** Trustees could manage the office directly. But the Right of Participation in our service structure is of such high importance to our future that ~~it is~~ **we are** urged ~~we to~~ preserve this traditional right in the face of every attempt to whittle it down.

Participation also responds to our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong. The Al-Anon ideal of a working partnership could never regard any member as second class. This is perhaps the main reason we have struggled to achieve participation at every level. The Right of Participation encourages us who serve Al-Anon to accept the necessary disciplines that our various tasks require. It assures us that we are truly the “trusted servants” described in Al-Anon’s Tradition Two.

CONCEPT FIVE

The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and assure insure that they be heard.

The Rights of Appeal and Petition aim to protect and make the best possible use of minority feeling and opinion.

In the principle of the Right of Appeal, all minorities—whether among our staff, Executive Committee, **standing selected** committees, **or** Trustees—should be encouraged to file minority reports whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error. ~~Furthermore, w~~When a **any** minority considers an issue to be so grave that a mistaken decision could seriously affect Al-Anon as a whole, it has the actual duty of presenting a minority report **appeal** to the ~~Conference~~ **body that made the decision**.

This traditional Right of Appeal acknowledges that minorities can be right; that even when they are *partly* or wholly in

error, they still perform a valuable service when, by asserting their Right of Appeal, ~~they~~ **and** compelling a thorough debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty, or angry majority.

The traditional Right of Petition permits any person in our service structure **including World Service Office (WSO) employees, members of the Executive Committee, selected committees, or Board of Trustees**, whether paid or unpaid, to petition for the redress of a personal grievance, carrying **his** the complaint, if **he** desired, directly to the Board of Trustees. **He** One should be able to do this without prejudice or fear of reprisal. **However, the Board of Trustees has the right to delegate the consideration of any and all petitions to another body that it deems appropriate.** Though in practice **this** the right to petition the Board of Trustees will be seldom **be** exercised, its very existence will tend to restrain those in authority from unjust use of power. Surely our workers cheerfully accept the direction and discipline that go with their jobs, but all should nevertheless be confident that they need not silently endure unnecessary and unfair personal domination. **For all our paid workers at the WSO, the Board of Trustees has established a clearly defined process for the redress of a work related grievance. This process is outlined in the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of the World Service Office.**

It should be noted that while minorities, whether groups or individuals, have the right to be heard, it does not mean that the action in question will be delayed while the petition or appeal is being considered, nor does it guarantee that the decision will be overturned.

In our Al-Anon groups, individual freedom is of enormous importance. Anyone who feels his/her personal life is, or has been, deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon. [9] We never take away this right to belong. Neither do we compel our members to believe anything or pay anything.

In our world services, we also go to great lengths in our trust of minorities. Under Tradition Two, the *group conscience* is the final authority for Al-Anon world services. Nevertheless, the groups have recognized that for **the purpose of** world services ~~purpose~~ our group conscience has certain limitations. It cannot act directly in many service matters, because it is seldom sufficiently informed about the problems at hand. During times of stress, it may not be the best possible guide, because emotional bias may prevent it, temporarily, from functioning efficiently or wisely. When, therefore, the group conscience cannot act directly, who does act for it?

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~~ **ready** 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.

The foregoing observations illustrate Al-Anon's concern for the freedom and protection of individual members and the whole membership's willingness to trust able and conscientious servants to function for us all.

Our ~~Conference~~ **WSC** Charter is infused with provisions that ensure protection and respect for minorities. This is exemplified, for instance, in the method of selecting Delegates. Unless the majority candidate can poll a two-thirds vote of his state or provincial **the Area** Assembly, ~~he places his~~ **the** names **are placed** in a hat with one or more of the choices of the Assembly minority. By thus drawing lots, the minority candidates have an equal chance with the majority's choice.

This method of electing Delegates strengthens the spirit of democracy among us. Unity is cemented, cooperation increased, and when the Delegate is finally chosen, the minority has no reason for discontent. To increase the actual spirit of democracy by special deference to minority opinion is better than to follow blindly the rule that insists in unqualified dominance by majority vote.

Consider another example: Our respect for the minority position plus a desire for unity and certainty often prompt the World Service Conference **WSC** to debate important questions of policy even in cases where a majority could easily be obtained. Such a voluntary practice is evidence of real prudence and courteous deference to the views of all. The ~~Conference~~ **WSC** usually makes important decisions on no less than a two-thirds vote.

This same consideration for the minority position can be found in the **WSC** Charter provision that no Conference vote can be considered binding on the Board of Trustees unless it equals two-thirds of a Conference quorum. Up to this point, the Trustees have a power of veto. **[See Concept Seven, legal rights of Board of Trustees.]** They may ask for further debate to check any tendency to haste or emotionalism. They may choose to veto a simple majority or to act with it. Here again is recognition of the constructive value of a trusted minority.

~~If to such ample recognition of minority privileges we now add~~ **By adding** the traditional Rights of Appeal and Petition **to minority privileges**, we ~~shall have granted~~ to all minorities, whether of groups or of individuals **among our staff, Executive Committees, selected committees, or Trustees**, the means of discharging their world service duties confidently, harmoniously, and well.

In Al-Anon, we believe the spirit of democracy in our fel-

lowship and in our world service structure will always survive despite any countertendencies that may beset us.

We believe that we shall never be subjected to the tyranny of either majority or minority, provided we carefully define the relationship between them. We can then tread the path of world service in the spirit of our Twelve Steps, our Twelve Traditions, and these our Twelve Concepts of Service.

Concept Six

The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.

Just as the Al-Anon groups can act decisively in world service affairs only by entrusting authority and responsibility to their World Service Conference (WSC), so must the ~~Conference~~WSC in turn entrust administrative authority to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.), in order that its Trustees may act freely and effectively in the absence of the ~~Conference~~WSC.

For several important reasons, the Trustees must have freedom to act. Next to the ~~Conference~~WSC, Al-Anon's Board of Trustees should be our most influential group of world servants. We ~~shall~~ have to consider carefully the kind and degree of authority, responsibility, leadership, and legal status the Trustees must possess in order to function at ~~top effective-~~ness effectively in the years to come. We ~~shall~~ need to define ~~clearly~~ the kinds of professional and financial skills that will be required for a ~~balanced Trusteeship~~ an effective Board of Trustees. Thus we ~~permanently~~ ensure the Board's capability of future leadership.

~~It will also be necessary~~ We need to show ~~precisely~~ how the Trustees ought to be related to the ~~Conference~~WSC and, in turn, to the Executive Committee and any other active service committees or corporations that may be needed in the future. In a general way these relations ~~already~~ are indicated in our World Service Conference Charter (WSC Charter) and on preceding pages; however, ~~T~~there still remains a need to interpret them in detail. These relations should never be frozen into a rigid pattern. However satisfactory and right our present arrangements are, the future may require changes that we do not yet envision. New conditions may require refinements or even considerable alterations. For this reason, our WSC Charter is capable of being ~~readily~~ amended by the ~~Conference~~WSC itself.

If later we do make changes that happen to work out poorly, the experience of the past will provide, in these articles, a point of safe return to tested procedure.

A careful review of the legal and traditional rights of the ~~World Service~~ Board of Trustees ~~clearly~~ indicates ~~their~~its actual administrative responsibilities. ~~Their~~Its authority in this

field is unquestionably great.

Why should our Trustees be given this wide latitude of judgment and action? The answer is that they are held ~~chiefly~~ responsible for all our service activities, as well as for Al-Anon's worldwide public relations. They are expected to spearhead the formulation of Al-Anon policy and its proper execution. They are the active guardians of our Twelve Traditions. The Trustees have ultimate responsibility for the preservation and prudent management of all Al-Anon's financial assets. They are accountable for the internal controls of funds received and the investment thereof. ~~fHf~~. The wide range of their activities is further detailed under Concept Eleven.

While the Trustees must operate under the close observation, guidance, and sometimes the direction of the ~~Conference~~WSC, it is nevertheless true that only the Trustees can evaluate and handle most of the innumerable transactions involved in our World Service operation. In view of this great responsibility, they must be given a correspondingly large grant of authority and leadership with which to discharge it. It must be understood; ~~tøø~~; that the conduct of our World Services is primarily a matter of policy and business. While our objectives are spiritual, these aims can be achieved only by means of an effective business operation. Since our Trustees must function like the directors of any large business corporation, they must have ample authority to manage and conduct Al-Anon's business.

Concept Seven

The Trustees have legal rights while the rights of the Conference are traditional.

At first this Concept may appear contradictory. Actually both the rights of the Trustees and the World Service Conference (WSC) work well together. On the one hand, we see a Board of Trustees invested with complete legal power over Al-Anon's funds and services; on the other hand, Al-Anon's ~~World Service Conference~~ WSC has such great responsibility for and authority over all aspects of Al-Anon's program and policies that in those areas it could give the Trustees directives and secure their compliance. ~~fHf~~

This means that the actual power of the ~~Conference~~WSC will nearly always be superior to the legal power of the Trustees since it flows from the powerful traditional influence of the World Service Conference Charter (WSC Charter) itself. It derives from the large majority of group-chosen Delegates in the ~~Conference~~ WSC. And finally, in any ~~great extremity~~extreme situation, it would rest upon the unquestioned right of the Delegates to deny Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the moneys with which to operate—those voluntary contributions of the Al-Anon groups themselves. Theoretically, the ~~Conference~~ WSC is an advisory body; practically speaking, it has the ultimate rights and powers.

The Board of Trustees is not likely to contest the clear and sustained will of the ~~Conference~~WSC Delegates and the Al-Anon Areas they represent. ~~{#2}~~ If someday a crucial stalemate arose between the Delegates and the Trustees, the ~~Conference~~WSC, as the conscience of Al-Anon, would find itself in complete authority over the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc, and its ~~arms-of-active~~ World Service arms.

Experience shows that this balance of powers between the Trustees and the ~~Conference~~WSC is thoroughly workable. We believe ~~T~~his balance can be maintained indefinitely, because the one is protected by tradition and the other by law.

An interesting question often raised by new Trustees is whether they ~~haven't~~ have a legal right to say no to something the ~~Conference~~WSC wants.

In certain corporate business areas, the Trustees certainly do have this legal authority; ~~but~~, on the other hand, they are quite at liberty to accept, even seek, advice and recommended directions from the WSC or other qualified sources. ~~{#3}~~ Just as the ~~Conference~~WSC should avoid the overuse of its traditional authority, so should the Board of Trustees avoid overuse of ~~their its~~ legal authority.

Clearly, then, our Board of Trustees does reserve a veto power over any ~~Conference~~WSC action; this is legally necessary and right in principle, even though the veto will seldom be used. At certain times, however, the Trustees' veto could be of important and constructive use.

Here, ~~for instance~~, are three typical examples in which it would be the duty of the Trustees to veto ~~Conference~~WSC action:

1. If, in a time of haste or heavy stress, the ~~Conference~~WSC should take an action or issue a directive to the Trustees in clear violation of ~~its own~~ the WSC Charter or of the By-laws of the ~~headquarters corporation~~ AFG, Inc., or if the ~~Conference~~WSC were to pass any measure so ill-considered or so reckless as to seriously injure, in the judgment of the Trustees, Al-Anon's public relations, or Al-Anon as a whole, ~~it would then be the duty of the~~ Board of Trustees ~~to ask~~ would have the duty of asking for ~~Conference~~WSC reconsideration. In the event of a ~~Conference~~WSC refusal to reconsider, the Board of Trustees could then use ~~their~~the legal right to veto. If desirable, ~~they~~the Board could appeal the issue directly to the Al-Anon groups themselves.
2. Although traditionally the Trustees ~~never~~ should never substantially exceed a ~~Conference~~WSC approved budget without consulting the ~~Conference~~WSC, they should feel entirely free to reduce this budget figure during any fiscal year, even though such an action might curtail or cancel plans or projects initiated and directed by the ~~Conference~~WSC itself.

3. If, by reason of unforeseen conditions, any particular plan, project, or directive of the ~~Conference~~WSC should become impractical, ~~or unworkable~~, or legally inadvisable during a fiscal year, the Trustees should, without prejudice, be able to use their right of veto and cancellation.

In the years ahead, the ~~Conference~~WSC should always bear in mind the actual rights, duties, responsibilities, and legal status of the Board of Trustees; the Trustees should constantly realize that the ~~Conference~~WSC is the real seat of ultimate service authority. Then we may be sure that neither will be seriously tempted to ~~make a rubber stamp~~violate either the authority or responsibility of the other. In this way, grave issues can always be resolved by harmonious cooperation.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

TRUSTEES AT LARGE

Judith P.	Liz W.
Genevieve B.	Zelda R.
Doreen D.	Mary Ann R.
Bidge B.	Mary G.

REGIONAL TRUSTEES

Frank R., US Northeast
 Colleen R., US North Central
 Doris W., US South Central
 Judy D., US Northwest
 Claudette D., Canada East
 Jo-Anne L., Canada Central
 Julie F., Canada West

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Catherine J., Chairperson
 Ric B., Executive Director
 Judith P., Board Chairperson (ex-officio)
 Zelda R., Treasurer
 Colleen R., Policy Chairperson
 Cecelia L., Member at Large
 Marjorie S., Member at Large

NON-TRUSTEE COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Beth K., ECRPM Chairperson**

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Ric B., Executive Director
 Mary Ann K., Director of Member Services
 David Zach, Director of Business Services*
 Robert S., Director of Communication Services**
 Tom C., Associate Director of Fellowship Communication
 Cynthia H., Associate Director of Membership Outreach
 Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Public Outreach
 Barbara O., Associate Director of Member Services/Alateen
 Pat Q., Associate Director of Fellowship Communication
 Claire R., Associate Director of Public Outreach
 Dolores T., Associate Director of Group Services
 Marsha W., Associate Director of Membership Outreach

*Nonmember, non-voting

**Non-voting

AREA DELEGATES

Janie J., Alabama
 Marlene R., Alaska
 Marilyn M., Alberta/Northwest Territories
 Cindy M., Arizona
 Susan R., Arkansas
 Kal T., British Columbia/Yukon
 Sandi C., California North
 Mary M., California South
 Carol C., Colorado
 Ellie L., Connecticut
 Pam L., Delaware
 Lisa P., Florida North
 Georgia C., Florida South
 Debbie F., Georgia
 Cecily C., Hawaii
 Cecilia S., Idaho
 Libby D., Illinois North
 Betsy C., Illinois South
 Faye S., Indiana
 Connie H., Iowa
 Laurel L., Kansas
 Bruce F., Kentucky

Clara E., Louisiana
 Reen R., Maine
 Rick P., Manitoba
 Mickie Z., Maritime Provinces
 Karen L., Maryland/District of Columbia
 Ann F-S., Massachusetts
 Mike B., Michigan
 JoAnne H., Minnesota North
 Patricia S., Minnesota South
 Fran A., Mississippi
 Donna E-H., Missouri
 Jeanne H., Montana
 Dorothy B., Nebraska
 Tina B., Nevada
 Sheila K., Newfoundland/Labrador
 Lida K., New Hampshire
 Kathy B., New Jersey
 Gayle McN., New Mexico
 Robert C., New York North
 Joan L., New York South
 Paula B., North Carolina/Bermuda
 Shirley J., North Dakota

Barbara W., Ohio
 Debbie P., Oklahoma
 Sharon C., Ontario North
 Joan P., Ontario South
 Susan G., Oregon
 Mary R., Pennsylvania
 Carmin T-M., Puerto Rico
 Elaine L., Quebec East
 Yvette D., Quebec West
 Barbara M., Rhode Island
 Lois K., Saskatchewan
 Susan L., South Carolina
 Cherri N., South Dakota
 Joyce R., Tennessee
 Bennie P., Texas East
 Sue E., Texas West
 Joyce B., Utah
 John McL., Vermont
 Phyllis S-T., Virginia
 Ruth H., Washington
 Nancy C., West Virginia
 Jim S., Wisconsin
 Tricia B., Wyoming

