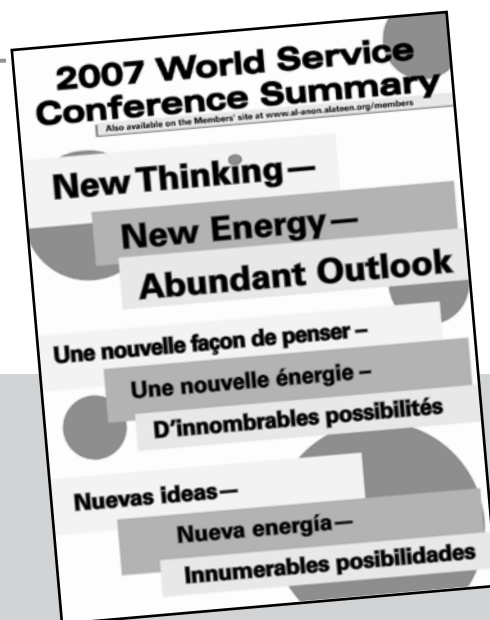


2007 CONFERENCE SUMMARY

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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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New Thinking—
New Energy—
Abundant Outlook

Nuevas ideas—
Nueva energía—
Innumerables posibilidades

Une nouvelle façon de penser –
Une nouvelle énergie –
D'innombrables possibilités

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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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 World Service Conference to share their Area successes and concerns. This year, Delegates submitted their responses in advance to the following questions about the Conference theme, New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook:

How has your Area changed its thinking this last year?

How has your Area gained new energy?

How has your Area used the abundant resources that the World Service Office (WSO) offers?

How has the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process affected, helped, or hindered your Area?

New Thinking brought about:

- More cooperation with A.A.—reaching out to them
- A different approach to outreach, asking to meet with various agencies
- An introduction of the concept of shared leadership
- An introduction of the KBDM process, which brought about a shift away from Robert's Rules of Order
- The idea of providing Area guidelines, bylaws, voting and election procedures, and information on agenda items in advance of meetings for a more informed group conscience
- A shift in attitude from “we can't do it” to “we can do it, because it will benefit the membership”
- Greater use of technology to communicate, which has resulted in monumental and positive growth
- The creation of a Coordinator position for Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) on a three-year trial basis
- Action committees focusing on clear goals and being accountable, which led to less resistance
- The development of group budget guidelines to expand groups' view of giving
- The idea of looking for ways to combine and link all local and district Web sites with the same meeting lists to the Area Web site
- The appointment of an ad hoc committee to revise the “turnover” process between panels, asking two questions. What are three things you wish you'd known when you started your current service position? What, given the upcoming elections, information, and/or support, would make it possible for you to step up for another service position?
- The addition of facility and workshop information for the Area convention to the Web site, which resulted in a five percent increase in attendees
- The development of a Convention workbook to include guidelines, reports, information about attendance and registration, budget, etc.



- The creation of an ad hoc committee to research meeting site locations to cut costs
- The creation of an ad hoc committee to study the feasibility of purchasing Spanish translation equipment
- A request from members to study the possibility of holding additional Assemblies in order to allow more time for workshops, service opportunities, and fellowship
- The idea of offering Alateen Group Sponsor training and a Sponsor-only weekend for further training and to share information and tools
- An inactive district hosting the Fall Assembly using KBDM and shared leadership—the district now has a District Representative who attends Area meetings
- A Spanish answering service with its own office staffed by members
- An LDC accepting credit cards
- The idea of working with two large grocery store chains to have the *Crying House* bookmark (M-76) printed on plastic bags during “Alcohol Awareness Month”
- An Area publishing the Area newsletter in English and Spanish
- An Institutions Coordinator developing a database of contacts for members
- The development of an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) training kit and workshops and Alateen meetings on wheels

New Energy was brought about by:

- Using breakout sessions at AWSC meetings
- Spanish-speaking groups hosting our Assembly
- Creating new coordinator positions to share the workload
- Seeing ideas come to fruition, which increased the belief that we can do together more than we thought we could hope to accomplish individually
- Seeing the Delegate and the Alternate Delegate cooperate by sharing leadership and information
- Having information flow not only from Officers/Coordinators to GRs, but from GRs to Officers/Coordinators
- Celebrating and recognizing Alateen's 50 years of recovery

- Inviting GRs to Area meetings—resulting in an increased interest in service and decision-making
- Using a Coordinator as a guest speaker at a group that was struggling with low attendance and commitment to service
- Having a visit from WSO staff or Trustee
- Holding a “vision” workshop asking, “Where do we see our group, district, Area in 2020?”
- Two drug and alcohol commissions seeking our participation as a community resource
- Studying and using the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), which increased interest in service
- e-CAL—reaching out to the on-line community

Abundant Outlook has created successes by:

- Inviting WSO staff and Trustees to Assemblies at least once per panel
- Coordinators initiating direct contact with the WSO
- Action committees collecting needed data through old *Conference Summaries*, Area/WSO Web sites, and WSO Archives
- Encouraging the use of the WSO Web site and e-CAL as service tools
- Developing a vision and mission statement with goals to guide Area meeting agenda topics
- Using *Area Highlights* for project ideas
- Selling literature at Assemblies so rural groups don’t have to pay postage
- Making PowerPoint presentations with information shared at the WSC
- Providing an orderly and thoughtful process for studying issues, gaining input, and achieving consensus
- Using old *Forums* as a public outreach tool

Delegates also reported the following benefits of using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process. The KBDM process:

- Provided focus and goals for action committees to better communicate findings
- Helped with clear communication and consensus
- Is working, but the turnover in members hinders progress
- Principles helped us with GR orientation and workshop information sessions
- Helped members understand a year-old redistricting proposal
- Is bringing more informed members to meetings
- Has strengthened our mutual trust within the Area
- Is helping members thoroughly discuss an issue before taking action
- Resulted in a drastic decrease in motions
- Has shortened discussion time because background information is available
- Is helping our meetings become more fluid—we are having open discussions without the pressure for a motion or vote
- Helped our members determine that buying rather than renting translation equipment made more sense and it has helped us achieve a comfort level with our ultimate decision
- Allows the minority to be heard from the beginning; there aren’t any surprises
- Is helping to determine if an Area Assembly should be centralized and whether a district can afford a local Al-Anon information telephone number

Concerns were also expressed regarding the following:

- There’s a need to constantly repeat and explain new concepts, such as action committees
- There’s a need to resolve an ongoing issue regarding the relationship between Areas and AIS/LDCs
- An inability to fill Coordinator positions for three years
- Several Coordinators who are not doing their jobs
- Outlying districts that don’t participate at the Area level

During the meeting, attendees broke out into small groups and were asked to share what they believe the purpose of the session should be, whether the session is the best use of the Delegates’ time at the Conference, and what they would like to change about the session. Overall, the Delegates liked the format of small group discussions and the opportunity to share Area ideas.



CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

The Conference theme, “New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook,” was reflected in all of the discussions and activities throughout the 47th World Service Conference (WSC), held at the Ramada Plaza Resort Oceanfront in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 22-26, 2007.

Prior to the official opening, Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee, and World Service Office (WSO) Conference staff gathered together on Saturday night for their first meal together. The Executive Director briefly welcomed everyone and challenged the Delegates to “share your opinions; don’t take them home, and share from the depths of your understanding” in the upcoming week for the benefit of Al-Anon.

After dinner, Panel 47 Delegates were “pinned” by their Conference Sponsors. The Conference Chair shared that when she came to her first WSC, her “pin” was on the table in front of her and someone said, “Take it, it’s yours.” She commented that the Conference had come a long way since then.”

Returning Delegates were asked to share their experience on the following question: “What was it, at the 2006 Conference, that helped you share the Conference discussions with confidence in your Area?”

One Delegate, spoke about the roles and responsibilities discussion. “I didn’t know what I didn’t know until I got here.” Another said that roles and responsibilities helped her to “stay out of double-headed management. I don’t have to get involved in everyone’s business.” Another commented that shared leadership has been a great asset, “The role of the Delegate is to delegate.”

Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) was by far the most helpful tool taken from that WSC. Some commented that decisions, which usually took years to make, had been reduced to a matter of hours. “KBDM was more helpful and made me comfortable with my role.” Another viewed it as a process to reach an “informed group conscience.”

Other comments included:

- The implementation of the new orientation program for first-time Conference members
- Using the phrase “presume goodwill”
- Receiving reports before leaving the WSC and then, again, electronically the week after Conference made giving a report easy when combined with handwritten notes
- Realizing that the WSO staff were trusted servants and available to help if they were asked

The Chairperson of the Board closed the dinner stating that she already felt a lot of energy at the orientation earlier that day. “The experience this week will change your life. It changed mine.”

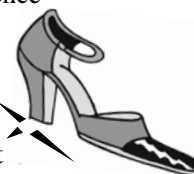
Instead of using a gavel, the Conference Chairperson opened this year’s Conference by taking off her shoe and tapping it the lectern, as a tribute to our cofounder, Lois W. In her opening comments, the Chairperson said, “Somewhere right now, there is a man, a wife, or a child who is tearfully pleading with a loved one to please stop drinking, to please come home after work, to please stop arguing about everything. Somewhere, right now, a life is in tatters; someone is feeling desperate and crying out for help. That someone was once you and I.

“Today we have the incredible privilege of making sure that when a person calls, writes, watches TV, contacts a health professional, walks into a meeting place, or signs onto the Internet looking for an answer, they will find help and hope.

“Ultimately, that’s why we’re here this week. For 46 years, the World Service Conference has met. WSO staff and volunteers and representatives from every

Mary G.,
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Doreen D.,
Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee



“The 2007 World Service Conference begins!”

Area in the U.S. and Canada have come together to guarantee that our world services are carried out so that hope and help is available to everyone, everywhere.

“We are here as a service body to give guidance and direction, to deliberate on important matters and to guard our Traditions. We are the voice of worldwide Al-Anon. We are its largest group conscience. Al-Anon’s harmony, unity, and survival depend on our conversations and our leadership. We are here for every group so that the one suffering, desperate person who seeks hope and recovery has a chance to get it. We are accountable to the little group in Hamburg, New York; Hallettsville, Texas; and Welland, Ontario.

“Our program has taught us that perpetuating our past deadened our future. So here we are, once again, ready to expand our thinking, to invigorate our service work, and to discover limitless resources we can barely imagine.

“Our theme this year connects to the themes and ideas of all 46 World Service Conferences. ‘New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook’ could have been the visionary theme of the very first Conference in 1961, when the Conference was just a trial. Look where we have come today!

“Our pioneers were visionary, brave, and bold as they stepped forward to create this Conference. Can we be anything less?

“Our program has taught us that strengthening the values found in our three Legacies is essential to our survival. Beginning today, we will reach out to our Higher Power and to each other in trust—committed to fulfilling our primary purpose, guided by our Traditions and Concepts of Service.

“As trusted servants, we are responsible to our founders to continue in their pioneering path, to be flexible enough so that we don’t fall in love with ‘the way we’ve always done it,’ disregarding how best to serve the new generation of groups and people who need our help.

“I wonder if we should all wear wristbands imprinted with ‘What Would Lois Do?’ I think she’d say, ‘Get in the sidecar, I’ll drive the motorcycle. Let’s just get going!’

“‘New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook.’ Our pioneers set the standard for us. They gave us both this gift and this responsibility. Welcome to the 2007 Al-Anon Family Groups World Service Conference!”

At every Conference, after the official opening with the Serenity Prayer, the first order of business is approval of a motion presented by the Admissions/Handbook Committee to seat certain persons who can provide critical information to the Conference. The following persons were seated:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach

Director of Business Services

Non-Al-Anon member

Lois A.

International Representative—Australia

Al-Anon member

Andreas H.

International Representative—Germany

Al-Anon member

Nydia Julia M.

International Representative—Mexico

Al-Anon member

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

Annette T.

Chairperson, Executive Committee for

Real Property Management

Al-Anon member

With voice limited to facilitating discussions in the role as Conference Consultant, but no vote:

Nancy Ackermann Cole

Conference Consultant

Non-Al-Anon member

With no voice and no vote:

Suzanne M.

Associate Director—Conference

(in training)

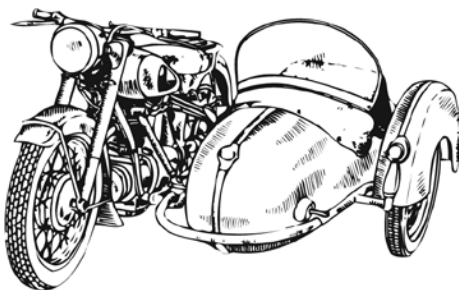
Al-Anon member

Nicolette Stephens

Information Analyst (in training)

Non-Al-Anon member

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



WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

“On behalf of the Board of Trustees for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., I welcome each of you to the 47th World Service Conference. Last year, we focused on shared leadership. We had conversations about being leaders and our roles as leaders here at Conference. Many of you continued those conversations when you went to your Assemblies and into your Areas. Thinking of ourselves as leaders, and knowing we don’t have to do it alone, has given us new thinking and new energy. The positive result of this is an abundant outlook! I think this is what the members of the Conference Committee must have felt when they came up with this exciting theme: ‘New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook’!

“While visiting Areas in the U.S. and Canada, I have had the opportunity to talk to members of Al-Anon Family Groups everywhere. I often hear that we need more members, more members to do service, more meetings, more literature, more money, more enthusiasm, more participation, always more of something. For me, I know now that this thinking comes from growing up in

alcoholism—whatever I had was never enough. With my new thinking and new energy, I see abundance! We have many members—members who are willing to serve—and they do. We have literature in all sizes and shapes and to fit every occasion. We have meetings in over 130 countries with literature translated into many of their languages. We do have abundance! Our challenge these next few days is to embrace and incorporate the spiritual principle of abundance into our thinking, our planning, and our decisions.

“We are here to continue the conversation our pioneers started over 55 years ago. When we leave here, we must take our *new thinking*, our *new energy*, and our *abundant outlook* with us. This is one time that ‘what you hear here’ does not need to stay here.

“Let the understanding, love, and peace of the program be with you as we come together with open hearts and open minds for Al-Anon Family Groups’ 47th World Service Conference.”

The Chairperson of the Board concluded her welcoming remarks by reading the Twelve Traditions.

Judy P.,
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Orientation

The Chairperson began the session by recalling her first Conference in 1988. “At that time, no one talked about or understood their role or that of the other Conference members.” She compared communication then (by letter and surface mail) with that of today (e-mail and text messaging), commenting, “I wonder how we got anything done and yet we prided ourselves on how good we ‘thought’ we were and how it was not our grandmother’s Al-Anon anymore!”

The Board’s two goals for the Conference were reviewed so that all Conference members would understand that the purpose of the Conference is to come together to take care of the business of Al-Anon. The Board Chairperson said, “The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown. It promotes unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole on important matters. This makes the Conference the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen’s harmony and survival.” Conference members shared their understanding of the roles of the Delegates, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Conference staff and how everyone works together at the Conference to come to informed group conscience decisions. Conference members shared how they used the “Paths to a Group Conscience” chart

(see back cover) in their Areas to demonstrate the relationship. The last part of the goal is to be able to articulate the Conference decisions in the Areas. The Chairperson stated, “We know that it is up to each Delegate to carry the work of this Conference back to the groups we serve. You are the vital link. It is your report back—your enthusiasm—your energy—that will be at your Area Assemblies. The Board wants you to be successful and to have all the information and tools you need.”

The first goal assures that a spiritual tone will prevail through mutual respect and acceptable conduct by all Conference members. Conference members then shared the meaning of this goal.

Flexibility and using good judgment were stressed in deciding what issues to present in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) format. The Chairperson noted that the title has been expanded this year to Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience in order to clarify the purpose of KBDM. An overview of the four

Judy P.,
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Goal #1

The spiritual tone of the WSC will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members.

Goal #2

Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the structure, and be able to articulate Conference decisions.



essential elements for the KBDM process followed.

- Open communication between leadership and membership

The “Paths to Group Conscience” chart illustrates how we “talk to each other, reason things out.”

- Dialogue before deliberation

This allows us to discuss the information, ask questions, and express concerns before we construct a motion. Often the discussion reveals that we do not need a motion—often all that is needed is to have the discussion.

- All decision-makers will have common access to full information

It is the decision-making body that needs to have access to all information. Concept Four tells us that those who are making the decision need to have all of the necessary information in advance so they are fully prepared to participate in the discussion. After full discussion, Concept Three then gives Conference members the right and autonomy, along with a Higher

Power, to make a final decision. It is then up to all Conference members to support the group conscience whether we agree with it or not.

- We exist in a culture of trust

This is a principle that we learn to have a firm belief in—that a Conference member would never, knowingly, do anything to hurt Al-Anon. Accepting this principle allows Conference members to trust in the concept of substantial unanimity or “drawing from the hat,” and to “presume goodwill.” Conference members then shared their experience of successfully introducing the KBDM process in their Areas.

APPROVALS

2006 Annual Report

Ric B.,
Executive Director

The final version of the 2006 Annual Report was sent to the Delegates at the end of March. As suggested last year, reports from the committees were sent in advance to the Conference members. This year they received up to a one page update from each department, as well as another page providing information from the Committees in that department. The format of the Annual Report is similar to that of the last several years. The Board of Trustees added a new theme to its Strategic Plan, “Support and Strengthen Our Structure.”

Since the report was provided in advance, the Executive Director made only brief opening remarks, then opened the floor for discussion. Members expressed appreciation to the WSO staff for all the information provided and the ease with which it read. In response to a ques-

tion about the status of the 2006 Membership Survey, the Executive Director announced that it is in the final stages of being completed and will be provided in a PowerPoint presentation and possibly posted to the professional section of the Web site. Another question concerned the possibility of public service announcements (PSAs) being provided without charge. The response was that PSAs are available to 1,000 TV stations at no charge. The fellowship is encouraged to reach stations not on the distribution list. The costs charged cover duplication, packaging, and postage.

A motion to approve the 2006 WSO Annual Report was carried. (See WSC Motion # 2, page 65. The complete report can be found on pages 69 - 82.)

2006 Auditor's Report

Each year, the Director of Business Services explains the purpose of the Audit and its details. The financial records of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., are audited by an independent certified public accounting firm. The auditors, after reviewing all the materials provided, found that the financial statements were prepared in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Again this year, the Corporation received an "unqualified" opinion, which is the best opinion that a corporation can receive. Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit including the opinion letter of the independent auditors was forwarded to all Conference members for review.

A cast of characters was introduced to help clarify in visual form the role and responsibility of the funds—the General Fund, our checking account used to fund day-to-day operations; the Building Fund, used to track occupancy costs; and the Reserve Fund, our savings account.

In summary, at December 31, 2006, the Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. had total assets of \$10,107,604 and liabilities of \$1,833,778, leaving net assets of \$8,273,826 among three funds: General, Building, and Reserve.

In the General Fund, revenue from operations

totaled \$4,375,412 in 2006 and expenses for the year were \$4,448,423, reducing net assets by \$73,011. The net amount realized on literature sales was \$2,760,325 and contributions were \$1,228,422. Subscription income from *The Forum* totaled \$246,638. Investment income in the General Fund for 2006 was \$140,412. Net income of \$491,342 was recorded in the Reserve Fund. The expense for Special Projects (printing and mailing *The Forum* free to each English-speaking group in the U.S. and Canada) from May to December 2006 totaled \$59,671 and the estimated post-retirement health benefits liability was reduced by \$186,448. Building Fund expenses are charged to the General Fund through occupancy costs.

The Reserve Fund had a balance of \$4,945,986 at year-end after recording investments at market value and estimating the liability for post-retirement health benefits.

The Building Fund, established in 1995 to record the purchase of the headquarters' office, shows the cost of land, building, and building improvements after depreciation at \$2,284,887. There is \$93,506 in the contractual reserve for the retirement of bonds.

A motion was made and carried to approve the report. (See WSC Motion # 3, page 65.)

Zelda R.,
Treasurer, Trustee

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



"General Fund"



"Building Fund"



"Reserve Fund"

2007 Budget

Zelda R.,
Treasurer, Trustee

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

The 2007 budget report was presented by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. It showed that projected revenue will equal expenses this year, at \$4,836,000. Overall expenses are budgeted to increase by \$388,000. Labor costs are expected to increase \$163,000 due to merit and cost of living increases for salaries, increases in the cost of benefits, and potential relocating costs for new employees. Occupancy expenses are projected to be \$8,000 less than last year. While the amount of correspondence requiring postage has decreased because of e-mail, the cost of postage will be going up in May. Increases in shipping and postage are expected to exceed fees by about \$7,000. Funds have been provided for public outreach projects that may be proposed during the upcoming year.

Income from literature sales is estimated to be more than last year because of the new book *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29) and projected subscriptions for *The Forum* were estimated to be less in 2007 than in 2006. Contributions were budgeted to be \$1,500,000, which is about \$380,000 more than the actual amount received in 2006. Investment income was budgeted at \$20,000 less than last year due to expected lower interest rates on fixed income investments.

Included with the financial reports was a comparison of the occupancy costs in the Hampton Roads Area, which includes Virginia Beach. It showed the dollar savings of owning property versus leasing.

A motion to approve the 2007 Finance Committee report was carried. (See WSC Motion # 4, page 65.)

Visit to the World Service Office

Conference members boarded buses for a short trip to the World Service Office (WSO). WSO Trustees and Executive Committee members greeted with applause the Delegates and their guests prior to ushering them into the lobby. The Executive Director welcomed everyone and explained the unique features of the building. Then he pointed out the portraits of Al-Anon's cofounders, Lois and

Anne, as well as Lois' typewriter, which was used to write to the first 86 groups.

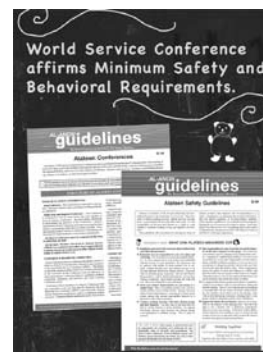
The Delegates assembled into small groups and WSO support staff conducted tours of the office. A set of eight posters in commemoration of Alateen's 50th birthday—a new display in the WSO—was one of the highlights of the visit. The Archives was also a highlight where visitors saw memorabilia of our pioneers and re-

cords of Al-Anon's early years. Delegates listened to details of two WSO trips in March and April 2007 to China. Trustees also showed the latest e-CAL postings on the Members' Web site.

Following the tour the Delegates enjoyed a luncheon, had the opportunity to walk around the grounds, chatted with WSO staff, and took pictures to share with their Areas.



"Alateen's History"



AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

Schedule 1

	2007 <u>Budget</u>	2006 <u>Actual</u>
<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Salaries (includes Temp Help)	2,265,000	2,162,000
Payroll Taxes	184,000	168,000
Employee Benefits	559,000	515,000
Total Labor Costs	3,008,000	2,845,000
Building Occupancy	267,000	275,000
Packing & Shipping (Net)	7,000	13,000
Postage	270,000	231,000
Telephone	53,000	48,000
Stationery & Office Supplies	100,000	97,000
Outreach Activities	60,000	32,000
Office Services & Expenses	156,000	109,000
Repairs & Maintenance	22,000	10,000
Travel & Meetings	288,000	238,000
Direct Conference Costs (Net)	86,000	73,000
General Service Meeting		33,000
Regional Service Seminars	25,000	20,000
Legal & Audit	36,000	32,000
Printing	159,000	120,000
Canadian Office	15,000	12,000
In-Office Volunteers	4,000	3,000
PSA Campaign	123,000	102,000
Miscellaneous	27,000	44,000
Total Operating Expense	4,706,000	4,337,000
Membership Survey		12,000
Depreciation & Amortization (Exc. Bldg.)	130,000	99,000
Total Expense	\$4,836,000	\$4,448,000
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>		
Literature Sales less cost of printing	3,000,000	2,760,000
Contributions	1,500,000	1,228,000
Forum Subscriptions	216,000	247,000
Interest	120,000	140,000
Funds from General Fund *		73,000
Total Estimated Revenue	\$4,836,000	\$4,448,000

* To be used only if necessary revenue is not received

SELECTED COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Selected Committees—2007 World Service Conference

Committee	Panel 45 (2005-2007)		Panel 46 (2006-2008)		Panel 47 (2007-2009)	
Admissions/ Handbook	Connie H., Joyce B., Susan R.,	IA UT AR	Joyce R., Mary M., Georgia C., Libby D.,	TN CA (S) FL (S) IL (N)	Rodney B., Peter C., Donald F., Rosie S.,	AL MA VA WV
CCT	Gayle McN., Sheila K., Sharon C.,	NM NF/LB ON (N)	Sandi C., Sue M., Mary R., Barbara W.,	CA (N) TX (W) PA OH	Jeff G., Fran M., Leslie N., Skip G.,	GA NJ WA MS
Group Services	Sharon B., Tricia B., Susan L., Reen R.,	AK WY SC ME	Bruce F., Mike B., Pam L., Lisa P.,	KY MI DE FL (N)	Tom B., Christa A., Pennie K.,	CO VT MT
Literature	Ellie L., Carmen T.-M., Dorothy B., Lois K.,	CT PR NE SK	Rick P., Bennie P., Joan P., Barbara M.,	MB TX (E) ON (S) RI	Paula M., Trudy C., Renee H.,	NC QC(E) WI
e-CAL	Tina B., Cherri N., Donna E.-H., Cecilia S.,	NV SD MO ID	Pat S., Karen L., Bob C., Laurel L.,	MN (S) MD/DC NY (N) KS	Dennis G., Rose Anna J., Darcy A., Roland C.,	BC/YT AB/NT ND OR
Public Outreach	Betsy C., Lida K., Joan L., Clara E.,	IL (S) NH NY (S) LA	Yvette D., Cecily C., Faye S.,	PQ (W) HI IN	Virginia S., Judy C., Mary M., Jackie S.,	AZ MP MN(N) OK

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATION

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee

Bidge B.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Mary Ann R.,
Interim Chairperson, Trustee

Suzanne M.,
*Fellowship Communication
Coordinator*

The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee streamlined its work procedures this year. It met in-person twice, with one other meeting conducted via teleconference. Various Committee members grade every sharing submitted to *The Forum*, but each member is no longer

required to read all of the 250 sharings submitted for review each quarter. The Committee has shifted its emphasis from a group discussion of the merits of individual stories to a discussion of broader questions affecting the strategic future of the magazine.

Literature Committee

Lorraine F.,
Chairperson, Trustee

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

This year, the Literature I and Literature II committees were consolidated into a single Literature Committee, and an e-CAL Committee was established. The Literature Committee's major project was the review and final approval of the book, *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29), which contains the shared experience of more than 700

Al-Anon members. In other business, the Committee completed and approved changes to the Concept Eleven sections of both *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) and *The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best Kept Secret?* (P-57). The Committee also approved a new outline for the book OUR RECOVERY IN RELATIONSHIPS (working title).

e-CAL Committee

The e-CAL Committee is currently in the first year of a three-year trial and was created to develop electronic literature consistent with the current process for developing Conference Approved Literature. The Committee conducts most of its business electronically—whether on-line, via e-mail, or by teleconferencing. The only exception is the meeting held at the Conference each year. The members have dedicated themselves to completing rapid turnaround of all reviews for a variety of messages submitted by the fellowship. Working in teams of three for weekly assignments, the 18 Committee members have approved files for posting on the Members' Web site. Conference members were



"Click here to view e-CAL"

encouraged to bring this new form of communication to their Areas and solicit sharings, especially multimedia sharings, for consideration. The Committee is especially interested in providing more animation on the site. For an up-to-date presentation of their work, go to www.al-anon.org/members. Click on the e-CAL logo and follow the links to "View e-CAL."

Mary Ann R.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Patrick Q.,
Associate Director of Fellowship
Communication—e-CAL/
Newsletters

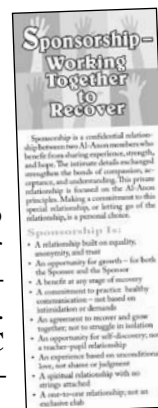
GROUP SERVICES

Group Services Committee

In an effort to identify the needs of the membership and the abundant resources available, the Group Services Committee brainstormed about ideas and ways to support the membership. The ideas generated from the discussion are being used to set goals. A knowledge-based discussion was begun on Al-Anon Information Services (AISs) and their connection to the Areas. Two Committee members expressed concerns regarding sharing of information and duties by the AISs. The discussion is continuing. The Committee reviewed feedback from a task force on sponsorship abuses and recommended the development of a new bookmark about sponsorship.

In 2007, on a trial basis, the Alateen Advisory

Committee (AAC) will meet at two Regional Service Seminars (RSS). The Committee will be comprised of two separate committees, one in the U.S. and another in Canada; each committee will meet at an RSS in their country. The trial provides Alateens in Canada the opportunity to participate in the AAC and also provides Committee members the opportunity to encourage Alateen growth through their participation in the RSS. Both Committee meetings will have the same agenda. If needed, a conference call for all AAC members will be scheduled after the second RSS.



Frank R.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Mary Ann K./Barbara O.,
Director of Member Services

Doris W.,
Chairperson, Alateen Advisory
Committee, Trustee

*"Sponsorship
working together"*

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

Admissions/Handbook Committee

The Committee completed review of the wording preferences that came as a result of the discussion regarding text revisions to the "World Service Handbook" (Handbook) that took place at the 2005 World Service Conference (See *2006 Conference Summary*, pg. 17 for background). A motion based on those suggestions was presented at this year's Conference. (See WSC Motion #6, page 65.) The Committee also recommended a change to the text of the "World Service Conference (Area Committee Structure)" chart on page 148 of the Handbook section of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). (See Motion # 5, page 65.) These changes were recom-

mended for clarity to the text of the Handbook, the function of which is to provide the fellowship with guidance and accuracy on the Conference structure.

The Committee is continuing its study of whether the current policy that allows populous states and/or provinces to divide only once is still reasonable today. The Committee sought direction from the Board of Trustees. The Board asked the Committee to compile a background summary of its discussions to date and to develop a "big thinking question" for presentation to the Board. This topic could be brought to the World Service Conference for future discussion.

Lyn D.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Jo-Anne L.,
Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Cynthia H.,
Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—Conference

International Coordination Committee

Doreen D.,
Chairperson, Trustee

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

A Guide for the Family (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32), and the “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” section of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) are now available in Farsi, Mongolian, Romanian, and Simplified Chinese. Al-Anon literature is now available in 36 languages.

The Committee planned the agenda for the 2006 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in October in Virginia Beach, Virginia, which included the participation of 14 countries.

Interest by members in participating in the trial National Service Structure meetings in India has broadened. A service meeting is being planned for 2007.

The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International and the Translation Services Manager were invited to participate in Mexico’s service meeting held February 18-23, 2007. The theme for the meeting was “Service, the Instrument of Love.”



“Translations now in 36 languages”

Two Trustees, the Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International, and a retired World Service Office staff person participated in a training institute for professionals that took place in Shanghai, Beijing, and Kunming, China. World Service Office participants made presentations during the plenary sessions and held scheduled Al-Anon meetings as well as met with professionals.

International Conventions Update

Ric B.,
Chairperson

Marsha W.,
Coordinator, 2008

Cynthia H.,
*Co-Coordinator, 2008;
Coordinator, 2013*

Barbara O.,
Co-Coordinator 2013

2008 International Convention with Alcoholics Anonymous Participation

The theme for this exciting event is “Connecting People Around the World: Al-Anon Family Groups.” The site for the Convention is Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and the dates are July 4-6, 2008. Conference members were advised that all speakers and workshop leaders will be selected from those who register. Al-Anon workshops will be held during the day on Friday and Saturday. On Friday evening after the “Big Meeting,” thousands of members will gather on the rooftop of the Convention Center for a spectacular view of the fireworks. On Saturday evening, the “Big Meeting” will follow the parade of members in costume. Ticketed events will include the Conference Reunion and Pioneer Luncheon. A.A. will have a daytime program on Friday and Saturday.

Conference members were reminded that the registration/housing form will be sent in September 2007 through the U.S. Postal Service to the current mailing address of all registered groups in the U.S. and Canada. The registration/housing form will also be mailed to General Service Offices for distribution within those structures. On-line registration will be available in September and registration is necessary before housing can be assigned. Members were



“Connecting People Around the World”

also asked to utilize the housing process established for the Convention to lower overall costs and ensure that Al-Anon receives credit for the room block. The presentation concluded with the body joining in song.

2013 International Convention with Alcoholics Anonymous Participation

Bid forms for the 2013 International Al-Anon Convention and a cover letter detailing Convention requirements were sent in 2006 to all Areas that are part of the World Service Conference structure. Of the 67 eligible Areas, 14 submitted valid bids: Minneapolis, Minnesota; Boston, Massachusetts; Louisville, Kentucky; Hartford, Connecticut; Baltimore, Maryland;

Raleigh, North Carolina; Sacramento, California; Portland, Oregon; Anaheim, California; Salt Lake City, Utah; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Vancouver, British Columbia; Denver, Colorado; and Orlando, Florida. A Convention Site Committee of Delegates, Trustees, and WSO staff was formed to review the bids and listen to the presentations, which were made immediately following the 2007 World Service Conference. Each Delegate and/or representative from the Area's local convention bureau was given ten minutes for their presentation, followed by ten minutes for questions. The Committee then had the task of narrowing the choices to the three cities they believe will be best suited for Al-Anon's convention needs. A Site Selection Committee will visit the three cities to walk through the meeting facilities, meet with hotel personnel, and envision, in general, how the Convention would function in each place. Based on its findings, the Committee will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. At its October 2007 meeting, the Board will consider the Committee's recommendation and the Board Chairperson will announce the site.

Regional Service Seminar Committee

The Regional Service Seminar (RSS) Committee began the year discussing the various components of the RSS including the RSS pamphlet, fund-raising, site selection, and evaluation results. Ad hoc committees were formed to review each component and report back. The reports indicated that the Committee needed to look at the RSSs from a broader perspective. A knowledge-based discussion began with the Committee inviting all Trustees, Executive Committee, and Conference staff to participate. Afterwards the Committee sent the Delegates recaps of previous Committee discussions. Delegates also received questions to include their Areas in the discussion at the 2007 World Service Conference. (See discussion on page 27.)



Claudette D.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Mary Ann K./Barbara O.,
Director of Member Services



2008 World Service Conference Site

The 2008 World Service Conference (WSC) will be held in the New York City vicinity. There were several factors involved in making the decision for the dates and location, including availability of meeting space, cost, service, food, and the need for time to prepare financial reports. Based on those factors, the 2008 WSC will convene at the Stamford Marriott Hotel in Stamford, Connecticut, from Sunday, April 13, through Thursday, April 17, 2008. At some time during the Conference, members will have the opportunity to visit Stepping Stones, the home of Al-Anon cofounder Lois W.

Cynthia H.,
Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—Conference



POLICIES

Policy Committee

Colleen R.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Robert S.,
Secretary, Director of
Communication

In the past year, the Policy Committee has continued its review of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). Its intent was to ensure that the content of the Policy Digest is a clear and concise statement of Al-Anon policy—not historical background, process, or procedure. Ad hoc committees were assigned to examine specific issues and pages and to recommend revisions, when appropriate. As a result of this ongoing process, the Policy Committee brought four motions to the 2007 World Service Conference. These motions proposed revisions to pages 68, 69, 75, 76, and 77 of the Policy Digest section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The Committee believed that the recommended changes would improve the clarity of specific text. Ad hoc committees will continue to review other sections of the Policy Digest. (See WSC Motions #8, #9, #10, and #11 on pages 66 and 67.)

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 Conference staff, gives Delegates an opportunity to see how the Committee discusses and deliberates policy issues. The first item on the agenda concerned the paragraph on page 69 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Policy Digest section, titled “Multiple Group Membership and Office-Holding.” The policy does not allow a member to be the Group

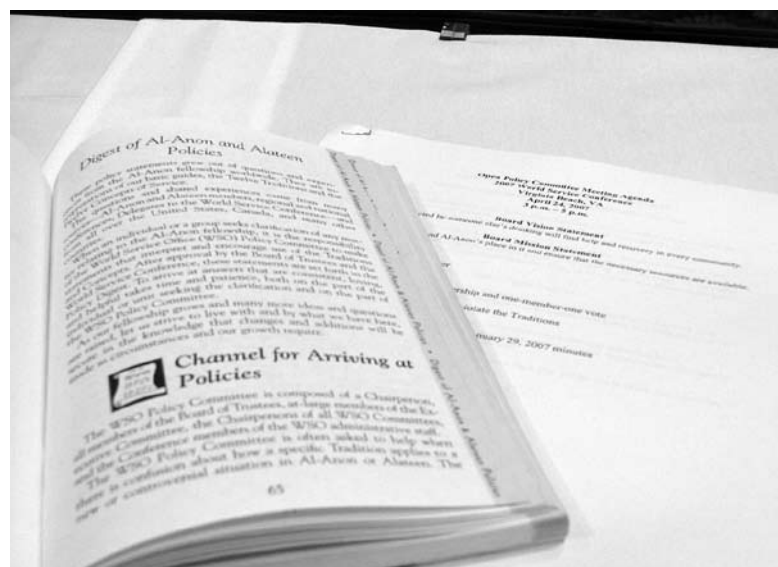
Representative of more than one group simultaneously. However, in smaller districts, members have voice and vote at several meetings and have influenced district decisions. This practice could influence Area decisions and ultimately have an effect on the World Service Conference. The Committee was asked to reassess the policy to consider whether the policy allowing members to vote at more than one group still reflects what is in the best interests of Al-Anon Family Groups. In discussion, it was suggested that the matter could be resolved at the district level where members could reason it out together. Some members thought Areas could have an open, Knowledge-Based Decision-Making discussion on the topic.

The second topic asked the question, “Can the World Service Office (WSO) deny the use of the Al-Anon name to electronic meetings that violate the Traditions to the extent of hurting Al-Anon as a whole?”

Over the past few years, the WSO has received a range of complaints about on-line meetings that violate Al-Anon’s Traditions. These have included posting on Web sites or forwarding sharings that break members’ personal anonymity and/or make personal attacks on individual members in violation of Tradition Twelve. There have also been complaints about on-line meetings placed on Web sites that also include a variety of other meetings that are not Al-Anon. They promote non-Al-Anon literature and are privately operated as a “for profit” enterprise. These Web sites violate Tradition Six, implying Al-Anon endorsement of the Web site by using the Al-Anon logo. They also solicit cash contributions, which imply that these donations support Al-Anon when they often only support the Web site and its owner.

Although meetings/groups that register with the WSO agree to abide by the Traditions as part of the registration process, there is no policy to “de-register” a meeting that does not comply with that commitment. Current Al-Anon policy does not require registration for use of the Al-Anon name.

In discussion, it was noted that the WSO views Internet meetings to be “at the public level,” and that the Board can protect Al-Anon’s rights under copyright law and trademark registration. It was also noted that members at the local level have taken legal action against on-line meetings



“Delegates attend an Open Policy meeting.”

that violated their right to privacy or solicited funds under the misleading implication that donations would be shared with Al-Anon as a whole and not retained by the owner of a privately-owned, “for profit” site. One member ques-

tioned whether there is a policy to address the issue for on-line meetings that violate Al-Anon’s Traditions to the extent of hurting Al-Anon as a whole. There is no policy at this time. Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public Outreach Committee

The at-large members of the Public Outreach Committee met with World Service Office staff and volunteers in October 2006 and January 2007. Among the several issues addressed was the recommendation that, whenever possible, members be encouraged to use the full name of “Al-Anon Family Groups” rather than just “Al-Anon.” This focus would help eliminate any possible confusion that Al-Anon is just another way of saying Alcoholics Anonymous. This distinction is important to the integrity of both programs, but it is especially important to Al-Anon. While a large segment of the general public is aware of Alcoholics Anonymous, relatively few are aware that Al-Anon offers something different and fulfills different needs. Using the name “Al-Anon Family Groups” helps clarify the separate and distinct nature of the two programs and gives Al-Anon greater visibility. The full Committee (along with the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee) reviewed the content for *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007* and offered suggestions for *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2008*. It also reviewed and approved the content and approach taken for the 2007 public service announcement. It approved the final text for the new outreach service tool *Al-Anon Welcomes Gays and Lesbians* (S-70, replacing the Conference Approved Literature pamphlet *Al-Anon Is for Gays and Lesbians*, P-85). The Committee concurred with the Advisory Committee’s recommendations to discontinue the Contact

Information Card (M-46) and to revise the text of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Is & Is Not* bookmark (M-44).

The Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee met in October 2006. It focused on four topics: (1) Al-Anon’s “brand” image for health-care professionals, how we want professionals to perceive us, and possible courses of action; (2) suggestions for expansion of the World Service Office’s “Writers Reaching Out” project through increased utilization of members’ and/or non-members’ expertise; (3) input about types of Web site content that might be of interest to professionals; and (4) ways to increase professional awareness of the availability of the 2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Membership Survey results.

There was concern that the Advisory Committee’s work overlapped the Public Outreach Committee. When this was presented to the Board, it agreed and the Advisory Committee was suspended for a three-year trial period. During this time, more task forces will be used to target specific issues with specific audiences.

The Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee is charged with ensuring that Canadian interests are met in all World Service Office outreach activities. The Subcommittee reviewed its purpose and agreed that there was no longer a need for a separate Canadian committee. The Board was notified of the Committee’s consensus and agreed to the suspension of the Subcommittee for a three-year trial.

Gen B.,
Chairperson, Trustee

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

Winnie S.,
Outreach to Professionals Advisory
Committee, Chairperson, Trustee

Judy A.,
Canadian Public Outreach
Subcommittee, Chairperson, Trustee

Claire R.,
Associate Director of Public
Outreach—Professionals



SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

2007 Regional Trustee Nominating Process

In opening remarks regarding the Regional Trustee Nominating Process, the Board Chairperson outlined some of the duties and responsibilities of those who ultimately become part of the Board of Trustees. She stated that, among other things, even though a Trustee resides in a particular Region, he or she does not represent that Region. Trustees serve worldwide Al-Anon, the fellowship as a whole. They provide general oversight of the business operations of the World

Service Office (WSO) in accordance with the Bylaws of both the U.S. and Canadian 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

Judy P.,
Chairperson of the Board of
Trustees

Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Conference Charter. 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 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) for more information on the Board of Trustees.)

The 2007 Regional Trustee Nominating process for the three Regions of the WSC structure actually began at the 2006 WSC. At that time, the Delegates in the US Northeast, US South Central, and US Southeast Regions were given résumé forms and asked to present a qualified candidate for consideration as Trustee from their Region. The deadline for submission to the WSO was January 1, 2007. At the close of the session, the US Southeast Regional Nominating Committee submitted no candidate.

Conference Committee on Trustees

Gayle McN.,
Chairperson, Panel 45, New Mexico

Ric B.,
Executive Director

Judy D.,
Nominating Committee Chairperson, Trustee

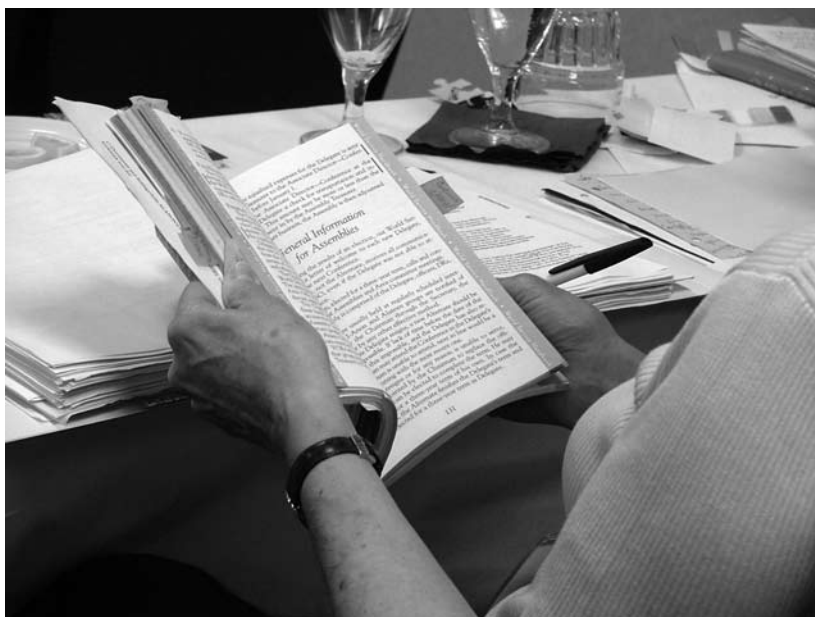
“When I was first told that I would be on the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), I realized that, although I had requested it as my first choice, I didn’t really understand the depth of the responsibility involved. Now that I’m in my third year and also the Chairperson, I’m grateful that I’ve had the opportunity to serve on this Committee and come to understand its value and importance.

“The CCT is a subcommittee of the Board’s Nominating Committee and assists them in the candidate selection process for Trustee at Large (TAL) and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). It is a process whereby CCT members, independently and without discussion with other members, review and evaluate all the résumés. They forward their rankings to the CCT Chairperson who then sends one tally sheet for each office, with all the compiled rankings and comments, to the World Service Office and the Nominat-

ing Committee Chairperson. This information is kept highly confidential and all paperwork is destroyed after selections are made. By assisting the Nominating Committee in this way, the Delegates have the opportunity to have their voices heard.

“At Conference each year, the CCT affirms their Chairperson-Elect as Chairperson and selects a new Chairperson-Elect.

“Additionally, since 2005, the CCT, along with the Nominating Committee, is continuing to discuss and beginning to formulate ways in which to introduce leadership development tools at all levels. A need has been expressed by the fellowship for guidance in this area and both committees, working together, look forward to making some headway on this before the next World Service Conference.” (For further information, refer to Concept Eleven, under CCT on page 184 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.)



Nominating Committee

When the Committee met with the Conference Committee on Trustees during the Conference, the Chairperson of the Committee explained the process for ranking and affirming a candidate for Trustee at Large and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). (For a brief history of this process, see page 23 of the *2006 Conference Summary*.)

Following nomination of Regional Trustee candidates for the US Northeast and US North Central, Conference members gave traditional approval to the nominees for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustees, and at-large members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management and the Board Officers.



The following Trustees were affirmed by the 2007 WSC:

Trustee at Large:

Doreen D., 2nd three-year term

Mary G., 2nd three-year term

Roger C., 1st three-year term

Margot M., remaining 2 years of a 1st three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Frank R., US Northeast, 2nd three-year term

Carol V., US North Central, 1st three-year term

Board Officers:

Zelda R., Chairperson

Doreen D., Vice Chairperson

Mary Ann R., Treasurer

2007 Executive Committee for Real Property Management member:

Richard S., three-year term

The Board announced Annette T., Chairperson, ECRPM.

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2007-2008:

Mary C., 1st one-year term, Chairperson

Marge S., 3rd one-year term

Julie F., 2nd one-year term

2008 Regional Committee on Trustees Process

At the 2006 World Service Conference (WSC), members affirmed the trial implementation of the proposed plan to create a Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT). (Please refer to the Regional Trustee Plan Revisions discussion on page 27 of the *2006 Conference Summary* for details.) Each RCT consists of the current Delegates serving the Areas of the region and three additional out-of-region Delegates. The regions that will be selecting

a nominee and an alternate for the 2008 Regional Trustee election process are the US Northwest, US South Central, and US Southwest. The US Southeast Region will also be selecting a nominee and an alternate for the last two years of a three-year term since no candidate was nominated during the 2007 US Southeast Regional Trustee nominating process. The names of the following out-of-region Delegates were drawn to serve on the 2008 RCTs:

Judy P.,
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Region	Voting	Alternate
US Northwest	Mary M., Panel 46, CA (S) Mary M., Panel 47, MN (N) Fran M., Panel 47, NJ	Rosie S., Panel 47, WV Skip G., Panel 47, MS
US South Central	Tom B., Panel 47, CO Pennie K., Panel 47, MT Pam L., Panel 46, DE	Pat S., Panel 46, MN (S) Cecily C., Panel 46, HI
US Southwest	Don F., Panel 47, VA Yvette D., Panel 46, PQ (W) Rodney B., Panel 47, AL	Rick P., Panel 46, MB Jeff G., Panel 47, GA
US Southeast	Karen L., Panel 46, MD/DC Rick P., Panel 46, MB Pete C., Panel 47, MA	Joan P., Panel 46, ON (S) Faye S., Panel 46, IN

An ad hoc committee from the Board of Trustees conducted a training session for all Conference members regarding the scoring of the candidate résumés. (See discussion below) Following that session, each 2008 RCT caucused to elect a Chairperson who is willing to serve and able to perform the duties

within the designated time. Each RCT also elected an Alternate Chairperson, who will perform the duties of the Chairperson if for any reason the Chairperson is unable to complete his or her duties as required. The following 2008 RCT Chairpersons and Alternates were elected:

Region	Chairperson	Alternate Chairperson
US Northwest	Cecilia S., Panel 45, ID	Roland C., Panel 47, OR
US South Central	Donna E-H., Panel 45, MO	Bennie P., Panel 46, TX (E)
US Southwest	Sandi C., Panel 46, CA (N)	Cecily C., Panel 46, HI
US Southeast	Jeff G., Panel 47, GA	Don F., Panel 47, VA

Implementation of the Regional Committee on Trustees Process

Colleen R.,
Chairperson, Regional Committee
on Trustees (RCT) Implementation
and Training Ad Hoc

The process for Regional Trustee Candidate Selection began this year. (See the “Regional Trustee Plan Revisions Discussion” on page 27 in the *2006 Conference Summary*.) To familiarize all Conference members with the process, the Committee Chairperson gave a brief history of the creation of regions and an overview of the process using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making format.

Three regions were formed in 1969, in order to seek broader representation on the Board. In 1977 six regions were created to get yet a broader representation and perspective. Expansion again took place in 1986, when nine regions were created, six in the U.S. and three in Canada.

The purpose of expanding the Board was to have Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc.

(AFG, Inc) represented by a diverse membership. Al-Anon members living in various geographical areas of the U.S. and Canada provide a wide range of thoughts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles giving the Board the all-embracing diverse input necessary for making competent, inclusive group conscience decisions for AFG, Inc.

AFG, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation established in 1954, before the World Service Conference was created. The Corporation functions with a Board of Trustees that is self-electing and, according to the By-laws of the Corporation, the Trustees “shall control and manage the affairs of the Corporation.” The Board of Trustees is the legal entity of the Corporation and fulfills other responsibilities as stated in Article II and Article V of the By-laws. The Trustees are guardians of Al-Anon’s Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service.

We know that the Board of Trustees executes the Corporation’s responsibilities including oversight of the World Service Office. Trustees must be skilled, competent, dependable, committed, team players, and communicators who can articulate the vision, mission, and goals of the Corporation for the benefit of worldwide Al-Anon.

In July 2005 the Board of Trustees began to study alternatives to the nominating process for Regional Trustees. The Board reviewed historical documentation as far back as 1965. It studied Concepts Six, Seven, Nine, and the By-laws of the Corporation. Additionally, the Board reviewed the written concerns and suggestions submitted by Conference members and interviewed past Conference members.



At the 2006 World Service Conference, the Board of Trustees presented in a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making format a new process to nominate Regional Trustee candidates. After lengthy discussion and deliberation, the new RT plan received a unanimous vote of approval for implementation on a trial basis.

Goals of the RT plan to select nominees are to:

1. Restore the original intention of broad representation as the purpose Regional Trustees are added to the Board.
2. Present a fair playing field for all candidates interested in serving on the Board of Trustees by eliminating or reducing the issues of personalities and politicking.
3. Free up valuable time during Conference week for in-depth discussions of forward-thinking, strategic planning, and to do the business of Al-Anon Family Groups of helping families and friends of alcoholics.
4. Bring back to the Conference the spirit of democracy as stated in Warranty Five in that all Conference action will be democratic in thought and action.
5. Provide the Board with skilled, competent, dependable, committed, team players, and communicators who can articulate the vision, mission, and goals of the Corporation for the benefit of worldwide Al-Anon.

At this Conference, the US Northwest, US Southwest, US South Central, and US Southeast Regions began the process of implementing the RT plan. The roles and responsibilities of the Chairperson were explained after which these regions caucused to appoint a Chairperson who will tally and summarize the résumé scores. A demonstration walked the Delegates through the RT plan's process and a PowerPoint presentation provided a variety of tools that will assist them in scoring. The goal of the presentation was that Delegates have clarity about the RT plan and the process.

It was suggested that to begin the process in the Areas, when a member is interested in standing for Trustee we might ask ourselves:

1. Does my Area have in place a method for selecting a candidate for Regional Trustee? Concept Nine asks that we not use hit-and-miss methods in electing our trusted servants, especially in the position of Trustee. It is a myth in Al-Anon that all it takes is to be willing. How often in our Areas, do members show up willing but not ready to fulfill the responsibility of a position and lack commitment? When this happens, Areas suffer and so does Al-Anon.

It works the same for the Board of Trustees.

2. Has the member actually read the information regarding qualifications and eligibility on the résumé?
3. Does the applicant understand the work and time commitment involved?

Things to consider when scoring a résumé might be:

- Is the overall appearance of the résumé neat and readable?
- Does the person seem to have a broad understanding of the Al-Anon program and the mission and vision of the organization?
- How might this person's background meet the needs of the Board?
- Would this person's leadership skills be an asset to the Board?
- Does the résumé indicate a high level of dedication and confidence?
- Does this person bring diversity to the Board?
- Does it contain suggestions for forward, long-term, and worldwide thinking?
- Does the candidate demonstrate good oral and written communication skills?
- Does it indicate an ability to compromise?
- Has he or she worked both independently and in a group?
- Is this person flexible?
- NOTE: Having served as Delegate is not required



“Visual demonstration of the new RCT plan’s process”

If an Area has more than one submission, it can select an alternate candidate. The alternate's résumé is not considered unless the selected Area candidate becomes unavailable prior to scoring. If the region is unable to present a qualified candidate or if an objection to a candidate is filed and deemed valid, the position is left vacant or the Board may go to the region and ask for new candidates. In either case, the Board Chairperson's letter would advise that no candidate was being brought forward for traditional approval at the Conference. The Board uses its discretion when a position is vacant.

ALATEEN'S 50TH BIRTHDAY

Doris W.,
Chairperson, Alateen Advisory
Committee, Trustee

Barbara O.,
Director of Member Services

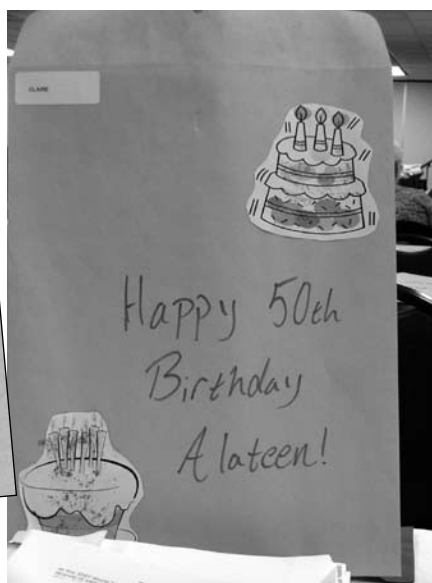
In celebration of Alateen's 50th birthday, Delegates received a "warm fuzzy" necklace made of red strands of yarn at the center of a multicolored ball on a loop of yarn—one red strand for each Alateen group in their Area. This Alateen necklace is often a love gift at Alateen functions. Alateens exchange a piece of yarn from the fuzzy ball on their necklace

and place it on another member's necklace as a token of friendship and love. Delegates were asked to pass the warm fuzzy around in the Area and invite Al-Anon groups to make the necklace "warm" by adding a strand of any other color to the necklace—to signify fellowship, commitment, and love. Al-Anon groups that make a commitment to start a new Alateen group during the next year are invited to add an additional strand of golden yarn to signify their commitment to growth among Alateen groups.

All Area Delegates were invited to send their Area's warm fuzzy to the World Service Office. The Al-Anon warm fuzzies will be used to decorate the halls at the WSO, just as the birthday cards did that the Alateen groups sent to celebrate Al-Anon's 55th birthday last year. All of the cards and warm fuzzies will be taken to Pittsburgh to decorate the hospitality room at the 2008 Al-Anon International Convention (July 4-6). The presentation ended with Conference members singing Happy Birthday to Alateen. Members of the Group Services Committee passed out Alateen Birthday kits to Delegates to participate in the project.



"Happy Birthday Alateen"



ALATEEN TRADITIONS DISCUSSION

Judy P.,
Chairperson of the Board of
Trustees

Doris W.,
Chairperson, Alateen Advisory
Committee, Trustee

Barbara O.,
Director of Member Services

At the 2005 World Service Conference (WSC) it was announced that the World Service Office, in researching and discussing the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, determined that the Alateen Traditions had never been Conference approved. After the Board reviewed all of the archival material available, it decided that a discussion needed to be held with the Conference for resolution. At the 2006 WSC, discussion of the Alateen Traditions was introduced and the members of this 2007 WSC were asked to continue the discussion, using *new thinking*, *new energy*, and an *abundant outlook*.

All of the background material that was presented at the 2005 and 2006 Conferences was mailed again in February 2007 to the current Conference members. Additionally, a cover memo was sent to all Areas, asking for any information, either in a member's personal collection or in Area Archives, that might be significant to this discussion. No further information was received.

This matter was introduced to the 2007 WSC in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making format, with everyone having the same back-

ground information. The following questions were presented for discussion:

(1) Do we want separate Traditions for Alateen or, since Alateen is part of Al-Anon, should we all use the same Traditions?

(2) If we have different Traditions for Alateen, which version should be used?

During the floor discussion, the Executive Director further clarified some of the background information, explaining that, in the decisions made by the 1994 and 1995 WSCs, Conference members were not given correct information and, therefore, were unable to make an informed decision. The information they were provided indicated that the Traditions had been approved at some earlier date and that the Conference Charter did apply to the Alateen Traditions. Based on that understanding, those Conferences said the Traditions could not be changed without going back to the groups. It was not revealed that in 1967 when the Conference Charter was adopted, the Alateen Traditions were not discussed, that the 1968 Conference voted to change Alateen Tradition Six, that the 1973 version of Tradition Eleven was

changed to “TV and films.” With the exception of the 1968 change, all other changes that have been made to the Alateen Traditions were made without a vote of the Conference. A longtime WSO staff member shared, “The WSO Archives were started in 1978 with a file cabinet from the warehouse. Information from 1951 to 1978 is very sketchy. We have a jigsaw puzzle with most of the pieces, but some are missing. We don’t know if we have everything.” The information that has been provided to all Conference members, past and current, is what the WSO has been able to verify through reading of minutes and reviewing other materials.

The overwhelming opinion expressed by Conference members was that Alateens needed their own Traditions and that the version currently published in the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/*

Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) would be the appropriate version to use. One member said, “Without their own Traditions, anyone could attend an Alateen meeting.” Another suggested, “Let’s give Alateen a birthday present and give them a version of the Traditions that’s approved.” The Conference approved the Alateen Traditions as found on pages 43 and 44 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, with the following exception: the text of Tradition Eleven is changed from “TV and films” to “films and TV” to match the Al-Anon wording. (See Motion #14, on page 68 and Motion #14 discussion on page 64.)

After formalizing the Traditions, the Conference asked the Board of Trustees to review the entire Charter to see what other changes need to be made to formalize the Alateen Traditions.

CONCEPT REVISIONS DISCUSSION

When the Board of Trustees started its review of the descriptive text of Concept Eleven almost five years ago, they found typographical and clerical errors, and/or incorrect information and text that needed to be updated. At the 2005 World Service Conference (WSC), the proposed changes to that text were presented and accepted.

As this work progressed, it became apparent that the descriptive text for the remaining eleven Concepts contained information that was incorrect, often confusing, language that was sometimes misunderstood by today’s members, and, in some instances, not able to be translated into many of the languages used by today’s members around the world.

The descriptive text for Concepts One through Seven and the Introduction was presented and

passed at the 2006 WSC. At the 2007 Conference, members were asked to consider the changes proposed to the descriptive text of Concepts Eight, Nine, Ten, and Twelve. The Chairperson made a brief presentation prior to the review. Using the shared leadership model, she invited the selected ad hoc committee members to join her to answer any questions. She and the committee members went through the draft page by page with only one concern being an edit that changed the word “God” to “Higher Power.” A WSO staff member shared that when she was in China, she learned that to some people there “Higher Power” meant the government. After further Board discussion, the original wording was restored and the motion carried. (See WSC Motion #7, page 65.)

Judy P.,
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRESENTATION

An Area Delegate introduced the topic with the following background: “As the Chairperson for the Sharing Area Highlights meeting this year, I was asked if I had been contacted about having a conflict resolution training session as part of that meeting. I hadn’t, but knowing that the Sharing Area Highlights is a meeting for the Delegates, I did not want to make this decision alone so I talked it over with the Sharing Area Highlights Co-Chair.

“I thought it would be a good idea to poll the Delegates and see what everyone thought.

“I called the World Service Office (WSO) and talked with the Executive Director and the

Chairperson of the Board to see if a poll was possible. They agreed it was a good idea to poll the Delegates.”

Following this introduction, the Chairperson of the Board said that she and others had reviewed the report and concluded that a majority of those responding wanted a session on conflict resolution, and many also wanted to continue with the Sharing Area Highlights session. So the Board of Trustees worked with the Conference Committee to make time on the agenda for this session.

The Executive Director and the Conference Consultant continued the session by outlining the following conflict resolution goals:

Judy P.,
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Cherri N.,
Panel 45, South Dakota

Ric B.,
Executive Director

Nancy Ackermann Cole,
Conference Consultant

- Recognize how conflict affects us
- Become comfortable with conflict, rather than threatened by it
- Gain skills to reframe what another person said
- Learn how to deal with someone who doesn't recognize that conflict is happening

The Executive Director and the Conference Consultant modeled dialogue that can move people who are involved in conflict to “talk to each other, reason things out.” They also gave the Delegates tools to achieve conflict resolution. The main points of the presentation were:

- Keep in mind that some conflicts only have to deal with a person's need for a broader understanding of a particular topic
- Maintain principles above personalities
- Presume that everyone involved wants what's best for Al-Anon—seek a win-win outcome
- Remain fully engaged by actively listening
- Conflict subsides when all parties have been heard

Before the session ended, the Executive Director and Conference Consultant invited the Delegates to ask questions, share their experiences, and receive feedback.

NEW THINKING—NEW ENERGY—ABUNDANT OUTLOOK DISCUSSION

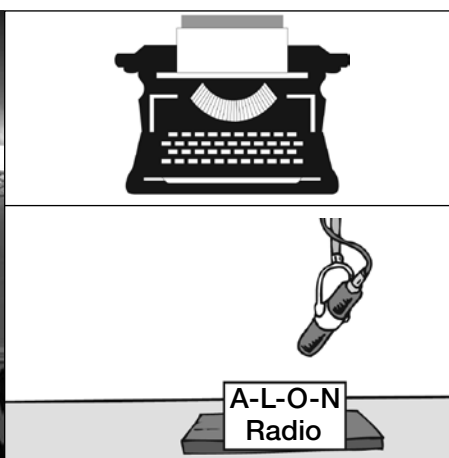
Judy P.,
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Nancy Ackermann Cole,
Conference Consultant

In planning this presentation for the 2007 World Service Conference, members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and World Service Office Directors asked themselves two knowledge-based questions, “What do we know?” and “What do we wish we knew?” They knew that if we continue doing the same things, we will get the same results. They wished they knew the “magic answer” to what would cause everyone who comes to Al-Anon to stand in line to do Al-Anon service and they wished they knew how to get people to commit. They recognized that because many members came from a background of lack, they carried into service work their ideas about not enough money, service workers, volunteers, and fear of being stuck with responsibility. There was an inability to consider some ideas because we simply could not support the requirements of time, money, or people to do the job. Since Al-Anon has been talking about the problems for 56 years with the same results, they developed a three-part presentation and participa-

tion session for the Conference. Members were asked for their biggest thinking—not solving problems, just thinking with an abundant outlook! They created goals for each session, how to evaluate whether they were met, and to what extent each session carried out the spirit and intent of this year's theme.

The Chairperson of the Board introduced the workshops: Al-Anon Family Groups in the World Today; Al-Anon Family Groups—from Traditionalists to Millennials; and Tapping the Abundant Resources of Al-Anon Family Groups. During each session, the presenters introduced ideas that had been gathered and discussed (what we know) by the Board and Conference staff over the past year. At the end of each presentation, the Conference Consultant facilitated a “big thinking” question (what we wish we knew) and Conference members brainstormed ideas in a variety of formats. The goal was to provide Conference members with a range of techniques to solicit Big Thinking throughout the links of service.



Al-Anon Family Groups in the World Today

This session was introduced by three “reporters” from “A-L-O-N radio” giving a history of Al-Anon communications over the past 50 years. One gave a history of the telephone, from the crank telephone and its limitations to what is available today—cordless phones and cell phones, providing great mobility. Another presented a history from the early methods of publication used by the Clearing House to the launching of e-CAL today. The third topic was technology—from manual typewriters, index cards, and surface-mailed letters to laptop computers, text messages, and personal digital assistants (PDAs).

Changes in our ability to make and keep long-term commitments were reported. Fifty years ago, the majority of the membership consisted of wives of alcoholics and most did not work outside of the home. Today most women are in the workforce and the world has a faster pace with many members unable to fulfill long-term commitments. They are, however, willing to perform short-term tasks.

The “Big Question” for this session was: How do we create a future that’s more responsive to the diverse needs of Al-Anon Family Groups? The Conference was divided into small groups and given 15 minutes to have spirited conversation where no comments about the past or present were allowed—only new (forward) thinking and abundant outlook. A spokesperson from each group shared their ideas:

- On-demand 24/7 information on a variety of media
- Broadcast information e-mails to individuals from the WSO
- Simultaneous language translation at meetings
- Video conference calls
- Virtual Al-Anon meetings, Assemblies, and conventions
- Virtual Lone Member meetings
- Al-Anon talk show
- RSS cruise
- Al-Anon movie
- Al-Anon skill pool for service needs
- Kiosks at airports/malls/public venues to provide meeting access
- Links to Al-Anon on company Web sites
- Education tools, cultural awareness, show a meeting on CD
- Alateen meetings in the mall
- Alateen video games
- Newcomer packet for iPods
- Stay current on technology to recruit young people—use e-invites
- Area “file exchanges”
- Reframe our message without losing our purpose
- What needs to change for links of service and WSO to go directly to members
- WSC on closed-circuit TV to bring WSC to members

Zelda R.,
Trustee

Marge S.,
Executive Committee Member

Barbara O.,
Director of Member Services

Al-Anon Family Groups—From Traditionalists to Millennials

How can Al-Anon, formed by Traditionalists and re-energized by Baby Boomers, apply *new thinking*, *new energy*, and *abundant outlook* so that Gen Xers and Millennials will feel welcome?

A PowerPoint presentation showed the results of the September 2006 membership survey, which indicated that Al-Anon is a fellowship composed primarily of white women averaging 55 years of age. Al-Anon is strong in membership loyalty within that core group, but weak in attracting Generation Xers, between the ages of 27 and 42; and Millennials, between the ages of 6 and 26.

Several Gen X or Millennial members of the Conference were invited to participate in a conversation with each other. They were asked the following question: In five years, if we wanted 30 percent of Al-Anon members involved in service to be from the Gen X and Millennial groups, what can we do to attract and make them feel welcome?

- Embrace them unconditionally like any newcomer—being accepting of tattoos, piercings, dress...
- Make the effort to approach them

- Ask for e-mail addresses on the “phone list” and send information about meetings
- Go where they are and engage them where they are
- Educate current group members

The group was then asked: Assuming they are feeling welcome, how do we get them to join? What’s attractive to them? The group responded that they will join if:

- We share in a way they can relate to
 - We are encouraging and non-judgmental
 - We include them in the group’s activities
 - They feel understood and are shown respect
- How do we get them to serve?
- Ask them to help with group and district functions
 - Educate and mentor (Service Sponsor) them to experience the rewards of service
 - Use their technology of choice
 - Model core Al-Anon/Alateen values and Traditions
 - Listen to what they have to say

Cecelia L.,
Chairperson, Executive Committee

Mary Ann R.,
Trustee

Robert S.,
Director of Communication Services

Tapping the Abundant Resources of Al-Anon Family Groups

Mary G.,
Trustee

Julie F.,
Executive Committee Member

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

The purpose of this session was for Conference members to evaluate the current methods of operation used by the World Service Office and Al-Anon as a whole (what we know), and come up with more effective, efficient, and responsive ways to meet the needs of the fellowship, using current technology or other innovative means to involve a more diverse membership. The focus was on tapping the abundant resources of the Al-Anon Family Groups and on how to maximize those resources. As background, we know that members want opportunities to serve, ways to share their expertise and love of the program, ways to serve that meet their lifestyle and do not increase demands on their personal lives, ways to make a difference in the lives of those still suffering, and personal growth through service.

Various scenarios were then presented asking the question: How can we maximize our abundant resources throughout the Al-Anon Family Groups structure while allowing for flexibility in meeting the needs of our fellowship at every level?

The first scenario introduced:

“Francine,” a five-year member with a journalism background who was unable to leave her family for extended periods of time. As a lover of *The Forum*, how could she serve? Suggestions were to:

- Use her talent locally, conduct local writing workshops
- Serve on e-CAL Committee; support and encourage e-CAL use and submissions in her Area
- Become part of a resource pool that reviews *Forum* submissions and sends comments to the WSO
- Participate in short-term work groups that are dissolved when the job is done
- Write an article without breaking anonymity for any generally accepted magazine read by her age group sharing how her life has been changed as a result of Al-Anon

“Joe” has been active in Area service for 15 years. His new job has a complicated work schedule and he can no longer get away for Al-Anon business meetings. He also cares for his elderly mother. He really misses service and wants to help in technology-related projects. How could members like Joe serve? Suggestions were to:

- Serve on the e-CAL Committee and also help those who want to learn more about technology and multimedia sharing
- Work with Public Outreach projects by

developing brochures or other materials for the Area

- Ask some Al-Anon friends to help him with his elderly parent so he can work on service projects
- Have the elderly parent participate and engage in routine tasks associated with the project
- Maintain a list of local members who have special talents for specific short-term jobs
- Become an Alternate Coordinator or part of an action committee
- Work on small, at-home projects for Alateen—they need the guidance of those who know the Traditions—and come up with things that might be more attractive for them

“Ken” is a young, successful businessman. He believes he owes his success to the program and wants to grow in service beyond the group level. He loves focused projects. He is not the type to sit in long fellowship business meetings and he’s not about to give up his active, weekend outdoor lifestyle. He does have great ideas the program could use. How could members like Ken serve? They could:

- Share Al-Anon experience with institutions, civic groups, and service clubs
- Start an Al-Anon meeting at work during the day or after work
- Be an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service, one night a week or after school
- Do an interview with radio or TV, using the guidelines
- Run a marathon wearing a sign on his back that says, “Have you been affected by someone else’s drinking?”
- Serve as the group’s Current Mailing Address (CMA)

Three Alateens are willing to serve on a WSO Committee, but travel to Virginia Beach with Sponsors is complicated. They know people who go to Area events and could get to them easily. Is there a way they could serve? They could:

- Form an Area service technology work group to teach text messaging to Al-Anon members
- Include them with other local members in service activities adhering to the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements
- Develop meeting formats and schedules that will work for them

- Form an Alateen task force to encourage and create e-CAL content

In conclusion, it was suggested that we need to get over the barrier of asking and remember how nice it was to be asked. Add a line for spe-

cial expertise to phone lists so there is a pool to draw from for special projects. Service commitments do not always have to be long-term. Projects can be broken into small, short-term pieces so commitment to service can grow.

REGIONAL SERVICE SEMINAR DISCUSSION

In the *1977 Conference Summary*, it was reported that Delegates showed interest in having regional meetings. In the *1979 Summary*, the Board of Trustees proposed establishment of Regional Service Seminars (RSSs), which would rotate in the six regions of the U.S. and Canada. The goal was to stimulate interest in service by increasing communication at the grass roots level. The first RSS was held in 1980 in the Canada West Region at Banff, Alberta, with 430 attendees. In 1981, after the RSS, it was reported that there was renewed enthusiasm in service. In 1983, the RSSs stimulated service by increasing communication.

Over the last several years, attendance at RSSs has declined. At the July 2006 RSS Committee meeting, a decision was made to have an October meeting with a limited agenda focusing on the future of the RSS and to investigate a new look for the RSS beginning in 2009. Trustees, Executive Committee members, and Conference staff were invited to attend.

At the October meeting, questions were developed and members were divided into groups to brainstorm. Some of the ideas that evolved from the workshops were:

- Consider revising the pamphlet, *Al-Anon's Regional Service Seminars (RSS-1)*
- Discourage the hosting of hospitality rooms; instead encourage fundraising to help send members to RSSs
- Review the roles and responsibilities of the host committee, WSO staff, and Trustees
- Review the quality of topics and other agenda items presented at past RSSs
- Review the standards for the meeting facilities
- Change the name

It was suggested that a general session be placed on the agenda of the 2007 WSC to discuss the future of the RSS.

A PowerPoint presentation outlined the RSS attendance history. From 1996 to 2000, nine RSSs were held with a total attendance

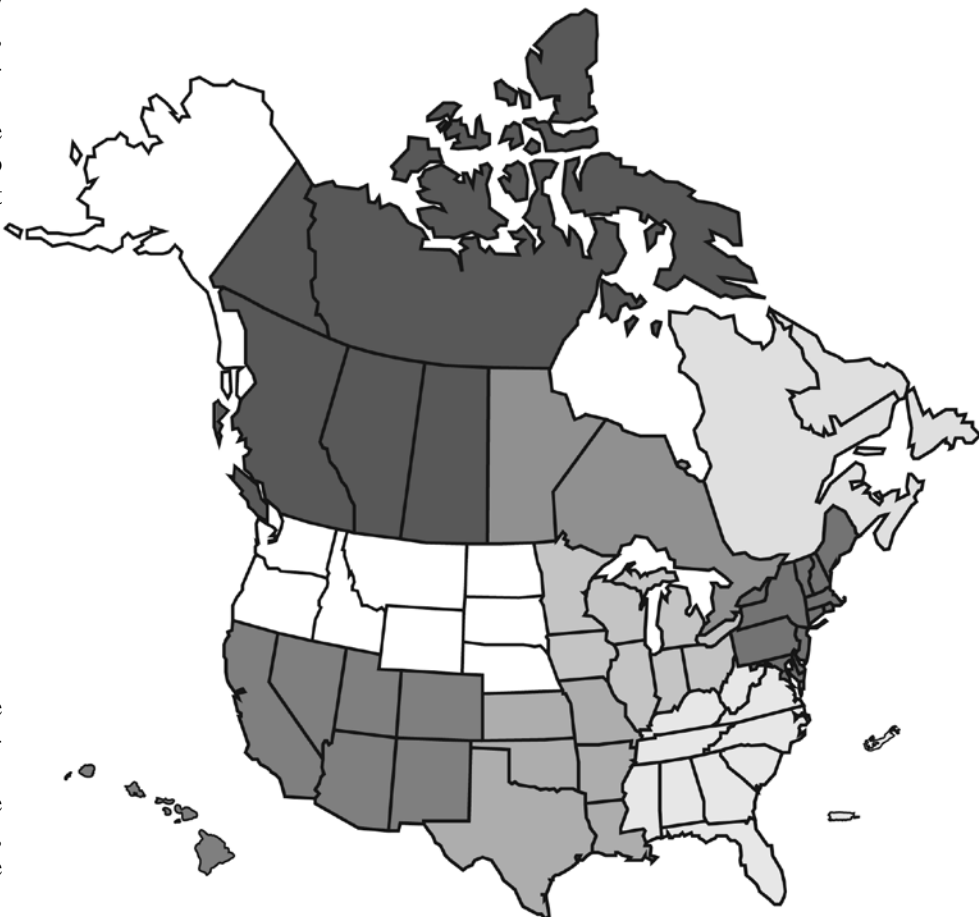
of 2,833 members. There was a drop of 600 attendees in the next cycle of nine RSSs. There were 1,862 participants in this last cycle (2004-2006), a drop of almost 1,000 attendees since 1996.

At the last RSS held in March 2007, 50 percent of attendees completed and returned evaluation forms. Most said they had attended an RSS before; 97 percent were in service; 15 percent were Group Representatives; and 22 percent said they would take the information they received back to their groups. The personal sharings of the WSO staff were popular. Packing so many topics into 12 hours was not.

In January 2007 the RSS Committee developed the following questions, which were sent to the Delegates, and asked the Delegates to get

Claudette D.,
Chairperson, Regional Service
Seminar Committee, Trustee

Barbara O.,
Director of Member Services



How is the Regional Service Seminar Fulfilling its goal for your Area?

feedback from members in their Areas. Delegates reported:

How is the RSS fulfilling its goal for your Area?

- Hosting one brought new thinking, new energy, and an abundant outlook to our Area
- Members tend to get more involved after attendance
- Provides new ideas and new understanding of service
- Allows for meeting new people and sharing ideas
- Shows that Al-Anon is bigger than the home group
- It is an opportunity to meet WSO staff and Trustees and discover that they are Al-Anon members too
- We can learn about WSO operations
- It provides increased education

How is the RSS not fulfilling its goal for your Area?

- There is too much information in too little time
- There is a lack of tools to explain the importance of RSS—it needs to be part of beginner's packets
- We need to have alternative sessions for those who have previously attended a particular session
- There is too much time between RSSs in a region

What would keep you from attending an RSS?

- Cost, distance, time
- Cannot plan that far in advance because of child-care
- Competition with Area events, such as conventions or roundups
- Weather restrictions in regions when RSS is scheduled
- No child-care available
- Had a bad experience
- Some members think it is only for Group Representatives

If a problem was identified, members were asked to suggest possible solutions.

- Education on what an RSS is and is not
- Publish workshop topics
- Don't use acronyms—there are already too many sets of initials
- Some sessions were too long
- We, as Sponsors, are not fulfilling our obligation. Encourage sponsees to go to the RSS. Those who have attended need to show enthusiasm
- Changing the format
- Add a mini RSS at the International Convention in Pittsburgh
- Reportbacks are very important. Members need to know what happened

Lack of money was a “hot topic.” Suggestions for solutions at the group level included passing a can at meetings for loose change, raffling Conference Approved Literature (CAL), bake sales—divide the proceeds among those who want to attend. At the Area level, some suggested returning part of the attendees expense when reportbacks are made. Others proposed having a line item in the budget to send members to RSSs.

2006 INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON GENERAL SERVICES MEETING PRESENTATION

The International Coordination Committee Chairperson reported to Conference members that the 13th biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) was held October 4-7, 2006, in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The theme for the meeting was “Creating a Universal Culture of Trust.” There were 14 General Service Offices represented and 28 members who participated in eight general sessions and six workshops during the four-day meeting. Three International Coordination Committee members shared with Conference members some basic ideas from the IAGSM presentations.



The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (U.S. IAGSM Delegate) shared thoughts expressed by the keynote speaker, Siri A., an Al-Anon member in Norway. She spoke about creating a universal culture of trust and how she was able to trust the fellowship and the program from the very beginning. “Al-Anon’s culture of trust starts in our groups and Areas, and rings

true in our Conference and structures around the world.” The Chairperson emphasized that Siri is a member of the same worldwide fellowship and that it is assuring to know Al-Anon members everywhere share the same understanding of our principles and core values, whether in Australia, Canada, the U.S., Germany, or Mexico.

The Canadian IAGSM Delegate shared highlights from the discussion that followed a presentation on anonymity. The Twelfth Tradition says, “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions . . .” This means we need to be anonymous at the level of press, radio, films, TV, and the Internet. The press has trouble understanding anonymity and it is the obligation of every member to be clear about what is said to them. Some think the phrase “public level,” means hotel lobby, health fair, doctor, or talking to a group of professionals—none of which is a violation of anonymity. The fellowship of Al-Anon is not anonymous and members need to be sure it’s not invisible. It is the members who inform the public that Al-Anon is there for families and friends who still suffer from the effects of alcoholism.

Another member of the International Coordination Committee then gave an overview of a discussion on sponsorship. One International Delegate shared that sponsorship has a negative connotation in her country. Sponsorship can have different meanings due to a lack of understanding. In some cultures sponsorship needs to be between two individuals from the same social class. It was pointed out that translation of some words can be a problem.

Judy P.,
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Doreen D.,
Chairperson, Trustee

Claudette D.,
Trustee

Mirta S.,
Trustee

Marsha W.,
Associate Director—International

SPANISH/FRENCH PRESENTATION

In 2006, during the WSC Spanish/French presentation, an Al-Anon “passport” was distributed to all Conference members as a reminder that our ability to perform outreach activities is not limited to the language we speak. That “passport” listed Areas where meetings were held in languages other than English. Conference members then shared their ideas and were encouraged to use their “passports” as a reminder to carry the message across language barriers in their Areas.

This year Conference members received new “passports” and more encouragement through a PowerPoint presentation that suggested the benefits of “New Thinking—New Energy—Abun-

dant Outlook” for all groups in our trilingual service structure. The personalized “passport,” in addition to listing the Areas where other-language meetings are held, included the number of meetings and type, Spanish or French, found within that Area. It was suggested that outreach activities may contribute to the strengthening and overall growth of groups.

To help with their efforts, Conference members were reminded of the existing tools that can support recovery in multiple languages—the World Service Office Public Outreach Web site at www.al-anon.org, the Members’ Web site at www.al-anon.org/members, and the Al-Anon/Alateen toll-free meeting line avail-

Marsha W.,
Associate Director—International

Barbara O.,
Director of Member Services

able in English, Spanish, and French, 1-888-4AL-ANON (1-888-425-2666), in the U.S. and Canada. They were advised that two books available in Spanish and French were revised this year—*Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8) and *Alateen, Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B-3).

Conference members were then asked to share highlights of their experiences over the past year. One member shared that she corresponded with a Spanish-speaking person in Spanish through a free, Spanish translation Web site. She was invited by this person to speak at her group and had to tell her she didn't speak Spanish! One member shared that the *Spanish Service Manual* she received at the 2006 Conference was given to a Group Representative in

her Area. In one Area, "We took the meeting to them. It was done in Spanish and we had to have translation." One member shared, "I work in a hospital emergency room and get people who don't speak English. I had a suicide victim and was able to find out that alcoholism was the problem. I was able to give her a book I got at Conference last year and she hugged me. We didn't speak the same language but we communicated." To help with their efforts during the coming year, all Conference members practiced phrases found in their new "passports" in English, Spanish, and French.

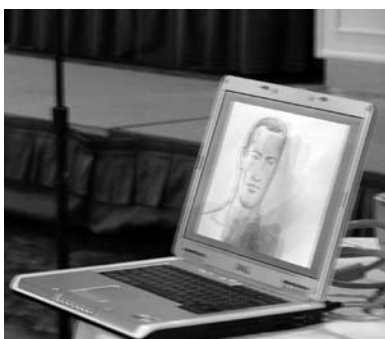
Hello! My name is...

¡Hola! Me llamo...

Bonjour, je m'appelle...

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

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



"Sketches"

For the past ten years, Al-Anon Family Groups has produced TV public service announcements (PSAs). Each PSA is created to reach the potential newcomer and the general public, to let them know that hope and help are available in Al-Anon Family Groups. This year's PSA is entitled "Sketches." Its producer presented a unique concept that used no actors. This trimmed costs and made it possible to produce three different PSAs. The Conference viewed all three spots.

For the past seven years Al-Anon PSAs have been played in the U.S. and Canada an average of 2,000 times per month. The PSA is encoded with a signal so that every time it's played the

vendor gets the information and sends the WSO a report, including the stations and times the PSA was played and the projected dollar value of that time.

PSAs are the largest item in the Public Outreach budget and include production costs as well as the cost to distribute them to 1,000 TV and 2,300 radio stations. The return airplay value each year is estimated to be ten times the cost.

Delegates received a DVD with the 60-second versions of the three PSAs in English, Spanish, and French to pass on to their Area Public Outreach/Information Coordinator. The DVD may be copied for Area viewing, but it is not broadcast quality.

COMMUNICATION PRESENTATION

Tom C.,
Associate Director of
Communication—Literature



In the past, when a new book was presented at the Conference, it was simply handed to the members. This year, with shared leadership in mind, Delegates received Al-Anon's newest book *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29), as well as an opportunity to encourage their Areas to continue the discussion the fellowship started when members asked the Conference to approve "a piece on grief and loss as it affects the families and friends of alcoholics." This presentation focused on using the book as a gentle tool for starting a discussion of what many consider a difficult topic.

An abbreviated "workshop on wheels" illustrated one way to conduct district and Area workshops about alcoholism and loss. This sample workshop used the subject, "Living with the Family Disease of Alcoholism" (Chapter Two of the book), as a springboard. It opened with

a brief reading, followed by one member's personal sharing on how she used the program to deal with a personal loss. Five other members then participated in a roundtable discussion of several questions from the end of the chapter, while the rest of the Conference observed.

At the end of the presentation, the moderator explained that in a full workshop, this sample could be expanded to include further table discussions among all attendees. He also explained that by including the subjects and questions from other chapters, or from other Conference Approved Literature, the format could be expanded to a series of workshops, or one longer workshop. An outline of the complete workshop was given to Conference members at the end of the session and will later be posted on the Members' Web site: www.al-anon.org/members.

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

In a skit, Conference members looked in on the Assembly for Area 294 held in the small town of “Stuck in a Rut” in the state of “Apathy.”

The “Gorilla of Change” made a cameo appearance at the “Assembly.” In his role as a new Group Representative, the gorilla wandered aimlessly looking for answers to questions. Conference members watched how things changed as “Delegates” from other Areas stopped by with *new thinking*, *new energy*, and an *abundant outlook*. These “Delegates” saw how quickly the Assembly got through business to get to fun things. They learned that fewer than half the Group Representatives were attending the Assemblies. Doing things the same way doesn’t create new energy or thinking. The “Gorilla of Change” found answers to his questions when “Delegates” offered ideas to revitalize Area 294, make it more interesting, and how to get a better turnout. They suggested that changing the agenda to think “out of the box” instead of “the way we always have done things” and to look at new ways of presenting information. The *Service Manual* tells us that the Delegate is the channel of information between the Assembly and World Service. The Assembly needed an abundant outlook—to use all its resources to discover unknown talent in the Area. The Assembly learned that Knowledge-Based Decision-Making eliminates conflict and helps the Assembly stay focused. The Assembly was reminded that it needed people of all ages, cultures, and faiths.

The Assembly Chairperson was able to put the Assembly’s old thinking on the shelf when presented with new thinking and an abundant outlook. Conference members then went to breakout rooms to think without barriers and come up with new and innovative ideas for the Areas.

In workshop sessions, Conference members discussed ways to revitalize Assemblies by exploring, discovering, and embracing new ways to share what they learned at the Conference.



“Looking for answers at the ‘Assembly’”

What are 2 new ways to encourage the Area Officers or AWSC to conduct your Assembly business?

- Use multimedia and skits as motivators at Assemblies
- Have workshops on how to fill out and use “Hot Topic” sheets at Assembly and districts
- Provide photocopies of all materials, have the “big questions” framed on “Hot Topic” sheets
- Send reports before Assembly and publish reports in Area newsletters to allow for more participation and creativity
- Explain Knowledge-Based Decision-Making to the Area World Service Committee (AWSC)
- Reserve seats in the front of the room for Alateens
- Use action committees for brainstorming and to do the background/framing for Area business discussions
- Change Delegate’s report to Delegate’s conversation

Conference members were then asked to explore possibilities that could create new energy through the links of service including groups, districts, Areas, and AISs.

What are 2 new ideas you could bring to your Area to create new energy?

- Put the report in your own words
- Create excitement—present new ideas in a workshop or skit format
- Send reports out ahead via e-mail, then have a question and answer time
- Use Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process
- Three ways of communication. Written, visual, hearing/participation—need to hear things over and over again
- Have a goal and focus on it
- Use breakout sessions or action committees
- Share leadership—assign people specific tasks or parts of the report
- Use small groups for discussions and brainstorming

In your role as Delegate, how can you make this happen?

- Do PowerPoint presentations and hit the highlights; make presentations available
- Use the PSA and/or give each Group Representative a copy
- Invite a Trustee to Assembly
- Assess Area needs and use local talent to accomplish the task
- Use new methodology consistent with AI-Anon’s core values
- Be your own Delegate—use a style of presentation that works for you
- Mentor, mentor, mentor, educate, educate, educate
- Encourage Group Representatives to bring motions using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process
- Involve Group Representatives
- Encourage Group Representatives to talk to one another

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 submitted questions were combined into a single document and sent back to the members. From this list, each person was asked to select 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 given a topic and invited to give a brief presentation, followed by open discussion.

At the Conference, members voted for two additional topics for half hour open discussion sessions. Due to agenda adjustments, only one of the two sessions was held. The remaining topics, along with the one that was cancelled, were discussed in small group workshops.

Cynthia H.,

Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference

Open Discussions and Presentations

Chosen Agenda Item #1

Al-Anon's future:

- Where do we see Al-Anon in five years?
- What changes could Al-Anon make in the way it is structured that might attract younger members who are our future?
- Are the places where we meet attractive to a diverse audience?
- What language barriers do we create with terms like "fellowship," "Sponsor," or ..?
- How are new members being greeted?
- Are we getting to the meeting and setting up early so we are ready and the meeting looks welcoming?

Bruce F., Panel 46 Delegate from Kentucky introduced the topic:

"Al-Anon could increase in numbers if we would pay close attention to the newcomers. We could greet them at the door when they arrive, tell them we are glad they came, and inform them of the many different types of Al-Anon meetings in town. We could say, 'If you don't like this one, try another.' It would be helpful to tell them about the literature most groups display on tables. My home group keeps a large supply of literature and books displayed at the door when people arrive. We also meet in a community center, which could be attractive to a diverse audience.

"When I came to Al-Anon at the age of 22, my Sponsor was able to help me understand the principles of what I was reading. I remember her asking me what the reading in *One Day at a Time* was about today. I said, 'I don't know, it does not apply to me, I am not married.' She responded with a few choice words, 'What is the *principle*?' After I learned to pick out the principle, I was then able to practice it in my everyday life.

"It has been mentioned that A.A. has a 'spokesperson.' Maybe Al-Anon needs to hire one. This person could be responsible for keeping up with all that is going on in the United States and Canada with regards to alcoholism. Within our Traditions, this person could also let the public know about the Al-Anon Family Groups—for family and friends of alcoholics."

After thanking him for the presentation, the Conference Co-Chairperson moderated an open discussion. She asked Conference members to bring their "big thinking" ideas to the microphone to



"Hope and recovery this way"

discuss where they would like to see Al-Anon in five years.

Many expressed the continuing need to have the interchange of face-to-face meetings. In discussing ideas for ways of making meetings welcoming, one member said, "Our Public Outreach Coordinator has started an Area program to have groups do something positive by making and putting out a welcome mat with footprints that say 'hope and recovery this way.' Some groups use a special cushion for newcomers to make them feel special." Another group puts out footprints labeled with a Step on each to welcome members, "When you get to Step Twelve, that is where the meeting is." It was suggested that groups could have greeters outside the room. Another suggestion was when we are in a conversation before meetings to remember to pause and acknowledge the new person who comes into the room. Another member said, "One Al-Anon meeting I attend has had an influx of young members—they are coming, we just have to embrace them."

One member shared new thinking about the service structure by using conference calling for service meetings. "Two districts hold their meetings alternating between face-to-face and conference calls. It has motivated and energized them. One district had been without a District Representative and someone volunteered on the call. The other district had trouble getting more than three or four Group Representatives to show up at meetings—the conference call had ten, and half were in a room with a speaker phone." Another member shared, "I see all the current members in my Area as the core of Al-Anon Family Groups. We are always looking to the future but not really developing and working with what we have." Another said, "I would like to see a *Service Manual* in the hands of every member and every member knowing how to use it." A Conference member said, "All service needs to be valued, not just the Group Representative, District Representative, and Delegate. We don't value other service posi-

tions—if we have a GR, but no one is willing to open the door, the group doesn't have meetings. Valuing the person who shows up every single week at the meeting, if that is the service they can do right now—is important.” A member summed up these ideas saying, “In five years, I would like to look out at the World Service Conference and see 20 - 40-year-old vibrant people.” Another would like to see more service positions at the Area level open to Alateens because “my experience has been that if Alateens are involved as Alateens with Al-Anons, they feel comfortable coming into our meetings.” Alateen participation in Al-Anon service requires complying with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

Big ideas included increased use of technology and visionary ways to use the Internet: “I would like to see a virtual Al-Anon reality center where newcomers can see what their lives will be like if they continue on their current path,” said one member. Another said, “I'm glad that when I do a search with any search engine that Al-Anon information on the family disease of alcoholism will come up first. I want any medical student, teenager, or college student seeking information or help to find Al-Anon's Web site.” One Conference member wanted to have an e-CAL workshop where everyone brings a laptop, hooks up to a wireless network in the facility, puts presentations on a big screen so the group can talk about possibilities for adding animation, music, or whether a photo goes with a story. Attendees could also share their experience about what its like to create things as a member of a team.” Another idea shared was, “We know potential members are using ‘key word’ searches in looking for solutions. Al-Anon could identify these through search engine optimization or through ‘ad words.’ If these newcomers are attracted to our site, an introductory section where the ‘20 Questions’ pop up and maybe a list of meetings by Area. Ad words are a cost per click and many are not looking for words like alcoholism so the cost would be low. The key to recovery is face-to-face meetings and we need to tap into ways to get those interested newcomers.”

Another change that Al-Anon groups could make that might attract new members is meeting in places other than churches. One member said, “I just looked at my meeting list as a reality check to see where our groups are currently meeting—we're only in nice little churches and nice neighborhoods.” Others suggestions were: to work toward a required curriculum class at every university to learn about Twelve Step programs; to design a video for elementary, middle, and high school health classes; and to get the Al-Anon Public Outreach Web site address visible at sporting events—on race cars, team shirts, behind home plate at baseball parks so that it could be written down and people could go in private to see who and what we are. A project in one Area is “checking out the idea that when anyone goes to a town, county, or state Web site that there be a link to an Al-Anon Web site where they can find help.” Another Area is looking at ways to attract and develop more District Representatives and Group Representatives. “We want leaders but we are not necessarily supporting them. We are changing the name of our Assembly to ‘Spring Leadership Assembly.’” If we want leaders, we need to suggest that the Assembly is where leadership is developed. Action committees haven't been working in our Area, another said. So to support new Coordinators, “We asked past Conference members who haven't been involved in the Assembly to be

mentors to each of the action committees.”

Alateen meetings in school settings can be a safer, more protective environment than some evening meeting locations. “My Area is working on trying to make meetings more accessible to Alateens. Two groups are looking at malls with secure space. Sponsors would be there. Young people can easily get themselves to a mall and parents don't ask as many questions when young people are going to the mall. We need to find out-of-the-box places to meet that are easily available and comply with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.”

Another theme was getting “back to basics.” Several members commented that sponsorship is a weak link. One member said, “Just hearing that pyramid sponsorship is occurring in various parts of the World Service Conference structure is a concern. Is there something we aren't doing? Why are people seeking a solution there? In groups where there is a lack of sponsorship, members are not involved in service.” Another said, “When I have new sponsees, I always buy a *Service Manual* for them. I also read the *Service Manual* with them—not just give it to them to put in a drawer. I keep reading page 65 in the *Service Manual* to them. Be a good power of example.” “Sponsorship will keep future of Al-Anon alive. We could have a variety of Sponsors for service, for beginners, or for working the Steps.” One Area shared, “We just held a Sponsorship seminar for people who are already Sponsors—personal, service, and Alateen Sponsors. We had a panel discussion, broke into groups to talk about sponsoring newcomers, and issues that come up in sponsorship (difficult things we don't quite know what to do with). Sponsorship is a core value of the program and if we sponsor other people in the basics of the program, Al-Anon Family Groups are going to survive and thrive.”

A Delegate summed up the discussion by saying, “I never want to lose the heart of the program—face-to-face meetings. I travel a lot. I have gone to many Areas and tried to find meetings. If your Web site is not up-to-date or the location is wrong, I won't find your meeting. If I do find the meeting but it is in basement of a church and the lights are off on the outside, I won't know which entrance to go in or how to find it. I love the idea of the footsteps. I love the idea of greeters meeting me at door.”

Chosen Agenda Item No. 2

What does “abundant outlook,” as expressed in this year's Conference theme, mean in terms of our individual programs, groups, districts, Areas, and for the fellowship as a whole? How could thinking abundantly influence the way we approach our service responsibilities?

Donna E-H., Panel 45 Delegate from Missouri, introduced this topic with a brief presentation. “To me, an abundant outlook is having the ability to see beyond what is laid before me. A person with an abundant outlook possesses the ability to dream, to envision what is yet to happen. There is a certain amount of clarity and wisdom that comes with an abundant outlook. Concept Nine states: ‘Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity....’ As World Service Conference members, we have agreed to lead in a unique way. The outlook of a leader and how

we communicate our outlook is essential to success.

“One element of a good leader is stability. While serving at any level in Al-Anon Family Groups, our individual program of recovery comes first. It is important to remember that our recovery from the effects of someone else’s drinking is the primary reason we began attending Al-Anon. For some of us that was many years ago. Staying current with a Sponsor and approaching our personal recovery with a vigorous belief that we will continue to benefit from working and applying the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions keeps us stable and in a well-balanced place to help others in Al-Anon. Having this vigorous belief is having an abundant outlook toward our individual program.

“As World Service Conference members, we have been privileged to serve in a way that many members will not experience. There are service positions within our Area structure that only a handful of members will fill. What we do with our service experience continues to affect our groups, districts, and Areas. Because these entities have supported us in our service endeavors, we remain accountable to them. Most importantly, our presence at group meetings, district functions, and Area business meetings communicates a message of dedication. Having served Al-Anon Family Groups at the World Service level, members will often look to us as an example. In our groups, it is critical to show a gentle welcome to newcomers. We foster group growth by allowing the process of group conscience meetings to run their course without our interference. We can do so because we have an abundant outlook. Our experience has taught us that group problems arise and can be resolved by the group and a loving God expressed in the group conscience. We would do well to refrain from having all the answers and knowing what is best. By utilizing our generous intuition as the group conscience process unfolds, we exhibit an abundant outlook for Al-Anon Family Groups.

“In our districts and Areas, our individual support is needed. I’ve learned that support can be silent or expressed in very few words. Sometimes support is a mere presence and sometimes it requires giving direction or information. There are those times when we are asked to step in and lead or just assist. Our willingness and open-mindedness are essential to all levels of our service structure. One way to exhibit leadership is to express hope in district and Area efforts. Being able to view these efforts as productive is having an abundant outlook for the districts and Areas. ‘Good leadership knows that a fine plan or idea can come from anyone, anywhere.’ (2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 173)

“There is a district in my Area that is struggling. The largest meeting in the district is a group that uses the *Big Book* of Alcoholics Anonymous. This group does not support the district. Other meetings in the district are not well attended and are beginning to fold. Some members in the district have suggested that the district disband. Existing groups would be absorbed by a nearby district. It was suggested that at an upcoming district potluck, a member from the *Big Book* group be invited as one of the speakers. The reasoning behind this gesture is one of inclusion. It also involves a generous and prolific look into what some feel is hindering the district. This approach is one of abundant outlook. Abundant outlook is not new. Al-Anon’s Concept Four is about participation. This gesture is participation in action with a slightly different slant. A leader with abundant outlook recognizes that there is nothing to be gained from exclusion and much to be gained from focusing on our common threads, one of which is welcoming friends and families of alcoholics.

“The fellowship as a whole includes each and every member whether in service or not. All of Al-Anon Family Groups benefit from how we view and portray the fellowship and the facets of it. We are members of a worldwide organization, that is, in and of itself, plentiful. There are many opportunities available to our members. These opportunities can be proposed in many different ways. The program has changed lives and offers hope to many that have yet to be changed. In giving back via service, members flourish and discover a deeper sense of self. Service is an avenue that allows members to develop skills and reclaim the



talents that were once subordinated to someone else’s disease. The enthusiasm that you and I exhibit regarding Al-Anon and its plentifulness portrays a message of abundant outlook.

“Lastly, how could thinking abundantly influence the way we approach our service responsibilities?

“Leaders have the ability to see into the future. ‘A good leader originates plans and policies for the improvement of our fellowship’ (2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, page 173). Those plans and policies are often born from a vision. Thinking abundantly requires clearing away self-imposed limits and daring to step out of a comfort zone. Approaching our service responsibilities with inexhaustible vision is to stay informed and to look beyond today. To use an overused phrase, we must think outside-the-box. We can embrace a new method or approach, or expand what’s already in place. We can expect to grow and catch up to the changing world. Ask yourself and those you serve with: How can we streamline certain aspects of business meetings and educate our service members with workshops at district and Area meetings? Is it time to inventory our Area’s way of conducting business meetings? Have we considered outreach as it pertains to newcomers at our meetings? Are we utilizing action committees? Can communication in your Area improve? If improvement is possible, open these topics up for discussion and take the steps needed to implement change. Create an abundant outlook in some of your members. They will pass it on.

“If your response is, ‘Oh, we don’t do things that way,’ you have yet to adopt an abundant outlook toward Al-Anon’s future. We learn in Al-Anon that any decision can be re-decided. I believe we can think abundantly when we approach our service responsibilities with inexhaustible vision. Think big. Think beyond. Implement change. Think like a leader—with an abundant outlook!

“An abundant outlook is having the ability to see beyond what lies before us. A person with an abundant outlook possesses the ability to dream, to envision what is yet to happen. There is a certain amount of clarity and wisdom that comes with an abundant outlook. Concept Nine states: ‘Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity...’. As World Service Conference members, we have agreed to lead in a unique way. The outlook of a leader and how we communicate our outlook is essential to success.”

The Conference Chairperson thanked her for the presentation and opened the topic for discussion.

“When I have an abundant outlook it takes away the limits that I would put on myself. I share my abundant outlook in my own groups, district, and Area. It is at the group level that so many things begin. An abundant outlook has to begin with the groups thinking. They need to take action, have less dependence on the WSO to do for them what they can do for themselves. Each member to do something.”

Another member commented, “Abundant means expanding on what we already have. Every organization that has a signature event knows that it has a life cycle. The declining numbers we saw in the RSS discussion show a Bell Curve and that RSSs have peaked. It is next to impossible to turn the curve around. I was thinking that it is OK to stop doing RSSs and try something else in looking for a way to reach more people. So I was thinking that we turn those resources devoted to RSSs toward having WSO staff and Trustees go to as many Assemblies as possible. If we divert those resources, our Areas would be organizing the event, not WSO, and we could maximize the resources.” We have resources all around us; having an abundant outlook is learning how to use them. One member described the idea through her neighbor’s reaction after a series of snowstorms. “I watched a neighbor get every flake off his driveway. Some did a narrow walk for the postman, some shoveled two ruts to drive out. At one house nothing was touched but a big sign said ‘unassembled snowman for sale.’ Now that’s an abundant outlook!” Another commented, “If we acknowledge what we have, we’ll get more of it, but if we focus on what we don’t have, we’ll get more of that. We just need to think about the possibilities of what we can do. There is enough abundance in Al-Anon. We have enough of everything. If we can focus on what we have, we will not worry that we will have to give something up.” New thinking and energy were created when a member commented, “I’m going to my home group and change the phone list to a contact list with name, phone number, cell number, and e-mail.” Another said, “I am going to ask District Representatives to collect the Group Representatives e-mail addresses and I will send out e-mails to educate them about issues and to put questions out there for their input.” Others shared that abundant outlook also means, “Before Al-Anon to have change happen, I tried to do it all myself. It didn’t work then, so why would it work when I am talking about

service responsibilities? If I keep it simple, these things that truly changed my home—a joyful attitude, inviting others, sharing the fun, and saying, ‘I *get* to do this, not I *have* to do this.’ I can refuse to complain about the brown envelopes that show up in my mailbox. I can look at it as a bother or I can look at it as ‘My goodness, look at the abundant resources that have shown up to help me help the groups and districts in my Area.’”

The following are some of the ways that thinking abundantly has influenced the way we approach our service responsibilities: “I realized that I am sitting in the middle of six universities. I am going home and get hold of the Public Outreach Chairperson for our AIS and I am going to work with her to see if we can flash e-mail all the students and faculty. I never had these thoughts before I came here.” Another idea was to get some Al-Anon members to design a YouTube Web site with characters, Al-Anon and his sister Alateena who could talk about Al-Anon and Alateen and what it was and real people could respond back to them using characters’ names. This could be a service project that we could get people from throughout the U.S. and Canada to agree that for one day they would respond to all the questions that came up on the site. One member is going to ask some of the younger people and those a little older, to teach us about iPods, laptops, multi-media, and text messaging in a series of business meetings. “I am going to my Area and challenge all groups to see how many multi-media pieces we can create for the e-CAL page. I think there would be some excitement of the young people to be involved with this and we would include our Alateen groups. I think some of the older folks, once they get over the fear factor with training, would be interested in learning some of this technology.” “A Group Representative in our Area demonstrated abundant outlook. She got every group member’s e-mail address and the day before meeting, she sends a reminder, gives the agenda, topic, who’s leading, and if there is a speaker, puts a little quote at the bottom and that group has enjoyed a resurgence of membership. She decided to put abundant outlook into action.” Another Conference member shared, “It can start with me—I plan to do a ‘meeting on wheels’ at alternate locations of a popular coffee shop franchise in my district. We might leave *The Forum* and a couple of other things while we are there. Also, my annual workshop is done in a psychiatric hospital with wireless interface—I can do an e-CAL/*Forum* workshop and I can lead it!”

The Conference Co-Chairperson asked a Delegate to sum up the discussion. She said, “We need to stretch beyond where we are, allow people to succeed. There is no limit to what we can do if we start where we are and look to the future.”

Chosen Agenda Item No. 3

Group Problems:

- How can we encourage “seasoned” members to change with the times, grow with the opportunities, rotate long-held service positions, omit statements that begin with “because this is how we’ve always done it”?
- How do we deal with members who are overwhelmingly controlling, dominating,

and threatening to members of the group to do things their way?

- How do we address non-Al-Anon terms used during Al-Anon meetings (i.e., my qualifier or co-dependent)?
- Would it benefit the groups if something addressing the issue of crosstalk were included in the *Service Manual*?
- How does the fellowship help members understand that Al-Anon membership is not for hyper-focusing on socializing and popularity, (losing sight of Al-Anon's primary spiritual aim), gossiping and criticizing, joining another in their catastrophe versus tossing a life preserver, exhibiting an adrenaline rush over another person's turmoil, encouraging drama in another person's life, energizing a relationship with a significant other by discussing another member's hardships and problems?
- How do we keep the focus on Al-Anon in meetings where dual members participate in large numbers?
- "Seasoned" members who don't change with the times have stopped doing service and live in the past.
- Sometimes it is hard to change what's already there, and it is easier to start a new meeting.
- The strongest examples of recovery are longtime, seasoned members who remain in service. Ask them if they would be willing to mentor newer members.
- Seasoned members have wisdom and knowledge to share when they are included in the decision-making process. Be open to hear what they have to say—take what you like and leave the rest.
- One Delegate shared, "I asked each of our six past Delegates to hold up a sign that gave their Panel number. Each sign had one word on it—willingness, enthusiasm, humor, etc. I asked our Area World Service Committee to look at these members. I explained that the word on each sign was what I had received from them during my Area service. I explained that I bring these characteristics into my role as Panel 47 Delegate, but I am still going to do things differently."

Suggestions for working with controlling, dominating members included:

- Chair a meeting with a topic that focuses on whatever principle is being violated.
- Start another meeting—my program opened up and the new members who came got involved in service.
- Learn ways to focus on the principles of the program so as not to give power to domineering and disruptive members in our meetings.
- Review the index of the *Service Manual* to shed light on some solutions.
- Study the Traditions and our abundant literature for answers to most questions and problems.
- Visit problem meetings and participate in presenting solutions.
- Use the District Representative and Delegate as sources of information. However, the group must still resolve its own problems.
- Give them a job with clearly defined authority.

[See also Question 21 on page 62 of the *2003 Conference Summary* for additional information on this topic.]

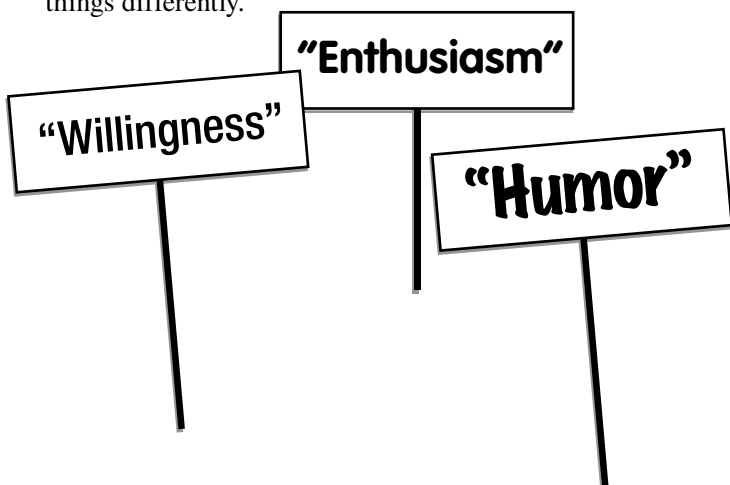
On the issue of "crosstalk," the following clarification was offered: "Crosstalk" is not an Al-Anon word. We don't need this outside term. We don't give advice or interrupt each other, but we do share what worked for us so we have loving interchange in the meetings. If we don't have loving interchange, what is the purpose of going to meetings? We need to stop using the term crosstalk, stop focusing on it, and instead talk about what we do, because what we do is lovingly support one another by sharing what worked for us.

Other thoughts and suggestions were:

- Negative sharing occurs when we try to fix other members.
- A group conscience can limit interchange to give everyone an opportunity to share. A gentle explanation of loving interchange can foster mutual respect.
- Page 100 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, subsection "Labels," says, "Focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of our program is strengthened when we avoid using professional terms and labels since they may confuse members by implying affiliation with certain persons or specific therapies." Al-Anon does have loving interchange and loving support for one another. It does not give advice. We need to be the messenger that this is a warm and loving fellowship for encouragement, not discouragement.
- When I hear a new term, I look in the *Service Manual*. If it's not there, I assume it must not be an Al-Anon term.
- Each member has a responsibility to keep Al-Anon welcoming for the generations that follow.
- Another suggestion was to read and study the pamphlets "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon" in *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4) and *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17).

Comments in response to keeping the Al-Anon focus in meetings were:

- Make a point to read the Suggested Welcome and Closing.
- Always have only Al-Anon literature available.
- Use a meeting outline with a list of things for the Chairperson of the week to say to newcomers such as—we recommend



sponsorship (explain what it is); we have asterisks on our phone list designating members willing to be temporary Sponsors, and if they aren't available, call anyone on the phone list. If they bring up outside or very sensitive issues, we try to let them know there are things best handled one-on-one and we keep everything confidential.

- Study the sections relating to Tradition Five in any Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. It provides information to define what Al-Anon is and is not. If a specific behavior becomes a problem, face-to-face loving interchange can usually defuse it. In most instances, applying the Traditions will result in a solution.
- Display the table tent card, *Al-Anon Spoken Here*, as a subtle reminder to focus on the Al-Anon program. If the meeting focus wanders to outside issues, gentle steering can bring the meeting back to an Al-Anon focus.
- Offer to explain the primary purpose of the Al-Anon program after the meeting to individuals who attempt to discuss outside issues in the meeting.

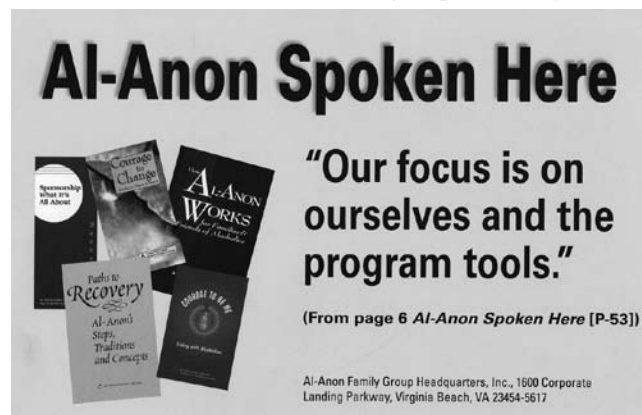
[Page 24 of the 2001 Conference Summary has further discussion.]

Suggestions for solving group problems in general included:

- I owe my recovery to on-line meetings. We have just finished an on-line group inventory. We found ways to apply the Traditions clearly and simply when problems

occurred. I have confidence that we only need to apply our Traditions and the group will find a good solution.

- One meeting I attend had things happening that I didn't like. I made it my responsibility and my pleasure to attend. I picked one little issue at a time. I used references from the *Service Manual*, suggested a business meeting for an inventory—started by asking “Is our group going OK, are we attracting people, are we sharing with them, are we providing loving interchange?” Leading by personal example can influence others.
- I talked with those who went before me and they said to use the *Service Manual* and hold a group inventory.



Workshop Highlights

Al-Anon Information Services (AIS):

- How can AISs be connected with the Area to meet the needs of the groups and potential members?
- How can AIS and Area Web sites cooperate in the timely and accurate distribution of meeting information?
- How does this impact Al-Anon Family Groups when it doesn't happen?

Within the Areas, there is a broad range of connections. Some Areas are not incorporated. Some Areas have no AIS. Some Areas are incorporated and their AISs want to be incorporated, but not under the Area because they (AIS) want to stay separate. Some AISs have voice and no vote in the Area structure. Some have voice and vote; some have neither. AISs have various combinations of employees and volunteers to man the phone service. Some AISs have Group Representatives at their business meetings and have a liaison to the Area Assembly. Some AISs report to the Area World Service Committee (AWSC), while some do not attend at all and wish to stay separate. Some AISs collect money to pay for rent and/or phone service.

When an AIS and Area use the Al-Anon guidelines, it gives them a way of dealing with problems that arise. Conflict arises when one or both of the entities do not follow those guidelines. Talking it out can resolve the issues.

There was not adequate time to address the question about the impact on Al-Anon Family Groups and local Twelfth Step outreach when no AIS is available or when group information is not updated in a timely manner. Updating the group contact information and addressing Twelfth Step work locally are important topics.

Districts:

- How can Al-Anon/Alateen educate members about the importance of districts?
- How do district roles differ from those of an AIS?
- If District Representatives are the weakest link of service, what tools can we use to have an orientation to train the DRs?
- What can we, as a fellowship, do to encourage our District Representatives to pass on the information they are given, and to better enable them to become leaders for the future of Al-Anon and Alateen?

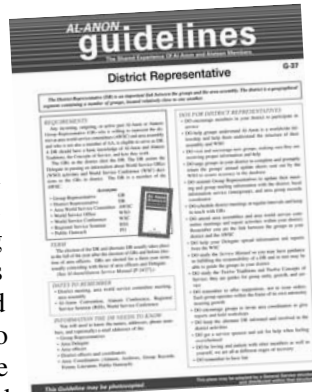
Districts are “convenient segments into which an Area is divided by the Area World Service Committee (AWSC), with the approval of the Assembly.” (Page 108, 2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*)

“An Al-Anon Information Service, also known as an Inter-group, is a local service center established by one or more districts or by groups located close enough to one another for easy access and communication.” (Page 53, 2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. For a list of suggested services, see page 53.) The *Information Services (AIS)* guideline (G-4) may provide additional information.

An AIS can provide manpower to the supporting districts. The District Representative (DR) focuses on helping the Group Representatives. An AIS can also provide services, the cost of which might be prohibitive for a district, and spreads the cost among the groups serviced by the AIS. An AIS is most effective when there are several districts willing to support it and utilize

its services. An AIS can function as an action committee for the district(s). There should never be competition between the districts and the AIS. They can work well together if the part of our Twelfth Tradition is observed—principles above personalities. Special attention should be paid to Concept Ten, to clearly define service authority and responsibilities among the service arms so that double-headed management is avoided.

Development of a local orientation and/or training could supplement the *District Representative* guideline (G-37). The Area Chairperson needs to state what he/she needs from the DR and ask the DRs what they think they need to carry out their roles and responsibilities. Workshops focusing on this role and its responsibilities could be helpful. This training could be given by longtime members who have served in that capacity, who are willing to share their experience, and who have a working knowledge of the *Service Manual*.



Seventh Tradition:

- How can we make our printed literature affordable, while maintaining the quality and variety we enjoy today?
- Are there alternative methods to achieve our Seventh Tradition of self-support rather than relying so heavily on the sale of Conference Approved Literature?
- The quarterly appeal letter—Is there another way it could be more effective in appealing to individual members?
- The literature we have is affordable and abundant.
- If groups and members contributed the cost of services, literature could be free.
- On page 193 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, it says that the WSO sells books for little more than cost. Our Seventh Tradition says we must be self-supporting. The small amount received which is over the cost of printing is “not profit after all, but further contributions which the member-buyers make to the general welfare of their groups or WSO.” These small financial sacrifices are made by individual members for the good of the whole fellowship.
- Another way to financially support the WSO is to have monthly or quarterly donations automatically withdrawn from your bank account. Members who write checks and put them in the appeal envelope do not receive receipts. Those with automatic withdrawal or who mail their checks separately to the WSO receive a receipt for tax purposes.
- Members may want more specific information on what funds are needed, especially specific projects, outreach, and how it would help the fellowship.

What does “big thinking” mean and how do individuals at the WSC go about thinking in that fashion? How do groups think “big”? What could we use as an example of big thinking to stimulate the response desired?

If Lois and Anne were going to organize and unify the groups today for the first time, how could they do it? How could we use these ideas in the way we do business today? How could we balance the need to communicate quickly with the desire for an informed group conscience at all levels of service?

- Big thinking means asking, “What can I do?” instead of, “What can’t I do?”
- Use brainstorming sessions modeled on the theme of the 2007 Conference to come up with ideas that have no limits, but remain consistent with our core values.
- Positive thinking might be stimulated by the use of “What if” questions.
- Utilize technology—for example, “Webinars” with conference-calling services
- Listening stimulates thinking

How have Areas been able to successfully implement Knowledge-Based Decision-Making? How have local groups been able to move from no discussion, simple majority votes to “reasoning things out” and coming to an informed group conscience and substantial unanimity?

Assemblies and AWSCs welcome the information sent out ahead of time. Discussions are fuller and the information is better received. Groups and members like and want information. Members are better able to come to a consensus when they have access to the relevant information to make the decision.

Where is the balance between tradition and history (Lois used the Lord’s Prayer and therefore it should not be changed) and meeting the changing needs of a worldwide fellowship? How have groups found ways to avoid an emotional discussion of religion, an obstacle to success in Al-Anon?

Let in the air of diversity and tolerance by explanation. Under Tradition Four, autonomy, let groups develop their own customs, such as a moment of silence or letting individuals silently say their own prayer at the same time. Groups within the World Service Conference structure use a combination of the Serenity Prayer, Lord’s Prayer, and the Declaration. International Al-Anon meetings only use the Serenity Prayer. The principle is to close meetings with a spiritual moment.

How can we encourage participation in Alateen sponsorship (new and current) in light of a litigious society and growing number of sexual abuse cases?

Encouraging participation in Alateen sponsorship must start with good Sponsor training. Without training in the Area's safety and behavioral requirements, the new or current Sponsor does not understand what the role or responsibilities for the position include. Knowledge of these is important for the adults as well as the Alateens. Using two Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) at each meeting, and only certified Sponsors, reduces the risk of an incident. Insurance protection for Sponsors may increase the desirability of the position. Some Areas have shown a reduction in problems since the safety requirements came into being.

Is the "links of service" concept outdated and ineffective in our fellowship? How can we get information to and from the groups using more modern methods? How can we get our message to more people and utilize people willing to make shorter time commitments? What other approaches could we use to encourage more members to participate?

The links of service are working, but focus needs to be placed on them to be sure that they are effective and that members strengthen them.

As a whole, why is Al-Anon so anonymous? How can we better market Al-Anon to make the general public aware of what Al-Anon really is and is not?

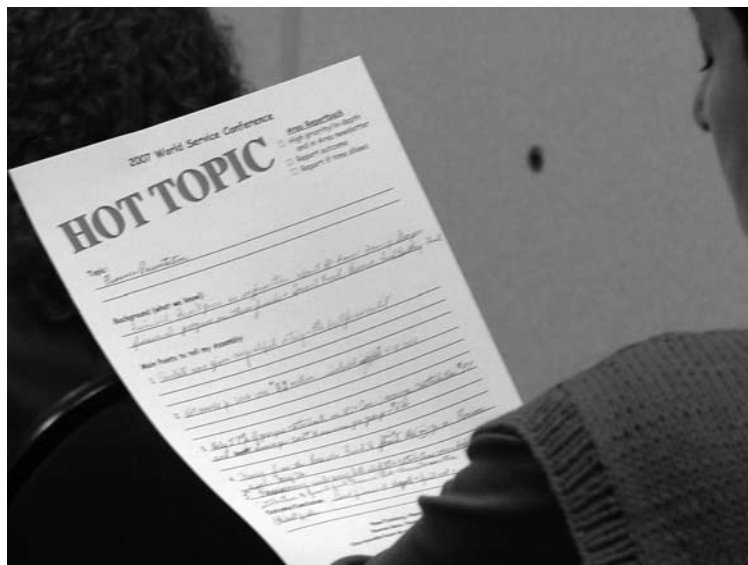
There are several misconceptions about anonymity and more education of members is needed at all levels.

What can we do to involve more of our younger members in service?

Involve young people by asking them what they can do, what they want to do, and then valuing that service. Invite them to lead activities that utilize their talents and energy.

Due to time constraints the following agenda items did not receive the attention they deserve. Any of these (or any part of the Chosen Agenda Items discussed here) would make ideal topics for discussion at district meetings, workshops, action committees, or Area Assemblies. Reports of such discussions would be welcome for inclusion in an expanded on-line version of *Area Highlights*.

- How can the Area Assembly bring enthusiasm and shared leadership to our action committees?
- In reference to the *Service Manual*, page 81, "Autonomy of Groups," why should districts and Areas not be allowed to remove groups from meeting lists if the groups are not following the Traditions and particularly Tradition Four, where their practices might affect Al-Anon Family Groups as a whole? Does the "Right of Decision" and the group conscience support each district and/or Area in deciding to make that change?
- How willing is the fellowship to allow current business/corporate trends to dictate the fellowship's future direction?
- How do we encourage our members to participate in sponsorship?
- How can we strengthen our structure by enhancing the position of Alternate GR?
- How do we prevent dilution of our program?
- How can Al-Anon cooperate better with A.A.?
- How can we bring more unity between Al-Anon and Alateen groups?
- Membership:
 - How can we address our declining membership and number of groups closing?
 - Why are our members coming into meetings during crisis and then leaving?
 - How do we get and retain new members?
 - How do we get the word out to the younger generation so that they are ready to give Al-Anon/Alateen a try? What can we do to make Al-Anon/Alateen more "sticky"?



SHARING OURSELVES

Delegates (Panel 45)

Susan R., Arkansas

I grew up in a family where principles of living were taught not just in words but in actions. My parents were, and still are, active in service to their church and community. They believe in volunteerism. They believe in giving back to those who have helped them. They believe in service to God and mankind. My four siblings all “got” that message; I did not. My attitude prior to coming into Al-Anon was, “What’s in it for me?” I was often asked to help with committees and group activities, and out of guilt I might reluctantly agree, but I was always looking for a payoff and a way out of the commitment.

The Al-Anon Family Groups showed me a new way of thinking. I went to my first Area Assembly when I was only three weeks in the program and I continued to go for the fellowship, but I had no understanding of or desire to serve. Then someone asked me to lead the prayer at a district luncheon, and it felt so good to give some little piece of myself to the program that was giving me so much. My Sponsor sponsored me in service as well as in recovery, and soon I began to grow into the kind of person my parents had modeled through their example.

I learned about boundaries through service work not to decline a reasonable request in Al-Anon service. When God has my plate full, I need to take care of myself by knowing what is reasonable. That’s the gift of discernment. When I set healthy limits, I have new energy for the tasks my Higher Power has set before me.

At last year’s Conference, we learned about shared leadership. I took this concept back to my Area and put it to use. I delegated parts of my report to other trusted servants and they came through with flying colors. The Area responded with a resounding request for more shared leadership, more participation, greater use of all our abundant resources. We are an enthusiastic group, full of energy and wonderful ideas to carry the message to those who still suffer.

As usual in my recovery, I first had to apply these ideas with my program family before I applied them in my home and workplace. In February my parents celebrated their 65th Wedding Anniversary. We children wanted to give them a party, but no one has a lot of free time. I prayed about it and knew it was my time to step up to the plate with family. That’s new thinking. I organized the party, but I delegated the work. I listed what we needed to prepare and left the rest in God’s hands. That created new energy for myself and others. Sure enough, my siblings and our children took care of everything, each choosing what he or she could do best. I did my part and let go of the outcome. God’s abundance was clearly evident in the success of our celebration!

Ellie L., Connecticut

I was told by a counseling professor many years ago that I have a simplistically logical mind. This could be good or bad. Logic tells me that if there is “new thinking,” there must also be “old thinking.”

I remember my old contradictory thinking: “No one loves me. Please, make me happy. What if disaster happens? I feel all alone...but it’s really not that bad. I’m Mrs. Atlas holding up the entire world!” Old energy? No energy—I had so little remaining energy from all that thinking that I could scarcely make it from the couch to the TV to change the soap opera channel—long before there were remotes! All of my energy was sucked up by those negative feelings that overwhelmed me. My outlook was grim. I never gave up hope, but I could see no way out of the box in which I felt confined.

After years of A.A. and Al-Anon family recovery, I am grateful that a very different person is standing here today. My outlook continues to expand daily, beyond the box. Any problems I think I have can be given to my Higher Power with the most amazing and often unexpected results. I don’t think nearly as much! I am energized because I no longer focus on anyone else’s opinions or actions. As my husband and I enter our retirement years, my abundant outlook can visualize a kaleidoscope of possibilities as we walk confidently with our Higher Powers toward a multi-colored sunset.

I am saddened as I see some Al-Anon members and groups stuck in murky old thinking. I’ve heard: “Lois said...so it can’t be changed. They’re up to something... Al-Anon is not like it used to be...” Such thinking stifles our energy to apply the Traditions and Concepts of Service abundantly in a rapidly changing world.

In Connecticut, after 20 years of discussions, 93 percent of the Assembly members voted to establish an Information Service Office/Literature Distribution Center. Thank you, Knowledge-Based Decision-Making! New thinking and shared leadership inspired us to develop a Sponsorship Seminar for personal, service, and Alateen Sponsors to help us sponsor more effectively.

When I let go of my expectations and find courage to accept the possibility of change, I gain serenity by experiencing God’s abundant outlook. By intentionally creating a culture of trust and developing new ways to benefit from the explosion of available electronic information, we can provide energy to propel Al-Anon into limitless directions.

With *new thinking* and feeling *new energy*, I liken Al-Anon’s *abundant outlook* to entering a house full of mirrors, each reflecting all the different ways Al-Anon can abundantly reach out to anyone, anywhere, who is affected by someone else’s drinking.

Cecilia S., Idaho

When I came to Al-Anon, I had only one way of thinking and that was “my thinking.” The first idea that came to me was “my truth” and I would rarely be open to other people’s thoughts or opinions. After all, I felt I had already come to my best thinking and I would doggedly stand by that even when more information was revealed to me.

By the time I came to Al-Anon, I was exhausted and full of despair—definitely unable to believe in the possibility of change. When I started going to meetings, the Al-Anon fellowship healed my soul on many different levels. I learned to speak “my truth,” but I also learned to listen to other people’s experience, strength, and hope. I became willing to consider new and different ideas. I became flexible. I became more of the person I wanted to be.

I remember when my outlook started to change. I had been going to Al-Anon for about three months. I came home after my Thursday meeting and was sitting in my apartment looking out of my living room window when it started to rain. I noticed a very small bird, probably a sparrow no bigger than two inches, just outside of my window. The bird seemed busy, but when it started to rain the large leaves on the tree collected water and the bird paused to drink from these large, cupped leaves. As the rain continued, the small sparrow got inside the leaf and took a bath. Pretty soon I could see the bird begin to flap its wings and purposely splash and play in its newly found birdbath. All of a sudden, I had this spiritual “ah ha” moment. It dawned on me that I had to go to Al-Anon meetings to learn what this little bird knew by instinct. This bird knew to take advantage of God’s gifts—it may not rain tomorrow, so take a drink of water today and if there is time, take a bath and play. The bird’s priorities were right, but mine after living with alcoholism were not.

Three months earlier, I had gone to my first Al-Anon meeting. I hated everything in my life. I didn’t think my boyfriend could stay sober. I hated my job and my apartment, but I felt stuck. What changed? Nothing had changed in my circumstances, everything was the same, but I no longer felt the same. I was getting glimpses of hope and happiness. I started focusing on what was good in my life instead of what I didn’t like. I gave thanks. I started taking care of myself instead of bearing down harder. I started to rely on God instead of people, places, and things. Today, because of God and the fellowship of Al-Anon, I do have *new thinking, new energy, and an abundant outlook* for my future.

Betsy C., Illinois South

When I came into this program, all I had was “stinkin’ thinkin’.” Al-Anon gave me new ways of thinking. First, I learned that it wasn’t my fault, I couldn’t cure nor could I control it. Those three Cs are the most difficult for me to accept. This new way of thinking also opened my eyes to my participation in the failure of two marriages. I learned that stinkin’ thinkin’ uses up all my energy. It’s no wonder I was tired and miserable all the time.

Early on, I went to a lot of different meetings. I was like a kid who was given just a taste of candy. I wanted more. I read all the Al-Anon material I could get my hands on. I wanted to understand this disease (if that’s really possible). Armed with information, understanding, and renewed energy, I began my journey of recovery. I learned to have compassion for the alcoholics in my life. Members told me that Al-Anon is a spiritual program, not a religious program, so I was able to use this new way of thinking to begin a real relationship with the God of my understanding.

I was in the program about six months when I got involved in service work. Service work is what got me busy, and I did get better. After my first Assembly, I was hooked. I was like a sponge at each Assembly, district meeting, convention, and “Recovery Day” that I went to or participated in. I soaked up the love, experience, strength, and hope from everyone I met.

When I became Delegate I was terrified. My Service Sponsor helped calm my fears and was there spiritually to hold my hand when I went to my first World Service Conference in Connecticut. Going to Stepping Stones was one of the most spiritual experiences of my life!

I am so blessed today because of this program. I have a loving relationship with my son and his family. I have three fabulous grandkids. Al-Anon opened my eyes to see that my mother wasn’t able to give me something that she never had herself. I was able to go to her, tell her that I loved her, and make amends to her without expectations.

The new and renewed energy that I get from this program is hard to describe, but it has changed my whole outlook on life in general. For me, Al-Anon is for life. I will continue to climb my recovery ladder and find happiness with every rung. On those rungs that are slippery or if I’m just feeling unsteady, I know members will always be there to steady the ladder and give me their hand in friendship, love, and courage.

Connie H., Iowa

Like many others in our program, by the time I finally came into Al-Anon to stay, I had given up thinking good thoughts about life, period. My thoughts were about how to survive, how to get by—basically how to live for just another day. I could not even conjure up new thoughts of how to do him in or how to finish him off. I used all my faithful old habits of trying to out-think him, out-smart him, out-talk him. The only outlook I had was the thought that, because of him, I had the life I had. Day in and day out I thought, “Here we go again, down the same road, around the same mountain, over the same issues, ending at the same place.” I was so wrapped up in my pain and anger I could not even envision a good outlook for my children.

I must say, my life has changed over the last 18-plus years. It definitely did not come with the same outcomes that I expected or planned. Changing how I think about life and what it has to give me is hard sometimes. Negative thoughts like to surface before positive thoughts and I just know the outcome is going to be the same-old-same-old. There is part of me that still wants to believe I know better, I am more logical, or I am just down-right accurate. But I have learned from some fantastic, loving “teachers” that if I put my energy and my thoughts toward excitement, adventure, and anticipation, I end up in places where I never dreamed I would be. I have adopted a theme for my term as Delegate, “Those who wander are not always lost,” and that thought has taken me to some great places. I have traveled roads not published on the map and I have ended up in some fantastic meetings with some very interesting and healthy people. If I had not opened up my mind to new thoughts, I would have never seen doors open and opportunities present themselves in my path.

My life now is overflowing. My friends are numerous and I am learning to love abundantly. I work daily at trying on new thinking and I try very hard to put my energy toward looking forward instead of backward. I will always be grateful to Al-Anon for helping me discover new ways of thinking, having more energy to live life, and changing my outlook to be open to all the abundant blessings life has to give me. Service work in Al-Anon has allowed me to find out who I am and what talents I have that are mine alone. I thank all of you and my family thanks you. Because of you, in our own ways, we all have been given a life worth living, a life full of *new thinking*, a life full of *new energy*, and an *abundant outlook*.

Clara E., Louisiana

It was a Friday night in late August 1979 when my husband left me standing in the doorway as he left with other men for a south Louisiana camp. That Friday night was significant, as I worked every other weekend. It was a time that we could have had together. Back then, I didn’t know how to identify feelings. I was extremely hurt. Later I realized I felt alone, abandoned, unloved, and unwanted. By reaching out to Al-Anon, I learned to listen and became aware that I did not have to be alone. That was the start of new thinking. My mind became open to new ideas and new ways of thinking. I developed a new perspective on life.

I learned to pray more sincerely, to pray for guidance and wisdom. It took several years for me to get out of denial and reach for this program. After arriving, I learned how this Twelve Step program works—by being honest, open-minded, and willing. As my thinking changed, so did my feelings, attitude, responsibility to my life, my God, and my happiness.

When I got honest, I came out of denial, slowly admitted my problems and sought help. When I became open-minded, I learned the symptoms of the disease called alcoholism. I learned the roles I had played, would need to change, and I gained understanding. When I became willing, I made lots of meetings, worked the Steps, and made changes in my life.

New thinking taught me to be still and listen, to give to God that which is His, and to give to Caesar that which is his. I could not stay in a marriage where I was unwanted and felt unloved. I kept my values and beliefs, deepened my spiritual life, and proceeded with a divorce to protect myself financially, physically, and emotionally. I, thereby, gained more peacefulness in my life. New thinking led to new energy, guiding me to take better care of myself and my future. New thinking led to new discoveries about myself and others.

New energy evolved from releasing the bitterness of the past. I no longer needed to carry my baggage. I asked for God’s will and direction in my life. New thinking emphasized to me that my Higher Power loves me and is as close as my invitation for my HP to be in my life. My Higher Power gives me energy. That energy provides a broader outlook on life.

My outlook can be tunnel vision, or can be through binoculars or a magnifying glass, or open and widespread—a vision. My outlook is wider when I focus on the present and not the clutter. Abundance makes me think of a cornucopia or a land of plenty. An *abundant outlook* can be standing on a high hill looking across miles of land.

By nurturing myself, I can have an open mind with new thinking, new ideas, new energy for living a new life—with an abundant outlook not only for me, but also for Al-Anon Family Groups.

Reen R., Maine

As I reflected on this year's Conference theme, I was reminded of my recovery journey in Al-Anon. Alcoholism had worn me down bit by bit. I hated the person I had become—always frightened and hiding behind a smile. As I attended meetings, I came to see my personal situation in a new light, and that a Higher Power was gently leading me. I had to replace my old thinking by applying the program's principles in my personal, family, and work life. As my thinking began to change, I began to pick up on the enthusiasm of those involved in Al-Anon service. My very small world was expanding as I was "taken for a ride" by these more seasoned members. Even though I didn't understand a lot of the discussions, I could feel the excitement, energy, and enthusiasm.

My first year at Conference was overwhelming. Instead of heeding the many suggestions offered to me, I stubbornly had to do it my way, working long hours instead of slowing down and resting up before Conference. I arrived at Conference exhausted and sick. When I retired to my room that evening, barely able to think, I read through the 17 cards and letters I had received and cried. I knew then that I would be okay and that my Area trusted me to do the best that I could. By year two, I began to feel more confident and ready to really participate. I had been hearing a lot about Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) and was excited to see it in action. I learned that KBDM was actually used by our cofounders and this helped me put this new learning into perspective. I began to really think about my role and my responsibility as Delegate. I witnessed the importance of full participation during that Conference and the rewards of reasoning things out. I also *loved* those really cool "Hot Topic" sheets for taking notes and getting organized. I took home KBDM and other new ideas and I began to witness participation at our Assembly in ways I hadn't seen before. The old "us and them" divisions were beginning to soften.

Today, I do feel blessed to be a trusted servant for worldwide Al-Anon. I will continue to bring enthusiasm and energy to my service work and to recognize the abundant, tangible, and intangible resources that are readily available to each member whenever I allow the hand of Al-Anon to reach out and let it begin with me.

Donna E-H., Missouri

World Service Conference themes excite me when I challenge myself to dive into each word. "New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook" is a theme that encapsulates my story of recovery and service. Each word provides an opportunity to "think" and be led to thoughts that have yet to be explored.

Years ago the idea of new thinking may have had a positive ring, but change was beyond my grasp. I was enveloped in someone else's alcoholism and had lost the ability to climb out of that darkness. My outlook lacked sparkle. My attitude toward life needed a shift. Although new energy would have made a difference in those days, I was too exhausted to embrace anything new. What I had was an abundant measure of anger and despair.

It was getting acquainted with the three Legacies that provided me with new thinking, new energy, and a changed outlook. The idea of working the Steps and eventually incorporating the Traditions and Concepts of Service into my life required willingness and a new kind of thinking. For once, I took my own inventory and even survived a spiritual awakening! Placing principles above personalities was a new way to think. Participating for the sake of harmony and leaving sick payoffs behind provided me with a new type of energy—an empowerment. The three Legacies have lent to the reality of an abundant outlook as they have chipped away at my black-and-white thinking, and cleared the way for my outlook toward life to improve.

In Missouri we have shifted our thinking and are using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process in our business meetings. The open-mindedness our members have shown by embracing this change has required new thinking. I see fewer motions and more data collection and communication. As a result of the communication, goals and projects have been born. This is exciting. The excitement creates new energy. The outcome is one of confidence, which leads to a plentiful outlook.

Perhaps for the first time, team members are utilizing every source of information available in order to accomplish their goals. Web sites, e-mail, previous but not discarded *Conference Summaries*, and Al-Anon's history add to our belief in the attainable. Look how much we have! Imagine the things we can accomplish.

As a leader, it is crucial for me to think in new ways, demonstrate my renewed energy, and exhibit an abundant outlook. We are not lacking! I believe an abundance of talent, resources, and energy lies within our fellowship. What a wonderful fellowship it is!

My service as World Service Conference Delegate will remain a special chapter in my life's story.

Dorothy B., Nebraska

I grew up on a small, rural Nebraska farm. Our closest neighbors were a mile away. We were pretty much self-sufficient in that we raised our own food. I grew up the oldest of five children. I was expected to help my mother care for my younger siblings, do housework and chores—like caring for the animals and in the garden. I guess that is where I learned the idea of caring for others.

Later, I became a nurse to continue my caring responsibility! Even in that profession, attitudes have changed. Where we used to do everything for patients, now we expect them to do as much as possible for themselves.

My caring also continued into my married life, as I married an alcoholic. Due to a series of problems, he got sober and started going to Alcoholics Anonymous and I started to go to Al-Anon. What an eye-opener! I learned that it was not my responsibility to always care for someone else—that I needed to take care of myself. When God said to love your neighbor as yourself, that meant to me that I needed to love myself and put myself on the top of my list instead of the bottom. That was new thinking for me. When I tried it, it worked. My spouse got sober without me and I had a lot more energy to do the things I was supposed to do.

After we had been in the program for a while, my husband started going to the A.A. Assembly. He suggested I go along because there was something for Al-Anon as well. I went and was hooked on service. I know that my greatest growing experience has been in service. With much encouragement from our past Delegates and listening to my Higher Power, I became willing to run as Delegate. I decided that if they thought I was capable, I must be. Being Delegate has kept me busy a lot of the time and out of my husband's business. Being a nurse, it has been hard for me this last year and a half, because my husband was diagnosed with lung cancer. My program has taught me that I can be there when he wants me to be, and allow him the dignity of giving him a choice. For now, abundant outlook seems a bit bleak, but I know that my program friends will help me deal with whatever I am facing.

Tina B., Nevada

As a new Delegate, I was greeted with warmth and support from many wonderful Al-Anon members. I was told that this service position is an incredible experience and filled with lots of growth opportunities. That has all been true so far. But there is one truth I wasn't told – the longer I participate in service, the faster three years go by!

Our theme, “New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook,” describes for me the path of recovery from this family disease of alcoholism. When I arrived at the doors of Al-Anon, my thinking was anything but clear. I was consumed with trying to find the key to turn the screws in *his* head. Through working the Steps, I learned to let go of what I never really had control of in the first place. I learned how to think in healthy ways. I learned to be mentally quiet long enough to allow new ideas and surprisingly better solutions to come in.

Like so many of us, I dragged myself to Al-Anon years ago, exhausted and hopeless. I was greeted with smiles and enthusiasm and best of all – hope. You let me borrow your energy and hope until I could find my own. I have always had a love for our Al-Anon literature as it has touched my soul on so many occasions. Today, I have renewed energy for our literature. I have had the privilege to work in our CAL process. Working on our new book about coping with grief and loss has increased my respect and admiration for members who risk sharing their pain and their recovery so that we all can grow. Every member who has shared their experience, strength, and hope with me in our books and *The Forum* has helped to energize my recovery and I am grateful.

Having an abundant outlook has been the most challenging part of recovery. I have spent so many years being wary, on guard, and preparing for the next inevitable crisis. I am challenged to let go of fear and trust that more than just my needs will be met—that I can do much more than merely survive. I have found that I need to do more than just let go of the fear, I need to truly live in gratitude—not just gratitude for what I have already received, but an expectation of more amazing gifts to be grateful for.

As I have been practicing living in gratitude, I would like to suggest a new word to Webster's Dictionary—fore-gratitude. When I was working on forgiveness, I looked the word up in the dictionary. It said, “To give before it is requested or deserved.” So, as an attempt to live a life with an abundant outlook, I am letting go of my fears and making choices that are based in “fore-gratitude,” fully anticipating that more blessings and more love are available to me before I request them and certainly before I deserve them.

Sheila K., Newfoundland/Labrador

I've heard it said many times, and I've said it myself: Al-Anon is a program about dealing with life on life's terms, as much as it is about dealing with alcoholism. Years ago, Al-Anon helped me deal with my husband's alcoholism. Today, Al-Anon is helping me to deal with life without him. When my husband passed away suddenly almost a year ago, I was compelled to face changes that seemed overwhelming at times. I was out of my comfort zone and I didn't know how to get back in. Although I've spoken on Steps Two and Three in meetings over the years, I found it difficult to turn my will and life over to a Higher Power, who in my mind had treated me so badly. I learned that I had a lot of work to do on Step Three. The words to that poem, "Footsteps in the Sand," express exactly the way I felt when my husband died. It was then that only one set of footprints were in the sand and I was carried for the next few months. Gradually, as I began to heal, my Higher Power set me on my feet so that today I can honor my commitment to my Area and complete my three-year term.

The healing power of my Higher Power was working through the program and the fellowship. I began to function and think again as a whole person. The loving friends that I have in the fellowship of Al-Anon took my hand and walked beside me. It was Al-Anon that taught me that "I Am" and it was Al-Anon that guided me for the past 38 years.

I have been involved in service for most of my Al-Anon years and there are no words to adequately describe what it has done for me. New thinking not only applies to me in a personal way, but also in how I can reach out to those who are still in need. In reaching out I take my mind off myself and bring a broader perspective of hope to the families of alcoholics who are still suffering. New energy may be a bit more challenging, but I am confident that it will come in time.

As for me and my outlook, I am fortified with the Al-Anon program, the Al-Anon fellowship, my service experience, and good friends. In the midst of my own grief, I think about the spouse or the family trying to cope while living with an alcoholic and what I can do to help. It takes me out of my feelings of "self." It's the medicine I need to gather the strength and courage to go on.

In closing, let me just say that today, when I wonder if I am able to go it alone, I realize I don't have to. *You* were there when I struggled with my husband's drinking and *you* are there as I struggle to cope with his passing, and I am grateful.

Lida K., New Hampshire

In the beginning, it was painful to share personal experiences in a meeting. Just to identify feelings and understand what was going on was difficult. It was scary to commit to chairing a meeting, or to become Secretary or Treasurer. The program told me that I didn't have to do it perfectly and it was "One Day at a Time." Also, plans A and B could be in place in case I was unavailable. This definitely was new thinking, which gave me new energy when I accomplished serving in these positions. This gave me an abundant outlook versus the "can't do" attitude I previously had. Holding the position of Group Representative was exciting—learning about the program and about me. It was excruciating, though, when I had to report something at my home group. Reading the job description and carrying out all the suggested duties meant I needed to say something at every meeting. By the end of the term, I had more understanding of the program, definitely more self-esteem, plus *new thinking*, *new energy*, and an *abundant outlook*.

My district was not active, so I saw the need and was voted in as District Representative. I learned how to run a meeting in an allotted time frame and get through the agenda. What a tense session this was for me, yet I was really excited that I did it. Using new thinking and actually doing it gave me and the District new energy and an abundant outlook—meaning that we were united and had the attitude that we could do anything. What a growth experience! We held a district meeting every month, held workshops, made calendars that made money for the Area, and won the attendance banner repeatedly. It was an exhilarating experience!

With my Higher Power, I accepted other service positions, chaired workshops, spoke at anniversaries and conventions, performed the duties of Alternate Delegate, Literature Coordinator, and now Delegate. It is a constant challenge for me to keep moving forward, trying to give back some of what Al-Anon has given me. Thank you to those who have been there to tell me I'm okay just the way I am. It has been such a growth experience to do this position and it has left me with new thinking, new energy, and an abundant outlook.

Gayle McN., New Mexico

Incorporating “New Thinking – New Energy – Abundant Outlook” into my talk is quite easy because it very succinctly sums up what I was sorely lacking when I came to Al-Anon and how this program has profoundly changed my life.

When I walked into these rooms, I thought that most of my problems were your fault. I was physically and emotionally tired because of excessive worry, anger, and resentment. I was spiritually wanting, feeling that my life was lacking when I compared myself to others. Of course, I didn’t really know then what I needed, only that something was very wrong and through the grace of a Higher Power, I stayed long enough to find help.

New thinking came first, from the awareness that alcoholism was a family disease and that it had permeated every facet of my life. Second, by acceptance that I, like the drinker, had been affected and many of my difficulties and poor choices were the result of this disease. Third, through the action of attending meetings, working the Steps, and doing service work. I began to change the thinking and behaviors that once plagued my life and sent me to places that I would not choose to go again.

New energy has come from the burden of this disease being lifted through understanding, love, and forgiveness of self, as well as others. Today, I am able to live with a newfound freedom and lightness of spirit that this program affords us.

Abundant outlook is what I believe in today...that there is more than enough for all of us. We don’t always get what we want, but we get what we need. By trying to live by the three Legacies, I have more than I ever could have hoped for. And, I have the wonder of a Higher Power that is not only a reality in my life, but a true partner.

It’s been an honor and a privilege to serve as a Delegate. How could I ever have imagined that I would celebrate my 15th Al-Anon birthday at the World Service Conference! I have tremendous gratitude for the gifts of this experience and for all of you who breathe life into this program on a daily basis, by sharing your experience, strength, and hope. I am grateful from the bottom of my heart for being a part of this amazing voyage!

Joan L., New York South

When I arrived at the doors of Al-Anon at the age of 25, I was spiritually bankrupt, physically ill, and mentally depleted. I was just a mess! With the help and encouragement of healthy Al-Anon meetings, a caring Sponsor, and service, you taught me a new way to live each moment of every day for the rest of my life—one day at a time.

You taught me how to change my negative thoughts to positive thoughts and actions, so that I would not continue feeling doom and gloom! In order to do that, I was told constantly to keep the focus on myself.

I do not remember where or when it happened, but I soon found new energy along with my new way of thinking. I began to take care of myself and reach out for help from my Sponsor and my friends in Al-Anon. I thank God for all who came before me and led the way!

Today, new energy arrives each time I attend an Al-Anon meeting, Assembly, AWSC meeting, convention, and most especially the World Service Conference. New energy comes each time I reach out to a newcomer or another Al-Anon/Alateen member in need. New energy comes each time I see the message being carried into schools and hospitals and institutions. As was told to me many 24 hours ago, I must give away what has been given to me and I do that with the daily practice of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service. In my meetings, it is a piece of cake; at home, it takes a lot of love and patience; on the job, a lot of tolerance and understanding; and on the highway—well, I use whatever I can so that I do not lose my dignity and grace!

Today, I have a daily “gratitude attack” when I think of how far Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups have come and just how many families have been touched all over the world. Lois loved to say, “What I cannot do alone, we can do together.” Let us all continue to keep the dream alive that was started some 56 years ago by our pioneers who did not have all the abundance of tools that we have today.

So my thinking has changed, my energy is at a high, and my outlook is abundant! I will be forever grateful that I married an alcoholic named Joe who took me to my very first Al-Anon meeting and we were able to grow together. I thank my Area for trusting me with this responsibility of Delegate, for it has made me more aware of the passion I have for Al-Anon and Alateen and my purpose for living.

Sharon C., Ontario North

I came into this program looking for help for my family and friends because their lives were unmanageable. I tried so hard to make their lives happy so that I would be happy and we could be happy together. I could not get to the point of being happy and I became exhausted and felt that, if this is life, I was not fitting into it.

I believe my Higher Power knew the only way to get me into the Al-Anon program was for me to think I was in the position of helping someone else. I did the research, made the calls, and brought a friend to this program. This is exactly what she needed! I stayed in Al-Anon because there was something I needed in this program and the people in my life were not getting better. The Al-Anon members told me to keep coming back and I would get answers.

Then, I came across a story in *Courage to Change*, on page 74, about the birds who do what they do best. I understood the story to read that I needed to get out of the way of my family and friends. My *new thinking* was starting to take place, with a little righteousness attached. I also found a cartoon with two birds sitting in a tree looking at each other and a person under the tree with their mouth open catching snowflakes. I thought, "There I am. That's me, catching snowflakes," the martyr I was! Then I had a dream and in this dream there I was sitting in the tree doing what I can do best to my family and friends. That was the day I started to see myself.

Everything I had read in Al-Anon was different now. I was seeing this program as it applied to me. Now, by minding my own business, I have received *new energy*.

Seeing my life from a different perspective, I gained an *abundant outlook* on life. The Al-Anon members embraced me and I went into service in this wonderful program. In my journey through service I learned a better way to communicate and carried this to my own family. I learned I can love my family whether this disease is active or not. I learned my family members and friends have their own Higher Power and it is not me. I learned focusing on me is a full-time job and I learned, if I keep an open mind, I will hear what I need to hear.

Carmen T.-M., Puerto Rico

I found it hard to think, let alone write about the theme of the 2007 Conference. Although, I had written a few key words and phrases, I waited until past the deadline to sit down and write. Once more, I let the fear of not doing it right, of not saying the correct things, paralyze me. I have lived my life fearing change, dreading new ways to do things, wishing that things didn't change, procrastinating as if things, chores, responsibilities, etc., would go away if I didn't do something, if I didn't move. I wanted everything to stay the same. If I didn't grow-up, someone else would take care of me, think for me, do things for me.

I came new to the 2005 WSC with my old fears—fear of authority and fear of change. I came away realizing that the body of the Conference was much bigger than its individual members—some were crazy, control freaks, some knew what we were doing, and some knew what needed to be done. However, I had concern for the future of Al-Anon locally and abroad, knowing that structures of service in other countries were looking at what we do and how we do it. What I saw was, more or less, a rigid body that was attempting to move, but something was not letting it. This seemed so familiar—it was the same thing I was seeing in myself. I had a sense of despair. I was not trusting by letting go and letting God do the job.

The introduction of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making concept at the 2006 World Service Conference represented an influx of new thinking about the way the Conference made decisions. Also, the effective use of conflict resolution, for me, brought new energy to the Conference. These new ways of thinking have helped me in how I resolve conflict and make decisions at the personal and service levels. I felt we were applying the concept of "reasoning things out with someone else" in a new way. This new thinking, I believe, helped in finding ways to see that abundant resources are there for Al-Anon and for me—I just needed to ask for the serenity to seek it, and the wisdom to see it when it comes my way. So the idea that "a relaxed mind is a creative mind" now had a new meaning for me.

Lois K., Saskatchewan

Like many of you, I thought that, when my husband first reached out for help, he was the only one who needed it. Wow, did I ever have a lot to learn! It never occurred to me that the drinking was our problem. I thought, we married too young, we have too many children; we don't have enough money; we have lots of problems but I sure didn't recognize what was at the root of them. And, after all, I was holding everything together by going out to work to pay the bills (so my husband would have more money to drink). I did believe in prayer and getting results when I pray and so I was not surprised that I got an answer in the form of this fellowship.

Something that I experienced personally perfectly illustrates my new thinking. I am sure you have experienced a meeting becoming stale, especially if it is a very small group week after week. Maybe it was the fact that I had been pondering the Conference theme, but about two months ago I came to an "aha" about our small meeting. We were talking about wishing new members would come, but all of a sudden I took my own inventory and realized that I was showing up at two minutes to 8:00. There was no literature set out, no tea on, and no one prepared to chair. As a result, the meeting would start 10 - 15 minutes late. So we really were *not* ready for new members. Now I am certainly not suggesting that my new thinking is the reason, because I know that at least one other member had reached the same thinking at about the same time, but we started getting there early, setting out literature, and having someone ready to chair *and* would you believe we now have six to eight members regularly! We are having some terrific meetings! And I was talking to another member who shared how much it has enriched her personal program when she started taking more responsibility for the meetings. We have a new energy!

For many years now I have embraced the idea that what I think about is what I will get. So I choose not to focus on things like: the membership is down, the groups can't afford..., there isn't enough money, there aren't enough members doing service. I believe that if I focus on what we do have, we will get more of it. Instead of focusing on the members who aren't there, I focus on and appreciate the ones who are. I enjoy the service that is there. That is part of what abundant outlook means to me today. As a longtime member, I realized the importance of "regular giving" on my part. There was a day when I couldn't put more than a quarter in the basket. That is not the case today. My outlook on abundance has changed and so have my contributions to this program. Outsiders cannot financially support our fellowship so, of course, it must come from us. I was pondering an "outside" concept recently that there is a principle in our culture that is embraced by many, and that is "that we should give one-tenth to the source of our spiritual support." What would happen if all members gave one-tenth? Is that an abundant outlook?

This theme, this fellowship, and all of you have contributed to my *new thinking*, *new energy*, and *abundant outlook*, and I thank you!

Susan L., South Carolina

I walked into Al-Anon defeated and alone. I stayed because I needed this program for me. Gradually, I heard the message: I was not alone, I could change, I deserved to have a life, I was worthy to receive love, and able to love others without losing myself. The most significant revelation was the understanding of the words "we" and "our" in the Steps and Traditions. I was responsible, but not alone. The "we" is my Higher Power, Sponsor, home group, district, Area, and now the worldwide fellowship.

I became involved in service after a few months in the program. I heard the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service read at meetings. I learned about group conscience—to listen and accept the group conscience decisions. In various service positions, I learned more about me, what worked and what needed to change—those defects of character. By working with others, I felt empowered to be open to new ideas, to take risks, and even to change my mind if needed—*new thinking* for me.

New energy came with service. Each home group meeting, district meeting, Assembly, and Regional Service Seminar fostered my development. While Area Alateen Coordinator, we worked through the Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements. I was grateful for the enthusiasm of the Alateen Sponsors, the experience of the previous Alateen Coordinators, and the Alateens' input on the committee. We worked together and the Requirements were passed. This experience brought about a unification of our Area. During my time as Delegate, our Area has experienced *new energy*. I see it in the leadership of a powerful AWSC and a confident Area Chairman. Our Area is one of action and we are moving forward. Our Assemblies are exciting and more are involved in the action committees. It's fun!

Abundant outlook is the unlimited opportunity for growth. Today, I know the strength and hope of my Higher Power expressed in the spiritual principles of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service, because I have experienced them through service. My life has been restored. I have new energy and enthusiasm. I am excited about what I do. The abundant outlook is my unlimited potential for personal growth. It is the desire to develop relationships that inspire others to help me carry the message of recovery. I am not alone, I am a part of the "we" of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen. Thank you for this life-altering experience.

Cherri N., South Dakota

When I first came into the Al-Anon program, new thinking wasn't in my vocabulary. I didn't think there was anything wrong with my "thinker." I see today how it worked overtime, and would get me into trouble once in a while. I had been taught not to trust anyone, so I didn't talk much either. In fact, people in general scared me! I kept you at arms length or farther if I could. But, you had something I was looking for, though I didn't know yet what it was. That kept me coming back to find out.

The *new thinking* started when the student and the teacher came together. Looking back, I have found that the only thing that I had to do differently in my life was everything. Talking out loud was the biggest! It was suggested I ignore the slogan "Think" for awhile. I also heard you say, "Run with the winners and you will grow too." I have found that to be true. Today, I hang out with a different crowd. Not only in everyday life, but in my own head too! At times, when I'm thinking I know what's best for me, I still hear, "How's that working for you?" And it reminds me that I'm still not in charge, God is.

New energy has come from saying "yes" when the "thinker" is saying "no." It comes from saying "please" in the mornings and "thank you" at night. New energy has come from getting into service. It comes when I talk to others, go to Assemblies, attend an RSS, and even when I've been a tour guide. It comes from seeing a newcomer's eyes light up when they get the "ah ha's."

Then comes the *abundant outlook*. Sometimes I've thought that God has given me much more than I can handle. Then I see that I get what I need when I need it. I see that I don't have to do anything alone anymore. When I look at the bigger picture, I've been shown that the world is wide open. From a kid of 15, who didn't think she'd make it to 18, or that the world was any different once I got past the end of the driveway, to getting into service and being elected Delegate for my Area, puts me in awe. When I think about where I was then, to where I am today, I am so grateful I got on for the ride. It truly is a journey!

Joyce B., Utah

This year's World Service Conference theme describes many of my experiences as the Utah Panel 45 Delegate. At the five Regional Delegates meetings I've attended and the last three World Service Conferences, I've been exposed to new ideas and thinking. As a brand new Delegate, I learned that one of my roles was to be forward-looking and to help anticipate future needs of worldwide Al-Anon. I've been able to participate in discussions and decisions that will affect Al-Anon in the future. Two of those decisions included e-CAL and electronic meetings.

I've found there is a positive energy among Al-Anon's trusted servants. I've been taught to "stick with the winners," and I believe many of those winners are past, current, and future leaders who care about the future of Al-Anon. Just as I find energy in my Al-Anon meeting and talking with my Sponsor and program friends, I look forward to Area meetings, regional meetings, and especially the World Service Conference for the same reason. There was tremendous energy last year at the 55th birthday celebration in Virginia Beach. We were introduced to a lady who traveled by bus from Canada to visit the World Service Office and attend the celebration. The "parade of countries" where there are Al-Anon meetings was awesome. I saw that Al-Anon is truly a worldwide organization. I'm looking forward to Pittsburgh in 2008 to participate in the "parade of countries," to see old friends, and to meet new friends from all over the world. I know I'll also gain new ideas and new energy as a result of my attendance.

My husband and I are self-employed. We've learned over the years to say, "We have enough," whenever we feel discouraged. I believe Al-Anon will have enough money to carry the message throughout the world. I believe there will be enough new ideas to attract and help future generations of families and friends of alcoholics. I believe Al-Anon will have enough members actively involved in service to continue to be a worldwide fellowship that helps those of us who have been affected by someone else's drinking. I'm willing to "Let It Begin with Me!" I am grateful for this opportunity to serve and share.

Outgoing Board of Trustees and Executive Committee Members

Tricia B., Wyoming

I began this process of new thinking by looking for a healthier way of living for my family and myself. I knew how to survive, but not how to live. My Higher Power helped by moving me next door to a member of the Al-Anon Family Groups in 1980. I started a new way of thinking by applying the basic tools that I found in Al-Anon. I was pretty scared of what was going to happen in my life and how I was going to get through it. My Higher Power knew I needed a new way of thinking, new tools, and new energy to move forward in my life.

The new energy I found in Al-Anon Family Groups is a calming energy. This was a much more user-friendly energy instead of the excitable, out-of-control energy that comes with chaos. In a group meeting, everyone can feel this new energy where the members who are using the three Legacies keep the spirituality of the program alive. This new energy has revitalized me, especially when I use the tools of the program in my daily life. I am so very glad to be a part of this recovery program and to see the spirituality of our program growing every year.

When a physical disability started to take over my life, I knew some major job changes had to occur. I got some special tests done to find out what type of work I would be able to do. I thought they would come up with a few choices. Instead they came up with many choices. I was so disappointed because I did not want a lot of choices. I felt out of control and overwhelmed. The instructor looked at me and said, "Some people after these tests end up with only one choice, you should be grateful you have so many to choose from." That set me back a bit and, after a while with the use of the tools of recovery, I was able to understand what he meant. I had choices, lots of choices! When I let my Higher Power lead me, amazing opportunities happened. Things I only dreamt about doing—I am doing! If I had stayed with my narrow, controlled thinking about making choices, I would be on a very different journey.

My family was pretty small when I came into recovery. Today, I have an ever-expanding family all over the world. Just thinking of the countries and the recovery that have begun during the past three years, I get goose bumps. Looking at Al-Anon as a whole, the vision is opening up from an inclusive member point of view to the good of Al-Anon Family Groups as a whole—around the world and beyond. Yes, our outlook can be beyond traditional boundaries by members willing to take it with them on their journey into outer space and sharing their experience, strength, and hope with others.

Remember, what you think becomes words, words become actions, and actions become your outlook on life. How are you "comin' alive"?

Colleen R., North Central Regional Trustee

My name is Colleen. Thank you for inviting me to speak as an outgoing Conference member. Growing up in a large family, there was little room for independent thinking or decision-making. Our lives were highly organized and controlled by strict religious parents. Our mandatory family time included eating popcorn for supper and watching Ed Sullivan on Sunday nights. My parents valued educating my three brothers who all went to college and are very successful. But the value for the girls was just getting married and living happily ever after; of which none of us was successful. I was on a constant collision course with my parents.

I fell in love at 17, got pregnant, and was hustled off to a home for unwed mothers. The struggle to keep my son fostered deep resentments within my family. I became bitter from the imposed turmoil in my life. Against my parents' wishes, I was married during my senior year in high school and kept my baby.

My husband's drinking and lackadaisical attitudes outraged me. My behavior was out of control and my thinking bizarre. When this alcoholic marriage ended, I was homeless. I lost custody of my two sons because of my bizarre behavior and mental instability.

Feeling worthless, hopeless, and out of control, a second marriage enmeshed with alcoholism, sent me by ambulance to a mental health unit where I was introduced to Al-Anon. I went to meetings and found a Sponsor. At her gentle suggestion, I attended beginner meetings for a year.

The ensuing years of recovery were difficult and the ideas of powerlessness and trying to find the middle ground of managing my life seemed an impossible undertaking. At times, I wondered if I could change at all. Gradual changes did occur as I began to work the Steps. I began serving the group, sharing at meetings, and was foolishly elected group Treasurer.

Home life improved as my behavior and thinking changed. However, the drinking often caused the craziness to remain in high gear. We mutually agreed to end the marriage when my oldest son came to live with us. Working the program and my Al-Anon friends helped to ease the pain of another failed marriage. Yet, for the first time in my life, I felt free and energized as I began another chapter in recovery and my life.

In 1991, I married a member of A.A. who is celebrating 25 years of sobriety this year. In 1999, he suffered a massive stroke resulting in a brain injury, and overnight I became a caregiver. From a life of carefree responsibility to full responsibility of another human being seemed too much. What I know for sure is that it is important to be spiritually prepared for the unexpected because life happens. Step Three helped me renew my commitment to this marriage and its struggles. It has been a bittersweet journey. Since I have been here this week, my husband fell into

my china hutch, he forgot to let my dogs in one night, and unbeknown to me he started to remodel my kitchen. This man is the love of my life, but I am thinking I need to get home fast.

Living with someone who has a brain injury challenges new thinking and new energy. The program and my Al-Anon friends have been an encouragement and lifeline in the long process of growing up. My Sponsor introduced me to the realm of the third Legacy as a natural progression in recovery. In serving the fellowship, my Higher Power has revealed talents and skills that were hidden under a heap of self-reliance, rebellion, and distorted thinking. God has provided the service opportunities for me to work at creative thinking, leadership, communication, and has touched my heart with love and passion for Al-Anon.

My life today is full. My 87-year-old parents (who just celebrated 65 years of marriage) love me; Al-Anon gave them back a daughter. I enjoy relationships with my children; Al-Anon gave them back a mother. My grandchildren love me; Al-Anon taught me how to be lovable. I have been a college student pulling a 4.0 average and just recently was offered a permanent position with the U.S. Forest Service—I wonder if life gets any better.

Serving on the Board of Trustees has been an honor and a privilege. I often think of how someone like me could have been chosen for this particular assignment at this particular time, and then I think how lucky I am to have been chosen at all. With the closing of this Conference, I will go home to serve Al-Anon in my community. I believe that the depth of gratitude for the transformation of my life manifests itself in my willingness to serve. Serving and being useful to others is a gift given by the grace of God and I will always remain thankful for the abundant opportunities He continues to send my way.

Cecelia L., Executive Committee Chairperson

When I first came into Al-Anon, angry, confused, and resentful, I did not know that I was looking for new thinking. I only knew I needed some change in my life because my husband's sobriety was not giving me the happiness I was so sure it would. But I did get new thinking—what we call “a change in attitude”—the knowledge that I had choices and had always had choices that I just could not see before. I could choose to stop looking at myself as a victim of circumstances and choose to start thinking of myself as responsible for my own life and my own happiness. Imagine that! This new thinking seems so simplistic, but I started to understand how my thinking had been affected by the disease of alcoholism.

This new thinking could not help but give me new energy as I began to cast off the baggage of the past. The program was helping me to lighten the load of my mind and fill me with new energy to get on with my life—to look forward with enthusiasm, not backward with resentment. Of course that led me to another awareness—the abundant resources in my life. Many had always been there and now and then were appreciated—a loving family, good friends. But now my resources were so much more plentiful—people who truly understood me, did not judge me, and were always there to offer experience, strength, and hope. But most of all, I now had a program to guide me through all of my life. So began a new journey with the tools of the program as my abundant resources.

As I grew in recovery, I got involved in service and that again demanded new thinking. Now my consideration was, “What is good for Al-Anon as a whole?” With this new commitment, new energy was generated and I learned that once I truly committed to something, what always showed up were all the resources I needed to get the job done.

It is incredible where my journey has brought me—from Group Representative of my first home group, to Delegate, to Chairman of the Board of Al-Anon Family Groups, and to my current position as Chairman of the Executive Committee.

As I finish my 12th year at the World Service Conference, I am excited by the energy and enthusiasm that has been created as we all—WSO staff, Trustees, Delegates, and Executive Committee—work collaboratively for the good of the whole. I have learned that there is great power in giving voice to an idea and here we have given voice to many new ideas and new ways of thinking. I see us having the courage to move beyond what we are, to what we can become. We will always stay true to our core values but we have moved into the big thinking necessary to fulfill the vision we all have for our program—that when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen will always be there.

International Representatives

Andreas H., Germany

New thinking. I nearly killed my wife. This was my turning point. It made me think. I thought that something must be terribly wrong with me—not only with my wife. I was a pacifist, a conscientious objector, and only a few millimeters saved me from becoming a murderer! New thinking made me look for help for myself—not for my wife. She was already with A.A.

Several years later, I discovered that new technology provided me with opportunities for new thinking in Al-Anon. This was when I found access to the first on-line Al-Anon meeting. New thinking: Al-Anon working in a face-to-face environment and not only during an hour or two per day or week, but around the clock, 24x7x365. Meeting structures and officers mimicked as close to face-to-face meetings as possible.

New energy. Recognizing that I am not alone with my mad experiences living with an alcoholic provided me with relief, and with new energy! I still remember my first Al-Anon meeting as if it were yesterday. I opened the door of a meeting room in the city of Cologne, Germany. Between 30 and 40 people—a few men, but mostly women—welcomed me. I suddenly found they were all as mad as I was—or as normal as I was. Normal? Hiding the bottles so that my wife couldn't find them. I couldn't find them either! And I was young—at least much younger than now, where I steadily get closer to generation Alzheimer, one day at a time.

This experience of no longer feeling desperately alone provided me with unexpected energy. Only three weeks later, I decided not to jump in and drive back home from a business Conference to save my wife from driving her grandfather home drunk. I now had energy to change my life and my behaviors—energy which I needed afterwards when my wife drove home drunk and used the autobahn exit instead of the entry to get onto it. Her grandfather was the only one killed by the frontal crash. I needed all my energy to survive the following weeks and months, one day at a time.

Only a couple of months later, I attended my first annual A.A./Al-Anon convention. Again, I was overwhelmed by the nearly 5,000 people in the Conference Centre in Berlin, Germany. All the attendees had similar experiences and all understood my mad stories.

The energy received from my experiences with Al-Anon on the Internet was another push for my personal recovery. It helped me to publish the first personal German Al-Anon homepage, and finding a way to convince the Germany GSO to take over ownership of this Web site. It helped me to participate in and support the growth of the first German-speaking Al-Anon on-line meeting; a new source of Al-Anon energy at a fingertip and around the clock.

All this energy supported me on my way through several service positions at the GSO. Currently, I am in my third year as Chairman of the Board, and this service provides me with several challenging and exciting experiences.

Abundant resources—abundant outlook. To realize that Al-Anon comprises a true worldwide fellowship providing me with abundant resources to support my recovery wherever and

whenever I am on this shrinking planet makes me ever grateful. Through the Internet and on-line meetings I was able to attend, I made contact with members around the globe. This was the foundation for my becoming an IAGSM Delegate, doing service not only locally or in the GSO but also on a worldwide basis. IAGSM meetings in Virginia Beach and Sao Paulo, Brazil, connected me with Al-Anon

members in service from more than 20 structures all speaking the language of Al-Anon. I knew that with these abundant resources I had a safety net around the world—a safety net which works even in countries where I do not speak the local language. In Gothenburg, Sweden, I attended a Swedish-speaking meeting, and when I entered the meeting room, I immediately felt at home. Even though I did not understand many of the words, I sensed that it was the language of Al-Anon.

The safety net and the energy supported me to get to where I am today. I am still alive. So is my wife. I love her abundantly. I wouldn't want to miss a single hour of all the good times I had with my wife. And I have an abundant hope for an even better future—together with my wife!

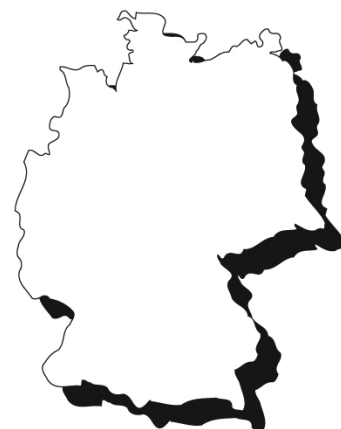
Where are we with Al-Anon and Alateen in Germany? This year we celebrate 40 years of Al-Anon in Germany. In January our first group celebrated their birthday meeting in Mülheim/Ruhr. I have brought with me today, a red paper heart with the slogan “Nur für heute – just for today” written on it, as a little memento from our fellowship in Germany.

In May, our A.A./Al-Anon convention will have another birthday meeting to celebrate the anniversary, and I am looking forward to welcoming three members of the WSO staff to this meeting.

In February, we held our 20th annual three-day Conference in Essen under the theme, “With trust into the future.” Delegates representing 36 Areas and 800 groups nearly 50 of them Alateen attended along with 15 members of the Policy Committee. Over the past couple of years, our Conference has become more “relaxed,” with less tension between Delegates and Trustees. To help us get there, we utilized tools from earlier World Service Conferences. For a few years, we began the Conference with a “Clearing the Air” session. Last year, the Trustees followed a WSC idea and stayed in regular phone contact throughout the year with the Delegates.

At this time we do not have a Public Outreach Committee or an Alateen Committee as no successors have volunteered. On the other hand, our Internet Committee, is now back in operation.

The situation with Alateen is still very challenging. Several groups just consist of Sponsors waiting for kids to arrive—we might even have more active Sponsors than Alateen members.



The Literature Committee will focus later this year on refreshing our translation of your *Service Manual*. Our current version is based on the 1998 edition of your *Manual*.

We have around 800 groups in Germany including nearly 50 Alateen groups. Since the introduction on our homepage, group data can be maintained with input using the Internet. Updates are finally released by the GSO. These updates to our group records have become much more up-to-date than they were in the past.

As discussed at last year's IAGSM, we will invite European GSOs to a meeting in Germany later this year to explore better

ways of working closer together within our IAGSM zone to more regularly exchange our experiences and to provide mutual support beyond the national borders. It is an abundant outlook for possibilities in our future, to grow our links across geographical borders within this truly worldwide fellowship. I am very grateful that I can be part of this experience. I am also grateful that I can be here representing our structure in Germany, and to exchange with all of you experience, strength, and hope for our service work in Al-Anon and Alateen.

Lois A., Australia

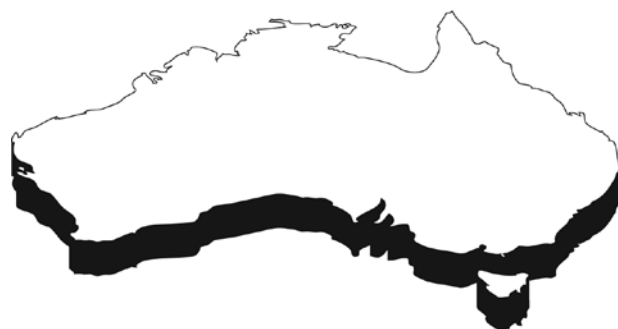
I grew up in a happy, loving, and supportive family and naturally assumed that I would have the same happy life with the man I loved, as my parents and grandparents had experienced before me. I had no experience of alcoholism so did not recognize the symptoms of this illness in the man I fell in love with and who became my husband.

I knew that he had some problems, a failed marriage, many debts, a series of different jobs, no car (this had been smashed when he hit several parked cars while drunk), but I thought that when we were married and he had me to love him and help him fix up his problems, he wouldn't need to drink anymore and we would be happy. What a naïve little "babe in the woods" I was!

Life became a roller coaster of highs and lows as I tried to fix my husband's life. When he was not drinking, he was a gentle, sensitive, funny, loving man, but when he drank, he was an angry, abusive, aggressive, crazy person. I became confused about which person was the real one. One minute I loved him, the next I hated him—life became a constant battlefield. I became a very unhappy person, completely obsessed with stopping his drinking, full of despair, with very little hope for our future together. My confidence and self-esteem were shattered and I was so ashamed of our situation I could not confide in anybody. Anger and anxiety were my constant feelings, my energy was very low and my outlook was very far removed from "abundant." My outlook was doom-and-gloom in abundance!

New thinking is what I found when I came to Al-Anon. I learned that my husband was sick, not a bad person. That was such a relief. I was very relieved as this also meant that I wasn't such a bad person either. I had thought there was something seriously wrong with me that I would put up with all the chaos that went with the drinking. In Al-Anon meetings I found it was OK to love an alcoholic. I also learned that, while I could not cure or control his sickness, there was much I could do to change my thinking and my behavior to make both our lives much happier. Gradually I realized my happiness could come from within me and not be dependent on whether my husband was drinking or not. My outlook seemed much more abundant in good things.

The members at my Al-Anon meetings were laughing and enjoying life and that's what I wanted, so I was happy to follow their example. They said if I wanted what they had, it was necessary to get to lots of meetings and stick close to Al-Anon people between the meetings. I was given phone numbers to call



members at home. One lovely member, who became my Sponsor, called me often to see how I was and to invite me to go with her to meetings or to social outings and later, to help her with service tasks.

My beautiful son is one of the greatest gifts that Al-Anon has given me because I thought before I came that the drinking was going to prevent us ever having a family. My son turns 29 this year and is happy with his partner and two little sons and a step-daughter. The joys of being a parent and grandparent have been possible with Al-Anon's help. Unfortunately my husband was unable to achieve lasting sobriety and died in 2002. Because of Al-Anon, and later Alateen in our home, our son was able to have a loving relationship with his father.

I was very fortunate to live in a large city, Melbourne, where there were many meetings to choose from, and to come to Al-Anon at a time when the fellowship was growing fast. My development as an Al-Anon member has been parallel in time to the development of the General Service Structure of Al-Anon in Australia. When I came to Al-Anon in 1975, planning had begun to establish an Australian General Service Office and an annual Australian Service Conference. Since the early 1950s, there had been groups registered with the World Service Office and these groups had been linked by Central Service offices and committees in each state capital since the 1960s.

In 1975, an Al-Anon representative attended the World Service Conference as an observer to get some help in establishing this new national structure. This member just happened to be my first Sponsor and a member of my home group in Oakleigh, Melbourne, Australia. Who would have thought that 32 years later I would be following her footsteps and attending the World Service Conference as the General Secretary of the Australian General Service Office?

This was a time when new thinking was needed to enable

Al-Anon in Australia to move ahead and improve its service structure to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing number of groups. Attendance at the World Service Conference, visits to the World Service Office, and observing the service structure working in Canada and the UK and Eire enabled our representative to bring back information which helped our early service members set up the General Service structure we have today, which is based closely on the model provided by the World Service Conference structure. Our "Australian Service Handbook" was developed along the lines of the "World Service Handbook," while including appropriate adaptations to suit our unique Australian conditions.

The first Australian Service Conference was held in 1977 and has been held in May in Melbourne each year since. Later that same year, the Australian General Service Office was opened in Melbourne, taking over the task of reprinting Conference Approved Literature in Australia from the state Central Service offices. The General Service Board and Executive Committee were formed in 1978 and Al-Anon was incorporated in 1980 as a non-profit organization known as Al-Anon Family Groups (Australia) Pty Ltd.

The Central Service committees were phased out and Areas and districts established. Each Area established an Information Service Office either in a state capitol city or a larger regional town. It was an exciting and challenging time to be involved in developing the new structure. I began in service at the group level and then spent time as Area Treasurer, Delegate, Chairman, and District Representative. I served at the General Service Office as Conference Committee Chairman for three years in the mid-1980s, then returned to Area positions. In 2000, I was appointed as a member of the Board and later took over as General Secretary.

The number of groups, which had reached over 600 in the late 1980s, had fallen to 540 in 1999. In 2007 we have around 440 groups. Hopefully the decline has slowed, but the small numbers in some of our Areas is a concern. We have nine Areas ranging in size from 12 groups to 110 groups with very large variations in land size and population density. The size of our groups varies greatly, some having only two or three members, many eight to ten members, and some with 15, 20, or more members. As with the general population, the Al-Anon population is clustered in a few big cities around the coast, mostly in the east and south of the continent. Long distances and small numbers of members in some Areas have resulted in some difficulties in communication, but they have also resulted in some creative innovations to solve the isolation problems. The age of electronic communication has aided us very much in Australia.

The General Service Board is composed of eight experienced service members drawn from within a 200 km radius of Melbourne, with two of these being Sustaining Trustees, the General

Secretary and the Editor of our national magazine, *Austra-Link*. The Executive Committee consists of the Chairmen of the GSO standing committees, the two Sustaining Trustees, the Treasurer of the Board and, at present, one other volunteer. The Board meets five times during the year and the Executive Committee meets monthly.

The nine Area Delegates attend our Conference with the General Service Board members (Trustees), Chairmen of the Alateen, Archives, Conference, Public Information, and Literature Committees, and members of the Australian GSO Administrative staff. Our Conference has 24 members and is held over three days. The agenda includes reports from GSO members, items of general concern or interest to the whole fellowship, and each Area Delegate is able to address the Conference briefly on happenings in their Area for the year.

Since 1980, Australia has been involved in the International Al-Anon General Services Meetings (IAGSM) contributing to, and drawing strength from, the worldwide fellowship. I have attended two IAGSMs. Our Delegates to the IAGSM have always brought back very useful information which we have used to strengthen and further develop our service structure. New thinking and inspiration from around the world has resulted in our Conference discussing ideas, which previously have been dismissed as impossible, e.g., Board members coming from places other than a 200 km radius of Melbourne, purchasing office space to avoid large rental costs, greater use of electronic communication, more visits to Areas by GSO personnel. Allocation of more Conference time and Board meeting time for forward planning has been implemented as a result of ideas gained from the worldwide fellowship.

Each year we avidly read the *Conference Summary* to draw as much as we can from the shared experience of the World Service Conference. A visit to Australia by the Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees in 2005 helped improve our knowledge of this Conference immensely. But it is always first-hand experience that is the most effective learning tool. I hope that attending this 2007 World Service Conference will help us in Australia to apply new thinking and will inspire new energy in our quest to more effectively use Al-Anon's resources to carry the message of hope to anyone, anywhere in Australia (or beyond). We were very excited to be invited recently by the WSO to assist in improving Al-Anon's visibility in the professional community in the Asia Pacific region. Innumerable possibilities abound!

I am very grateful to the longtime members who encouraged me to be involved in service to Al-Anon. My fellow service members have always given me tremendous support and have believed much more than I did in my abilities to perform my many roles. It is an honor and a privilege to serve this wonderful fellowship.

Nydia Julia M., Mexico

For the second time, God has given me the opportunity to share my personal experiences within Al-Anon with you and the growth of our structure in Mexico.

Many years ago, during the first meetings of Al-Anon that I attended, it was a great relief to find out that alcoholism is not a sin, but an illness. With this I could let go of the anger and hate towards my alcoholic husband. I have changed these feelings for understanding, forgiveness, and love.

However, I didn't have peace with myself. I desperately wanted my husband to stop drinking, because the daily alcohol consumption damaged him so much. On one occasion I asked God to send my husband an accident as a message—not for my husband to die, but for him to react and scare himself so that he would stop drinking. But God in his great wisdom sent me the accident. I was in my garden with my youngest child on the swing and a stray bullet hit my skull. Since then, I value my life more! This was the second opportunity that God gave me to enjoy my life and to change what I don't like about myself. In other words, to be the best person I can be and have no regrets about the past, to walk beside my husband, whom I really love, and to see my four dear children who were only three, six, nine, and 12 years old, grow up. Finally, what I wanted so badly happened, my husband stopped drinking and started going to A.A. It was really a miracle!

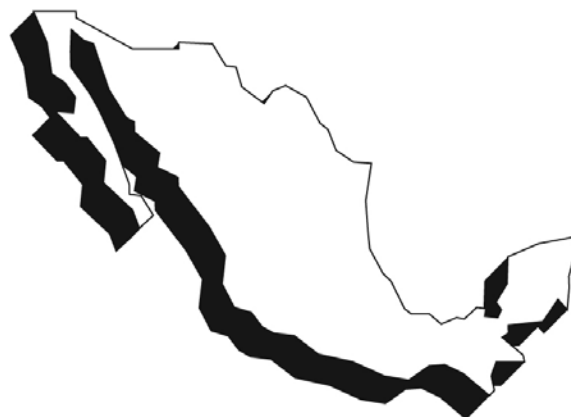
I was so grateful for so many blessings and started to serve Al-Anon as a Group Representative. Now, I have the greatest responsibility in my country. I never believed I would be the head of this spiritual organization in Mexico, but I have done it, leaving myself in the hands of God because He helps us and gives us all that we need.

Nowadays Mexico has a solid structure, with more than 3,300 groups and 36 Areas. In July 2006, a Regional Service Seminar was successfully realized in Guadalajara, Jalisco. More than 2,500 persons attended the Seminar. The theme was: "Regional Service Seminar Equals Responsibility, Serenity, and Service."

The Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee for the Real Property Management feel very grateful to our Higher Power because the project: "Purchase of the House" has become a reality. In October 2006, we started the paperwork to acquire property, of which we have paid 69 percent of its value, thereby fulfilling the requirement of the bank to obtain a mortgage for the remaining part.

In February 2007, we held our National Service Assembly Conference in peace and harmony:

- All the Areas were represented by 36 Delegates.
- We had two WSO staff members as special guests. They presented a workshop on the following: What the WSO does and its relationship to the GSO; What their jobs are within WSO; Web site information for Public Information and the members; and remembering Lois W. and Anne B. This gave us a better understanding of Al-Anon worldwide and widened our horizons.
- Three Regional Trustees were elected.



- The finances were approved for our special project to continue to visit three Areas in our country each year, chosen by drawing, so that more members know more about the finances in the GSO. For example: What the contributions of the groups are for and who manages them? This year, we will visit Coahuila, Querétaro, and Tlaxcala.
- We held two workshops. The first one was "The Five Warranties and the Fundamental Pearls" which reflected on the primary purpose of Al-Anon. The other workshop was "Ana Nimity and the Myth Busters" intended to increase awareness and break the myths about anonymity.
- In April 2006 I had the opportunity to attend the 46th World Service Conference and the 13th International Al-Anon General Services Meeting in October 2006. They were two great gifts that my Higher Power gave me. In our Assembly Conference we summarized our most relevant experiences. I reported that Finland, UK & Eire and Mexico competed to host the next IAGSM in 2008. Although we did not win, we received a warm applause, which we will always carry in our hearts. We keep the hope and faith that we will host this event some day.
- After the close of our 34th National Service Assembly Conference all the Conference members—Delegates, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, Executive Committee for Real Property Management, special guests, and GSO staff—attended the opening of our new General Service Office, to celebrate the hope that it will be a house full of love and the spirit of Al-Anon. The A.A. Executive Director shared some lovely words with us and gave us a beautiful painting of Lois W. with a red ribbon and an inscribed plate.

I thank God for all his blessings for our structure and for myself because I know that with faith we can climb mountains to reach our goals. I also would like to thank the Board of Trustees and Conference Committee of the WSO for letting me participate in this special Conference. Also I thank the Board of Trustees of the GSO for having faith in me to be the Representative of our country.

Finally, I wish that our spiritual program will fill each and every one of you with blessings and that the benefits will continue from generation-to-generation.

Spiritual Speakers

Cherri N., Panel 45, South Dakota

I am my father's daughter. I look like him, I act like him, and I've been known to cuss like him. I was also born on Father's Day. And when I was young, I wanted to grow up to be just like him too.

I grew up the second of four kids, in a house where both of my folks drank. When I was two years old, I ended up in the hospital with bronchitis and pneumonia. They gave me a shot of penicillin and my heart quit. As you can see, they were able to bring me back. But I lived with that guilt until after I found you. There were times as a kid that I would ask why I didn't die. I would be told that I was such a rotten little kid that God didn't want me. He wanted them to put up with me for awhile. So, I grew up believing there was a God, but I wasn't worth the bother.

I took on trying to be perfect—then maybe they'd all like me. I'd do my chores and other things without being asked, so that I wouldn't get yelled at either. Though it didn't matter how hard I tried to do things right, they always picked out what was wrong.

I was in the fourth grade when I remember the first fight my folks had. Dad didn't like what Mom had fixed for dinner, and told her so. She said "You'll eat it or wear it!" He chose to wear it. The yelling, fighting, drinking, and places we lived got much worse after that. We went from a really nice brick house, to a house that had running water to the kitchen sink only, a wood-burning stove for heat, and an outdoor biffy—all in five years.

I felt like I raised my younger sister and brother until I left home at 15 because my folks were either out drinking or if they were home, they were usually drunk. My folks always put me in charge of the younger ones when they were gone, because I could make them mind, one way or the other. See, I could catch them and my older sister couldn't. At night I would watch out the window, looking for the camper lights to come down the road. Then run to bed and pretend to be asleep. Sometimes I'd wish they'd wreck, and then feel guilty for thinking it.

Growing up, there were times when I had thoughts of suicide, but figured I'd mess it up. I had thoughts of running away, but where would I go? And what if Dad caught me? All I really knew was that, if this was all life had to offer, I didn't want any part of it.

I learned early on not to cry or show my feelings, because I didn't want to be called a wimp or a cry-baby. And I had to be tough, if I was going to hang out with my dad. He used to let me go to work with him. I also learned not to trust, love, or talk to anyone.

Even after coming into this program, I've done some things that made others think I was nuts. Like phoning and entering a rodeo in the bull-riding event—not once, but two years in a row. I used to also own a motorcycle until one day I thought I'd take it out to see if I could do 100 mph on the Interstate. I did it, then sold it shortly afterward because I knew I would do it again. I did these things not to prove anything to anyone else except myself. I had to prove to myself that I was still tough.

I never believed my mom when she would tell me she loved me because she was always drunk when she said it. And Dad never said it. The next morning they'd line us up and want to know what they'd done the night before. I would think, if you

don't know what you did, then you don't remember what you said either.

We had a lady doing her internship as a counselor at our school. She came into one of my classes to do a speech on living and dying. Toward the end of class she handed out a sheet with four questions on it. The ones I remember are, "Give a reason for living, and give a reason for dying." In real tiny letters under "Give a reason for dying," I wrote, "What is there to live for?" This same lady came and got me that afternoon, and took me to the office. She wanted to know what was going on and why I wrote what I did. I didn't have a clue who she was, so there was no way I was going to talk to her. She kept me until the end of the day and as I was leaving she said I could come talk to her anytime, that she wouldn't tell anyone what I said. I don't know that I believed her, but I stored that comment.

My older sister and I were in this program where we stayed after school one night a week and the teachers would help us with our homework. The teachers were giving us all a party one week and asked if we could stay later. When we got home that night, we really got yelled at. My folks were now saying they had told us no—we couldn't stay later. They took us separately into their room to talk more. I don't remember what was said to me, but I smart-mouthed back. My dad told me that if I didn't shut my damn mouth, he'd cram my teeth to the back of my throat. I believed him and that scared me, because he had never said anything like that to me before. I see today, this is where I started hitting my bottom.

At lunch the next day at school, I saw this counselor lady come in. So I went to talk to her. She told me that I had choices, though she didn't say what they were. She left the room, and when she returned she asked if I had decided what I wanted to do. I said no. She asked if I wanted her to decide for me. I said sure, still not knowing what the choices were. She said okay, would you come with me? She didn't tell me where we were going, until we got to the police station. Now, I'm thinking, I have just done something really wrong and I'm sure I'm in big trouble. That's the only time I thought you ever went there. All I did was tell her what had happened the night before and I hope Dad didn't find out. She told the officer what I had told her, because I wasn't saying anything else. And I didn't know him either. The officer called my mom at work and asked if they'd stop by when she got off. Dad took her to work and picked her up afterward. The officers talked with my folks and ended up taking my dad to a detox center. He was there for two weeks. When he came home I was really scared of him, where I hadn't been that afraid of him before. I was also waiting for the other boot to drop. A couple days after he came home, I got to go stay at this counselor lady's house for a couple weeks, until things settled down. What I learned while I was at her house was that not everyone lived like we did. She had three kids of her own, and we had fun together. I really didn't know what it felt like to have fun and really laugh. Shortly after I went back home a lady from social services came to see me at school. I don't remember what she asked or what I said, but by that evening I was in a foster home. I was there for two months. During this time, I had written a letter to my cousin, and she showed my aunt. I know my aunt made some calls, because shortly after that my

case worker asked my folks, if they would sign papers for me to come live in South Dakota with my aunt and uncle. They signed with saying, "Let her do whatever she wants."

I called my mom shortly after moving and she told me that I shouldn't call anymore. My dad had told them that I didn't exist in their family and if my little brother or sister ever tried to pull the same stuff I just did, they would go to court and fight to keep them. Once again, I'm not worth it. By now, I'm telling myself that I really don't care about my folks and could care less if I ever saw them again.

My aunt made me go the last two weeks of school, after missing the last two months. I didn't understand that! During those two weeks, though, I met another girl in one of my classes. We got to talking about our lives and the drinking. She asked me if I'd like to go to an Alateen meeting with her. I really didn't know what they did there, but I went because I wanted to know why my folks drank. I didn't talk much there either, but started learning that my folks had a disease. That they weren't drinking because they wanted to—it was because they had to. It didn't matter what I did or didn't do, how good or bad I was, they were still going to drink. The guilty feelings started going away, because I was starting to understand. Then when I got old enough, it was suggested that I go to Al-Anon meetings.

About five years after I left home, my mom packed up the other kids and left too. During these five years I still wrote letters, even though I didn't hear anything back. You had taught me to act as if, to clean my side of the street, and to never give up hope of my folks getting sober.

One weekend I went to another state for an Al-Anon workshop. I met a lady there who looked tough, yet I could see she had a soft place in her heart. I knew that I was tough. I wanted to know if I had a soft place in my heart too. A couple months later she became my Sponsor. She was the first person that I took the walls down to let in. I learned about trust and love from her, because her actions followed her words. She didn't always tell me what I wanted to hear, but what I needed to hear.

She made a suggestion at a Conference one time, that I go up to someone I didn't know and have a conversation. That was one of the scariest and hardest things I've been asked to do in this program. But, I did it and I'm still here! When I go to any functions today, I really try to talk to someone I don't know, because I know it's good for me, even though I would still rather blend into the woodwork, and not say anything.

She also encouraged me to get into service work. When I did that, I started learning more about this program and how it works. And lots more about me! She had been my Sponsor for five or six years when she passed away. What I had also learned was that I can't do this program by myself, so, I got another Sponsor.

I still had hopes that my folks would get sober. My mom and the other kids were living about an hour away from me. One night my mom and her friend got picked up for a DUI. She wasn't driving but, she did go to treatment and has been sober since—she told me I could say that.

After my mom left my dad, he started writing to me. We wrote back and forth for a long time. Then there was this long time span where I didn't hear from him. I knew that he had moved, but wasn't real sure where. My gut was telling me I needed to go down there and see if I could find him. He was in Colorado.

I wanted to know that he was all right. I thought about this for a couple weeks and it didn't go away. So, I talked to my Sponsor. What I heard was: if it was that strong on my heart, maybe I should go. I had learned in this program that my dad was one of God's kids too. I didn't know if this would work or not, but I prayed all the way there, asking God to please let me see my dad as He sees him. When I found him, he was riding his bicycle into town from where he was living. He was picking up cans and whatever out of the ditch, to take to the recycle place so he could get some money to buy more beer. You know, he drank the whole time I was there, but with God's help, I was able to see past it. I got to see my dad for the person he really was. It was the best weekend I had had with him since I was a little kid. We talked about everything, from cooking to cars. You could say we made our amends with each other. Dad told me that he knew he was an alcoholic, but that he was too far gone for help. I didn't understand that comment, but wasn't going to give up hope either. There were two things I wanted to do before I left to come back home. So, that morning when I went to leave, Dad rode down to the gate with me in case it was locked. After I drove through, Dad got out to close it. I got out too and walked up to him and asked if I could have a hug. He gave me one like he had given me a million of them. And while I had a hold of him, I said, "I love you, Dad." He replied, "I love you too, kid." And I used to think God wasn't there for me! I got to hear those words because I didn't give up hope, like you taught me. I cried most of the way home, because now I'm going to get to have a relationship with my dad again. Well, about a month to the day later, I got a phone call. My dad had had a heart attack and passed away. After I got past being mad at God for taking him, I was able to say thank you for the weekend that I did get to have with my dad. Today I believe that God set that up, and I am grateful.

Some of the things that I've learned since coming to Al-Anon are: I'm still not in charge, God is. Everyone has a direct line to God and it's not through me. I've learned that it's okay to cry, to laugh, and to have fun. I don't have to be tough anymore, I can ask for help. Today I can talk and ask questions if I don't understand, and not feel stupid for asking. All I have to do today is my best; I don't have to be perfect.

My favorite page in the *One Day at a Time* is page 100. It talks about the roses and the thorns. I love roses and love to smell them, but I also need to be poked once in a while to get my attention. This reminds me that life isn't always rosy, but how I choose to deal with it is what counts. A friend told me once, that if I see a need, then I am responsible. I don't always like hearing stuff like that, but I am also starting to understand what it means.

The last three years have really been a journey that I wouldn't trade for the world! The things I've learned, the things I've done, and the people I've met. You know, as a kid who would never say anything to anyone, and didn't want to, to a lady who knows at least one person or more in every state and province and then some, it puts me in awe when I think about it. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would be here. I am also thankful today that I had parents who drank.

I have made some really cool friends here. And I hope that our paths will cross again in the future. I thank you for asking me to be one of your speakers. It has truly been an honor and a privilege.

Connie H., Panel 45, Iowa

One of the things I ask myself regularly is, “How did I get here?” I was not raised in an alcoholic home. Neither my parents nor my in-laws ever abused alcohol. They were all very religious, God-fearing people. How did I get here? Then I realize, I may have not been raised in an alcoholic home, but I grew up in an alcoholic home, my husband’s and my home. As my first Sponsor told me, “None of us planned to end up with this disease, but somehow we got here.”

I grew up in a mid-size Iowa town with one brother and one sister. My parents were hard-working, devout Christians who believed your honor was your word and your work ethic was who you were. If you said you would do something, you did it, no excuses. If you committed to do a job, you stayed with it until it was finished, even if it finished you.

My father struggled to keep his business afloat and often needed to be gone from home for days at a time. My mother was the bookkeeper and manager of the family business until finances required her to take a full-time job out of the home. She is a very independent, strong woman who always told me I could be whatever I wanted to be. Yet I would see her give up her identity as soon as my father came home. She then allowed him to make all the decisions and choices. I told myself as I was growing up that if I ever married, I would never marry a man who was not home nightly. I also would never allow a man to make me weak and indecisive. It was not until many years later, in Al-Anon, that I realized that my mother worshiped my father. It never was an issue of who the boss was or who won or lost, it was a statement of respect. I still struggle to learn this lesson.

As I grew up I never really felt I had a voice, a choice, or a vision for where my life was headed. I knew that life required having a job and that was about all I had planned for my future. I did not venture far from home, still have not! I was a follower, not a leader. I had two close friends throughout my teen years. One had a very strong personality and the other was a follower just like me. I used to change my views and beliefs to match theirs. Every exciting thing, every adventure, was not done by my imagination but by my choice to hang on to someone else’s shirttails. I did not believe there was one original thought in my head.

When I met my future husband it was just an exchange of one strong personality for another. Now I began to follow him instead of my friend. I was attracted to the excitement I felt when I was with him. He did things spontaneously and with less care or restraint than I could. He was fun! He also had grown up in a very Christian home so God, church, and proper living were what I expected for our future together.

Because I was so afraid of setting a purpose for my own life, I wanted to make certain I had someone’s life to live. I became pregnant right out of high school. In order to alleviate the pain and embarrassment we put on our parents, getting married was an obligation. It was a marriage made in haste and necessity. I thought that marriage would guarantee freedom and adventure. There were no thoughts of pain, suffering, hate, deceit, resentment, anger, or infidelity. Only sweet love!

Almost immediately alcoholism came into our lives. We did not call it alcoholism. At the beginning it only looked like good

times, great friends, and excitement. Little did I realize that this disease can affect anyone’s life, no matter how “religious,” good, or proper one is. It knows no boundaries.

We partied regularly. Our little “fantasy cottage” home was a hangout for all our friends. Drinking and the things that go with it were always in our home. Our daughter came into this world during a “regular” weekend fight. My poor parents were called to come take me to the hospital and my dad went looking for my husband. I couldn’t even tell them where to start looking. I was too embarrassed to share that he was probably in a bar or drinking in some other town. The possibility of him being with another woman was even a reality. I was scared and angry and I hated the life God had given me. What had I done to deserve any of this hardship?

Our lives spiraled out of control. If you had stepped into our home, you would have noticed it immediately—but we didn’t. Alcoholism hides its face behind anger, yelling, pain, and abuse. We went through all of those things and more and still did not know we were living with something we could not manage.

There are several pages in our book *From Survival to Recovery* that talk about appearing extremely mature and serious about life, but in reality we lack confidence and feel driven.

I became obsessed with working. After all, if I could not control him at least I could be in control at work. I took on the twelve-hour jobs working all day and all night. Someone had to be responsible, in charge, doing the ‘right’ thing. When life happens and we are not equipped with the proper tools, we often make choices that seem rational to us. That is what I did. I had not grown up in a home of rage. I had not grown up in a home of abuse, neglect, or pain. As our literature discusses, when we struggle to change others, we ourselves become exhausted, angry, and frustrated. I was extremely frustrated! Anger was my friend and the rush of adrenaline that I got allowed me to accomplish long hours at work without exhaustion. Of course, by the time I got home I was burned out. I had no time for family life. I cleaned a house, but did not nurture a home.

Since both of us had grown up in homes that had God at the center, the life we were living was so off-kilter. I truly believe that both of us knew things were not right, but neither of us knew how to fix the problem or even what the difficulty was.

Family beliefs can sometimes lock me into a world of guilt, shame, expectations, and responsibility. I had made my bed, as my father would say, and I now had to live with it. There was no turning back, no escape, no relief—this was life.

Years go by and here I was just living day-to-day. Divorce was not an option. We had both grown to hate each other so much that releasing our partner from the pain would be like giving in and they would win. We were not about to let that happen.

I began to put myself on a pedestal, so much better than he was. I worked, I came home at night, I paid the bills... I also ignored our daughter, tore down my husband’s self-esteem, and lied to family and friends. Of course, all those things were necessary according to me.

Somewhere along the line I decided we needed another child. After all, our daughter was getting older and someday she would leave home. Then I would be left with just my husband. I knew my husband had always wanted a large family. This knowledge was ammunition to me. If I could hold the power of sex and

children over his head, surely he would give up the drinking life and settle down. A compromise was offered; stay sober for one year and I will grant you the favor of having another child. God had saved us once by giving us a daughter, he would save us again. God knew that we did not need another male person on this earth like my husband! So of course, our second child would be a girl also. See, I was even beginning to know what God wanted! We started off on the year of sobriety. Less than six months later, I was pregnant again and he was drunk again. I often have wondered how that happened.

Life went on. Neither one of us was willing to change. Our children regularly were witnesses to a life filled with destruction. Never once did I take the time to realize the example I was setting for these two precious little girls. Never once did I realize how our children looked to us for guidance, security, peace, and love—only to see our distorted faces raging in hatred and retaliation. Never once did I realize how I was helping to distort the image of marriage, commitment, and relationships. It was only me against him.

By the time our second daughter was born, my husband had basically become unemployed. Oh, he provided for our family sporadically, buying and selling whatever he could to bring in a few groceries here and there. Our children never starved, but luckily we were blessed to have both of our parents around to rescue our children for weekend visits. During the time with their grandparents, they learned about God's love. They sure were not learning about love at home.

But, without my help, guidance, or interference, God had already started his mending of our dying family. By the time the city police finally stepped in and helped stop our family from spiraling any further into disaster, our oldest daughter had been in Alateen for almost two years. A friend of hers had noticed the chaos in our family and had shared with our daughter that there was a place for her to get some peace and serenity. Our daughter started attending Alateen meetings each Wednesday night and she began to get recovery. I would love to say that we were right by her side, seeking help and supporting her, but that would just be a lie. We did not. Either my husband or I would take her to the meeting place, drop her off, come back an hour later, and pick her up. Our daughter learned to "live and let live" with us. She stopped struggling to understand our illness and started learning to take care of herself and her sister. She attended Alateen functions, sharing her story and just living life. We continued to fight.

My husband's final drunk-driving arrest sent me reeling. He would be in jail for several nights and I did not know how to react. My healthy, recovering daughter held me in her arms as I cried and prayed. I did not know where we were headed but her words helped me to calm down. She shared her program with me that night by telling me to just go to bed and we would work things out tomorrow. She told me that her dad was safe for the night. She shared that no immediate decision was necessary and in the light of the next day we, together with my youngest daughter, would make whatever decisions needed to be made. The world was not ending and we would survive. God had touched our lives one more time, without my input.

Recovery finally came into our lives. My husband found his Higher Power sitting in jail and searched out treatment. Of

course, I did not think I needed any help. As soon as he recovered, all would be fine with the world. Once again, I did not look at the damage I had done to our children and our marriage.

A little less than year after he started out-patient treatment, I began to attend meetings. At first I was not too excited to be going to Al-Anon. I did not like people and I did not want them to like me. It is easier to stay mad and frustrated if you don't let people love you. My pride kept me going to meetings. I was not going to let anyone call me a quitter. Slowly I began to learn how to communicate without hateful words and actions. I began to learn how to be social, out in the world, without causing a scene or embarrassing my family. My husband and I began the slow, slow process of loving each other again.

As soon as she reached 18, our oldest daughter stopped going to Alateen. She had a hard time adjusting to our recovery efforts. She had watched us tear each other apart for so many years, she did not believe we actually were trying to work at saving our marriage. When she left for college, she wiped us from her mind and we did not have any contact with her for more than six months. One day she called us to come get her. We found out she had quit school and had been living with an abusive boyfriend. She knew she needed to come home and had reached out to us. How much earlier in her life she learned to stop the pain and suffering than I did. Alateen had taught her how to break the cycle.

Our youngest daughter started Alateen as soon as she was a teenager. She had gone with us to Assemblies, Conferences, and other program activities. By the time she was a teenager she had watched us straighten up our lives and she was excited to be part of it also. She continued into Al-Anon and was even involved in service work for a short time.

My curiosity got me interested in group service work. The Group Representative for the Saturday night meeting I attended did not like traveling to the district meetings. She used to share that not much happened at these meetings and most of the information was only for those people who were interested in the World Service Office. It really was not for recovery, it was just business stuff. I was still in my questioning mode—well I still am, but maybe not quite as negatively! Anyway, I could not understand why an organization like Al-Anon would have business meetings if they weren't necessary for something. So, the next time discussion about a district meeting was brought up in the group, I volunteered to travel to attend. From the moment I walked into the meeting I was hooked. I don't know if it was the discussions, the controversy, or just the idea that I could 'work' in Al-Anon. I began to attend the district meetings regularly serving as the Secretary and Treasurer. The monthly meetings offered me a great outlet and a whole other world opened up to me. I began attending a Thursday night meeting regularly and soon became the GR for that group. A member there constantly brought up Conference Approved Literature. I could not understand her persistence until one night our meeting opened with readings from four different books, none of them Al-Anon. I began to understand the necessity of keeping the message Al-Anon. If I were the GR and I could not follow where the meeting was headed, what about the newcomers who knew nothing of Al-Anon? I began supporting the necessity of CAL. I also began studying and following the Steps and Traditions.

When my term was completed as Group Representative, I was elected Alternate District Representative. One month later the District Representative (DR) stepped down and I learned what one of the responsibilities of an Alternate meant—filling in for the DR. I loved being DR of District 2. What a great bunch of members. They have been my cheering squad and unwavering supporters over the years. I took the position seriously. I loved traveling to the meetings and attending groups outside my own. I truly believe that once I stepped outside the comfort zone of my two little meetings, I really began to see and watch how Al-Anon works.

Being a District Representative taught me how to get organized, how to conduct a good meeting by listening, sharing, and listening some more. As a Group Representative, I had attended all the Assemblies. I knew my vote was important as the representative of the group, but it was not until I was District Representative and attended both the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings and the Assemblies that I really learned how important all the links of service were to my group and myself. As a DR I questioned constantly—I just had to know why, how, when! I am so blessed that even though there were members of the AWSC who cringed when I walked in the meeting room, they put aside their frustrations and took me by the hand and answered my questions. What a great opportunity for me to learn how to disagree politely, and yet be able to walk away from the room with a hug and a smile from those who did not have the same opinion. These lessons followed me into my home life and I began to learn that my husband did not have to believe as I believed. As a couple we were allowed to have different ideas. We could love each other and yet be two different people with two extremely different personalities and beliefs. It did not mean the marriage was over. It just meant we needed to listen and learn from each other.

I have been given the privilege of serving our Area in other positions over the years. Each opportunity has enlightened my world. It has given me a different perspective and everything I have learned I have been able to take into my private and work life. How to conduct myself in public and how to maintain my dignity in heated discussions has been something I never thought I would obtain. I feel I am now respected for my input and that people feel secure and safe in asking for my opinions.

Our children did not come out of the disease whole, well, and content. They spent a lot of years learning bad lessons and it will take them many years to unlearn them. They both are very involved in our lives and we get the privilege of their love regularly. But, their ideas of marriage, commitment, and relationships are strongly rooted in our example. They both have chosen to not marry. They, like their father, love children, and have become fantastic single parents. They are devoted to our grandchildren and are fantastic mothers. But my heart hurts for the damage I have done to them when I think of the lack of companionship they have denied themselves. I do know though that their Alateen meetings are still with them. They make good decisions and they stand on their own two feet. They seek help when necessary and they are open to assistance when needed. I know God has some fantastic plans for both of them in the future, but I also know they are His plans and I had better keep my hands off!

There is not actual proof that living in constant rage, anger,

and hate can do physical damage to one's person, but for me I do believe it is true. In 2004, as I began to look at standing for the position of Delegate to my Area, my health started to change. When once I could do almost anything I put my mind to doing, now I began to feel fatigued and sick. I had no energy and I was in constant pain. Circumstances at work changed and it became necessary for me to seek medical input. After the first round of tests I knew that something was not right. Further testing by my family doctor confirmed my fears. When he recommended I seek out more specialized help I knew once again I needed to reach out for guidance from my Higher Power. A few weeks later I was beginning treatment for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Because I had learned to be open to new ideas and new thinking I was offered the opportunity to try out a new drug. Being willing in Al-Anon had always led me down an exciting and healing path, why not just be willing one more time? The new drug, along with chemo allowed me to keep working most days. My life's "busyness" changed very little and by the time our Area elections came about I was able to stand strong, with my hat on my hairless head, and say I would be willing one more time.

From the day I was elected Delegate by my Area to the day I received my letter asking me to share as a spiritual speaker at the World Service Conference, until today, as I stand before you, I have been so completely and overwhelming awed at what my Higher Power has envisioned for my life. My very limited dreams and goals never planned the life I have been given. My family is healing from hate, anger, frustration, and rage. We have fun together, we laugh, cry, and even argue but we are all together. My husband and I are a couple today. I never thought I would say that with pride and love but I can now. We still work on our marriage. We do not do well being bored! I have been given the opportunity to learn how to love people and let people love me.

Thank you all for giving me something I could never have given myself. You have given me love, respect, happiness, and joy. And most of all, you have given me a growing, living, breathing relationship with the most fantastic Higher Power I ever could have envisioned.

IN CLOSING WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY

Judy P.,
Chairperson of the Board

The Chairperson of the Board recapped the week saying, “What a week this has been. In five short days we met with our committees, passed the revised descriptive text for the remaining four Concepts of Service and the Warranties, discussed the Alateen Traditions, and had several conversations about Al-Anon with Chosen Agenda Items.” She reminded the Delegates that they are a resource for the Board and when Conference members are all engaged in thinking about the future of Al-Anon, we are truly leadership partners.

The Chairperson recapped the Board’s experience working with the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process. “We worked at learning how to gather information to ‘frame’ each session so that our discussions would be rich and meaningful. We learned it was everyone’s job to participate and listen to the full discussion. We summarized to ensure we have clarity. Now, the Board is working at evaluating its work—we may think it is completed but we don’t talk about it. We just seem to go from one thing to the next and trust that it is all going fine.”

“We talked about our Conference goals at the beginning of the Conference, and were reminded of them throughout the week. Now we want to bring this Conference full circle by taking the time to evaluate our work this past week to see if we met those goals.” As part of this evaluation process, the Conference Consultant was asked to provide a verbal report to the Conference of her observations.

The Conference Consultant reviewed her role and gave the Conference a picture of its path over the last three years. In the first year she observed and offered feedback to the Board on how they could be more effective in reaching the goals they had set for themselves and the Conference. This resulted in recommendations that improved the Orientation Session, using the Delegates as resources to the Conference and more shared leadership. At the Conference the Delegates asked that the Conference Consultant serve as a resource to them as well as the Trustees for the following year. Her participation last year included daily “summing-it-up” and focus sessions that clarified roles and responsibilities. This year she was asked to facilitate the “big thinking” sessions, present a workshop with the Executive Director on conflict resolution, and to provide verbal feedback (evaluation) on her observations collected during the week.

She pointed out that *new thinking* was used to demonstrate a

variety of new presentation styles, citing the Regional Committee on Trustees presentation where people who learn visually, those who learn by doing, and those who are auditory learners were satisfied. Delegates were challenged to think about how they can use these styles when presenting their reports to their Assemblies. They were also challenged to find new methods to develop full discussions that achieve clarity in the links of service.

New energy comes from successful leadership. A Delegate remarked, “A relaxed mind is a creative mind.” Energy comes with clarity and the energy can come if conflict is addressed, but Delegates must educate in their Areas. “Don’t assume that people know what their roles and reasons are. The time you take for a good foundation will assure success. Conflict is neutral—it is a signal. Deal with it when it arises. Don’t postpone it. When you see conflict brewing, name it and do something about it.” Energy also comes with big thinking. She suggested that Delegates try to help members “think big” relative to their Area by keeping the focus on the Area.

One of the greatest challenges and largest resources is our younger members. We need to learn who they are and not be afraid or judgmental. She suggested, “Go to them and invite them to share in the leadership with you. Others did that for you—you can do that with newer members and Alateens.”

Conference members were asked to think about how they can use their available resources. “Do not maintain tunnel vision. You have past Delegates, past Trustees, past Area Coordinators—if these are people who could serve in a new way but lack clarity or understanding of roles and responsibilities, you are losing valuable resources. Work on this together.

“I think it is critical that all Conference members pay attention to their roles. You come together with your perspectives, experience, wisdom and imagination. You engage to move the organization forward. This is not your home meeting; this is a business and planning meeting for the whole of Al-Anon. When you go back home full of new thinking and new energy, your roles and responsibilities change. Think carefully about your audience. Resist the temptation to overwhelm them by sharing everything immediately. Transfer what you have learned to trusted members. Let them roll out some of these ideas. Share your leadership and Al-Anon will continue to flourish.”

CLOSING SESSION

Mary G.,
Conference Chairperson

In planning the Conference, one of the areas of growth that the Conference Committee addressed was clarity. The Committee intentionally reflected the Conference theme in each session and attempted to weave the Conference goals throughout our processes. Each session attempted to frame the discussion so that it was in a context that was meaningful and to summarize so that all were clear on what happened during the discussion. The Committee found its weakness was in taking its time to evaluate its work against its purpose. The Committee asked the Conference if it accomplished what it set out to do and was it what our pioneers envisioned for the Conference.

The Conference Chairperson remarked, "At the beginning, I read this quote from the descriptive text of Concept Two: '...it is with a sense of great security that we old-timers are now assured that Al-Anon's World Service Conference will use its vested authority for giving shape to the destiny that God is holding in store for us all.'

"Let's ask ourselves—Did we do that? Were we visionary? Have we involved ourselves in some work or thinking that will give shape to Al-Anon's destiny? Did our theme contribute to our work?"

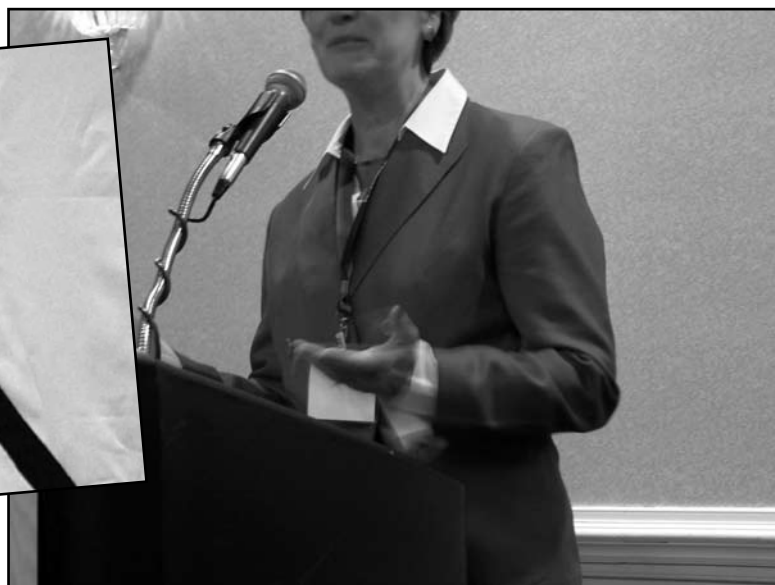
"Here is another quote I read from the descriptive text of Concept Two: 'We believe our fellowship is a spiritual society characterized by enough enlightenment, responsibility, and love for God and man to ensure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions.' Did that spiritual tone prevail in this Conference? Did our goals help us attain it?"

"And the third quote from the descriptive text of Concept Two: 'Our World Service Conference is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.' Did we fulfill our individual roles as Delegates, staff members, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and observers to form that effective group conscience?"

After Conference members took a few minutes of quiet reflection to evaluate the work of the 2007 WSC and write about a specific example of a session or activity that fulfilled either the Conference theme or one of the Conference goals, roving microphones gave members a few moments to share their examples.

- The spiritual tone of the WSC prevailed in discussion of the Alateen motion and the respect we were given.
- The Conference Committee workshop brought the theme together for me on how the Assemblies can change and how abundant our Area resources are.
- The Regional Trustee Nominating process was a demonstration of mutual respect with principles always placed above personalities.
- Big thinking sessions—we need to be the working example in our Areas. Wild ideas didn't seem so wild when I opened my mind. The sessions showed that we have the resources we need and we can come up with new ideas and new thinking to use them.

Following dinner, presenting scrolls to the outgoing Panel 45 Delegates, and the Spiritual Speaker talks, the gavel fell and the Chairperson closed the Conference.



2007 World Service Conference Motions

Background and Floor Discussions

Background for World Service Conference motions that are not part of reports are discussed here:

Motion #5

The Admissions/Handbook Committee was asked to review for clarity the text that accompanies the “Area Committee Structure” chart on page 148 of the World Service Handbook section of the *Service Manual*. The intent of the paragraph was to clarify how the group allocates funds for the GR to attend meetings of the Area Assembly when a District Representative is also a Group Representative.

That information is clearly stated on page 126, “At the District Level” section, “Finances” sub-section, second sentence. Therefore, the Admissions/Handbook Committee recommended that the paragraph be removed from page 148.

Motion #6

After the new structure was adopted, text revisions to the World Service Handbook were necessary. When Conference members reviewed the proposed revisions prior to the 2005 WSC, some members asked questions and offered suggestions.

One question asked for clarification about what level of Coordinator was being referred to in the last sentence on page 126 of the “Conference Procedures” section, “Finances” sub-section, “At the District Level,” Finances section.

The Committee thought that the reference to funding of Coordinator’s expenses is an autonomy issue and does not belong in the “Conference Procedures, At the District Level” section, which is talking about the District Representative’s expenses.

The Committee recommended that the sentence be removed and that the term Assembly Treasurer be changed to Area Treasurer as the Treasurer acts on direction from the Area Assembly in accordance with the Area budget.

Motion #8

An ad hoc workgroup studied the language of this section to determine whether it is appropriate for the Policy Digest. There was consensus at the July 24, 2006 Policy Committee meeting that this text should remain in the Policy Digest and that it include a broad policy statement with reference to the Seventh Tradition. The Policy Committee agreed that the sentence, “Members of the Area Assembly...” should be deleted since this is not a financial policy but a general statement of permission to announce and encourage the plan.

A Conference member asked why the number of times the Appeal letter should be read went from three to two. It was explained that this was changed a few years back and it is being brought up to date to make it accurate. Another member asked for clarification between Warranty One, which talks about the balance being financed by the sale of literature and the Policy Digest, which says it is financed from the sale of Conference Approved Literature (CAL). It was explained that CAL generates income. Service tools are sold at cost. By Consensus it was agreed to amend Motion #8 to read ...from the sale of our literature.

Motion #9

A Policy Committee workgroup considered whether this paragraph should be deleted from the Policy Digest because of possible duplication of material in the AI-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service section of the *Service Manual*. The workgroup concluded that the material should remain in the Policy Digest which states the policy while the descriptive text in Warranty One provides background and explanation. The Policy Committee, at its January 21, 2007 meeting, agreed that this information should be stated as a policy in the Policy Digest because the material in the descriptive text for Warranty One provides background but does not specifically address a policy on the Reserve Fund. This material was included in the original Policy Digest as a means of letting the fellowship know that the Reserve Fund was authorized by Warranty One and the WSO had the right and obligation to establish it. The change in language takes out some of the historical background to focus more clearly on the policy.

Previously literature had focused on preparing for economic emergencies and the continuation of essential services. In researching the Reserve Fund, a former Treasurer found that the second goal of the Reserve Fund had been forgotten. In the 1971 Board Minutes, the Treasurer found that the Board of Trustees approved the following statement in creating the Reserve Fund to clarify the purposes and use of the Reserve Fund: “The purposes of the fund are two-fold, 1) to assure continuation of essential services in the event of a substantial decline in income and, 2) to cover the cost of special projects which could not be financed from normal sources of income.” It was explained that if we didn’t have the money in the General Fund (checking account) but wanted to fund a particular project or if it was more feasible to pull from the Reserve Fund because it was a one-time project rather than an ongoing expense, we could take the money out of the Fund that year and it wouldn’t become a budget line item. The recent special project funded from the Reserve Fund was the development of a project to strengthen Areas by sending a Trustee and WSO staff member to 25 Areas. Today, a special project funded from the Reserve Fund is the trial free copy of *The Forum* currently received by all English-speaking AI-Anon groups in the World Service Conference structure.

Policy Motion #10

As the result of a Policy Committee discussion on July 24, 2006, the Chairperson appointed a workgroup charged with exploring the possibility of inserting new language into the Policy Digest under the heading “Institution Groups” on page 68 of the Policy Digest section of the *Service Manual* and to provide a rationale for any new language recommended. The workgroup proposed the use of the term “Introductory Meetings” to replace the term “Institution Groups” so as not to confuse outreach meetings which introduce the AI-Anon program to families members and friends of patients passing through hospitals or treatment centers with the meetings of a registered AI-Anon group

which may use a facility for its regular meeting place. Introductory meetings do not have a Group Representative. They are an outreach effort often shared on a rotating basis by Al-Anon groups within a district. The term “Introductory Meetings” also eliminates possible confusion with the beginners meetings of a regular Al-Anon group which integrates new members into the Al-Anon program. At the Policy Committee Meeting on October 30, 2006, the workgroup submitted the proposed language to revise the Policy Digest so as to eliminate any confusion about the terms “Institution Groups” and “Limited Access” groups. The heading for new language proposed for page 68 would be changed to “Introductory Meetings.” It was explained that this is not a change in policy. In discussion it was explained that there are currently 250 groups registered with the WSO as Institutions groups but only 35 are actually introductory meetings. The rest are groups that just happen to meet in institutions, which is why the language (Institution Groups) was deleted.

Motion #11

Limited Access Groups: Conference members expressed concern that the proposed motion was confusing and misleading with regard to its placement in the text. The motion was withdrawn and will be sent back to the Policy Committee for further consideration.

Motion #12

How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics (B-22) was first published in 1995. In 2003 the Literature Committee recommended that a new section of text on the Concepts of Service be added to the book in order to give them status equal to the sections on the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. This resulted in the 2003 World Service Conference Motion #10 which approved a major revision to the book adding a brief text on the Twelve Concepts of Service consistent with the current text for the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Currently, the Traditions chapter describes them as tools for group unity rather than for use on a personal level. Consequently, in keeping with the 2003 WSC Motion #10, text for the Concepts of Service chapter was drafted describing how they are used in world service.

It was noted that descriptive text of the Traditions and Concepts of Service in our early literature did not include stories and examples of applications of the Traditions and Concepts of Service to our personal lives until publication of *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) in 1997. In reviewing the first draft of the new text, the following points arose:

- Some members have the idea that the Traditions and Concepts do not apply to them because they have rarely heard these Legacies described as tools for personal growth and recovery.
 - Since *How Al-Anon Works* is considered a basic text that describes itself as “the essential book on Al-Anon Family Groups,” personal application of the Traditions and Concepts should be part of the “basic” information.
- Based on that, the Literature Committee asked the 2007 World

Service Conference to reconsider and amend the 2003 Motion in order to have the Traditions and Concepts chapters of the book describe application of these Legacies on personal as well as group and world service levels respectively.

A motion was made and carried to reconsider Motion #10 from the 2003 WSC. By Consensus, it was then agreed to amend the text of Motion #10 from the 2003 WSC. The amended motion became Motion #13. (See page 67.)

Motion #14

The Steps and Traditions of Al-Anon were adopted and adapted from A.A. in 1951. Lois wrote to the groups asking if they wanted to use the name and adapt the Steps and Traditions. During that time she sent the Traditions to the A.A. Delegates to ask for permission. A.A. wrote back and said it was prepared to give you everything but the A.A. name and further stated that A.A. must be a separate entity. That was when Al-Anon added “cooperate” to its Traditions. The 1961 Conference approved the Steps and Traditions but from 1961 to 1965, Lois and Henrietta made changes to the Traditions several times. The idea that the Steps, Traditions, and General Warranties could not be changed without written consent of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the groups worldwide came when the Conference passed the World Service Conference Charter with Section 3(d) concerning the Steps, Traditions, and General Warranties.

In 1957 a boy in California wrote to Lois about creating Alateen and about adopting the Twelve Traditions for Alateen. Not long after that, they were sent to the California Alateen groups who voted to adopt the Traditions. These were essentially the only groups that existed at the time. In 1967 the Alateen Traditions were in place. Some interpreted Section 3(d) to say that the Alateen Traditions were also “frozen.” In 1968 the Conference voted to change Alateen Tradition Five. If they were “frozen,” this could not have happened. In 1971 the WSC voted to change the name of the “World Service Handbook” to the “World Service Handbook for Al-Anon and Alateen Groups.” We know this from 1971 WSC backup material in the 1972 Delegate’s Brochure. It says that, “appropriate changes to the Charter must also be made.” The Conference Committee minutes at that time indicate that they made the changes to the Charter without a formal vote, using the rationale that the motion was passed at the 1971 Conference. The Committee added the note on the bottom of the Charter on page 147 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, but it was never approved by the Conference. History shows that the rationale for the note regarding references to Al-Anon including Alateen was related to the service structure. In 1971, the WSC discussed the idea that Alateen Group Representatives should participate at the district and Assembly levels. In 1973 the Alateen Committee changed the wording sequence of Tradition Six but the World Service Conference never voted on the change.

During the 2007 WSC discussion, it was reported, “We have lots of the pieces of the puzzle and no one alive who remembers everything that happened.” It was pointed out that by voting, the WSC would be affirming what has been practiced for the past 50 years and giving formal recognition to the Alateen Traditions. The wording in Tradition Eleven was altered to match the wording in the Al-Anon Traditions.

2007 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

MOTION #1

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

That the following persons be seated at the 2007 World Service Conference as follows:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach Director of Business Services

Non-Al-Anon Member

Nydia Julia M. International Representative—Mexico

Al-Anon Member

Lois A. International Representative—Australia

Al-Anon Member

Andreas H. International Representative—Germany

Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

Annette T. Chairman, Executive Committee for Real

Property Management

Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to facilitating discussions in the role as Conference Consultant, but no vote:

Nancy Ackermann Cole

Conference Consultant Non-Al-Anon Member

With no voice and no vote:

Suzanne M. Associate Director—Conference (in training)

Al-Anon Member

Nicolette Stephens Information Analyst (in training)

Non-Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2

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

To approve the 2006 Annual Report.

MOTION #3

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

To approve the 2006 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #4

(93 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2007 Finance Committee Report.

MOTION #5

(93 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

To amend the descriptive text on page 148 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, World Service Handbook, “Area Committee Structure,” to read (new is bold and underlined, strikethrough text indicates deletion):

The Area World Service Committee may also include Coordinators of special services such as Alateen, Archives, Public Outreach (PI, CPC, and Institutions), Newsletter Editors, The Forum, etc., and liaison members (from local Information Service centers or Intergroups.)

Each District allocates funds to send its DR to the meetings of the ~~Area World Service Committee~~, (Groups allocate funds for DRs to attend meetings of the Area Assembly as GRs).

(See discussion on page 63.)

MOTION #6

(93 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

To amend the descriptive text on page 126 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, World Service Handbook, “Conference Procedures” section, “Finances” sub-section, “At the District Level,” Finances to read (new is bold and underlined, strikethrough text indicates 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 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 Area 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.~~

(See discussion on page 63.)

MOTION #7

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

To approve rewording of the descriptive text of Concepts Eight, Nine, Ten, and Twelve, which include the Warranties on pages 169 - 180 and 188 - 200 in the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service section as amended.

(See discussion on page 23 and Appendix on page 83)

MOTION #8

(84 yes, 10 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) - CARRIED

To amend the text on pages 75 and 76 of the 2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, Finances, Contributions to WSO—Individual, Quarterly Appeal, Direct Contributions, Birthday Plan, and Memorial Contributions. (New text is underlined and bold, strikethrough indicates deletion.)

Finances

In order to fulfill our primary purpose, In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, Al-Anon is supported by members' contributions and from the sale of our literature. ~~a~~All contributions are used to meet expenses for worldwide services, including a portion of the operating expense of the World Service Conference. Members may contribute in the following ways:

Contributions to WSO – Individual Quarterly Appeal

~~In keeping with the Seventh Tradition of self-support, t~~The 1966 World Service Conference voted that three letters of appeal for individual contributions be sent annually from the WSO to Al-Anon members in the United States and Canada.

In 1998, the World Service Conference voted to increase the appeal frequency to quarterly (February, May, August, and November). Since it is not possible to maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon, the appeal letters are mailed to the groups' address of record. It is requested that the letters be read at ~~three~~two successive meetings followed by a special collection other than the regular group collection. This gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level. In November, the appeal is extended to members of groups worldwide.

Direct Contributions

In any calendar year, an Al-Anon member may contribute to the WSO up to one percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit. Members may authorize a monthly deduction from their bank account. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Birthday Plan

In honor of their Al-Anon Birthday ~~The Birthday Plan is an optional means of~~ members may expressing their gratitude to Al-Anon by contributing an amount ~~a dollar a year for each year's membership. Members of the Area Assembly stimulate interest in this plan: (See "Direct Contributions")~~

Memorial Contributions

Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased. ~~(See "Direct Contributions" above.)~~ (Contact the WSO for details)

Bequests

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

(See discussion on page 63.)

MOTION #9

(93 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 2 void) - CARRIED

To amend the text on page 77 of the 2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon & Alateen Policies, Finances, Reserve Fund. (New text is bold and underlined, strikethrough indicates deletion.)

Reserve Fund

In 1970, the Board of Trustees Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. has the right and obligation to established and maintain a Reserve Fund, ~~with an initial deposit from the accumulation of net income from the previous year's operation. Subsequently, the Trustees have transferred additional amounts to the Reserve Fund in years when there has been an excess of income over expenses. The purpose of the Reserve~~ This Fund, established in 1970, has a two-fold purpose: is to set aside sufficient moneys to ensure ing the continuation of Al-Anon's essential services and the funding of special projects, ~~in the event of a severe economic recession. (See "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service")~~

(See discussion on page 63.)

MOTION #10

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

To amend the text on page 68 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions, Membership and Groups, Registration of Groups, Institutions Groups. (New text is underlined and bold, strikethrough text indicates deletion.)

Institutions Groups Introductory Meetings

~~Institutions groups meet at~~ **Introductory meetings can be held at institutions, such as** hospitals, treatment centers, ~~correctional and other residential facilities.~~ **and shelters, or any other location where families and friends of alcoholics gather.** Membership is transient; there are no GRs. ~~Attendance changes frequently.~~ Experienced Al-Anon members share the responsibilities for forming groups and leading the meetings. **Such a meeting is not considered an Al-Anon group and does not have its own Group Representative.** Some Institutions groups fall into the category of limited-access groups (e.g., those meetings in correctional facilities, abused families' residences, and juvenile homes). **Experienced Al-Anon members share the responsibilities for conducting introductory meetings and for inviting those in attendance to try a regular Al-Anon/Alateen meeting.**

Surrounding **Al-Anon** groups, can be encouraged to help with the costs of literature and other expenses either directly or through their district. **are encouraged to help with the cost of literature and other expenses for introductory meetings.** In keeping with Tradition Seven, Institutions groups would not accept literature or other funding from the facility in which the meeting is held except where security restrictions might apply. **Members must comply with the security requirements of the meeting location.**

(See discussion on page 63.)

MOTION #11 – WITHDRAWN

To amend the text on page 69 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions, Membership and Groups, Registration of Groups, Limited-Access Groups. (New text is bold and underlined, strikethrough indicates deletion.)

Limited-Access Groups Meeting Sites

Limited-access groups meet in locations where our general membership may not be able to attend. Groups meeting in industrial, military, or school settings would fall into this category. These are ~~Al-Anon or Alateen groups, but membership may be limited because of location.~~ **are qualified to register and have a group representative.**

Regular or introductory meetings are held at some limited-access sites, such as shelters, and correctional and mental health facilities.

(See discussion on page 64.)

MOTION #12

(two-thirds majority vote by a show of hands)
- CARRIED

To reconsider Motion #10 of the 2003 World Service Conference, which reads: "To approve a major change to the book, *How Al-Anon Works For Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) as follows:

To move the Concepts of Service to a prominent position, placed following the Traditions, adding a brief text similar to the current text for the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

(See discussion on page 64.)

MOTION #13

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

To approve a major change to the book *How Al-Anon Works For Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) as follows: to move the Concepts of Service to a prominent position, placed following the Traditions, adding a brief text similar to the current text for the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as well as brief descriptions of the personal applications of each Tradition and Concept.

(See discussion on page 64.)

MOTION #14

(82 yes, 12 no, 1 abstention, 0 void) – CARRIED

To give Conference approval to the Alateen Traditions as found on pages 43 and 44 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* with the following exception: change the text in Tradition Eleven from “TV and films” to “films and TV.”

(See discussion on page 64.)

2006 Annual Report

ADMINISTRATION

OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

Ric B., Executive Director

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 the 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 51 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.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Judy P., Chairperson

The Board approved Interim Actions of the Executive Committee:

- To Celebrate Al-Anon Family Groups 55th Anniversary, we hosted:
 - An Anniversary Celebration Banquet in Virginia Beach for the fellowship
 - A Family Recovery celebration luncheon in Washington, D.C.
 - A Family Recovery celebration luncheon in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
- To set the equalized expense for the 2007 WSC at \$1,200 U.S. The projected cost for a Delegate to attend the WSC is \$1,698 U.S. The theme "New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook" was approved for the 2007 WSC.
- To produce 1,000 copies of *Courage to Change* (B-16) in a CD-ROM, copyright protected format and to set the selling price at \$15 U.S. each.
- To produce a magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, in three languages, English, French, and Spanish, annually. This magazine will be used for Public Outreach and made available in September and April. In 2006 there were over 168,475 copies sold, making this the largest Public Outreach project in the history of Al-Anon Family Groups.
- A trial reorganization of the Literature Committees. There will be one Literature Committee and one committee to process the submissions for electronic literature (the e-CAL Committee). A process for approving e-CAL was approved.

- A trial restructure of the Alateen Advisory Committee. To increase the number of Committee members eligible to serve, to change the term of the committee, to change the number of meetings each member attends, and to change the location of the meetings (one in the U.S. and one in Canada) to coincide with two RSSs during the year.
- To encourage wider communication and increase the *Forum* magazine subscriptions
 - The *Forum* magazine will be sent to every registered English-speaking group in the WSC structure, free, on a one year trial basis
 - The price of the *Forum* for everyone will be \$7.00 plus the cost of mailing
 - The Members' Web site will include a rolling archive of the year's *Forum* articles in addition to the three articles published monthly on the Web site
- To conduct the 2006 Membership Survey.
- Set the equalized expense amount for the 2006 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) at \$1,410 per Delegate which is 65% of the actual cost of \$2,166.85. The 2006 IAGSM was held in Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA, with the theme: *Al-Anon Family Groups Worldwide: Creating a Universal Culture of Trust*. The Delegates voted to hold the 2008 IAGSM in Finland.
- Increase Al-Anon's international presence and support evolving and existing structures with

- ❑ A visit by the Executive Director and a Trustee to Singapore, Japan, Korea, China, Mongolia, and New Zealand
 - ❑ Participation in the plenary sessions as well as other portions of the 2nd Asia Pacific Institute of Addictions, held in Singapore, by the Executive Director, a Trustee, and the General Secretary and Chairman of the Board of the Australian GSO. The theme of this meeting was “Many Roads, One Journey—Helping Families and Individuals Recover from Addictions.”
 - ❑ The “Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual* and three pieces of literature were selected as “starter pieces” to be translated, printed, and distributed at the expense of the WSO. The literature pieces are: *A Guide for the Family* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32)
 - ❑ The “starter pieces” have been translated and printed in Farsi and Romanian and will be given to emerging structures in Iran and Romania
 - ❑ To send the outdated version of *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (B-8) to South Africa for their members to take with them and distribute when they travel to different countries within Africa.
 - ❑ To create an outreach packet in English or French of *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32) to be sold to members traveling to different countries within Africa to take as an outreach tool
 - ❑ Participation at The World Health Organization in Geneva for non-government and professional associations on the public health problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol. The Executive Director of the German GSO is attending as the Al-Anon Family Group's representative since the dates coincided with our World Service Conference this year
 - ❑ Attendance at the Cuban Annual Convention and service meeting by the Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International and Spanish Translator. Monthly phone contact with the Cuban GSO continues
 - Exhibits this year included:
 - ❑ The National Catholic Conference on Alcoholism and Related Drug Problems
 - ❑ Foundations Associates National Intervention Conference for Addiction and Mental Illness
 - ❑ Emergency Nurses Association Leadership Challenge
 - ❑ National Child Welfare League of America Conference
 - ❑ American Indian Training Institute, 29th Annual Indian School on Alcohol and Other Drugs
 - ❑ Tenth Annual National Hispanic Medical Association
 - ❑ The National Association of School Psychologists
 - ❑ The National American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)
 - ❑ The National Canadian Public Health Association, 97th Conference
 - ❑ The Canadian Psychological Association, 67th Conference
 - Approve the 2006 revised budget, which included
 - ❑ Adjusting the selling price of literature to cover rising costs and to generate a net gain of 20%
 - ❑ Adjusting the shipping and handling charges to cover cost increases for literature orders, both within and outside the WSC structure
 - Print
 - ❑ A new table tent card in English, French, and Spanish which contains “Al-Anon Spoken Here” and the Al-Anon Declaration. This will be complimentary to each registered group, included in RSS packets, and placed in the Group Binders
 - Guidelines
 - ❑ Creating and maintaining Al-Anon Web sites
 - Staff travel
 - ❑ To attend the National Working Group Based on Evidence-Based Healthcare
- The Board
- Approved 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.
 - Proposed a trial Regional Trustees Election process which was accepted by the WSC.
 - Voted to participate in the 2010 Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention.
 - Continued to work on updating the descriptive text to the “Concepts of Service” section of the *Service Manual*.
 - Approved the Policy Motion to rename the 3 *Views of Al-Anon* (P-15) to *The Three Views of Al-Anon—Alcoholics Speak to the Family*.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Cecelia L., Chairperson

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

The following action will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval at the January 2007 meeting:

Staff travel to the Betty Ford Center at Rancho Mirage, CA for The American Society of Addiction Medicine's Families and Generational Issues Workshop, January 22 to 25, 2007.

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

Forum Editorial Advisory Committee		
Loretta J.	Minot, ND	sixth one-year term
Mae W.	Penticton, BC	fourth one-year term
Blondel R.	Saint Louis, MO	third one-year term
Charles Y.	Wichita, KS	first one-year term
Lucy K.	Lansdale, PA	first one-year term

GOALS

Goals were set by the Board of Trustees in the Strategic Plan. The following are goals for the Board and the WSO staff. The Quarterly Report confirms the status, progress, and activities of each goal. The Board updates its work on the appropriate goals and the staff reports on the objectives in the report which follow the goals.

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 together we can make a difference in the lives of those affected by someone else's drinking.

Objective: Increase the number of visits by an additional 10% on the Public Outreach Web sites and 100% on the Members' Web sites (English, Spanish, and French) between the 2006 World Service Conference and 2007 WSC.

First Quarter: Two presentations were prepared for the 2006 World Service Conference (WSC). The Delegates' assistance was sought to make the English, Spanish, and French Web sites better known and used. To measure success, quarterly baselines of the number of visits to the Public Outreach and Members' Web sites in English, Spanish, and French were established for the 12-month period ending March 31, 2006, as follows:

Public Outreach Site Baseline Figures:	English	Spanish	French	Total
2 nd Quarter 2005, April 1 – June 30*	313,687	19,640	11,542	344,869
3 rd Quarter 2005, July 1 – Sept 30	327,078	20,044	11,533	358,655
4 th Quarter 2005, Oct 1 – Dec 31	346,534	22,833	12,888	382,255
1 st Quarter 2006, Jan 1 – Mar 31	370,129	25,119	15,463	410,711
Annual Totals	1,357,428	87,636	51,426	1,496,490

Members' Site Baseline Figures	English	Spanish	French	Totals
2 nd Quarter 2005, April 1 – June 30*	4,462	123	150	4,735
3 rd Quarter 2005, July 1 – Sept 30	4,820	164	104	5,088
4 th Quarter 2005, Oct 1 – Dec 31	5,450	177	138	5,765
1 st Quarter 2006, Jan 1 – Mar 31	7,958	236	227	8,421
Annual Totals	22,690	700	619	24,009

*April 2005 data not available; quarter totals are estimated from May/June data.

Updates will be provided to Conference members quarterly.

Second Quarter: The Associate Director of Group Services attended California South's District 64 15th Anniversary and as part of the presentation invited members to visit the Members' and Public Outreach Web sites. *Area*

Highlights Summer issue announced the Web site addresses as did each issue of *Acción*, *Le Lien*, and *The Forum*. Visitors to all sites increased from the second quarter 2005 baseline, as shown below:

Number of Visitors — Second Quarter	English	Spanish	French	Total
Public Outreach Web site 2006	336,347	24,324	14,469	375,140
2 nd quarter 2005	313,687	19,640	11,542	344,869
Percent increase (decrease)	+ 7.2 %	+ 23.8 %	+ 25.4 %	+ 8.8 %
Members' Web site 2006	6,833	307	201	7,341
2 nd quarter 2005	4,462	123	150	4,735
Percent increase (decrease)	+53.1 %	+149.6 %	+ 34 %	+ 55 %

Third Quarter: WSO Web sites continued to be highlighted in WSO publications. Staff clarified reporting procedures, and made updates to First and Second Quarter reports. Third quarter figures show that we are well on our way to meeting our goals:

Number of Visitors — Third Quarter	English	Spanish	French	Total
Public Outreach Web site 2006	410,322	27,739	16,061	454,122
3 rd quarter 2005	327,078	20,044	11,533	358,655
Percent increase (decrease)	25.5 %	38.4 %	39.3 %	26.6 %
Members' Web site 2006	9,482	327	245	10,054
3 rd quarter 2005	4,820	164	104	5,088
Percent increase (decrease)	96.7 %	99.4 %	135.6 %	97.6 %
Public Outreach YTD 2006	746,669	52,063	30,530	829,262
YTD 2005	640,765	39,684	23,075	703,524
YTD Percent increase (decrease)	16.5 %	31.2 %	32.3 %	17.9 %
Members' Web site YTD 2006	16,315	634	446	17,395
YTD 2005	9,282	287	254	9,823
YTD Percent increase (decrease)	75.8 %	120.9 %	75.6 %	77.1 %

Conference members will be updated on our six month status in October, with figures on Members', Public Outreach, and overall site visitors. Delegates will be asked to continue to encourage members to visit the WSO sites.

Fourth Quarter: WSO Web sites were again highlighted in *The Forum* and *Area Highlights*.

Number of Visitors — Fourth Quarter	English	Spanish	French	Total
Public Outreach Web site 2006	380,715	24,646	15,847	421,208
4 th quarter 2005	346,534	22,833	12,888	382,255
Percent increase (decrease)	9.9 %	7.9 %	23.0 %	10.2 %
Members' Web site 2006	6,970	276	164	7,410
4 th quarter 2005	5,450	177	138	5,765
Percent increase (decrease)	27.9%	55.9 %	18.8 %	28.5%
Public Outreach Apr-Dec 2006	1,127,384	76,709	46,377	1,250,470
Apr-Dec 2005	987,299	62,517	35,963	1,085,779
3-queater percent increase (decrease)	14.2%	22.7 %	29.0 %	15.2 %
Members' Web site Apr-Dec 2006	23,285	910	610	24,805
Apr-Dec 2005	14,732	464	392	15,588
3-queater percent increase (decrease)	58.1 %	96.1 %	55.6 %	59.1 %

Annual: For the first three quarters of our April 1, 2006 thru December 31, 2006 year, we have an overall increase of 59.1% on the Members' Web site, and 15.2 percent on the Public Outreach site. While both are respectable increases, we have ground to make up in the first quarter of 2007 on the Members' site in order to reach the goal. The Delegates will be updated in early January. Note that we have already a 96.1% increase in visitors to the Spanish Members' site.

Goal #2: The staff will coach/support the fellowship in building local/regional partnerships to make a difference in the lives of those affected by someone else's drinking.

Objective: Expand our focus to seek additional articles from helping professionals as we continue to market the "Writers Reaching Out" project to the fellowship. In 2006, collect 15 manuscripts from members sharing personal recovery stories and 10 articles from members of helping professions.

First Quarter: Through the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee and the Associate Director—Professionals' networking, six articles from helping professionals were obtained. Three will be published in the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007* magazine. An article was written for the Spring issue of *Area Highlights* inviting members to write as professionals or to ask non-Al-Anon professionals that they know to write articles. Staff is working on a proposal to post an invitation to professionals to write articles on the Public Outreach Web site.

Two personal stories from members have been submitted for 2006; one will be published in a college newspaper, and one is posted on a "blog." The regional magazine that published a member article in 2005 has committed to publishing additional member articles this year.

Second Quarter: An article for the Spring issue of *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* invited members to write sharings for outside publications and directed them to the "Writers Reaching Out" flyer on the Members' Web site for further information. Another article in the same issue urged members to write as professionals or to ask professionals they know to write articles. An article for the Summer issue of *Area Highlights* invites members to write their recovery stories for non-Al-Anon Web sites related to Recovery Month. This information was also sent to Area Public Outreach Coordinators and Delegates.

A member's personal story was published in *Cosmo Girl* magazine; others have been submitted to *Family Circle*, *Guideposts*, and *New Day*. A book on parenthood citing Al-Anon titled *The TurnAround Mom*, written by a member, was published, and another member's book is in progress. A professional article featuring a transcript of an on-line Al-Anon meeting with annotations from a psychiatrist is slated for publication in a professional journal in 2007. An article from a priest was also received this quarter, bringing our totals year-to-date to seven member stories and eight professional articles. Plans are in process to in-

clude both personal stories and articles from professionals in the redesign of our Web site.

Third Quarter: "Writers Reaching Out" was featured in the July *Forum*, Fall *Area Highlights*, and coordinator mailings. Announcements of Web sites looking for family recovery stories were sent to Area Public Outreach Coordinators and Delegates.

Web logs ("blogs") have become a popular way to self-publish, and more and more Al-Anon members are doing so. We received notice of three members who have shared about Al-Anon in their blogs. The Associate Director—Professionals collected five professional articles, from counselors, a psychiatrist, and a group home administrator for our use, and one published in an American Psychiatric Association journal. An attorney wrote favorably in his blog about Al-Anon. Our totals year-to-date are 11 member stories and 13 professional articles.

Fourth Quarter: *The Forum* featured ads for posting stories on professional Web sites in November and for submitting personal stories to external publications in December. Winter *Area Highlights* included an Area Literature Coordinator's report on the project. A member sent an article she had published in her church bulletin and had also submitted to a local newspaper. Two additional professional articles were received; one from a chiropractor who employs a member, the other an article from an MD published on a professional Web site.

Annual: A total of 12 personal stories and 15 professional articles have been received. While we missed the goal of 15 personal stories by members (we had 12), we exceeded the goal of 10 articles by members who are helping professionals (15). It is our hope that members have begun to be aware that they can write about their membership without breaking their anonymity in accordance with the policy on page 98 of the *2004-2006 Service Manual*, and will continue to do so. We will continue soliciting professional articles.

Goal #3: 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: The Board of Trustees continues to have a priority focus of it's time spent in forward-thinking. When the Board adopted the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process, it meant a lot more time spent reading for preparation and more time in Board

meetings in discussion of where we came from, to know where we wanted to go. Much time has been spent this quarter, in discussion and the planning for the 2006 World Service Conference. The focus of the Board is to create an atmosphere at the Conference

which will foster the original intent, to exchange information with the Al-Anon groups, and create by our actions a safe place to transact the business of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc.

Second Quarter: The Board of Trustees was able to model a culture of trust at this year's Conference and with Conference agreement to begin the process of a true exchange of information as well as foster a safe place for those discussions. Planning of the Conference during the past quarter manifested itself in the reports sent in advance and in the ability to move the agenda around to meet the Conference's needs as they arose.

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.

The Strategic plan was reviewed, and ongoing work is in progress to update the Strategic Plan Goals. In addition, the Board reviewed Staff Objectives and is in the process of identifying Objectives for the Board.

Before closing, the Board determined priorities of current subjects. Members will continue to work in small ad hoc committees, or workgroups 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.

Fourth Quarter and Annual: The Board Agenda has continually increased in the percentage of time spent in forward-thinking. In addition, the Board met as a "Committee of the Whole" to work on enhancing the Strategic Plan, adding measurable Objectives for the Board in 2007. Completing this portion of the Strategic Plan will provide the vehicle for the Board of Trustees to provide oversight and evaluation of the Objectives set forth for self-evaluation as well as the objectives for staff and Committees.

Theme #2: Universal Understanding of Recovery

Goal #1: Educate the WSO staff and volunteers (Board of Trustees and Executive Committee) in preparation to go out into the fellowship to be able to articulate the Vision, Mission, and the Strategic Plan of the Board.

First Quarter: At the Regional Delegates meetings in the U.S., Board members practiced new skills of facilitating by framing discussions and asking members to synthesize what they heard.

Second Quarter: Conference members were encouraged to invite WSO staff and volunteers (Trustees and Executive Committee members) to Area Assemblies and events. The Executive Director and Chairperson of the Board will write and circulate the process to invite these WSO members.

Third Quarter: Board members continue to identify and develop presentations for use when they are invited to the Areas. As presentations are completed, they are reviewed by the Board and retained in an electronic library for staff or Board member's use.

One of the basic information presentations was identified and translated into Spanish and French. The WSO Structure is now available in all three languages.

At the July Board Development meeting, an abbreviated presentation regarding member contributions was made. Board members were acquainted with the different forms and various ways to make contributions. Board members are encouraged to discuss and

introduce the financial forms at the various functions where they are invited to attend and present. The various forms were made available for Board members with planned or anticipated visits.

Board members and staff participated in Conflict Resolution Training. This will be helpful and available to Areas requesting Trustee and/or staff visits.

Fourth Quarter: In addition to Board Development sessions at every Quarterly Board meeting, training is on-going via point papers and e-mail discussions. Information shared is to support development of technical abilities, leadership skills and techniques that enhance the abilities and skills of the Board and the staff when they are out in the Areas.

Discussion and training techniques for Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) continued with suggestions and ideas for sharing KBDM at various service events.

Annual: The Board is continuing to prepare itself to go out into the fellowship as a meaningful resource. Joint training sessions with the staff and Executive Committee are planned so that all can speak with consistency and clarity.

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

Objective: Contact at least three credible funding resources to determine the feasibility of those resources funding specific research studies on the effects of alcoholism on the non-alcoholic.

First Quarter: Staff reviewed a research proposal previously submitted to AFG, Inc. by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), New York, New York. Staff determined a need to contact the organization for possible changes in the proposal's parameters since the funding will need to be provided by a source other than indicated in the proposal. Staff also determined that it may be necessary to link more than one funding source with the research organization.

Second Quarter: A research organization provided information about existing sources of available grants and funding. Contacting private foundations was recommended as a better choice for funding research on non-alcoholic family members because at this time, government grants in the field of alcoholism and substance abuse are specific to certain types of medical diseases. By having this information, a starting point for finding grants has been established.

An alternative to a comprehensive research study of the physical and emotional health, and social functioning of non-alcoholic family members was also explored as a means of reducing costs of the study. It was decided to focus on medical well-being. However, by eliminating mental health and social functioning, the survey costs would not decrease because the components (pretests, focus groups, conducting the survey, evaluation of data, and dissemination of findings) of the research project would remain the same regardless of the number of topics. In fact, the costs of the research could actually increase because additional funding resources and research vendors would be needed to complete the other portions of a study.

Third Quarter: A credible funding source contacted the WSO to announce available funding. The deadline for the grant application is November 2006. Staff received notification of grants awarded to various communities from a government agency. Although hearing about the available funding after the fact, staff has learned that the term "families of alcoholics"—regarding research and grants—often refers to alcoholic family members, i.e., teenagers, rather than non-alcoholic family members.

Although willing to perform the research, a previously contacted organization wants AFG, Inc. to ap-

ply for the grant money.

Locating a funding source and then asking a researcher to submit a grant application appears to be an ineffective process because researchers routinely receive, and know where to access, information about grants rather than relying upon an intermediary.

An alternative approach, which is a direct outcome of hosting the National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Month Kick-off Lunch, is the establishment of a relationship with the Director of Research of a well-known Health Medical Organization (HMO) who has expressed interest in utilizing Al-Anon members as participants in current and future studies.

Fourth Quarter: A staff member was introduced to the U.S. Government's National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) Liaison Council members by the Director of Research of a well-known Health Medical Organization (HMO) who is an outgoing member of the NIDA Council. This same professional served as the keynote speaker at the National Alcohol and Addiction Month Kick-Off lunch hosted by Al-Anon Family Groups. The NIDA Council meetings are open to the public and NIDA is one of the largest funding resources of research projects related to alcoholics, non-alcoholics, and the application of research findings to the community level. Preliminary discussions about the need for Al-Anon members (on an anonymous and confidential basis) to participate in evidence-based studies related to nonalcoholic family members also occurred.

Annual: Staff met its objective of contacting at least three credible funding resources to determine the feasibility of those resources funding specific research studies on the effects of alcoholism on the non-alcoholic. However, staff determined that matching a funding source with a researcher is an ineffective way to meet the Board's goal of having credible comprehensive, professional research data available on the effects of alcoholism on non-alcoholics.

Establishing relationships with professionals and organizations has proven to be beneficial in providing information about current research and grants for new research. However, staff determined that this would be a long-term undertaking that would require its own strategic plan.

Theme #3: Unlimited, Abundant Resources

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

Objective: Increase the percentage of groups contributing funds by 10%.

First Quarter: We are currently researching ways to encourage non-contributing groups to participate in supporting the WSO including the idea of using new strategies in current publications to achieve this goal.

Second Quarter: After researching, we will ask Fellowship Communication about putting information to encourage groups to support the WSO in *The Forum*. We will review with the Internet Group a similar idea for posting on the Web site as well as a reference in the Board Chairperson's letter.

Third Quarter: Information was given to the Director of Communication to write an article in *The Forum*. Year-to-date, the total number of groups contributing is up by 4%.

Fourth Quarter: There was an article published in the December *Forum* encouraging groups to contribute. In addition, there is a 3% percent increase of number of groups contributing for the year.

Annual: The goal was to increase the number of groups contributing by 10%. Throughout the year different ways to promote and influence the groups to contribute were researched. We worked with the Chairperson of the Board to mention the goal in the Chairperson's letter. In addition we worked with the Director of Communication to include an article in the December *Forum* about group contributions and encouraging groups to contribute. The goal was not met but we do encourage continuing the goal next year.

Goal #2: Discover and use universal resources.

Objective: Encourage members worldwide to continue the "Leave Hope" idea by creating a tradition of remembering Lois' birthday with a "Second Annual 'Leave Hope'" project.

First Quarter: A "blurb" was written for spring issue of *Area Highlights* and *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* as well as a group information "ad" for *The Forum* asking those who participated to share with the WSO what they planned and implemented. Five sharings were received reporting the success of the first annual Leave Hope campaign.

Second Quarter: Sharings received in the first quarter were published in the Fall issue of *Area Highlights*, which will also go up on the Members' site. Four sharings were received. Acknowledgements were sent to those members encouraging them to continue the project. A full page thank-you for participating in the project and asking for sharings was published in the June 2006 *Forum*.

Third Quarter: Twenty-one e-mails were received from members in response to requests in *The Forum* to share their experience participating in the project. Eleven sharings were published in the fall and winter issues of *Area Highlights*. The date on the logo was updated and reminders for 2007 were written for the fall and winter editions of *Area Highlights*.

Fourth Quarter: Short pieces were written for the Winter 2006 and Spring 2007 *Area Highlights*, and January 2007 *Forum*. A reminder was placed on the cover memos of all Conference mailings. A memo was sent to Area Delegates offering the logo and some wording in three languages for use in Area newsletters.

Annual: Based on Area newsletters and sharings for WSO publications, the 2006 campaign was successful. Local campaigns for 2007 are beginning to form.

BUSINESS SERVICES

David Zach, Director of Business Services

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Zelda R., Chairperson

David Zach, Director of Business Services, non-member

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 2006 Preliminary Budget to the Board of Trustees. With Board input and consideration, the proposed 2006 budget was adopted. At a special meeting of the Board of Trustees, prior to the 2006 World Service Conference, the Board revised the proposed budget for presentation to the Conference. In July, the Committee reviewed the 2006 budget and no revisions were presented to the Board of Trustees.

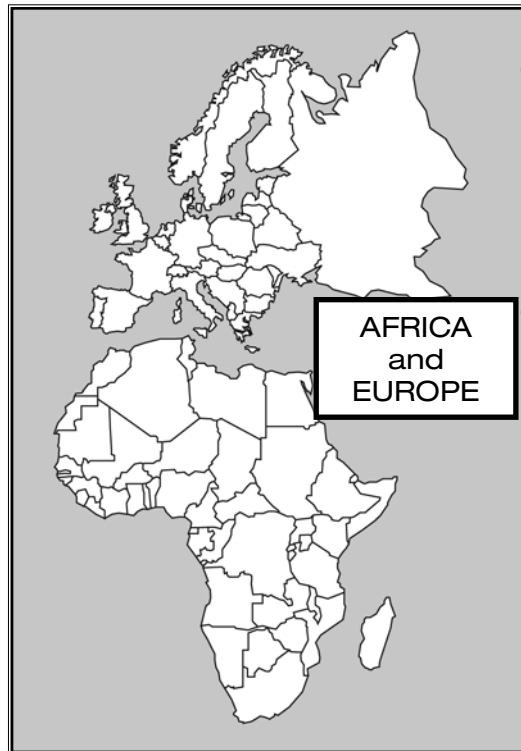
There were monthly and quarterly reviews of the financial statements. Quarterly appeal letters were reviewed. Letters from members, directed to the Finance Committee, were reviewed and answered.

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. The Committee set shipping and handling charges as follows: An 8% shipping and handling fee with a \$7.00 minimum charge in the WSC structure and a 25% shipping and handling fee with a \$10.00 minimum charge outside of the WSC structure, all effective June 1, 2006. The Committee reviewed a new Literature Order Form (S-16) WSC handout that reflected the increase of the selling price of literature to generate a 20% net profit gain, effective June 1, 2006. The Committee will analyze and adjust literature and shipping prices on a yearly basis in conjunction with the budget.

The Committee reviewed the prices of PSAs and set the TV PSA tapes at \$30.00 U.S. and radio PSAs at \$8.00 U.S.

The Committee spent part of a day in November and in December developing the 2007 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 2007 Preliminary Budget will be reviewed and adjusted for presentation to the Board of Trustees.

AL-ANON/ALATEEN INTERNATIONALLY



AFRICA

South Africa: The General Service Office advised that they were grateful to have the opportunity to send a representative to the 2006 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

EUROPE

Austria: A new on-line meeting has originated from Austria.

Belgium (Flemish-speaking): The General Service Office advised that they are discussing whether to buy or to rent office space as they are experiencing problems at their current location.

Belgium (French-speaking): A representative from the General Service Office indicated their Public Outreach efforts in 2006 helped raise awareness for Al-Anon Family Groups within the French-speaking population for Belgium.

Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union): The Committee for Russian-Speaking AFG elected eleven members to the Service Board which includes members of the Moscow Intergroup. There are currently 91 active Al-Anon groups.

Denmark: The General Service Office sent a Delegate to the 2006 IAGSM in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Finland: The General Service Office will host the 2008 IAGSM. The structure was able to translate and publish *Courage to Be Me—Living with Alcoholism*.

France: The General Service Office advised that they have begun updating their current *Service Manual* and hope to complete this project in early 2007.

Germany: The General Service Office indicated much of their focus in 2006 was directed towards plans for a celebration of the 40th anniversary of Al-Anon Family Groups in Germany in 2007.

Iceland: The General Service Office advised that they are in the process of re-vamping their Web site. The updated site will offer more information and services to the groups in 2007.

Greece: The Al-Anon Information Service in Athens launched a new Web site that includes a list of English- and Greek-speaking meetings.

Italy: The General Service Office indicated they published their translation of the book *Lois Remembers* in September and celebrated 30 years of Al-Anon at their National Convention.

Netherlands: The General Service Office advised that there is now an office Coordinator and two Board of Trustees members.

Norway: The General Service Office is planning to produce a Norwegian version of the WSO public outreach magazine *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.

Poland: The General Service Office started a Web site. The General Service Office sent a Delegate to the 2006 IAGSM in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The Literature Committee has started work on translations of the books *Paths to Recovery* and *Hope for Today*.

Romania: *This Is Al-Anon* (ROP-32), *A Guide for the Family* (ROP-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (ROP-13), and the *Groups at Work* section of the *Al-Anon and Alateen Service Manual* were translated and printed in Romanian by the World Service Office.

Spain: The General Service Office advised that their 2006 Conference was successful and members were very enthusiastic about opportunities to do public outreach.

Sweden: The General Service Office indicated they were happy to have four or five service positions filled during their 16th Service Conference. An open house was held at the General Service Office in October in recognition of their 30th anniversary.

Switzerland (French-speaking): The General Service Office advised that a revision was completed in 2006 of their service guidelines.

Switzerland (German-speaking): The General Service Office advised that they were pleased that a 24-hour telephone hotline installed in cooperation with A.A. Switzerland proved successful for them based on the number of Al-Anon related calls.

UK & Eire: General Secretary attended the 2006 World Service Conference.

ASIA

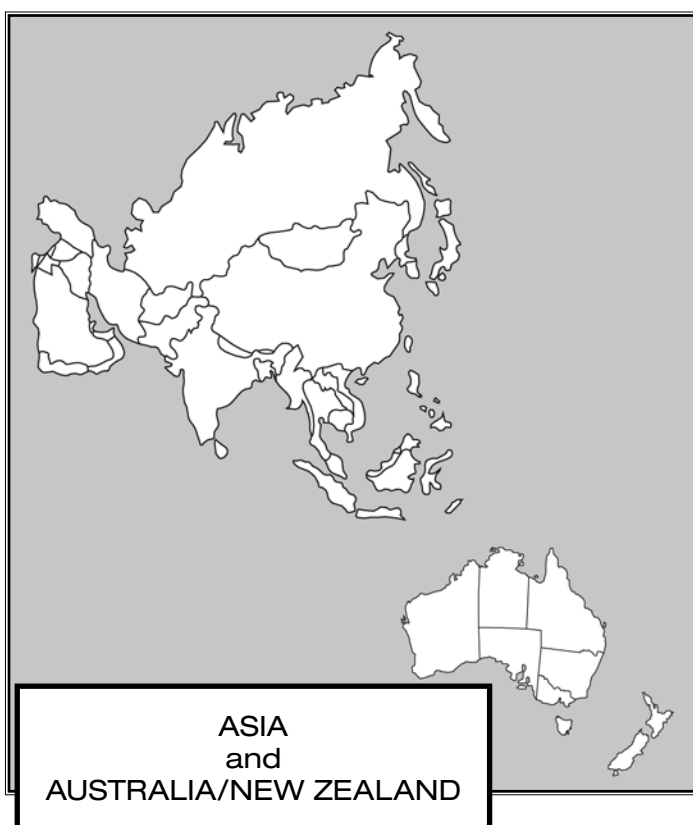
China: The Executive Director and International Coordination Committee Chairperson met with members and professionals in Beijing to share WSO experience regarding service.

Iran: *This Is Al-Anon* (FAP-32), *A Guide for the Family* (FAP-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (FAP-13), and the Groups at Work section of the *Al-Anon and Alateen Service Manual* were translated and printed in Farsi by the World Service Office.

India: A three-year Trial National Service Committee was formed on January 26, 2006 with the guidance and support of the WSO. Thus far the response has been positive.

Japan: The Executive Director and International Coordination Committee Chairperson from the WSO visited the GSO. The General Secretary advised that the discussions with members of the Board of Trustees concerning the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts were productive and appreciated.

Korea: The Executive Director and International Coordination Committee Chair met with members involved in service for discussions at the General Service Office.



AUSTRALIA/ NEW ZEALAND

Australia: The Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements were implemented January 1, 2006. The General Secretary advised that an increase in attendance of GSO personnel and Board members at area events has contributed to an overall increase in unity and understanding within the service structure. Understanding of Al-Anon as a worldwide fellowship was enhanced when two members attended the IAGSM and two members accompanied WSO members to a Conference in Singapore to increase Al-Anon Family Groups' visibility within the professional community.

New Zealand: The General Service Office advised that through recent internal structural changes, the Board now consists of a Literature, Editorial, Conference, and Public Outreach Committee Chairpersons, as well as Northern, Central, and Southern Regional Board Members, Treasurer, and two IAGSM Delegates. The Executive/Budget Committee Chairperson attends the Board meetings with voice and no vote.

NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA



Costa Rica: The General Service Office advised that they held a National Convention and a Regional Seminar. The fellowship seemed to benefit greatly from these activities.

Cuba: The Associate Director—International and the Spanish Translator participated in the second service meeting and 2nd National Al-Anon Convention with Alateen and A.A. participation in Camaguey.

Guatemala: While visiting the United States, the Chairperson of the Board contacted the World Service Office to advise that the service structure is doing well.

Mexico: In February, the 33rd National Service Conference was held and the theme was “Anonymity Yes, Invisibility No.” The General Service Office also advised that they purchased new office space and will move the office after the 2007 Conference.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina: The General Service Office advised that plans were approved by the 2006 Conference and the Board of Trustees to purchase space for the office.

Brazil: The year began with an outreach event for professionals and the launching of a commemorative stamp to celebrate 40 years of Al-Anon in Brazil.

Colombia: The General Service Office hosted the 20th Al-Anon National Meeting in November. The theme was “Experience Freedom.”

Peru: The General Service Office advised that the book *One Day at a Time* and some pamphlets were reprinted. Literature Distribution Centers were formed within the service structure. The Policy Committee approved three guidelines and the RSS Committee held service seminars nationwide.

Uruguay: The 10th National Service Conference took place in November. The General Service Office also advised that the RSS Committee became a permanent committee after a three-year trial period.

Venezuela: The General Service Office advised that the following service meetings were successfully supported in 2006: The National Alateen Sponsorship Assembly, 24th National Al-Anon/Alateen Congress, and the National Service Conference.

REVISED DESCRIPTIVE TEXT OF AL-ANON'S TWELVE CONCEPTS OF SERVICE: CONCEPTS EIGHT, NINE, TEN, TWELVE AND THE WARRANTIES

(New text is bold and underlined, strikethrough indicates deletion.)

CONCEPT EIGHT

The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees.

The Trustees of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters act in two major capacities: (a) in matters of policy and finance, they are the principal planners and are responsible for final decisions; (b) in routine operations, the Trustees delegate full authority to ~~Executive Committees~~ charged with the management of Headquarters.

To arrive at this Concept, experience has led us through the following stages of development:

From 1951 to 1954, when Al-Anon's Headquarters was still trying to feel its way, the workers at the then-named Clearing House were advised by a committee of representatives of neighboring Al-Anon groups who ~~could~~ met occasionally ~~meet informally~~. After the incorporation of Headquarters late in 1954, its Board of Trustees administered the World Service Office. Seven to eleven in number, the Trustees were and meeting monthly; ~~the Trustees~~ and appointed a large committee of volunteers to advise them. This Advisory Committee included all the Trustees and convened every three months. Any recommendations or resolutions proposed by the Advisory Committee had to be ratified by the Board of Trustees.

In 1957, the Advisory Committee was further formalized by a Charter and given a new name—the Advisory Board. It was the authorized custodian of overall Al-Anon policy and finance. In the Charter the hope was expressed that a permanent conference of Delegates from the various states and provinces would eventually take the place of the Advisory Board. The day-to-day administration of the office, however, was still in the hands of the Trustees. ~~(The latter, by the way, were known as “Directors” from March 1957 to January 1965.)~~

After three years' trial, in 1964, the World Service Conference ~~did come~~ came into being as the permanent guardian of Al-Anon's Traditions and services, replacing the Advisory Board, ~~which held its last meeting on November 11 of that year.~~

By this time, however, the business of Al-Anon's Headquarters had grown so large that it became unwieldy for the Board of Trustees to handle the routine administration of the office. Our Trustees realized they could no longer be concerned, as a body, with the endless details that arose daily, weekly, and monthly in the routine conduct of the World Service Office. They also realized the need to devote themselves to the more serious questions of policy, leadership, finance, group and public relations.

Therefore, the Board decided to assign its administrative function to a more constantly available seven-member Executive Committee, possessing the Board's full legal powers. **This Executive Committee is** ~~and~~ composed of three ~~elected~~ Al-Anon members, ~~—preferably not Trustees,—~~ elected by the Board, the Executive Director-~~[14]~~, ~~a person~~ ~~[15]~~ an Al-Anon member from the ~~Administrative Staff~~ of the World Service Office, and the Chairpersons of both the ~~Budget~~ Finance and Policy Committees. The Chairperson of this Executive Committee is elected by the Board of Trustees.

This committee considers all Project Proposals and Project Approvals from committees and staff that fall within budget and existing policy. If a project exceeds budget, it is directed to the Finance Committee. If it entails a change in policy, it is directed to the Policy Committee.

The Board's position thus became that of custodian and guarantor of good management of Al-Anon's World Service Office.

The Forum, from its inception, had a single editor with the full responsibility for choice of material, layout and the writing of editorials. As our magazine grew, an Editorial Committee was appointed by the trustees in 1968 to assist the editor. If and when the magazine reaches the stage where it should handle its own subscriptions and printing, a Forum Executive Committee will no doubt be needed. This would make the World Service Office and *The Forum* two separate operations, each with its own Executive Committee and each with separate funds and facilities.

There is always a strong connection between money and authority. This is a potent reason for forming separate entities for the management of these two dissimilar services.

The Board of Trustees would, of course, maintain its custodial supervision of both operations through its prerogative to elect the Executive Committee for both entities.

It is within the authority of the Board of Trustees to establish other executive committees if deemed necessary.

CONCEPT NINE

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

No matter how carefully we design our service structure of principles and relationships, no matter how well we apportion authority and responsibility, the operating result of our structure can be no better than the personal performance of those who ~~man it~~ **serve** and make it work. Good leadership cannot function well in a poorly designed structure. Weak leadership can hardly function at all, even in the best of structures.

Good leadership can be here today and gone tomorrow. Furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers is a continuing activity. We must constantly find the right people for our many service tasks. Since our future effectiveness thus depends upon ever-new generations of leaders, it seems desirable that we now define what a good service leader should be; that we carefully indicate for each level of service (especially for our Board of Trustees) what special skills will be required; that we review our present methods of finding and choosing leadership.

First let's remember that our service structure ~~rests~~ **depends** on the dedication and ability of thousands of Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives (**DRs**), and Delegates. These are the direct agents of the Al-Anon groups; these are the indispensable links between our fellowship and its World Service; these are the primary representatives of Al-Anon's group conscience.

When choosing GRs, Al-Anon groups should ~~therefore bear such~~ **keep these** facts ~~well~~ in mind. It is only the GRs who, in district or Assembly meetings, can name ~~District Representatives~~ **DRs** and finally name the Delegate. Hence, great care needs to be taken in choosing these representatives. Hit-or-miss methods should be avoided. Groups without GRs should be encouraged to elect them. ~~Improvement in this field is a matter of increased care, responsibility, and education.~~

As the GRs meet in their Assemblies to name a Delegate, an even greater degree of care and dedication will be required. Personal ambitions must be set aside, antagonisms and controversy forgotten. "Who are the best qualified people we can name?" should be the sole thought.

The Handbook or Third Legacy method of naming Delegates by a two-thirds vote or by lot greatly reduces political friction; it makes each Delegate feel that he or she is truly a world servant rather than merely the winner of a contest. Thus far, our Third Legacy methods have produced ~~District Representatives~~ **DRs** and Delegates of a high level of dedication and competence. Our Area Assemblies need only to continue to act with care and in a selfless spirit.

Some members, still doubtful whether choice by lot is a good idea, feel that the best person does not always win. It must be pointed out that each time we have disregarded the two-thirds vote or lot in naming Delegates, there has been a sense of defeat and disturbance in the minority camp, which is not offset by naming the supposedly best person. Indeed the second-best person can often be as good a Delegate as the Assembly's first choice and may even be a better Delegate.

Let us now consider the specific personal qualities a World Service leader ought to have. The following slightly modified essay, "Leadership," written by Bill W. for a 1959 issue of the *AA Grapevine*, applies equally well to Al-Anon.

No society can function well without able leadership at all levels, and we are no exception. However, we sometimes warp the traditional idea of "principles before personalities" to such a point that there would be no personality in leadership whatever. This would imply rather faceless automatons trying to please everybody.

At other times, we may demand that our leaders be people of the most sterling judgment, morals, and inspiration.

Real leadership, of course, has to function in between these entirely imaginary poles. In our fellowship certainly no leader is faceless, nor is any leader perfect. Fortunately we are blessed with any number of real leaders—those men and women whose dedication, stability, vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us.

A leader is a person who can put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader is a power-driver, we rebel; when he is just an order-taker and exercises no judgment of his own, he isn't a leader at all.

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

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured of sufficient backing, it freely makes decisions and puts them into action, provided of course that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility. A “politico” is an individual who is forever trying to “get the people what they want.” A statesman is an individual who can carefully discriminate when and *when not* to do this. He recognizes that even large majorities, when badly disturbed or uninformed, can be dead wrong. When such an occasion arises with vital matters at stake, it is the duty of leadership to take a stand against the storm, using its every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change.

Nothing, however, can be more hampering to good leadership than opposition for opposition’s sake alone. “Let’s have it our way or no way at all” is often powered by visionless pride or a gripe. The opposition that casts its vote “no” without giving any real reasons won’t do either. Leadership should always have good reasons and give them.

Then, too, a leader must realize that even very prideful or angry people can sometimes be right, when the calm and the more humble are quite mistaken.

Another qualification for leadership is “give and take,” the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever it can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to many of us. Nevertheless, progress is nearly always characterized by a *series of improving compromises*. We cannot, however, always compromise. Now and then, it is necessary to stick flat-footed to one’s conviction. Careful discrimination and keen timing are required in all situations.

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

Then there are destructive critics. They power-drive, they are “politicos,” they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They spread rumors and gossip to gain their ends—all for the good of the fellowship! We have to learn that these people, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be destructive at all, depending on how we relate ourselves to them.

If we are the target, we ought to listen carefully to what they say. Sometimes they are telling the whole truth; at other times, a little truth. More often, though, they are just rationalizing themselves into nonsense. If they speak even a little truth, we had better thank them, take our respective inventories, and admit we were wrong. If it is nonsense, we can ignore it or lay all the cards on the table and try to persuade them. Failing this, we can be sorry they are too sick to listen and try to forget the whole business. There are few better means of self-survey and of developing genuine patience than the workouts these usually well-meaning erratic members afford us. This is a large order and sometimes we shall fail to make good on it, but we must keep trying.

Now we come to the all-important attribute of vision. Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this to be heresy. But the valuable principle of “one day at a time” really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means that we are not to repine over the past nor daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God has endowed human beings with considerable capability for foresight and evidently expects us to use it. Therefore, we must distinguish between wishful fantasy and thoughtful estimate. This can spell the difference between future progress and unforeseen woe.

Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think about it at all. The making of estimates has several aspects. We look at past and present experience to see what we think it means. From this we derive a tentative idea or policy. First, we ask how this idea or policy might work in the near future. Then we ask how it might apply under differing conditions in the longer future. If an idea seems good, we try it experimentally, when that is possible. Later, we evaluate the situation and ask whether our estimate is working well.

At this stage, we may have to make a critical decision. Maybe our policy or plan still looks fine and is apparently doing well. Nevertheless, we ought to ponder carefully its longtime effect. Will today’s advantages boomerang into liabilities for tomorrow? The temptation might be to seize the immediate benefits and forget the harmful precedents or consequences that might result.

We have found we must use these principles to estimate constantly, especially at World Service levels, where stakes are high. We must think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, group capability, and willingness to contribute. We often must try to think months and years ahead.

Such is the process of estimating the future. Responsible world leadership must be proficient in this vital activity. It is an essential ability, especially in our Trustees. Most of them should be chosen on the basis that they have already demonstrated foresight in their activities for the fellowship and in their own careers.

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.

CONCEPT TEN

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

The guarantee of harmonious and effective function of good operational structure is in the relation of its several parts and people, so that none can doubt the nature of their respective responsibilities and corresponding areas of authority. Unless these relationships are well-defined and those holding the final authority are able and willing to delegate suitable operational authority; unless those holding such authority feel able and willing to use it freely as trusted servants; and unless there exists some definite means of interpreting and deciding doubtful situations—then personal clashes, confusion, and ineffectiveness will be inevitable.

The matter of responsibility and its necessary and co-equal authority is of such urgent importance that it might be profitable to recapitulate what has already been said, meanwhile taking a bird's-eye view of our entire structure to better envision how this principle does, and always must, apply in our every activity and attitude.

The first characteristic that any working structure must have is a point, or succession of points, where there is ultimate responsibility and ultimate authority. We have already seen how, for Al-Anon's World Service, this kind of final responsibility and authority resides in the Al-Anon groups themselves. And they, in turn, have entrusted some of their ultimate authority to the Conference and the **Board of Trustees**.

We have observed how the Conference Delegates, directly representing the groups, are actually in a position of ultimate authority over the Trustees. We have seen further how the Trustees are in ultimate authority over the **standing selected** and Executive Committees of the World Service Office ~~and the Al-Anon Forum~~.

The principle of ultimate authority runs through our entire structure. This is necessary, because all our service affairs and activities must be directed ~~at~~ **to** the point at which final responsibility rests, so that each worker, or each ~~class~~ **group** of workers, knows who makes final decisions.

If, however, authority is not specifically delegated, we would have the opposite result: The groups could direct their Delegates on every important issue; the Delegates could similarly turn the Trustees into a spineless committee to be given specific direction on almost every matter; likewise, the Trustees could regard themselves as the sole directors of the service entities, making automatons of the working staff. In short, such a misuse of ultimate authority would add up to a dictatorship in which nearly every classification of Al-Anon servants would have large responsibilities but no definite authority, and hence no capability of effective decision and leadership. Big or little tyrannies and buck-passing would be the inevitable consequence.

Therefore, it is clear that ultimate authority is not something to be used indiscriminately. Indeed, ultimate authority should practically never be used in full, *except in an emergency*. That *emergency* usually arises when delegated authority has erred, when it must be reorganized because it is ineffective, or because it constantly exceeds its defined scope and purpose. For example, if the groups are dissatisfied with the Conference, they can elect better Delegates or withhold funds. *If the Delegates ~~Conference~~ must, they it can censure, and under certain circumstances, they it can bring about the reorganization of the Board of Trustees (see Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter).* ~~†6†~~ The Trustees can do the same with the service committees.

These are the *proper* uses of *ultimate authority*, because they correctly discharge an ultimate responsibility. The *influence* of ultimate authority must always be felt, but it is perfectly clear that *when delegated authority is operating well, it should be left alone*. Otherwise those charged with operating responsibility will be demoralized, because their work will be subject to arbitrary invasion, and the demands made upon them would be greater than their authority.

Let us review the foregoing Concepts and note how, at each structure level, accurate definitions of authority and responsibility have been given. This has been done by (a) traditional means, (b) legal means, and (c) by principles under which doubtful or conflicting situations can be interpreted and resolved.

- a. Consider the Conference Charter. It is not a legal instrument, but practically speaking, it is substantially a contract between the Al-Anon groups and the Conference. The Charter indicates that the Al-Anon groups have delegated ~~some of their ultimate authority~~ **complete administrative** and ~~all needed~~ operational authority to the Conference **and its service arms**. ~~This includes the Trustees and the active services.~~ It further suggests that each Conference member be entitled to cast his ballot according to the dictates of his own conscience; that the Conference itself also be granted, under the traditional Right of Decision, the privilege of choosing which matters it will decide and which it will refer back to the groups for their discussion, guidance, or direction. These are the traditional definitions designed to check the natural tendency of the groups to overinstruct Delegates. This gives the Conference an authority equal to its responsibility.
- b. Consider next the position of the Trustees. It has already been stated that although the Conference has the ultimate authority, the Trustees must have the legal right to actively administer our service affairs. Their legal right has been further strengthened and its use encouraged by the traditional Right of Decision. We recognize also that the Trustees have a legal right of veto over the Conference when, in rare cases, they feel it should be used. By these means we have guaranteed the Trustees administrative authority equal to their actual responsibility. The position of the

Trustees is further strengthened by their voting participation in the Conference and by the recognition that they are Al-Anon's primary World Service administrators. All this, of course, does not deny in any way the ultimate authority of the Conference ~~or of the Delegates~~, should it be necessary to give the Trustees directives or censures or to reorganize the Board.

Much care has also been taken to guarantee the Executive Committee an ample operating authority that fully matches its responsibility for the routine conduct of our active services. The same would be true of any later-formed committees or boards, ~~such as a Forum Editorial Board~~. However, the legal authority of the Trustees over all of its subsidiary committees and boards is not only ultimate it is absolute the moment the Trustees have reason to make such a decision. They can **disband or** name new committees or boards at any time; they control the budget and can withhold operating funds. Nevertheless, so long as things go well, it is highly important that the Trustees do not unnecessarily interfere with or usurp the operating authority of these entities. Hence the care taken in constructing these definitions of delegated authority.

To a considerable degree, the **standing selected** committees of the World Service Office—**Policy, Budget, Public Information, [17] and the others**—have a similar latitude. Under the principle of the Right of Decision, each primary committee may choose what business it will dispose of and what **matters business** it will refer to the Trustees. The position of these committees is also fortified by the appointment of a generous proportion of non-Trustee members. Here, too, provision has been made to equalize the authority of these committees with their responsibility.

c. Now we come to the matter of conflicting authority and how these conflicts are to be resolved. Most routine conflicts in the active services are easily settled, because ready communication has been provided between all service committees and boards.

In all matters of joint or conflicting authority, a primary jurisdiction must be established, an understood point or body where a final settlement can be reached. The secondary jurisdiction must also be heard. Minor conflicts will not need to be referred to the Trustees, but the *point of final decision is always located there*.

Suppose, for example, **a plan for creation or expansion of service develops that involves interpretation or application of the Traditions or policies. It first goes to the Policy Committee.** that one of the service departments develops plans for expansion. It first takes these plans to the Policy Committee. If the Policy Committee approves the plans, it recommends them to the Board of Trustees. **The Board of Trustees determines what matters it will approve and what it will delegate to the Executive Committee.** However, if a considerable sum of money will be needed, the plans will first have to be submitted to the Executive Committee.

If, after consultation with the Budget Committee, the Executive Committee agrees that the expenditure is warranted and is in line with the overall budget, it makes its recommendation to the Trustees. But if the Executive Committee objects, it must then file its objection with the Trustees, who will settle the issue. If necessary the Trustees will refer the matter to the Conference.

However, if the project is not budgeted, the plans will first have to be submitted to the Finance Committee. If the Finance Committee decides the expenditure is in line with the overall budget or financially feasible, it makes its recommendation to either the Executive Committee or the Board of Trustees.

Primary and secondary jurisdiction also works the other way around. If the Executive Committee **approves any new or expanded service project that involves interpretation or application of the Traditions or policies, it sends it to the Policy Committee. Once the Policy Committee finds it is within the Traditions and policies and the Finance Committee finds it is financially feasible, the Executive Committee recommends it to the Board of Trustees for final decision.** after consulting the Budget Committee, for example, proposes a large expenditure that may strongly affect Al-Anon feeling and policy, it refers the matter to the Policy Committee. Then, after both the expenditure and the reason for it have been agreed on, it is recommended to the Board of Trustees for its final decision.

A condition to be avoided at all costs is *double-headed* business or policy management. Authority can never be divided into equal halves. Nowhere does such split authority so bedevil a structure as in its executive departments (**see Concept Eleven**). The vital need to avoid double-headed executive management will be fully discussed under Concept Eleven.

In addition to the methods we use to make delegated authority equal to delegated responsibility, we have two more guarantees—the Right of Appeal and the Right of Petition. As mentioned in Concept Five, a bare majority may constitute a pseudo-ultimate authority on many occasions when it is not warranted. Likewise, executives may **overboss excessively supervise** their assistants **staff**. Therefore, we use the concepts of Appeal and Petition to ensure that every minority and every worker who does a job has an authority and a status commensurate with the responsibility involved.

To sum up: Let us always be sure that there is an abundance of final or ultimate authority to correct or to reorganize; but let us be equally sure that all of our trusted servants have a clearly defined and adequate authority to do their daily work and to discharge their clear responsibilities.

All of this is fully implied in Al-Anon's Tradition Two. Here we see the "group conscience" as the *ultimate* authority and the "trusted servant" as the *delegated* authority. One cannot function without the other. We well know that only by means of careful definitions and mutual respect can we constantly maintain a harmonious working balance.

CONCEPT TWELVE

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

In order that the Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power, the General Warranties of the Conference read: "In all its proceedings the World Service Conference of Al-Anon shall observe the spirit of the Traditions":

- (1) that only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle;
- (2) that no Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members;
- (3) that all decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by unanimity;
- (4) that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy;
- (5) 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 always remain democratic in thought and action.

Our Conference Charter is an informal agreement made between the Al-Anon groups and their Trustees in 1967 and is the basis upon which the World Service Conference operates. In general, the Charter is a flexible document, since its first eleven articles can be readily amended by the Conference at any time.

But Article 12 stands by itself. An amendment or cancellation of any of its vital Warranties would require the written consent of three-quarters of all the *registered* ~~fifty~~ Al-Anon groups. Each group should vote on any such proposals after taking at least six months for careful deliberation. Thus, changes in the Warranties have been made difficult but not impossible.

It is believed that all of these Warranties are permanently important to Al-Anon's general welfare. A change in them should be made only upon positive evidence of some defect, and then only by common consent of the Al-Anon groups. They rank, therefore, with the Twelve Traditions and are as important to Al-Anon's world services as the Traditions are to the groups.

All the Warranties counsel prudence—prudence in personal relations, prudence in money matters, and prudence in our contacts with the world ~~about~~ around us. For Al-Anon, prudence is a middle ground, a channel between fear on the one hand and recklessness on the other. Prudence creates a climate of harmony, effectiveness, and consistent spiritual progress. These Warranties express the wisdom of taking thought for the future based on lessons of the past. They protect us against needless errors and the natural human temptations of wealth, prestige, and power.

The Conference, above all, should feel bound by the Al-Anon Traditions. Indeed, the Conference is named "the guardian of the Traditions." The Traditions, which express the principles and attitudes of prudence, set the pattern of unity and of function which our World Service Conference is expected to exemplify.

"In order that the Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power" does not mean that the Conference should have virtually no money and no authority. We must ~~use~~ have some money, and there must be some authority. But how much? How and where should we draw the line?

The principal protection against too much money and too much power is ~~to be~~ found in the Traditions themselves. ~~So~~ As long as our Board of Trustees refuses to accept outside contributions and sets a ~~modest~~ limit on each member's gift to Al-Anon's world services, we shall not become wealthy to a perilous degree. Indeed, it seems that the chief difficulty will continue to be that of effectively informing the Al-Anon groups as to the actual financial needs of the World Service Office and their responsibility to support it. It is ~~certain~~ unlikely, therefore, that we shall ~~never~~ become too wealthy through group contributions. We need only ~~to~~ avoid the temptation of accepting money from the outside world.

There can be little risk either in giving Delegates, Trustees, and ~~S~~staff the necessary authority. Experience indicates that we are unlikely to encounter problems of too much service authority. On the contrary, our difficulty may be to maintain enough of it. We are protected from too much authority by participation, by the Right of Appeal, and by our Charter. A leader who demands too much authority could not long remain in leadership. Our Delegates, directly representing the groups, control the ultimate supply of our service funds. This constitutes a direct check upon the rise and use of personal power. Taken altogether, these factors should be reliable safeguards against too much money and too much authority.

~~But there is a~~ Another sort of authority and power that the Conference cannot be without; is the spiritual power that flows from the activities and attitudes of truly humble, unselfish, and dedicated Al-Anon servants. They do not rule by mandate, they lead by example. This is the real power that makes our Conference function.

[The wording of the Warranties in this section is an adaptation, by our co-founder Lois W., of A.A.'s Warranties. It is retained here for historical purposes and because it has been in common usage since the adoption of this Manual by the 1970 WSC. The formal wording of the Warranties can be found in the Conference Charter.]

Warranty One

Sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.*

Our attitude toward the giving of time, compared with giving money, presents an interesting contrast. We give much time to Al-Anon activities for the sake of our groups, our areas, and Al-Anon as a whole, as well as for our own protection and growth. We often take time from home duties or business to do Twelfth Step work. We do not think these sacrifices are unusual. We remember that people once gave their time to us as we struggled for understanding.

But when it comes to the spending of cash for Al-Anon service overhead, many of us turn reluctant. When we drop money in the meeting basket, its usefulness is not as obvious as when we talk to a newcomer. There is no romance in paying the landlord. Sometimes we hold back when asked to meet area or Intergroup service expenses. As to world services, we may remark, "Well, our group doesn't get anything out of it. Let's not spoil Al-Anon with money and service organization. Let's keep things simple."

These reactions are natural and understandable, easy to justify. But they quickly disappear when the real need for a given Al-Anon service is made clear by right information and education. We see this in the ever-better job now being done by Delegates, District Representatives, and Group Representatives, who ~~are finding~~ **know** that raising money by pressure and exhortation is not needed in Al-Anon. When each member can be shown how much the service dollar really buys in terms of helping families to find Al-Anon, contributions are willing and generous.

We can take comfort, too, from the fact that the cost of our world services is small in relation to the size of our fellowship. Our paid workers at the WSO are comparatively few.

Not until 1966 was the Board of Trustees able to establish a **savings account that later became a Rreserve Ffund**. ~~Until Each year before~~ then the Trustees ~~each year~~ hoped and prayed that the budget would be met by contributions and literature sales. Fortunately this turned out as they hoped. But such a hand-to-mouth system of finance, although inevitable in our early years, is **was** not a prudent one for the future.

~~At present, g~~Group contributions pay for only a portion of the World Service Office expenses; the balance is financed by the sale of ~~books and booklets~~ **literature**. It is firmly believed that, as the groups understand the situation more clearly, their contributions will continue to increase, so that the World Service Office ~~may soon be able to build up~~ **can maintain** a sufficient reserve to carry it through an emergency, such as a financial depression.

Arguments pro and con the establishment of a Reserve fund are these:

Is a Reserve Fund needed?

~~As this is written, i~~In 1969, our headquarters operation is **was** breaking even. Compared with earlier days, this is **was** wonderful. Nevertheless this ~~condition is was~~ in a period of great prosperity. **The Board of Trustees, at its Annual Meeting in 1970, formally established the Reserve Fund with the following stated purposes:**

- 1. To assure continuation of essential services in the event of substantial decline in income.**
- 2. To cover cost of special projects which could not be financed from normal sources of income.**

What would it be like in bad times without a reserve? Suppose the WSO income were greatly decreased by a depression, or expenses increased by a steep inflation. We might be faced by a gaping deficit that would make it necessary to discharge ~~part some~~ of our paid workers ~~and staff members~~. Mail would go unanswered, requests for information would not be properly serviced. *The Forum* might have to be reduced to its former size. The number of Delegates attending the annual World Service Conference might have to be drastically reduced. These could be the penalties if we did not have a Reserve Fund to fall back on. Is it not wise for us to increase our savings whenever possible, especially in good times?

If the Reserve Fund continues to grow, will "perilous wealth" result?

There are so many present needs for more working capital that it is hard to imagine having too much. **Many outreach opportunities are becoming available to Al-Anon.** Al-Anon's foreign-aid field is just beginning to open up in a large way. Translators and translations are needed. Our continuous growth constantly increases salary expenses as more staff is needed. **Staff and volunteers are often invited to travel to different parts of the world to carry the Al-Anon message. Translators and translations are needed.** Members of the WSO occasionally are asked to visit distant groups as speakers at anniversaries, conventions, **service events**, etc. If there were more funds available, Headquarters could encourage this, by offering to pay part of this most informative and useful travel. There is nothing like personal contact for arousing interest and enlarging understanding.

The Reserve Fund would never be permitted by the Conference to become excessive.

Will the presence of such a fund discourage group contributions?

We believe that further education will help the groups understand the need of such a fund and that it will have little or no effect on their contributions. ~~The Delegates have already done much toward informing the groups about this.~~

Does the establishment of a Reserve Fund mean that we lack faith in God's providence?

Are we not expected to exercise a reasonable amount of foresight in the conduct of our affairs? This is certainly no denial of faith in God's providence; it is instead a willingness to shoulder our own clear responsibility ~~and so merit His trust in us.~~

Should our books and other literature be sold at cost so that hard-pressed members could purchase them more easily; or sold for less to encourage the general public to buy them?

No, because this would mean sacrificing the support of Al-Anon's world services for small financial advantages to individual members. Experience shows that without a modest profit on literature, the WSO could not pay for its many worldwide services. Money charity to members is not the function of the group, Intergroup, or World Service Office.

If a member cannot afford to buy a book, ~~his~~ a sponsor may give or lend ~~him~~ one. Many libraries carry our books. Groups sometimes sell books on the installment plan to ~~aid~~ help newcomers. If the group undertook to assist individual members financially, the group ~~kitty~~ treasury, which is for the benefit of all members, would soon be dissipated. The same would be true if WSO sold books or literature at cost.

Because of its specialized character there is no reason to believe that large sales of Al-Anon literature could be made to the general public even at lowered prices. To publish in paperback would not be the answer, either: Publishers tell us that paperback issues nearly always destroy the circulation of hardcover books.

Does so-called "profit-making" on our books and pamphlets go counter to sound spiritual principles?

Many groups, as well as the WSO, sell books for a little more than cost. Actually, this is ~~not a profit after all, but~~ further could be considered additional contributions which the member-buyers make to the general welfare of their groups or WSO. The certain and continuous solvency of our world services rests squarely upon these contributions. Looked at in this way, the Reserve Fund is seen to be the aggregate of many small financial sacrifices made by individual members for the good of the whole fellowship.

~~*Note: The Warranties are found in the Conference Charter (pages 143-147 of this manual). The wording above, drafted by our co-founder Lois W. and approved by the 1970 World Service Conference, is part of the descriptive text and not the actual Warranty.~~

Warranty Two

None of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others. *

The application of this principle has already been extensively discussed under Concept Four, Participation is the key to harmony. It is so important, however, that it is the subject of this Warranty, thus ensuring that Conference action alone can never overturn or amend the Right of Participation. For such a purpose, widespread group consent would be needed, which might be difficult though not impossible for the Conference to obtain. Our whole service experience fully justifies taking this strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at any point in our Conference structure.

This Warranty against absolute authority is far more general and sweeping in its nature than a guarantee of voting participation. It really means that we in Al-Anon do not want or need absolute human authority in any form.

Article 12 of the Conference Charter might be called "The Service Bill of Rights," because these Warranties, and especially this one, express deep and loving respect for the spiritual liberties of our fellows members. May God grant that we shall never be so unwise as to desire anything less.

Warranty Three

That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity. *

Here, on the one hand, we erect a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and on the other hand, take notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle further guarantees that all matters of importance will be extensively debated, until a ~~really heavy~~ **substantial** majority can support every critical decision we are called upon to make in the Conference.

The Conference voice would thus speak with authority and confidence beyond that which a simple majority could confer. If any persons remain in opposition, they are likely to be better satisfied because their views have had a full and fair hearing.

The principle of substantial unanimity does, however, have certain practical limitations. Occasionally a matter will be of such extreme urgency that a Conference decision must be made at once. In such a case a minority, however well-intended, could not be allowed to block a vitally needed action or one which is evidently in the best interests of Al-Anon. Here we shall need to trust the majority, sometimes a mere majority, to decide whether Conference debate is to be terminated and a final decision taken. In certain other cases, the majority will also have to exercise its prerogative. Suppose, for example, that a small minority obstinately tries to use the principle of substantial unanimity to block a clearly needed action. In such an event it would be the plain duty of the majority to override such a misuse of the principle of substantial unanimity and call for a vote.

However, majorities will probably seldom need to take such radical stands. If and when they do, the Conference will have to decide, by a simple majority vote, what the requirements of substantial unanimity should be, whether two-thirds, three-quarters, or an even greater majority.

The practical and spiritual results of substantial unanimity will make itself evident.

Warranty Four

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

Practically all societies and governments feel it necessary to inflict personal punishments upon individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles or laws. Because of ~~their~~ **its** spiritual character ~~both Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon find~~ this practice unnecessary. When ~~AAs~~ **alcoholics** fail to follow sound spiritual principles, alcohol cuts them down. It is not so obvious with us of **in** Al-Anon. It is easier for us to fool ourselves that we are right and that our indignation is justified. However, anger and resentment betray us, and we ~~soon~~ recognize we've had a "slip." Therefore no humanly administered system of penalties is needed in ~~either society~~ **our fellowship**. This unique condition is one on which we can fully rely and one which we should never abandon by resorting to personal attack or punishment. For much the same reason we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self-defense. Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the **growing** goodwill Al-Anon enjoys than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

Therefore, it is evident that the harmony, security, and future effectiveness of Al-Anon will depend largely upon our maintenance of a thoroughly nonaggressive and pacific attitude in all our public relations.

If we recognize that religion is the province of the clergy, ~~that~~ the practice of medicine is for doctors, and ~~that~~ social welfare; **is** for social workers, we can helpfully cooperate with all. Certainly there is little basis for controversy in these areas. Al-Anon has no concern with reform or politics. We should strictly mind our threefold purpose.

Because our World Service Conference represents us all, it is especially charged with the duty of setting the highest possible standards with respect to these attitudes.

The Conference, however, may sometimes have to apply these principles to specific situations and take certain protective action, especially in the area of Tradition violation. This action, however, need never be punitive or aggressively controversial. When the infractions have serious implications, the WSO consults the Conference for its advice and direction. For the more routine deviations the WSO takes appropriate action, which it reports to the Conference **at its next session on a timely basis**.

Let us take some situations that would require consideration and decision:

- Suppose that Al-Anon falls under sharp public attack or heavy ridicule with little or no justification in fact. Almost without exception, it can be confidently estimated that our best defense would be no defense whatever—namely, complete silence at the public level. Unreasonable people are stimulated all the more by opposition. If in good humor we leave them strictly alone, they are apt to subside the more quickly. If their attacks persist and it is

plain that they are misinformed, it may be wise to communicate with them in a temperate and informative way; also in such a manner that they cannot use our communication as a springboard for fresh assault. Such communication need not be made by the World Service Office officially. Very often we can use the good offices of friends. Such messages should never question the motives of the attackers, but should be purely informative. These communications should also be private. If made public, they will often be seized upon as a fresh excuse for controversy.

If, however, criticism of Al-Anon is to any extent justified, it could be acknowledged privately, together with our thanks.

- Then we might be confronted by public violations of the Al-Anon Traditions. Individuals, outside organizations and even our own members may sometimes may try to use the Al-Anon name for their own private purposes. As Al-Anon grows in size and public recognition, the temptation to misuse our name may increase.

It has been said, “Al-Anon is prepared to give away its knowledge and experience—all except the Al-Anon name itself.” Our principles can be applied in any situation. We do not wish to monopolize them. We simply request that the public use of the Al-Anon name be avoided by those ~~other agencies~~ who wish to avail themselves of Al-Anon techniques and ideas. In case the Al-Anon name should be misapplied, it would of course be the duty of our World Service Conference to press for the discontinuance of such a practice—avoiding, however, public quarreling about the matter.

The Conference, as we know, is the guardian of the Traditions. But this does not imply the right nor the duty of the Conference to publicly punish or sue every willful violator. Such aggressive public acts would place the Conference in the position of having violated one of its Traditions in order to defend another.

Privately, however, violators of our Traditions can be informed that they are out of order. If they persist, our resources of persuasion may be used. Consistent firmness will often bring the desired result.

In the long run, though, we shall have to rely mainly upon the pressures of Al-Anon and public opinion. We shall need to maintain continuous education of the public through communication channels of all kinds.

Experience has shown that continuous and general education respecting our Traditions will be a reliable protection in the years to come.

[See Appendix—Protection of AA’s Name.]

- Severe internal disagreement among us that comes to unwelcome public attention is unlikely to occur in Al-Anon, but it did in AA. *[See Appendix—AA’s experience with internal disagreement.]*

What should our World Service Conference do about this should it ever happen?

Always remembering group autonomy and the fact that Al-Anon’s World Headquarters is not a government, the best course is usually to make an offer of mediation. What the Tradition means, and what our experience has been, can be recounted. Avoidance of any breakthrough to the public level should always be urged and all parties should be reminded that an unfavorable public image could keep ~~new prospects~~ potential members from joining Al-Anon.

Many of these difficulties with the Traditions represent honest differences of opinion in interpretation of the Traditions. The Traditions sometimes reveal gray areas where violations are often debatable and inconsequential. In such cases we refrain from offering suggestions, unless they are insisted upon. Many such problems can be solved by the local people concerned.

- It is possible that some day might see a deep rift dividing ~~either or both AA and~~ Al-Anon—a cleavage of opinion so serious that it might involve a withdrawal of an appreciable proportion of members into a new society or one faction’s making an alliance with an outside agency, ignoring the Traditions. It might be powered by religious, political, national, or racial* forces. It might represent an honest effort to change for the better, but it would certainly pose a serious question of what to do.

Such a contingency is hard to imagine, yet this is no reason for refusing to give it calm forethought. If it ever came, its development might be such a terrific surprise and shock that aroused passions could flare, making any constructive solution difficult, perhaps impossible.

Particularly today, when society everywhere is in such a state of fission, this possibility must be considered. The best attitude in such a circumstance might be complete nonresistance—certainly no anger, no attack. Al-Anon has no doctrine that has to be maintained. There is no authority that has to be supported; no prestige, power, or pride that has to be satisfied. And we have no property or money that is worth quarreling about. In the event of a threatened major division, the best possible use should be made of these advantages in a calm and considered attitude of nonresistance.

We have always practiced this attitude on a lesser scale. If a member says there is too much dominance by one person in ~~her a~~ group, we simply say, “Why don’t you try another one? Or start one of your own.” If individual members wish to gather together for ~~retreats, Communion breakfasts, or any~~ outside undertaking whatever, we still say, “Fine. Only we hope you won’t designate such activities as an Al-Anon group or enterprise.”

In the event of an ~~extensive split~~ **major division** we would not waste time persuading the dissenters to stay with us. Should they become happier and more serene under new auspices and changed conditions; we would ask ourselves if we could not learn from their fresh experience.

Warranty Five

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

In preceding Concepts, attention has been drawn to the extraordinary liberties that the Traditions accord to the individual member and group. No penalties are to be inflicted for nonconformity to Al-Anon principles, no fees or dues levied; contributions are always voluntary. No member can be expelled from the fellowship; membership always is the choice of the individual. Each group conducts its internal affairs as it wishes, only abstaining from acts that might injure Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole. And finally, any group of ~~the relatives~~ **and friends** of alcoholics **when** gathered together for mutual aid may call itself an Al-Anon Family Group provided that as a group it has no other purpose or affiliation.

Because we set high value on our liberties and cannot conceive of a time when they will need to be limited, we enjoin our World Service Conference to abstain from any act of authoritative government that could curtail Al-Anon's freedoms. To maintain these freedoms the Conference must remain democratic in spirit and in action.

Therefore we expect that our Conference will always try to act with mutual respect and love, one member for another; that no action will be taken in anger, haste or recklessness; that care will be observed to respect and protect all minorities; that no action will be personally punitive; that whenever possible, important actions will be taken in substantial unanimity; and that our Conference will ever be prudently on guard against tyrannies, great or small, whether these be found in the majority or in the minority.

The sum of these several attitudes and practices is the very essence of democracy. Our freedom to serve is truly the freedom by which we live and have our being.

~~{The wording of the Warranties in this section is an adaptation of AA's Warranties. It is retained here for historical purposes and because it has been in common usage since the adoption of this manual by the 1970 WSC.}~~

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