

# 2009 World Service Conference Summary

2009 World Service Conference

## EMBRACE THE LEGACIES:

Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future

EMBRASSONS LES HÉRITAGES:  
Nos ponts spirituels pour élargir l'avenir

ACOJAMOS LOS LEGADOS:  
Nuestros puentes espirituales para ampliar el futuro

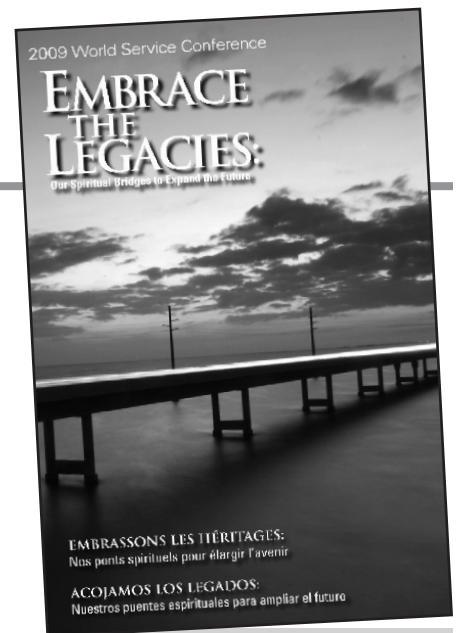
Also available on the Members' site at [www.al-anon.alateen.org/members](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/members)

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

## 2009 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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**"Our World Service Conference (WSC) is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs."**

*2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), page 170*

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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.

**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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THE  
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## SELECTED COMMITTEES, WORK GROUPS, THOUGHT FORCES, AND TASK FORCES

Mary Ann R.  
Chairperson of the Board

At the 2008 World Service Conference, a Trustee gave an in-depth presentation on the history of Committees (see page 35-36 of the *2008 Conference Summary*). Following the presentation, Conference members met with their assigned Committees, Task Forces, and Thought Forces. The Committees were asked to fill out an evaluation form describing the specific work of the Committee and the best way to accomplish that work. After the 2008 Conference, the Board of Trustees reviewed the evaluation forms.

The day before the 2009 Conference convened, the Chairperson of the Board reviewed the roles of Committees, Work Groups, Thought, and Task Force Members and offered hints for the members of these groups by saying, "In a few minutes you will be leaving for your Committee, Work Group, Thought Force, and Task Force meetings. To assist you in your work, I'd like to clarify the roles of Conference members as it pertains to participation in these groups and to provide some hints that could assist in your preparation for the meeting.

"Tradition One states that: 'Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.' When working in a group setting, I believe that unity is more easily achieved when we understand our roles and have a common understanding of our goals.

**"Let's look at the definitions of these four units; ones that the Board uses to better define our responsibilities when working in these capacities.**

- A Committee is what is known as an originating body and often considered a permanent part of an organization. A Thought Force or Task Force may evolve from a Committee. The Selected Committees that we are talking about today are Committees of the Board of Trustees and were formed to respond to an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups. While Committees do not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service department they are related to, they may make recommendations to the Board about any work the Committee is doing or want to consider.
- A Work Group may also be an originating body from where a Thought or Task Force may originate. A Work Group may be formed to respond to an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups and may make recommendations resulting from any work they are doing or considering.
- A Thought Force is a temporary unit of people established to research ideas and possibilities on a single defined task or activity. Sometimes they offer recommendations resulting from their findings. They are 'thinkers,' not 'doers.'
- A Task Force is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity. A Task Force may fulfill the recommendations made by a Thought Force. Task Forces are the 'doers.'
- None of these groups is a decision-making body, they make recommendations.

**"Who are the Members of Committees, Work Groups, and the Thought and Task Forces?**

- For the purposes of today's discussion all of the members of the WSC.
- Committees and Work Groups may also have At-Large members who are not present today.
- The Thought and Task Forces of the Conference are comprised of Conference members only, unless a Delegate member was outgoing at the prior year's end and remained on the Force to complete the work.



### **“What are the roles and responsibilities of the Committees, Work Groups, and the Thought and Task Forces?”**

- Everyone’s role is the same, with the exception of the Chairperson, who has additional responsibilities.
- All are participating members of the Committee—with staff, Trustees, and Delegates each bringing a different perspective.
- Be sure that you all understand the assignment or charge.
  - Why has this task been assigned?
  - What are we meant to accomplish?
  - What information do we need?
- Ask questions and get clarity in the beginning.
  - Do some brainstorming.
- At any time if you don’t understand something, ask for clarity.
- Stay on course and do not put your own interpretation on the charge, in other words, ‘what you think it should be.’
- If the conversations gets off track, simply say; ‘I think we’re off track.’
- Be prepared to work on your charge outside of the Conference.
- Be willing to volunteer for specific activities related to the fulfillment of the charge.
- Respond to the Chairperson in a timely manner and if you are unable to complete a task or be available on a given date, let the Chairperson know.
- Be able to accept constructive criticism when the project is up for review.
- Share your work with each other.
- Chairperson
  - Builds the agenda—a plan of action
  - Reviews the agenda with the group and asks them to agree to follow it
  - Sets ground rules for discussion
  - Has the group agree on the outcome
  - Sets up meeting times, dates, methods of communication, and the tentative purpose of each meeting
  - Helps the group maintain a sense of unity
    - Gives everyone a voice
    - Allows a few minutes for venting, if needed
  - Oversees that the job is done correctly
- Recorder (A member selected within the group)
  - Writes down key ideas and other information
  - Asks for clarity, when needed

“Everyone in the group is an equal member. Your ideas and input are valued. Your positive attitude and encouragement of each other can be a wonderful learning experience from which you may build upon in your future endeavors. This is a perfect opportunity to see our Al-Anon principles in action.

“Please remember that everything we do is for Al-Anon Family Groups and we do not claim individual ownership for anything that we create.”

Following this introduction, the Chairperson of the Board dismissed Conference members to attend their Selected Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, or Task Forces.



## 2009 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES, THOUGHT FORCES, AND WORK GROUPS

Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and World Service Conference staff members comprise the Selected Committees, Task Forces, Thought Forces, and Work Groups. Below are the Delegate assignments for this year's Conference.

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Panel 47 (2007-2009)</b>	<b>Panel 48 (2008-2010)</b>	<b>Panel 49 (2009-2011)</b>
<b>Admissions/Handbook Work Group</b>	Rodney B., AL	Judy K., NV	Sandie E., CA (S)
<b>Conference Committee on Trustees</b>	Jeff G., GA Fran M., NJ Leslie N., WA	Marcia B., NY (S) Kerri K., NE Leona W., ON (N)	Terry F., FL (N) Rosa M., TX (E)
<b>Develop a Conflict Resolution Presentation for Areas Task Force</b>	Don F., VA Pat N., MA	Marilee P., NF/LD Lorraine R., IA	Christine F., PA John S., CA (N) Linda S., FL (S)
<b>e-CAL Committee</b>	Darcy A., ND Linda R., WV	Marcy M., IL (S) Judy G., WY	Marcia W., RI
<b>Group Services Committee</b>	Christa A., VT Pennie K., MT	Dotty B., NH Cindy H., AR	Theresa D., IN Micheline B., QC (W)
<b>How to strengthen an AIS Thought Force</b>	Skip G., MS	Richard B., MO Norma D., UT Melissa F., ME	Charla C., KS Cindy H., TN Elaine R., NY (N)
<b>How would you create a strong relationship between the Delegate and the AWSC Thought Force</b>	Roland C., OR Rose Anna J., AB/NWT	Chris M., NM	Ramona C., IL (N) Kay R., HI Louise R., MB
<b>Integrating Alateen into Al-Anon where no Alateen meetings exist Thought Force</b>	Tom B., CO	Sharon B., AK Esther M., PR Berta R., ID	Sandra F., OH
<b>Literature Committee</b>	Trudy C., QC (E) Renee H., WI Paula M., NC/BDA	Judy S., SD	Meagan M., MN (S) Linda M., KY
<b>Public Outreach Committee</b>	Mary M., MN (N) Virginia S., AZ Jacki S., OK	Clif B., LA Barb L., SK Gina R., CT	Cindy K., TX (W) Debbie K., MI
<b>Utilizing technology at Area meetings for nontechnical people Task Force</b>	Judy C., MP Dennis G., BC/YK	Linda R., SC	Connie D., DE Claire D., ON (S) Charlie S., MD/DC

## ADDITIONAL TASK FORCES AND THOUGHT FORCES

Assignment	Delegates	WSO Volunteers	WSO Staff
Task Force on Understanding Anonymity	Chris M., Panel 48, NM Pat N., Panel 47, MA Don F., Panel 47, VA	Doris W.	Claire R.
Preserving our Alateen Traditions Task Force	Jeff G., Panel 47, GA Fran M., Panel 47, NJ	Lorraine F. Laurie K. Margot M.	Mary Lou M.
Abundance Task Force	Marilee P., Panel 48, NF/LB Leona W., Panel 48, ON (N) Kerri K., Panel 48, NE Esther M., Panel 48, PR Norma D., Panel 48, UT	Julie F.	
Member Contribution Thought Force	Richard B., Panel 48, MO Tom B., Panel 47, CO Judy C., Panel 47, MP Rose Anna J., Panel 47, AB/NT	Frank R. Penny R.	Marsha W.

## SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Delegates gather before the official opening of each World Service Conference (WSC) to discuss successes and concerns in their Areas. This year's session of Sharing Area Highlights could not have been more appropriately named. The Chairperson, Jeff G. from Georgia, asked Delegates to share one success and one concern from their Areas since the previous WSC. In considering this year's Conference theme, "Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future," the Chair also asked Delegates to share what Legacy applied to their successes and concerns.

While each Area is unique, many Delegates noted similar successes. Public Outreach was a particularly strong category. Members have adapted posters for use on billboards, benches, buses, transit trains, and grocery bags. The *Crying House* bookmark (M-76) has been a useful tool. Another Area adapted the WSO professional display for use at their local health fairs.

Area use of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process was also successful to inform members. One Area used a fun, humorous skit to introduce the concept of KBDM, making it easier for members to understand, discuss, and implement KBDM. Another Area holds information sharing sessions before bringing motions to the floor. They also conclude with evaluations of their service meetings to see where they can improve.

Alateen was a third strong category of success. Many Delegates noted an increase in the number of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and meetings, as well as an increase of Alateen presence in service. Some said that they have noticed strong Alateen leadership in their Areas, including Alateen Coordinators and Area Alateen Process Persons.

Other areas of success included increased use of technology, enthusiasm, and excitement at Area events, defining service roles, and smoothing the transition from one panel of officers to the next.

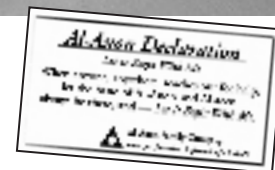
An area of success for some and concern for others involves Spanish-speaking members. While some Areas have been able to purchase translation equipment so Spanish-speaking members can be more active, others are struggling because Spanish-speaking members want to be of service but are unable to do so because of their lack of English-speaking skills. Members expressed a desire to support and encourage these members so as to increase participation and collaboration.



Others expressed a concern over the failure of their Action Committees, the use of non-Conference Approved Literature at meetings, and declining Alateen participation. Some are concerned with the flow of information from their Area World Service Committees (AWSC) to the local groups. Others are concerned about not being fully self-supporting.

Dinner was followed by the “pinning” of new Delegates by their Conference Mentors. The Conference Co-Chair then asked the members of Panel 48 to share what the most important thing was that they gained from the 2008 World Service Conference (WSC) and how it helped energize them to build bridges in their Areas. Here are a few comments from the returning Delegates:

- 
- A black and white photograph of a silver tray containing a crystal egg, salt and pepper shakers, and stacks of sugar packets. The egg is large and ornate, with a faceted design. The shakers are tall and slender, with a tiered base. The sugar packets are small and rectangular, stacked in two piles on each side of the shakers. The tray is set on a white tablecloth.



The Chairperson of the Conference closed the dinner by leading all present in the Al-Anon Declaration.



## CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

**Doreen D.**  
*Conference Chairperson, Trustee*

**Carol V.**  
*Conference Co-Chairperson,  
Trustee*

**Suzanne M.**  
*Associate Director of Membership  
Outreach—Conference*

The 2009 Conference theme, “Embrace the Legacies—Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future,” laid the foundation for the spiritual tone of this year’s World Service Conference. It encouraged members to use the Legacies of our program to empower members rather than to create barriers to success in service. This idea led to thoughtful discussion, creative thinking, and focused decision-making throughout the 49th World Service Conference (WSC), held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 19-23, 2009.

This year’s Conference was opened by the Conference Chairperson with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. The Conference Chairperson continued her greeting:

“Welcome to the 2009 World Service Conference. When the Conference Leadership Team met last July to decide upon a theme for the 2009 World Service Conference (WSC), it did not take us very long to realize that we wanted to expand on last year’s theme, ‘Build Bridges—Energizing Our Spiritual Quest.’ Our 2009 theme, ‘Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future,’ emerged.

“This week we, as trusted servants, will work together to build more bridges to expand the future of Al-Anon Family Groups. We will ensure that the Legacies our early pioneers gave us remain strong and will continue to be the foundation of our spiritual values. We will work hard to make sure that our message is heard everywhere by all of those whose lives have been affected by the disease of alcoholism.

“In many of her writings, Lois referred to the fact that the survival of our program depends on growth. We all want the principles upon which Al-Anon was founded to remain fundamental for all time and all people. Our individual acceptance and application of these principles must continue to grow as well. We remember Lois’s caution, ‘stagnation is retrogression.’ When I was a new Delegate, I personally heard Lois say, ‘The growth of the program depends on the dedication of each member.’ That is each of us!

“Some of us may feel a little nervous about this big responsibility. Let me share with you what someone told me just a couple of years ago when I was embarking on a new service position on the Board of Trustees: ‘Everyone in this room wants you to be a success.’ That comment meant a lot to me.

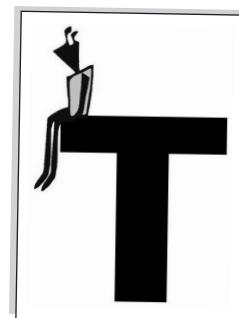
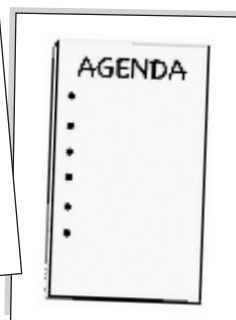
“So today, I say to all of you that everyone in this room wants you to be a success, too! We are going to work together, we are going to ‘presume goodwill,’ we are going to have fun, and we are going to build more bridges—spiritual ones that will sustain us over time.

“During my first year as a Delegate, many years ago, I met Lois. She looked at my badge and saw it was my first year. I have never forgotten what she said to me that day, ‘You are on the trip of a lifetime.’ So today I say to each one of you, ‘You are on a trip of a lifetime—enjoy the ride.’

“Are you ready for the challenge? Are you excited about what we can accomplish this year? I know I am. So let us get out our tools, put on our hard hats, and start building!”

Using the gavel, the Conference Chairperson announced, “I now formally open the 2009 WSC!”

After the official opening, the first order of business was approval of a motion brought forth by the Conference Leadership Team to seat certain people who could provide critical information to the Conference, representatives from other structures, as well as staff members who attended for up to two days as part of their on-going training.



### The following persons were seated:

#### **With voice, but no vote:**

##### **David Zach**

*Director of Business Services, Non-Al-Anon member*

##### **Hartmut G.**

*International Representative—Germany, Al-Anon member*

##### **María Del Carmen T.**

*International Representative—Mexico, Al-Anon Member*

##### **Nadia M.**

*International Representative—Italy, Al-Anon Member*

##### **Nuala C.**

*International Representative—UK & Eire, 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 no voice and no vote:**

##### **Nicolette Stephens**

*WSO Information Analyst, Non-Al-Anon Member*

##### **Sharon B.**

*Group Services Assistant—Special Needs, Al-Anon Member*

##### **Ami D.**

*Group Services Assistant—Alateen, Al-Anon Member*

##### **Raquel K.**

*Translation Services Manager, Al-Anon Member*

##### **Julie M.**

*Communications Manager, Al-Anon Member*

##### **Colette N.**

*Language Services Coordinator, Al-Anon Member*

The motion carried by consensus.  
(See WSC Motion #1, page 87.)

## WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mary Ann R.

*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

“On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., it is a pleasure to welcome you to the 49th World Service Conference (WSC). Our theme this year is ‘Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future.’

“The Legacies are the very foundation of our spiritual program and assure us that when entering the rooms of Al-Anon, we have an opportunity to share openly from our hearts. Our spirituality gives real meaning to our lives, the way we think and feel, and becomes evident in our manner toward others and our approach to life’s situations.

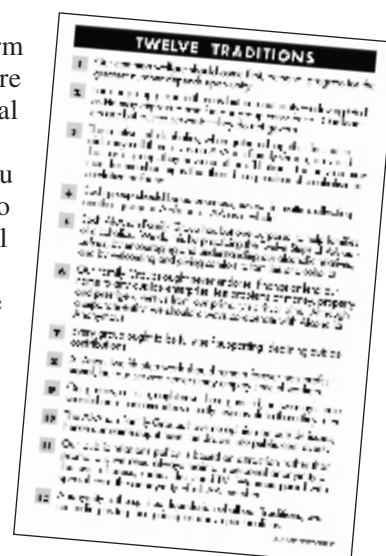
“As a formula for recovery, unity, and service, the Legacies bring balance to our lives. As we heal by gaining self-knowledge and confidence, we put aside our personal agendas, opening our hearts and minds to the possibilities for us to carry the message. In growing and expanding the future of Al-Anon Family Groups, we receive many personal benefits.

“To ensure the preservation of our beloved fellowship, we have the capacity to form spiritual bridges that will reach others by expanding our thinking and our horizons. There are many methods to deliver our message; some that we have yet to discover. Spiritual thinking brings vision and removes us from the status quo.

“While at Conference this week, you will experience many feelings. At times you may feel uncertain and challenged. You are not alone. I encourage you to reach out to your fellow Conference members. Capture that energy and spirituality. Be that spiritual bridge upon returning to your Areas and groups, or wherever your journey takes you.

“Let us remember that as members of the WSC, we are the active voice and effective group conscience of the fellowship. With the help of our Higher Power to guide us, let us ‘Embrace Our Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future.’”

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



**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.

## ORIENTATION

Mary Ann R.

*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

The Chairperson of the Board began the session by saying, “Let me begin by repeating the words that the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees used at the 2008 World Service Conference (WSC) Orientation, because they also have a special meaning for me. I was there with her. I, too, recall my first Conference in 1987. Lois W., Al-Anon’s beloved cofounder, was introduced and welcomed at the Opening Dinner with a standing ovation. Humbly urging everyone to sit down, Lois said: ‘Anybody can start something, but carrying it out is the real challenge.’ And all the rest of you are doing that job. You are all founders in your own right, carrying the message.

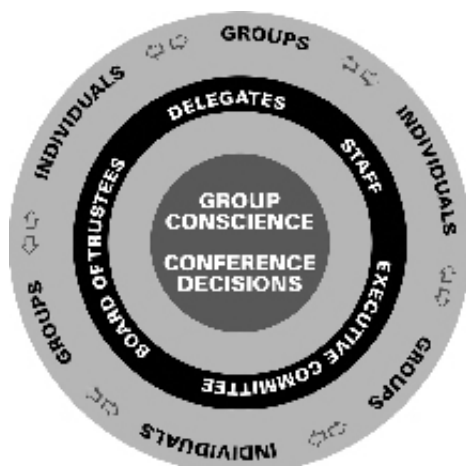
“Those words from Lois were to ring in my ears many times over the years as my husband and I struggled in the business world to change the things we could in an ever-changing health care environment and to do so without compromising our values.”

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 Chairperson said, “The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown; it makes for unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole upon important matters. This makes the Conference the principle guarantor of Al-Anon’s harmony and survival. Each of us has a role in that purpose.”

The Chairperson of the Board then asked several members—a Delegate, a member of the Executive Committee, a Trustee, and a staff member—to describe their role at the WSC.

The Delegate shared that her role is to represent the Area; be the primary communication link; be familiar with issues and vote responsibly; study the facts and figures; learn about the structure of the WSO and the history of the fellowship; talk about the future; serve on Thought or Task Forces; bring issues to the Conference; and attend all sessions of the Conference.

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee shared that her role as a member of the Committee is to exercise oversight of the World Service Office with delegated authority granted by the Board of Trustees; serve on the Policy Committee; and report all actions to the Board of Trustees quarterly.



Member to Member  
Group to Group



Member to Group to Trusted Servant

The Trustee shared some of the specific responsibilities of her role: manage the affairs of the corporation by establishing and maintaining the policies of the WSO; preserve and prudently manage funds; be a visionary leader; guard the legal rights of fellowship; protect the principles of the program; appoint the Executive Committee and the Executive Director; and approve the final agenda for the World Service Conference.

The staff member shared that the WSO is a clearinghouse. Her role at the WSC is to listen to and communicate with all Conference members; implement plans that are made at Conference; report trends in the fellowship; provide public outreach at national and international levels; support international communities; develop service tools and literature; and provide resources such as the *Conference Summary* to support Delegates.

The International Representative from Germany also shared. He explained that he serves as the General Secretary for Germany, a staff member, a Trustee, a Committee member, and a Conference member within his structure. He commented that he was at the WSC to participate in the worldwide fellowship and to get an idea of what they can do in Germany to have a better Conference.

Following the review of roles, the Chairperson of the Board asked for feedback on how Areas incorporated “The Paths to Group Conscience” chart (see back cover) in their Areas to demonstrate the different relationships.

Then the Chairperson of the Board gave an overview of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to reach an informed group conscience. She described the four essential elements for this process:

#### **Open communication between leadership and membership:**

“Talk to each other, and reason things out,” is a phrase we hear at the closing of every Al-Anon meeting. Wiser words were probably never spoken. Isn’t this what our Chart, “The Paths to Group Conscience,” is all about?

#### **Dialogue before deliberation:**

This is the opposite of *Robert’s Rules*; this allows us to discuss the information, ask questions, and express our concerns before we construct the motion. Often the discussion reveals that we really don’t need a motion, which makes me think that sometimes all we need is to have the discussion.

#### **All decision-makers will have common access to full information:**

This is often one of the most confusing elements. Sometimes all members think they should have access to all information, whether they are part of the decision-making body or not and sometimes you might think everyone needs it too.

Concept Four tells us, “Participation is the key to harmony.” This Concept does not say everyone is invited to participate. We are invited to participate if it is in our role as part of the decision-making body. In your role as part of *this* decision-making body, you do need information so that you can be better prepared to be a part of the discussions here. We have worked extra hard to ensure this happens. With that comes trust—trust that this information will be used by you to prepare yourself for dialogue.



Trusted Servant to Trusted Servant



Carrying the Message Back

### **We exist in a culture of trust:**

As Al-Anon members, we place a great value on trust. It is a principle that we experience with our first Al-Anon service. We learn to have a firm belief that each of us would never, knowingly, do anything to hurt Al-Anon Family Groups—we begin to rely on others and to be reliable, we learn to be truthful and rely on the truth from each other. It is when we understand how our spiritual principles are applied to the decision-making process that we experience the element of trust in the concept of substantial unanimity or “choosing from the hat.” Many times, we simply need more information to gain the understanding that lets us lighten our load and experience trust.

The Conference body was invited to share their experiences with the implementation of the KBDM process in their Areas. Areas report that using the KBDM process takes time but is becoming easier; helping the Area members understand the process is key; using KBDM has united the Area.

## **APPROVALS**

### **2008 Auditor's Report**

**Frank R.**

*Treasurer, Trustee*

**David Zach**

*Director of Business Services  
(non-member)*

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 in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit (which can be found on the Members' Web site, [www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members)), including the opinion letter of the independent auditors, was posted on e-Communities for all Conference members to review. During the Conference, the Director gave a page-by-page explanation of the audit.

#### **Conference members had the following questions:**

**Q.:** What is the current value of the Reserve Fund?

**A.:** \$4.2 million.

**Q.:** What would be used to calculate the ratio for one year's operating expense in the Reserve Fund? Would you include the Building Fund?

**A.:** *We want to have no more than one year's operating expenses in the Reserve Fund, taking out nonrecurring expenses. We price the Reserve Fund at the lower of market or cost for each security, which equaled 3.8 million. In the report, we have listed market price for securities. Then we subtract the post retirement health care costs from that, so we could roughly take \$858,000 and subtract it from \$3.8 million and get the net Reserve Fund.*

**Q.:** On the note about post-retirement benefits, I was curious as to how many individuals make up that number. Have there been any predictions as to how many more will fall in that category?

**A.:** *We take the people who are working now and consider their life expectancy and the probability of them qualifying for the benefit to make a projection. There are currently 16 people who are receiving post-retirement benefits.*

**Q.:** I have a question on functional expenses, under “Office Volunteers.” There are no entries there. Is that due to the fact that office volunteers made in-kind donations for any expenses they had, or were there no volunteers?

**A.:** *No, the expenses for Office Volunteers are included under “Customer Service/Warehouse,” on page 4 of the Audit.*

**Q.:** Where does international travel fit in this statement?

**A.:** *It's on page four under “Travel.” The travel is summarized together. There is some in Group Services, some in Public Outreach, some in Membership Outreach. The international travel would be in Membership Outreach.*

**Q.:** And what would the General Administration be?

**A.:** *That would be the Board, Finance, and Executive Committee travel to attend meetings.*

**Q.:** I believe everybody lost money in the stock market. Our unrealized loss was less than most people, right?



**A.:** *I've started a graph to show what's happened with benchmarks and how we've performed against those. We're a lot better off than some people are with their investments. During the last few weeks, stocks have had some improvement, so we're hopeful.*

A motion to approve the 2008 Audited Financial Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #2, page 87.)

## 2009 Budget

The 2009 Proposed Budget was presented to Conference members by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2009 Budget shows that we expect expenses to equal revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses and revenues to be \$5,066,000. This year we adjusted the preliminary Direct Conference Costs (net) because travel costs in July 2008, when the Equalized Expense was calculated, were projected to be substantially higher than they turned out to be. We normally don't adjust these costs until the July Board meeting.

Frank R.  
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach  
Director of Business Services  
(non-member)

### PROJECTED EXPENSES

Overall expenses are budgeted to increase by \$330,000. Labor costs are expected to increase \$107,000 due to merit and cost of living increases for salaries and increases in the cost of benefits. When estimating payroll, we assume all positions would be filled for 12 months. During 2008 we actually had some unfilled positions for part of the year. Occupancy expense is projected to be \$25,000 more than last year. On the Outreach Activities line, we have included funds to be available for projects that may be proposed during the year.

### ESTIMATED INCOME

We are estimating income from literature sales and *Forum* subscriptions to be less than last year. We are budgeting contributions to be \$1,500,000, which is about \$360,000 more than last year's actual. We are budgeting investment income at \$190,000 more than last year. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer up to 4% of the market value of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund. During 2008, we transferred 4% from the Reserve Fund. In December of 2008, we transferred the 4% back to the Reserve Fund since it was not needed to fund operations.

### Conference members presented the following questions and comments:

**Q.:** Why is it costing less to ship than last year?

**A.:** *We increased what we charge for shipping because we were losing money. Last year, we were also paying surcharges due to the increase in gas prices.*

**Q.:** What are the legal and audit expenses?

**A.:** *We have legal costs related to the protection of our copyrights and trademarks and we have an audit every year.*

**Q.:** When the WSO upgrades to Microsoft 2007, are Conference members going to be able to open the documents?

**A.:** *Yes, there is a free executable program that you can download to open Microsoft 2007 documents in Microsoft 2003.*

**Q.:** Under outreach activities, the actual expense was \$3,000. Why is it now \$38,000?

**A.:** *Outreach activities include money that is set aside to pay for our participation at Public Outreach opportunities, such as national professional conferences. Last year, few opportunities developed. This year, we have already agreed to fund the translation and printing of three pamphlets and "Groups at Work" in Turkish and Slovene.*

**Q.:** One of my initial questions was about amortization, but we're budgeting income to account for that. Could you explain the difference between accrual and cash basis for profitability?

**A.:** *If you remember the audit account, there was one page for cash flow. We adjusted everything that was non-cash; when we report income we use accrual. With the budget, we're trying to match accrual reporting. Everything on the budget is on an accrual basis.*

**Q.:** What is the cost-of-living increase?

**A.:** *The projected cost-of-living increase (4%) is based on national statistics the Director of Business Services received. The proposed merit increase is up to 2% based on performance evaluation. Increases don't occur until June 1, so only seven-twelfths of those amounts will occur in 2009.*

**Q.:** I noticed that we're budgeting for \$1.5 million in contributions. I don't know what previous years have been. Has any trending been done?

**A.:** *The Board thinks abundantly, so we put that amount in for the past several years. We're getting closer.*

**Q.:** You mention that this year you were not taking interest and dividends, but an actual 4%. Is there a threshold that you don't want to go below in the Reserve Fund?

**A.:** *The Board approved a transfer of up to 4%. We will review this during the year and if we don't need a 4% transfer, we won't do it or transfer a smaller amount.*

**Q.:** So there's no specific designation?

**A.:** *The Finance Committee looks at the financial statement each month. We always take into consideration whether we need to consider cutting costs? We consider a whole host of things. We are looking at projections this year. Do things look like we're getting close to the edge? As of the WSC, our revenue projections look okay. Should that change, the Board meets in July. We do a revised budget. If things look worse, we may make some changes.*

**Q.:** What specifically do you mean by tuition refund?

**A.:** *Tuition reimbursement is for employees attending classes related to his or her current job. Employees are reimbursed after successfully completing the class.*

**Q.:** My question is about \$35,000 for TEAM events: How does it compare to the cost of holding Regional Service Seminars (RSSs)?

**A.:** *The expenses for an RSS depended on where each was held. I think the RSS net costs were somewhere around \$20,000-30,000 annually. In the TEAM events, the Area decides if there is a registration fee and will keep any excess income or pay any additional costs.*

**Q.:** I still question the rationale of projecting a 30% increase in our current economic situation. Is there a precedent that contributions increased in past recessions?

**A.:** *As far as I can tell, there hasn't been any major difference. As a matter of fact, I said we projected through April. We are a few thousand above the projected budget. If that continues, we may find that in economic situations like this, there is an increase.*

**Q.:** My Area World Service Committee (AWSC) passes the Appeal Letter envelope—do other AWSCs do that?

**A.:** *I can't answer the question about what every Assembly does, but I do want to answer why Delegates, Past Delegates, Trustees, and Past Trustees receive the Appeal Letter. It is for information to let you know that the Appeal Letter has been mailed. If you're traveling and you don't see the Appeal Letter at the meeting, you can ask why they aren't using it. Some of you do use the envelope to make a donation, but that's not the purpose of sending the Appeal Letter to you.*

**Q.:** Are we in the process of thinking about putting any of our material on CD so that when people are commuting to work, they can listen to Conference Approved Literature (CAL)?

**A.:** *We do have approval to make an audio version of How AI-Anon Works (B-22). However, people are complaining about the cost of our books; audio books are expensive. The cost for an audio version of How AI-Anon Works would be around \$40-\$50 and would include ten discs. Would members spend \$40-\$50 on a book they may already have? How many members would copy their CD and share it with others? It would be a large investment on the WSO's part. How likely is it that the WSO would get that money back? There is a minority of people who have been requesting this, but it needs to be self-supporting or the majority of the fellowship would be subsidizing the needs of a few.*

**Q.:** Members have asked whether we will be able to use a wireless reading device, such as Kindle, to read CAL. Will it be a possibility?

**A.:** *A wireless reading device, such as Kindle (an electronic device that allows a person to download a book) is another issue. We've been exploring the feasibility of this. Some concerns are: whether members would purchase such a device due to the high cost; whether this would violate our Traditions because the books would be sold by an outside vendor; the vendor would profit most from the sale (if we sold a book for \$9.95, we would receive about \$3.00 and the vendor would receive the balance); the impact on Literature Distribution Centers.*

**Q.:** We have a CD ROM version of *Courage to Change* (B-17)—is it ever going to be Vista compatible?

## SCHEDULE 1

**AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.**

	2009 Budget	2009 Preliminary Budget	2008 Actual
<b><u>Operating Expenses</u></b>			
Salaries	2,344,000	2,344,000	2,310,000
Payroll Taxes	177,000	194,000	171,000
Employee Benefits	626,000	626,000	576,000
Total Labor Costs	3,147,000	3,164,000	3,057,000
Building Occupancy	272,000	272,000	247,000
Packing & Shipping (Net)	10,000	10,000	37,000
Postage	267,000	267,000	248,000
Telephone	48,000	48,000	48,000
Stationery & Office Supplies	95,000	95,000	69,000
Outreach Activities	38,000	38,000	3,000
Office Services & Expenses	135,000	135,000	136,000
Repairs & Maintenance	24,000	24,000	41,000
Travel & Meetings	267,000	262,000	250,000
Direct Conference Costs (Net)	76,000	99,000	103,000
Legal & Audit	50,000	50,000	45,000
Printing	137,000	137,000	132,000
Canadian Office	15,000	15,000	16,000
General Service Meeting			26,000
Service Event	35,000		
In-Office Volunteers	4,000	4,000	3,000
PSA Campaign	131,000	131,000	132,000
Miscellaneous	31,000	31,000	36,000
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>4,782,000</b>	<b>4,782,000</b>	<b>4,629,000</b>
Membership Survey	9,000	9,000	
Outreach Media (Al-Anon & Alateen)	150,000	150,000	
Depreciation & Amortization (Exc. Bldg.)	125,000	125,000	107,000
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$5,066,000</b>	<b>\$5,066,000</b>	<b>\$4,736,000</b>
<b><u>Estimated Revenue</u></b>			
Literature Sales less cost of printing	3,126,000	3,126,000	3,474,000
Contributions	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,141,000
Forum Subscriptions	230,000	230,000	247,000
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	210,000	210,000	20,000
2008 International Convention			91,000
<b>Total Estimated Revenue</b>	<b>5,066,000</b>	<b>5,066,000</b>	<b>\$4,973,000</b>

**A.:** *I don't believe so, because that would require us to redo it. Then we'd have to have a separate CD-ROM for MS Office and below and a CD-ROM for Vista. We initially produced 2,000 copies three years ago and we still have close to 1,000 left.*

A motion to approve the 2009 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #5, page 87.)

## 2008 Annual Report and Strategic Plan Update

Mary Ann R.  
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Ric B.  
Executive Director

The 2008 Annual Report, including the Operational Plan and the Strategic Plan Update, was sent to the Delegates prior to the Conference. The report included updates from Committees as well as WSO departments. The Strategic Plan Update included only the goals and objectives that the Board has been focusing on this past year.

Since the report was provided in advance, the Executive Director made only brief opening remarks before opening the floor for questions and comments.

**Q.:** Last year, the Conference gave conceptual approval for a history book. Can you give an update?

**A.:** *The Chairperson of Board formed a Task Force to create an outline and suggest a book format. Since the history books the WSO has published in the past have not been very popular, the Task Force looked at Al-Anon's most popular books and concluded that it would be best to combine personal recovery with history. Personal recovery is, in essence, our history. At the April Board meeting, the outline was approved.*

**Q.:** e-Communities [the electronic system used to communicate with the Delegates and Coordinators in a timely manner] is a little cumbersome, but I've heard that it has other capabilities. Could you share those with us?

**A.:** *Not having multiple databases is a huge thing. When we moved from New York, we had about six or seven different ones. We did look at a number of programs before deciding on e-Communities. The Information File Exchange, which is what we were using, wasn't really dynamic. We're working to make e-Communities more user-friendly; we realized that we haven't been using the folder function adequately.*

**Q.:** My concern is about the bulletin board feature of e-Communities. Will there be posting guidelines?

**A.:** *The Bulletin Board would be a business tool for members in service to use. It would be a place where a member could post a question and others could respond. It wouldn't be a place to post birthdays, etc.*

**Q.:** In my Area, I get asked why it is okay for the WSO to come up with a new phrase that we can use, but if helping professions come up with a phrase then we're not supposed to use it. The term "Strategic Plan" was not talked about at all when I got into the program. What I need is some kind of historical background regarding how long it took the Board of Trustees to become okay with strategic thinking and to move from "we can only afford to do this" to "abundant thinking"?

**A.:** *The Chairperson of the Board shared, "We have to start with separation between fellowship and corporation. The Board of Trustees is for the corporation. Before strategic planning, the Board had long-range planning. Long-range planning was only looking out five-ten years down the road. Strategic planning is more particular to the present. The concept of long-range planning has gone away because of how fast our environment moves."*

Another Board member commented, *"I came on the Board in 2002, but I was a Delegate in late '80s. At that time, the Board was already doing long-range planning, and numerous recommendations came out of a long-range planning study. We continued to have long-range plans, but those have timelines. Strategic planning allows the Board to continually change the plan. When I came onto Board, we were putting together the Mission and Vision statements. Once we got those, we saw we were on track. In the Strategic Plan, the Board came up with three themes and two goals under each theme, which have evolved over a period of time."*

A Board member responded, *"When I was a Delegate, we didn't know who the Board members were. They didn't eat with us, they didn't share at the mic. The Board operated in its own vacuum. There has been a very purposeful decision to be transparent, to let the*

*Conference know what the Board is thinking and doing, which is resulting in Delegates struggling with terms they haven't heard before in Al-Anon."*

**Comments:**

- We really need the fellowship to understand the difference between business and the fellowship.
- In addition to separation between the fellowship and the corporation, I also have to look at the difference between business and my personal program at the Area level. We work very hard to protect the program, but we do move ahead and change the way we do business.
- I think it's important to observe how business meetings are held. My Area tries to run Area business meetings like an Al-Anon meeting and it doesn't work. I think the WSC is in a position to be a role model for Areas on how to carry out the business side of an Area.
- I realize that you're implementing change. You want us to get it. I was talking to the Associate Director of Communications—Media about the PSAs using full-face photos. I understand what you're trying to say, but the reality is that we [the Delegates] have to go back to the groups. I'm having trouble with this; can you imagine how the groups are going to handle it? We're going too fast. People aren't going to understand what we're trying to convey.

A Trustee commented, "I'm one of the people who hates change. What happened for me was that I got on board when I got more information. I didn't go to people who had the information and ask them to explain it to me. I continued to argue and fight, and when I got in a position to listen and hear it, change began to happen. It didn't happen overnight, but it happened. Share as much as you can, and ask for help."

The Chairperson of the Board shared, "Information is power. When everyone has information, no one can exercise authority over another person. I was a problem child at Conference as a Delegate. It's so important for me today to let you have the knowledge that I do. Let's keep that in mind. Let's share what we know to help the program. It's not all about us; it's about moving the program forward."

A motion to approve the 2008 Annual Operational Report and 2008 Strategic Plan Update was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #3, page 87. The complete report and update can be found on pages 89-110.)

## VISIT TO THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

Conference members boarded two motor coaches to head to the World Service Office (WSO) for a visit. Upon arriving at the office, Delegates were warmly greeted by WSO Trustees and Executive Committee members.

The Delegates entered the lobby of the WSO where the Executive Director welcomed them 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's typewriter, which was used to write to the first 87 groups.

The Delegates then assembled into four groups for tours. Along the way, the Delegates met staff members and volunteers, took snapshots of interesting aspects of the building, and explored the WSO Archives. Delegates were given the opportunity to explore the Members' Web site and to take a virtual tour of e-Communities, the new file sharing Web site provided by the WSO.

Following the tour, Delegates enjoyed a luncheon hosted by WSO staff and Trustees. They also had time to walk around the grounds, talk with staff and volunteers, and take additional photographs to share with their Areas.



**Q.:** When we visited the WSO two years ago, there was talk about changing the signage from "Al-Anon" to "Al-Anon Family Groups" on the side of the building facing the street. Where is that discussion?

**A.:** *The commercial park that the WSO building is located in restricts the amount of signage businesses are allowed to display. It also restricts the size of the lettering. What we discovered is that if we used our full name, the lettering would be so small that people wouldn't be able to see it from the street.*



## CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA TRIP

Barbara O.

Director of Member Services

Raquel K.

Translation Services Manager



The Translation Services Manager and Director of Member Services presented a PowerPoint presentation about their March 2008 trip to Central and South America with a Trustee. During the trip, the WSO visited the General Service Offices (GSOs) in San Jose, Costa Rica; Bogota, Columbia; Lima, Peru; and Montevideo, Uruguay. In order to maximize the benefits of the trip, those GSOs were asked to invite nearby GSOs and evolving structures. As a result, representatives from Guatemala, Honduras, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Argentina also attended.

The goal for the trip was to support the WSO commitment of open communication with all of the structures and to strengthen our relationship. For some of the structures this was the first WSO visit. Two days of business meetings were held at each of the four GSOs. The first day's agenda was prepared by the hosting GSO and the second day's agenda by the other attending GSOs and evolving structures. Each GSO and evolving structure was asked to submit their questions to the WSO prior to the visit so they could be translated and the answers prepared beforehand. The questions focused mainly on the following: AI-Anon literature, reprint permission, how to get trusted servants to do their jobs, developing a strategic plan, starting an AI-Anon Information Service, and WSO operations and budget.

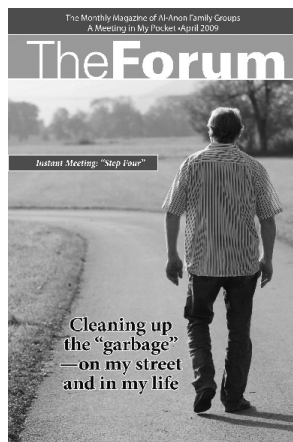
A discussion took place at each GSO about the Ibero-American Spanish zonal meeting and how that meeting could be more beneficial and meet the needs of the GSOs, as well as the evolving structures. After the trip, the WSO received an invitation to attend the 2009 Ibero-American zonal meeting in Argentina.

The GSOs and evolving structures expressed gratitude for the visit and welcomed the opportunity to share about their structures in person. Language was not a problem since the Translations Services Manager and the Trustee both spoke Spanish, and several of the Spanish-speaking members spoke English. During the trip the WSO modeled shared leadership, discussed resolving group problems, and shared WSO experience about issues that concern AI-Anon worldwide, such as public outreach and encouraging members in service to do their jobs.

## DOES THE FORUM HAVE A PLACE IN THE FUTURE OF AI-ANON?

Robert S.

Director of Communication Services



The Director of Communication Services presented concerns about *The Forum*: “Basically, the question is this: Does *The Forum* (as we know it today) have a place in the future of AI-Anon?”

“Subscriptions have been dropping about 200 every month. Twenty years ago, there were 60,000 subscribers, now there are about 19,000—a 66% drop in subscribers. That’s about 1.4 subscriptions per group. On average, every group has one subscriber; every second or third group has two subscribers. About 90% of the membership doesn’t subscribe. Part of the decline is due to the free copy sent to the groups. People are now reading the free copy instead of subscribing.

“I’m asking you to look at *The Forum* now. Our choice is to make a stronger commitment, make it a more vital part of our fellowship, or continue to see it decline.

“*The Forum* is not self-supporting, it’s a service to the fellowship. Subscriptions only cover printing and mailing costs; they don’t cover labor costs: processing of submissions (receiving, typing, etc.); the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) review; editing; layout; design; etc.

Why doesn’t 90% of our fellowship perceive *The Forum* as an enhancement to their recovery? What can we do to change that perception?

The Director finished his presentation by stating, “Tradition Seven reminds us to be self-supporting. But what we support remains our choice. Does *The Forum* have a place in AI-Anon’s future? The next time you say the AI-Anon Declaration, would you think of *The Forum* and what you can do to make it more vital?”

In discussing the future of *The Forum*, one Delegate suggested that maybe groups don’t use *The Forum* in meetings because they don’t know it is Conference Approved. There is a section in the *AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) on page 95 that covers this; Delegates can refer members to that section.

It occurred to another Delegate that she handles the new Group Representative (GR) training in her Area and she could remind GRs that they are representatives of *The Forum*.

Another Delegate noted that there seems to be a crisis with print media in general these days. A younger Delegate commented that she does not subscribe to any print media, but that she would consider subscribing to *The Forum* if it were in an audio format. The Director of Communication Services stated that a Thought Force could be created to study how to increase subscriptions to *The Forum*.

A Delegate shared that a meeting recently started based on *The Forum*. She noted that it's one of the biggest meetings in her Area. There are many young people who come.

One Delegate recommended printing all of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in each issue of the magazine. The Director commented that the office had received correspondence requesting the same. He also remarked, however, that there is limited space in *The Forum* and the Legacies can be found in other AI-Anon literature.

Delegates also suggested discontinuing the free copy to the groups to see if sales increase or having a contest to increase subscriptions.

## FOURTH TRIENNIAL REPORT ON REAL PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Frank R.  
Treasurer, Trustee

### Background:

In 1994, the World Service Conference passed Motion #12, which empowered the Board of Trustees to purchase property for AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This purchase of real property is for a trial period of fifteen years and contingent on several conditions.

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

To fulfill that condition, a motion to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) during the trial period was approved by the WSC in 1995. The separate Executive Committee was preferred for its simplicity and the fact that it would cut down on additional forms needed to be filed annually with the Internal Revenue Service. This Committee was established to oversee the management of real property in order to separate property maintenance and management from the day-to-day operation of the AI-Anon fellowship. The Committee consists of three At-Large AI-Anon members, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and the Director of Business Services. The Committee first met June 15, 1996 and has met twice a year since then. The ECRPM meets separately from the Board. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees (COB) and the Executive Director are not allowed to attend unless invited. There has never been a need to invite either the COB or the Executive Director.

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

### The Board of Trustees reports the following:

#### 1. Has ownership of property been financially feasible?

The Board of Trustees reports that ownership of property has been a very good step financially. AI-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. received tax-exempt financing and thus a lower rate of interest due to non-profit status. It also received a tax exemption so that no real property tax is paid on either the land or the building. A savings of at least \$250,000 a year has been realized by owning property in Virginia vs. leasing it in the Hampton Roads area. \*The gap between ownership and leasing is expected to widen as costs of ownership decrease and costs of leasing increase.

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

The Board of Trustees concerns itself with ownership of real property to the extent that it insures

that the ownership of real property is financially feasible and that the spirit and intent of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts is maintained. The Board reports that with the management of the property being the business of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management, the property management is kept separate from the primary spiritual aim of Al-Anon Family Groups. The Executive Director is able to focus entirely on assisting the groups in the primary spiritual aim of Al-Anon—helping families and friends of alcoholics. The need for staff to be concerned with the frequent search for office space and to deal with the day-in and day-out maintenance of commercial property has been eliminated as the ECRPM oversees this work.

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

After reviewing the last twelve years of real property ownership, the Board of Trustees has no negative impact to report. A small minority of groups attempted to tie the Alateen requirements established by the Board of Trustees to the ownership of property. In passing the Alateen Minimum Safety Requirements Motion in 2003, the Board of Trustees' concerns were to protect our name and our children. There have been fewer complaints about the ownership of property over the years. The ECRPM is a Committee separate from all other Committees. It is separate from the work and business of the World Service Office, and in turn, the primary spiritual aim of the fellowship. This real separation is what allows ownership of property to function as well as it does.

\*Please see budget line item "Occupancy" for the actual yearly costs of ownership.

## INDIA TRIP

Frank R.  
Trustee

Ric B.  
Executive Director

Nicolette Stephens  
Information Analyst  
(non-member)



Using a slideshow presentation, the Trustee, Executive Director, and Information Analyst shared about their travels to India. The primary purpose of the visit was to attend the third trial national structure meeting of India. The Executive Director had traveled to India in 2004 and explained how a national service structure evolves. After that discussion, the groups in India formed a trial national service structure, but like all Al-Anon members, they were concerned that they weren't doing it right.

The team also used this trip to carry the message of what Al-Anon is by using a non-member who could speak and be photographed at media events. She participated in four press conferences. They were held in Gauhati, Chennai, Goa, and Mumbai. During one press conference, a staff member of a treatment center shared that Al-Anon members assisted in the sobriety of alcoholics. According to him, his center's success rate of recovery is 80 percent if the family is also involved in recovery. When the family is not involved, the success rate is only 30 percent. During the trip, the team met with many professionals who are excited about family recovery.

During the trip, the Trustee held a workshop on the Traditions. The members also held public awareness meetings where professionals could see how an Al-Anon meeting works. They were well attended.

Upon reflecting on the trip, the Executive Director had this to share, "More important than any of us from the WSO being there, was the members getting up and being willing to share five minutes of their stories. That was the most powerful part of those meetings. Those stories had the media captivated. They had stories written for the press." Conference members were encouraged to participate in similar public outreach events in their local communities.





# INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON GENERAL SERVICES MEETING (IAGSM)

The Chairperson reported to Conference members that the 14th IAGSM held October 2-5, 2008, in Espoo, Finland, just outside of Helsinki, included the participation of 15 countries. There are currently 32 General Service Offices, and Al-Anon is in over 130 countries. The 2008 Theme was “Communication: Our Key to Understanding.”

The Chairperson stated, “The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through its Delegates. The meeting encourages the growth of a sound service structure while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of the Al-Anon Traditions. It also represents an expression of a worldwide group conscience.”

“Ultimately, this leads to the primary purpose of Al-Anon as a whole: to seek the best way to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics amidst cultural and language differences.

“The IAGSM is not a decision-making body. International structures hold their own service conferences and have a voice through the International Coordination Committee (ICC).”

The Co-Chairperson of the ICC then shared highlights from nine IAGSM workshops, which were selected by the structures involved due to their significance. Some of the highlights are listed below:

- Responsibility, Communication, Leadership (New Zealand)
- Our Communication ‘Highways’—General Service Offices, Service Conferences, Groups (United Kingdom and Ireland)
- Expanding our Understanding Concerning Seventh Tradition/Self Support (South Africa)
- The Value of a Strategic Plan (USA and Canada)
- Strengthening Our Understanding at Every Level of Service (Finland)
- Anonymity—Al-Anon is Not a Secret (Switzerland/German-speaking)
- Alateen—A Safe Place for Younger Members (Australia)
- Reforming and Restructuring Our Committees to Increase Communication (USA and Canada)
- A Shared Experience—The Value of the 2007 Trial Zonal Meeting—European Talk (Germany)

“In the ‘Finance—Communicating Our Concerns to the Fellowship’ workshop, communicating the financial information to the fellowship was discussed, as well as how to communicate financial needs to the fellowship. Structures agreed they have to educate the members of the financial needs and where the money goes.

“Members in the workshop, ‘Strengthening Our Service Structure,’ talked about using our full name, Al-Anon Family Groups, when referring to Al-Anon, because when doing so we include Alateen. The fact that the membership is aging was also discussed and we need to find ways to attract younger members. Another idea was that dual members can be liaisons or communication links between A.A. and Al-Anon. We need to focus on our abundant, unlimited resources. The WSO three-year trial for the Alateen Advisory Committee was explained and Al-Anon members should be encouraged to bring their children to Alateen.

“In the workshop, ‘Are We Meeting the Needs of Our Groups,’ many of the same concerns were shared by each country. Delegates were very interested in the Trustee visits WSO makes to the Assemblies, how the finances are handled to do this, and where the presentations originate.”

The U.S. Delegate, who is also the Chairperson of the Board, shared on the session called “Alateen—A Safe Place for Younger Members.” She said that the Delegate from Australia reported, “Although we would all like to believe that Al-Anon and Alateen are somehow divinely protected and our members are trusted servants in all senses of the term, in reality we need to take practical steps to protect our younger members.”

Zelda R.

*Chairperson, Trustee*

Doris W.

*Co-Chairperson, Trustee*

Mary Ann R.

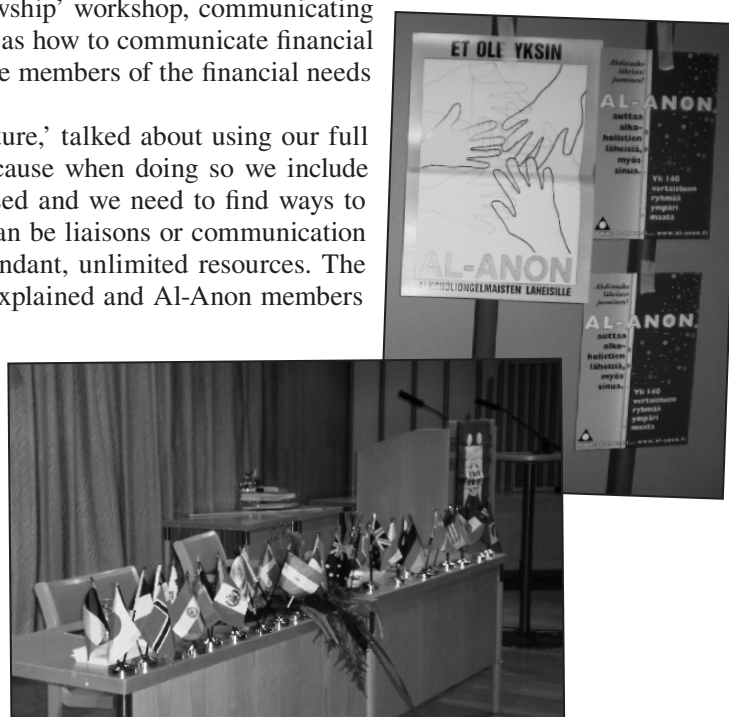
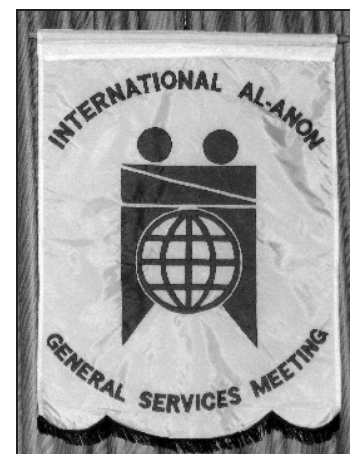
*Trustee*

Judy A.

*Trustee*

Marsha W.

*Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International*



In 2004 the Australian Conference adopted the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements introduced by the WSO, having adopted their own guidelines prior to the IAGSM in 2002.

The U.S. Delegate went on to share, “During the discussion, countries mentioned that they also had legal requirements to comply with when dealing with children and had adopted the WSO Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements, making modifications when necessary.

“In the initial stages of implementing safeguards, some countries experienced a decline in membership followed by a gradual rise. Some attributed the decline in meetings to groups that were no longer active; a discovery made during the re-registration process.

The Canadian Delegate commented on the “Value of a Strategic Plan” presentation she gave. She said that a strategic plan is a blueprint or map which takes us from where we are today to where we want to be in the future.

She also noted, “Being a Delegate at the IAGSM has shown me that, as a Trustee, I am responsible not just for Al-Anon in the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda, but to create bridges for the future of Al-Anon worldwide. I now have a broader perspective and an increased sense of responsibility.”

A Summary of the IAGSM is available on the Members' Web site at  
[www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members).

## INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS UPDATE

### 2010 Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention

Ric B.,  
2010 Chairperson

Suzanne M.,  
2010 Coordinator

Barbara O.,  
2010 Co-Coordinator

In 2010, Al-Anon will participate with Alcoholics Anonymous in celebrating A.A.'s 75th year at their International Convention in San Antonio, Texas, July 1-4.

Convention registration and housing reservations will open this fall. All necessary information will be included in the registration packet, which will be mailed to all English-speaking Al-Anon groups worldwide, all Spanish- and French-speaking groups in the U.S. and Canada, and all AISs in the U.S. and Canada.

In addition to joining A.A. members for the Big Meetings at the Alamodome, Al-Anon will have daytime meetings at the San Antonio Marriott River Center Hotel.



### 2013 Al-Anon International Convention

Ric B.,  
2013 Chairperson

Suzanne M.,  
2013 Coordinator

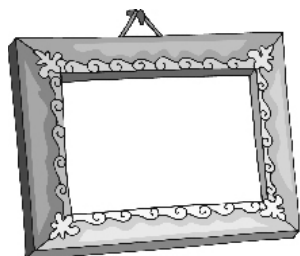
Barbara O.,  
2013 Co-Coordinator

The Coordinator asked Conference members to: “Picture yourself in Vancouver. Imagine taking a water taxi, flying high in a float plane, sitting on a beach, and riding the Super Skyride 3,700 feet above the city to the top of Grouse Mountain all in the same day! Members of Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. and their guests can do all of this and more in Vancouver, British Columbia, during the days before or after Al-Anon's 2013 International Convention, July 3-5.

“All meetings, including the Big Meetings, will be held in the new West wing of the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre. The Co-Coordinator and I recently had an opportunity to tour the expanded facility and it is quite a wonderful place for our Convention. Knowing that our Higher Power is fully involved in this International Convention was reinforced when I saw one of our Al-Anon PSAs an hour after arriving in the city. If you watch the two-week long major winter sporting event next February, you will get a taste of Vancouver and the surrounding area.

“Again, I ask you to picture yourself in Vancouver. This city, which is one of the safest and cleanest, is also one of the most multi-cultural cities on the planet. In eight city blocks there are 92 restaurants with a variety of cuisines. Vancouver's Chinatown is the second largest after San Francisco's. Gastown has great souvenir vendors.”

Conference members all received a postcard as a reminder of the upcoming International Convention. The Coordinator ended by saying, “We hope you can picture yourself in Vancouver and will join us in 2013 to celebrate our recovery!”



*Picture Yourself in Vancouver*



## POLICY COMMITTEE

### The Chairperson of the Policy Committee presented the report as follows:

"I hope that all of you become Trustees and have the opportunity to sit on Policy Committee. I mean that very sincerely. Because if you think you know what the policy says, after a Policy meeting on any topic, you are amazed at the breadth of interpretation and ideas that come from that group. The Committee consists of the Board of Trustees, the WSC staff members, and the members of the Executive Committee. It really is the largest group conscience of this fellowship, second to the people in this room—an incredible experience.

"The Policy Report is an update of our work this year. The Policy Report provides an opportunity to highlight discussions regarding issues of policy that have been discussed by the full Policy Committee during the year. Although some of these discussions lead to changes in the text of the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,' many do not, but do result in a consensus of the interpretation of the current policy in a changing world.

"Currently, there are Policy Task Forces working on 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies' text language which will likely be ready for your consideration at the 2010 WSC. These are related to the use of materials used at meetings, the establishment of a section of Alateen-specific policies, and clarifying the language regarding individual contributions to the WSO. By this time next year, there may be others as well, because we discuss whatever questions come in. Sometimes they result in Task Forces; sometimes they don't. There are occasional requests for Policy Committee discussions that do not require changes to the text of the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies' but are considered to be the way we conduct business at the WSO. We tend to call these procedures. They are not the same as policy, and they don't appear in the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,' but because the Policy Committee is the broad group conscience outside of the Conference, those issues come to us for discussion. The bequest procedure under consideration at this year's Conference did go through the Policy Committee to make sure it did have traditional understanding.

"One such issue that we've discussed at the July Policy meeting is this: A member asked that wording be inserted in the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies' defining the definition of an Al-Anon member for the purpose of establishing that an individual's contribution could be verified as eligible. The Policy Committee concluded that what Al-Anon membership is and who determines that membership is already covered on page 77 of the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.' Although specific office procedures for verification of membership are already in place, they are considered procedural rather than policy and are therefore not included in the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.'

"The Committee also discussed issues about on-line meetings that violated the Traditions, thus causing problems in the fellowship. It was concluded by the Committee that in general, on-line meetings do abide by the Traditions, and that complaints about Tradition violations are similar to the complaints received about face-to-face meetings. There is already a piece of literature entitled *Electronic Al-Anon Meeting Guideline* (G-39) that addresses such problems. The procedure for working with any group that violates the Traditions includes the possibility that an Information Service or district could remove meetings causing serious problems from the local meeting list while working with such groups to come to a resolution. Since on-line meetings are not geographically based, the WSO follows the same procedure for that type of meeting. In no case are the meetings de-registered at any level.

"Another discussion included a review of the local service section of the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies' regarding the requirement for local answering services to maintain a listing in the local phone directory. It was deemed that such a listing retains its importance and validity as a means of providing consistent public access to Al-Anon.

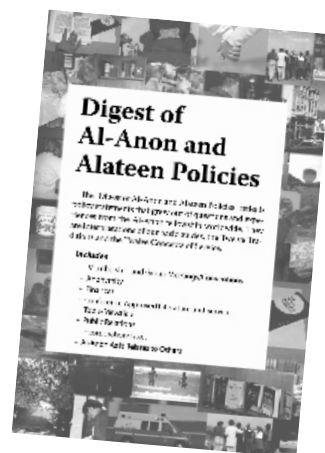
"A member indicated the concern that certain gender-specific special focus groups violate the Traditions because they do not promote the common welfare of Al-Anon. Nor, in his opinion, do they promote unity because they are exclusive. The Policy Committee referred the member to page 77 of the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,' the 'Registration of Groups' section which states, 'The WSO will register any group designating itself as an Al-Anon Family Group with the understanding that it will abide by the Traditions and that meetings will be open to any Al-Anon member.'

"Since it is likely that a new *Manual* will be printed next year, a number of clean-up issues in the 'Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies' will be taken care of at that time.

Mary G.  
Chairperson, Trustee

Margot M.  
Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Barbara O.  
Secretary, Director of Member Services



“A last important and interesting point regarding the ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies’—the entirety of the *Service Manual* is used as a guide for Al-Anon around the world. Since procedures for carrying out policies in the U.S. and Canada may be quite different from what works for General Service Offices worldwide, it is important that we are clear in our meaning and broad in our consideration of what constitutes ‘policy’ and how we word those policies for inclusion in the ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.’ We spend a lot of time making sure that the policies are going to be usable and translatable by other structures.”

## REGIONAL SERVICE SEMINAR (RSS) UPDATE

Vicki H.

Chairperson, Regional Service  
Seminar Task Force



Since 2006, the Board of Trustees has been gathering information about Regional Service Seminars from the RSS Committee, Thought Forces, Task Forces, WSC members, and from attendees' evaluation forms. Information gathered indicated a need for change. Last year the Future RSS Task Force was given the charge to create an alternative event that is dynamic, flexible, and nimble. The Task Force is now introducing the new event, TEAM—Together Empowering Al-Anon Members!

Using a PowerPoint slide show, the Chairperson of the Task Force described the new event. A TEAM event partners one or more Areas with the World Service Office (WSO), creating a unique service event geared to the interest of the members in the hosting Area or Areas. TEAM events target smaller audiences and are not limited to a three-year rotation. TEAM events make better use of resources. With the new TEAM event, responsibilities are shared.

The hosting Area is responsible for choosing and paying for the facility and some audio visual equipment. The Area will be responsible for all aspects of registration and may decide to offer hotel or meal packages options. The WSO is responsible for the assignments and expenses of the WSO staff and volunteers, as well as supplying the Area with a flyer template for publicity. Together, the Area(s) and the WSO will plan the program topics and provide supplies, materials, and literature.

TEAM events can be tied to an existing event, such as an Assembly, an Area Convention, or a Day in Service. It can also be a stand-alone event. An Area, group of Areas, or a Region can host a TEAM event. Members from anywhere can be invited.

To request a TEAM event, Areas submit an Event Request Form, available on the Members' Web site at [www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members). This form requires proposed dates, facility information, Host Committee information, and signatures of the Area Chair and the Area Delegate. A minimum notice of six months is requested for planning.

Once received, the WSO will verify the availability of staff and volunteers to participate in the event. After the event has been confirmed, the WSO will create a Task Force of staff members and volunteers who will attend the TEAM event and work with the Area's Host Committee. A timeline of tasks and responsibilities is included on a Suggested Planning Worksheet.

As with any new idea, the Delegates had questions. Here are some of those, as well as the responses:

**Q.:** Are there parameters around how many of these can be conducted per year/Region?

**A.:** *No, we left this nimble, however the WSO volunteer and staff member availability, as well as WSO funds available from the TEAM events budget, will be taken into consideration. It's not necessarily first come, first served. If all Areas want one of these in the next six months, we would have to consider meetings of the Board, Finance Committee, and Executive Committee, and other scheduled events.*

**Q.:** Is there a minimum amount of time for the WSO?

**A.:** *Six hours minimum, over one to three days.*

**Q.:** Can it be held at the same time as an A.A. event?

**A.:** *Yes.*

**Q.:** If there's money left over after the event, is that money split between the Area and the WSO?

**A.:** *The hosting Area(s) has the option of charging a registration fee to cover the Area's expenses for the event—the facility, registration, publicity, etc. Any excess funds could be donated to the WSO to help cover the WSO expenses; however that is not required.*

**Q.:** Does the event have to be in a hotel?

**A.:** *No, the event can be held at any facility that has sufficient meeting space. The needs of attendees—parking, restaurants, hotels, etc., should also be taken into account. Remember—nimble and flexible.*

**Q.:** Can the acronym TEAM be translated into French and Spanish?

**A.:** *We had a meeting with the WSO translation staff and couldn't come up with a similar word that could be translated in all three languages. The world is getting smaller, so we figure everyone will know what "TEAM" means. When you title your event, just put the word "TEAM" in the title. A sample flyer, with examples of TEAM event names in Spanish and French, will be available on the Members' Web site.*

## SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

### 2009 Regional Trustee Nominating Process

The Regional Trustee (RT) Nominating Process is in its third year of a three-year trial process. Using a visual demonstration with Delegate participation, involving large résumé forms on foam core boards, the Trustee explained the RT Nominating Process and deadlines. This year, four Regions will be nominating candidates. They are: Canada East (since they did not present a nominee in 2009), US Northeast, US North Central, and US Southeast. Each Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) consists of the current Delegates serving the Region, as well as Out-of-Region Delegates. The Canadian Committees have one Out-of-Region Delegate; the U.S. Committees have three. Each Area can select one candidate and an alternate for the Regional Trustee position.

There was some discussion on scoring and selecting nominees. The Trustee explained that scoring by the RCTs and the Nominating Committee is done at the same time, and that the Nominating Committee will recommend up to two candidates to be presented to the Board of Trustees to select one nominee per Region at their January meeting. These selections will be based on the scores provided by the RCTs and the Nominating Committee.

Frank R.  
Trustee

The Out-of-Region Delegates for this year's RCTs are:

Region	Voting	Alternate
Canada East	Charla C., Panel 49, Kansas	Cindy K., Panel 49, Texas West
US Northeast	Norma D., Panel 48, Utah Sharon B., Panel 48, Alaska Judy S., Panel 48, South Dakota	Sandie E., Panel 49, California South
US North Central	Judy G., Panel 48, Wyoming Claire D., Panel 49, Ontario South Cindy H., Panel 48, Arkansas	Berta R., Panel 48, Idaho
US Southeast	Louise R., Panel 49, Manitoba Rosie M., Panel 49, Texas East Kay R., Panel 49, Hawaii	Barb L., Panel 48, Saskatchewan

Following the selection of Out-of-Region Delegates for the RCTs, each RCT caucused to select a Chairperson from the Region's Delegates who is willing to serve and perform the duties within the designated time. An Alternate Chairperson from the Region's Delegates, who will assume the duties of the RCT Chairperson, if he or she cannot fulfill his or her duties as required, is also selected. The Chairpersons and Alternate Chairpersons for this year's RCTs are:

Region	Chairperson	Alternate
Canada East	Marilee P., Panel 48, Newfoundland/ Labrador	Micheline B., Panel 49, Quebec West
US Northeast	Fran M., Panel 47, New Jersey	Patricia N., Panel 47, Massachusetts
US North Central	Mary M., Panel 47, Minnesota North	Megan M., Panel 49, Minnesota South
US Southeast	Terry F., Panel 49, Florida North	Cindy H., Panel 49, Tennessee

## Conference Committee on Trustees

Jeff G.  
Chairperson, Panel 47, Georgia

“The selection of qualified, committed trusted servants is critical in protecting our Legacies; expanding Al-Anon’s future; and deciding, to a large extent, the continued success of our services worldwide. The Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) plays a key role as a partner and subcommittee of the Board’s Nominating Committee in the ongoing endeavor of choosing our future leaders.

“The CCT is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson annually. CCT members independently review and evaluate résumés submitted for Trustee at Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) openings. A compilation of their reviews is provided to the Nominating Committee to assist in the evaluation and selection of candidates presented to the Board of Trustees.

“While the CCT plays a pivotal role in the selection process of TAL and ECRPM candidates, it pales in comparison to the role that each of us plays individually in the same process. The ongoing vigilance to identify and encourage those who are qualified such that they are also willing is the ultimate responsibility of every past, current, and future Conference member. For without that diligence and vigilance on our part, there is no role for the CCT to play.

“The CCT was my first choice and only real interest when prioritizing Conference Committee assignments. At the time, I thought it important to learn more about the process of selecting our trusted servants at the Trustee level. What my Higher Power thought important was that I realize and appreciate the spiritual nature and principles involved in choosing those who protect our Legacies and expand our future. Serving as a CCT member has been a spiritual highlight and the role of CCT Chairperson a gift of grace.”

## Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

Lorraine F.  
Chairperson, Nominating  
Committee; Trustee

The Chairperson of the Nominating Committee began this session by explaining how the Board of Trustees came to be: “As we all know, Lois and Anne wrote to the existing groups in 1951. They asked whether the groups wanted to form a clearinghouse to connect them. They also asked whether the groups wanted to adapt the Twelve Steps and later the Twelve Traditions for their personal recovery. They considered the name A.A. Family Groups, but after consulting with A.A. found that A.A. was willing to share everything but their name. It was at this time that Lois came up with the ‘Al-Anon Family Groups’ name by taking the first syllable of ‘Alcoholics’ and ‘Anonymous,’ and making a new word. So they kept the connection with A.A. through our name, even though it remained separate.

“By 1954, Lois recognized that the Clearing House needed to have a legal basis to operate. While the groups as such ought never be organized, she understood that the Clearing House itself needed to have structure or it would be of no value to the groups. It was in 1954 that she, along with Henrietta and another member, incorporated Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. A Board of Directors was created to oversee this new corporation. Its goal was to serve and connect the individuals and groups that were growing throughout the world. The original Directors were nominated by a Nominating Committee as provided in the original By-Laws. Often these first Board members were friends of Lois or Anne who attended meetings in the New York Metropolitan area. As the organization grew, it applied for not-for-profit status in 1956 and amended its By-Laws in 1964 to create Trustees instead of Directors. In 1961, the first trial Conference was formed and Lois and the Board tried to find a way to link the groups through the Conference with the Board and the organization. Ultimately, as the Concepts of Service developed, the process of the Conference affirming the nominees to fill the vacancies arose. In the mid 1960s a plan to add regional participation on the Board was developed, and the first Regional Trustee selection process began. In 1986, the Conference Committee on Trustees was created to provide input from Conference members to the Nominating Committee as it nominated the At-Large Trustees. In 2006, the Conference gave approval to revise the Regional Trustee Plan on a three-year trial basis. For these past two years, Regional Committees on Trustees have provided input to the Nominating Committee for nominating Regional Trustees.”

The Chairperson continued to explain the process for electing nominees, “Today, we will continue that tradition of affirmation which gives the traditional concurrence of the whole Conference to the various nominees and officers. Friday, the Board elects those nominees who have received the traditional affirmation. As a result of this process, the voice of the fellowship through the Conference



is heard as the Board elects these Trustees to serve the organization, AFG Inc., and Al-Anon, the fellowship, as a whole.”

“In October 2007, the Nominating Committee recommended and the Board agreed not to propose candidates for the Southwest Regional Trustee position and two of the three Trustee at Large positions. In January 2007, the Board agreed to solicit résumés for appointments to fill these positions for one year until the regular election process could be followed and the names brought to the Conference for traditional approval. At the Board’s Annual Meeting in 2008, the Board accepted the resignation of a Trustee at Large, leaving a vacancy for the remaining year of a three-year term. The Board voted to fill that vacancy with one of the special appointment nominees. On April 18, 2008, the Board appointed three Trustee at Large members and a Southwest Regional Trustee for a one-year term. These Trustees have resubmitted their résumés, responded to the additional question, were reviewed by the appropriate Committees, and now stand for traditional approval to serve the remaining years of the terms.

“So let me start by thanking the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) and the Nominating Committee for their hard work over the last year. Using the résumés and additional question responses, they worked conscientiously to grade the candidates and return the information to the WSO in time for the October Board meeting. Between the two groups, we have fielded another excellent slate of candidates to serve the fellowship as Trustee at Large. The Nominating Committee has also proposed an excellent slate of Board Officers.

“Currently, candidates for Regional Trustee (RT) are selected by their Areas who then forward their résumés to the WSO via the Delegate. This year, the Canada Central and Canada West Regional Committees on Trustees consisted of the Regions’ Delegates and one Delegate chosen by lot. The Southwest Regional Committee on Trustees consisted of the Region’s Delegates and three Delegates chosen by lot. No résumés were submitted for the Canada East Regional Trustee vacancy. The Regional Committees on Trustees independently reviewed résumés and an additional written question that has been added as part of the process for a trial period. The comments and feedback from Delegates serving on these Regional Committees were submitted to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, with its own independent review of the résumés, considered the input from the Regional Committees on Trustees, and selected up to two nominees per Region for presentation to the Board. The Board then nominated one candidate per Region. These nominees will be given traditional approval by the Conference and are then elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting.

“Trustee at Large résumés are solicited from the fellowship after the WSC. Delegates receive a letter from the Executive Director in January and in June. Attached to that letter are a list of openings, deadlines for submission, and copies of all of the résumé forms—Trustee, ECRPM, and Committee. The résumés are submitted to the WSO by August 15th of that year and are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. The CCT Chair tallies rankings from CCT and sends a report to the WSO. At its October meeting, the Nominating Committee uses the CCT input and its own rankings to select a slate of up to six people to be invited to the January Board meeting for introduction to the Board. Each candidate gives a ten-minute talk about their Al-Anon recovery and service experience, followed by further questions during dinner. Using this information, the Board nominates up to three candidates at its quarterly meeting. You will be asked to give traditional approval to the nominees, who will be elected at the Board’s Annual Meeting. As there were vacancies from last year, two additional nominees are presented to fill the portion of those terms.

“The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was created by Motion 5 of the 1995 WSC in a trial amendment to the By-Laws—Article XII. This Committee, consisting of the Treasurer, the Director of Business Services, and three At-Large members, is designed to keep management of our Headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of Al-Anon. Each At-Large member serves a three-year term, and the Chairperson is seated at the WSC with voice only. The nominating process is the same as that for Trustee at Large. Résumés are due by August 15th and sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. Since no acceptable résumés were received, no candidate is being presented for traditional approval at this time.”

**Q.:** I have a question about the terms of Trustees. I noticed that every once in a while a Trustee steps down before the end of his or her term. Then the position is filled for one or two years.

Can a Trustee run for two full terms after that, or would partial term be part of that?

**A.:** *Members can serve two three-year terms up to six years. So, a member cannot exceed six years. If a person served for a year and then was re-elected for three years, the person could, at some point, serve for those remaining two years, but the total number of years can never exceed six.*



The Chairperson of the Nominating Committee continued, “You are being asked to give traditional affirmation for the nominees for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, and the Board’s officers. Each Conference member has the responsibility to ask questions or state any facts relevant to the candidacy of the person under consideration. Affirmation under the Right of Decision requires that each of us take our responsibility seriously. The fact that one is nominated is not the sole reason for affirmation. Likewise, the By-Laws of the Corporation articulate the Right of Decision given to the Board to elect or not elect an affirmed nominee.”

The ballots and voting process were explained. Discussion of each candidate for Regional Trustee and Trustee at Large was held. Any nominee present in the room was asked to leave during discussion of his or her candidacy.

#### **Trustees at Large:**

Judy A., 2nd three-year term  
Bev A., 2nd year of 1st three-year term  
Vicki H., 2nd year of 1st three-year term  
Laurie K., 2nd three-year term  
Harriet T., 1st three-year term

#### **Regional Trustees:**

Sandie D., Canada Central, 1st three-year term  
Sharon H., Canada West, 1st three-year term  
Karen R., US Southwest, 2nd year of 1st three-year term

#### **Board Officers:**

Mary Ann R., Chairperson  
Doreen D., Vice Chairperson  
Frank R., Treasurer

The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2009 WSC:

#### **The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2009-2010:**

Judith P., 2nd one-year term, Chairperson  
Catherine J., 1st one-year term  
Liz W.S., 1st one-year term

The Board announced Linda B, Chairperson, Executive Committee on Real Property Management

At its Annual Meeting, the Board appointed JP M. to fill the US Southeast Regional Trustee position (3rd year of a first three-year term) and Debbie G., to fill the At-Large position (three-year term) on the Executive Committee on Real Property Management.

## **TRIP TO TURKEY**

Mary Ann R.  
*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

Barbara O.  
*Director of Member Services*

The Chairperson of the Board and the Director of Member Services went to Gaziantep, Turkey, in January 2009. The WSO was invited to visit the facility by the Program Director of the new Oya Bahadır Treatment Center for young street boys.

During their visit, the two met with the Director of the International Center of Health Concerns and another team member, a doctor who was brought in to develop a family program. Both doctors recommend Al-Anon Family Groups and believe in the impact of family recovery.

The goal of this visit was to introduce the Al-Anon program to the staff at the treatment center and the families visiting the boys. The staff member and volunteer were given time for two presentations and gave each presentation twice so that the entire staff—including doctors, housekeepers, and janitors—attended the presentations. The Chairperson of the Board shared her personal story and the Director of Member Services shared about Al-Anon Family Groups as an organization. They held an open introductory meeting for the staff.

The WSO volunteer and staff member also held a closed meeting. One of the challenges was getting parents to attend. Transportation was a problem, so the facility sent vans to pick up members from the eight families who agreed to attend. The WSO volunteer and staff member were elated, as they were only expecting a few parents. One woman in attendance thought that because she wasn’t educated that maybe she wouldn’t be able to understand. The Board Chairperson told her, “I was educated and I still couldn’t understand my son’s alcoholism.” They had a special bond. After the meeting, the WSO visited with the boys and their families and took photographs.

While in Turkey, the volunteer and staff member had a chance to meet some members from an Al-Anon group in Istanbul. The WSO had lost contact with all Turkish-speaking groups when the English-speaking member of an Al-Anon group in Izmir, Turkey, moved out of the country. The

volunteer and staff member were delighted to discover that there are 15 Turkish-speaking groups. After a walking tour of Sultanahmet Square, a historical section of the city, the members took the volunteer and staff member to a facility where Al-Anon and A.A. meetings are held. The volunteer and staff shared about Conference Approved Literature. As a result of the visit to Turkey, the WSO is translating three pamphlets—*Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-9), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32)—and *Groups at Work* (P-24) into Turkish. The WSO often provides these pamphlets to support evolving structures.



**Q.:** In one part, you stated that the counselors said that families wouldn't come and if they did, because of their culture, they wouldn't understand about Al-Anon. How did you overcome that?

**A.:** *The counselors were eager to have a family meeting and for all the knowledge the families would get. One of the reasons we were successful is that we did footwork ahead of time. We read about the culture, we knew as much as we could about what to expect, and we were prepared to respond to their concerns.*

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## 2010 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE

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The 2010 World Service Conference will be held in Virginia. In searching for a site, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room, meal costs, and religious holidays are factors in the selection of the dates and location.

The dates selected for the 2010 World Service Conference are April 11-15, 2010. The WSC will be held in the Hampton Roads area at a location to be announced after a contract is signed.

Suzanne M.  
Associate Director of Membership  
Outreach—Conference



## ABUNDANCE TASK FORCE

Julie F.  
Chairperson

The Chairperson introduced the presentation, “At the January 2008 Board Meeting, the Board Presentations Task Force brought forward two suggestions:

- To create a presentation on the concept of ‘Abundance’—a reference to the Strategic Plan main idea, ‘Unlimited, Abundant Resources’
- To form Task Forces to create presentations on suggested topics for Area use

“The Abundance Task Force was appointed. Its charge was to create a presentation on member and financial resources and any other yet-to-be determined resource that will demonstrate abundance. This presentation is to be used at the Area and district levels.

“Members of the Task Force met at the 2008 Conference, by e-mail, and via conference calls. The following is the result of our labor.

“The definition of ‘abundance’: great quantity, plenty, wealth, profusion

The definition of ‘spiritual’: mystical, devout

“One might ask, ‘Why such a presentation?’ Al-Anon members generally have an aversion to talking about money, except to say that there is not enough—we can’t do it because we don’t have the money, the resources, or the people. We need an attitude adjustment! Our presentation is to turn that ‘lack of’ to one of abundance—we have plenty of money, we have members who can perform service and carry out innovative ideas, and we have spiritual abundance. This means thinking ‘outside the box,’ using the resources we have, thinking of ways to implement our new thinking, and asking for help from our Higher Power. We need to think about our cup being half full, instead of half empty. Al-Anon members are blessed with expertise, skills, and talents. How do we activate them into service?”

The Chairperson shared a bit of her own experience, “Before Al-Anon, I definitely felt I was not good enough, smart enough, talented enough, or that I would ever be able to speak in public. I was told to ‘risk a little,’ to dig deep to find the willingness and the time. The hidden talents and abilities that I never believed I had, and then the courage to use these abilities, came with the help of Al-Anon, a Higher Power, and a Sponsor who said, ‘You can do it.’ What an attitude adjustment! I made a commitment to myself that I would give to Al-Anon the gifts that I have received because of this program. What a journey I have been on—it has been rewarding, exciting, and challenging. I have received an abundance of insight, expanded my horizons, and accomplished things I never dreamed I could do. It spilled over into my personal life—I live an abundant life surrounded by family, friends, and an abundance of nature in my environment, which is an expression of my Higher Power. The Abundance Task Force presentation has been developed to inspire each of us to think abundantly in our spiritual lives, our personal lives, and our Al-Anon service lives so that we will use many methods to implement ‘Unlimited Abundant Resources.’”

### The Chairperson highlighted the main points of the presentation:

- Negative thinking of Al-Anon members—not enough money, resources, or people
- Change thinking to abundance of money, people with innovative ideas
- Feeling “not good enough” to contribute anything
- Al-Anon’s abundant gifts include friends, family, surroundings provided by a Higher Power

### The presentation included:

A PowerPoint slide show

A Panel—members sharing on spiritual abundance; abundance in groups; members involved in service; financial abundance; and methods of accessing members with special skills, talents, and expertise

A skit—“The Concept of Spiritual Abundance”

Audience Participation—members had an opportunity to share on abundance, allowing talents, skills, and expertise to blossom

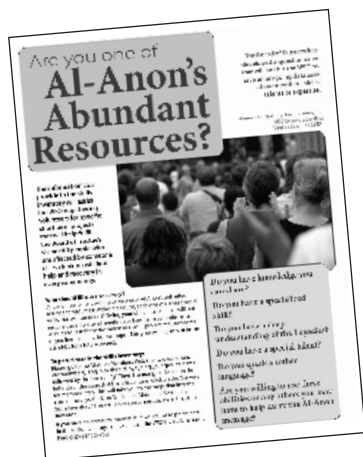
Summary—Conference members shared on what the Task Force presented

The presentation is available on the Members’ Web site.

In discussion, Conference members considered the question, “How can Al-Anon members think abundantly and demonstrate their abundant resources in their districts and Areas?”

Their comments included:

- This Conference has helped me to realize how good it will be for my brain to start thinking abundantly. I’ve made a list of ideas I want to discuss with the Coordinators. I’m going to suggest



the Public Information Coordinator create a Task Force when we need to address 500 envelopes. It could be an afternoon event. Like most Areas, we've tried to have a Steering Committee act like a Task Force and then wonder why no one else ever does or thinks of anything.

- We've been using job-sharing. If someone can't do everything, we give the person a partner. We've also been using short-term people (such as, a projectionist for Assembly). It's the kind of thing that gets more people involved and they like the idea that they're not being asked to fulfill a full three-year commitment. Short-term works to their advantage.
- I think it starts with me—I'm learning how to become a leader. When I first got here, I didn't think abundantly. Now, I realize that we're in this together, and we can perform tasks together.
- We can set the tone for others with our joy and enthusiasm. When I sat in my comfort zone, that's where I was. When I became involved in service, I grew in a way I never thought possible.
- "Let It Begin with Me"—it has to start with me. I want to attract members who have a variety of skills. I have many talented members in my Area.
- For me, spiritual abundance begins with willingness to accept where I am and where others are.
- One of the gifts of the fellowship that we all have is spiritual abundance. We can look at our finances in an abundant way. We can look at service members who want to do what we're doing because they see what we have. It's a mindset—we are an abundant program.
- The main thing is to be willing. I have to be willing to think abundantly and to demonstrate my abundant resources. I used to think I had no talents—the people in the meetings pointed them out to me. I got involved in service because the person who took me to my meeting was the District Representative. Another thing is to be visible; I was a Delegate many years ago, but I've stayed visible.
- We've made jobs very small. If we had a large project, someone could create it, someone else could print it, etc, which makes it more palatable. Many people don't think they have talent and they do—we need to tap that talent. We have a problem with financial abundance in my Area because people don't want to turn in all of their receipts for service work. We make them turn in receipts and we compensate them for their service. If they want to turn around and give the money back to Al-Anon, that's their choice.
- The idea of abundance for some people may sound new, and sometimes I'm afraid of anything that appears to be new. Here's a little bit of Al-Anon history. Back in the early 1950s, before Conference Approved Literature (CAL), there was a local piece titled, *Alcoholism, the Family Disease*, that was distributed by Headquarters. By 1961, it was developed into CAL. The original pamphlet included "Just for Today," and this line can still be found in our literature: 'Just for Today, I will be unafraid. Especially, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.' This is the idea of abundance from the beginnings of our program.
- First I have to let go of my issues. Once I've done that, it's like a total change. We needed a Newsletter Coordinator. I didn't have any ideas of who it should be. When I got to the Assembly, I opened the session in a very gentle way. I went over to a member and said, 'Would you like to be the Newsletter Coordinator? Because I really think you can do this, and I will be there for you.' A week later she accepted it!

**A Trustee summarized the discussion, highlighting these points for spiritual abundance:**

- Once my spiritual house is in order, the rest will follow
- In groups: the love they show equals spiritual abundance
- Paying it forward by helping a newcomer who doesn't have a lot of money is abundance
- Dignity
- Humility
- Abundant resources of human energy
- Get specific
- Use what we have
- Job sharing/Shared leadership
- Learn to be a leader then teach someone to be a leader
- Embrace the Legacies and apply them in your life
- Willingness
- Acceptance
- When we think in abundance, we will have abundance

## ALATEEN CHAT MEETINGS

**Ric B.**

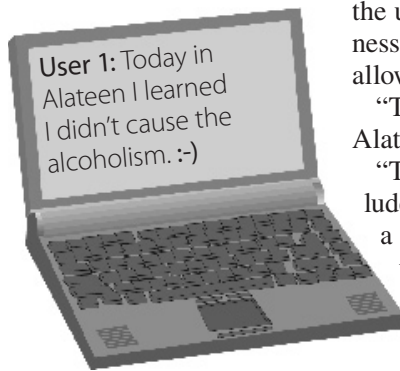
*Executive Director*

**Barbara O.**

*Director of Member Services*

**Mary Lou M.**

*Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Services*



The Executive Director began this presentation with a brief history: “At the European Talk meeting that preceded the 2008 International AI-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM), I became aware that one of the structures had started hosting an Alateen chat site. I think most of you are aware that the Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees asked the fellowship not to have on-line Alateen meetings of any type until the World Service Office could assure the safety and the protection of the Alateen members.

“Because the structure that had instituted the on-line Alateen meeting is very small—the meeting itself only had seven or eight members and the meeting was somewhat isolated from the rest of the world—the structure was allowed to continue the meeting on a trial basis. This trial basis included the understanding that the rest of the world would not go forward until the WSO Alateen and Business Services staff members could research whether or not there was software available that would allow the WSO to actually host on-line Alateen meetings and protect the membership.

“The good news is that we have found a program that the Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Services is now going to demonstrate.

“The one thing I want to caution Conference members is that we are showing this to you as a prelude for what is coming. We still have to test it and we’re going to ask the structure that first hosted a chat meeting to test the software too. Then, we’ll write safety procedures for the Alateen chat meetings. The procedures will go through volunteer oversight—the Executive Committee will review some things and the Policy Committee may have to review some things. My goal is that we might be in a test mode that can be open to the teens soon, so that the teens have an opportunity to share and not be isolated during the summer break.

The Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Services then demonstrated the new Alateen Chat meeting. She noted that teens will not be able to enter the meeting unless a “Moderator” (there would be two AI-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service Moderators per meeting) has already opened it. She showed how a teen would enter the meeting and what his or her screen view of the chat meeting would be. Then she showed what the “Moderator’s” screen view would be. In this new chat meeting, teens would be able to pick a topic and share on it. Before their messages are sent to the rest of the group, a Moderator must screen the message to assure its appropriateness. Sharings that include profanity or personal information would be deleted rather than sent into the meeting. The Moderator can begin a private chat with the teen (the Alateen members do not have this feature) and send him or her a warning message. The other Moderator can control the flow of conversation if one Moderator is busy handling a situation.

For those teens who continue to use inappropriate language or give personal information, there is a “gag” feature that the Moderator can use to block any messages from being sent—even to the Moderator. If necessary, the Moderator also has the ability to block someone out of the meeting.

Additional features for this chat meeting include: changing the background color, uploading an icon to show next to the display name, emoticons (smiley faces), and the ability to change font and text color and size.

Delegates, Trustees, and WSO staff agreed that the most important issue is safety. We want to make this chat meeting as safe as possible to keep predators from trying to come in and abuse the system. Since we are still in the planning stages, safety guidelines will need to be created. The logistics will be worked out as planning continues.

One concern, however, was that by imposing the control of the Moderators on what is sent to the group and what is not, that the meeting would not be a genuine Alateen meeting. The Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Services assured members that the WSO is doing everything possible to keep our membership safe. She also assured Conference members that the meeting format, topic, behavioral guidelines, etc., would continue to be the responsibility of the Alateen members.

**Q.:** Will the AMIAS who serve as moderators for the chat meetings be required to pass the safety restrictions of all 50 states?

**A.:** *No. It’s actually 67 Areas, plus all the countries and structures overseas. Since we had the opportunity, we chose to give you a preview of the chat room, but we haven’t worked out all of the details yet. The message to your Area is, “This is coming.” We don’t have a date yet, but there will be an opportunity to be of service and there will be this chat opportunity for Alateens sometime soon.*



*We'll find a way to have AMIAS in the Area to serve as Moderators. It's not going to be WSO staff.*

*The language software is already in place. We are working on the plan for implementation. As with any other new service, we will have a trial period.*

**Q.:** How will we fund the people who are going to be responsible for hosting the Alateen chat room? Will it be the responsibility of the Area?

**A.:** *Although we are still in the planning stages of the Alateen Chat Meeting, we can say that we don't anticipate there being any cost. The WSO will pay for the service of having a chat meeting. The moderators will be certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service from your Area.*

## DIVISION/CONSOLIDATION OF AREAS

Bev A.

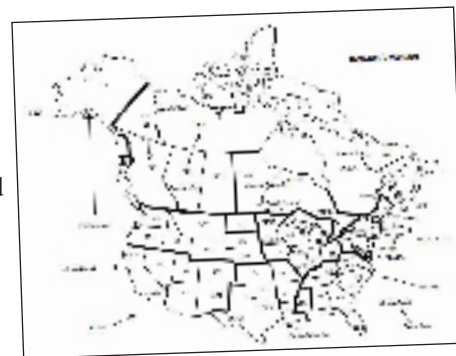
Chairperson, Admissions/  
Handbook Work Group

### Background

In developing a Big Question for the 2009 World Service Conference regarding division or consolidation of Areas, the Work Group has considered the following:

#### **What do we know about the Delegates'/Areas'/Conference's wants, needs, and preferences that are relevant to this discussion or decision?**

- The Conference needs competent members who represent the diversity of the fellowship.
- There is fear that the "balance" will tip toward a specific Region if Areas are allowed to divide.
- At least one Area found a solution in redistricting, rather than petitioning to divide.
- Some districts petition to join an adjoining Area.
- Dividing an Area could replace one problem with another.



#### **What do we know about the capacity (resources) and "strategic position" of Al-Anon that are relevant to this discussion or decision?**

- Although we operate from a position of unlimited abundant resources, the Board is also cognizant of the current financial climate. As good stewards of the fellowship, we must be aware of how any changes to the current structure will affect Al-Anon Family Groups overall.
- We could use evolving technology to communicate in new ways.
- We know that today's world is bridges apart from the time our pioneers were living in when they created the Conference structure.

#### **What do we know about current realities and evolving dynamics of the existing structure that is relevant to this discussion or decision?**

- Some Areas are struggling to serve all the groups in their Areas
- Some Areas are so large that it is impossible for a Delegate to visit all groups and districts.
- Some Areas have enough groups to split and choose not to split.
- Some Area Delegates share information with the Alternate Delegate and some do not.
- Alternate Delegates are not privy to first-hand knowledge of what happened at Conference.

#### **What are the ethical implications of our choices? (pros, cons, other)**

##### **Pros:**

- More groups/districts would be able to participate in Assemblies.
- The Delegate would feel more connected to the districts/groups.
- Delegates with large geographical Areas would not feel so overwhelmed in their ability to connect with the group.

##### **Cons:**

- Dividing Areas could make the WSC larger—is this what we want?
- Cost of making the WSC larger
- Separation rather than unity (ethnic, cultural etc.)
- Can the fellowship support divisions financially and with adequate member participation?

- A rushed decision could harm AI-Anon
- Would solving one problem create another problem?

### What do we wish we knew, but don't?

- Do the Delegates really understand their role at the WSC?
- Would dividing be more beneficial to an Area or would it be more harmful?
- Would the Areas be able to financially support a division and would they have enough members willing to serve?
- Is there another way to meet the needs of the Areas without dividing?
- Could a better use of technology benefit the Areas?
- What would be the cut off point for the WSC? (How big do we want it to get?)
- Is our current structure limiting the size of our fellowship?
- What would the total costs (monetary and volunteer base) be if we start dividing Areas?
- How do we get more people involved in service?

### Discussion

The Chairperson of the Admissions/Handbook Work Group introduced the session by saying, "Evaluation of petitions from a state, province, or territory to divide is part of the specific work of the Admissions/Handbook Work Group.

"The current policy, as stated in the *2006-2009 Service Manual* on page 128, is that 'A state, province, or territory having more than 400 groups may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference. A state, province, or territory may divide only once, as reaffirmed at the 1982 World Service Conference.'

"Our charge: To develop a follow-up 'Big Question' for discussion at the 2009 World Service Conference regarding further division or consolidation of Areas.

### Relationship to the Strategic Plan

"Goal 5, under Support & Strengthen Our Structure, 'Evaluate and recreate the structure of the WSO Selected Committees and other program delivery processes in innovative ways rendering them dynamic, flexible, nimble and task oriented to fulfill current needs of the organization' has been moved to an operational status. However, further division or consolidation of a state, province, or territory would impact the World Service Conference. There is value in asking the World Service Conference for guidance on establishing a plan for communication to the fellowship to articulate the changes which might be made.

"In 2004, it was reported that correspondence was received from an Area Delegate asking whether a state or province that has already been divided would be allowed to divide again.

"The 2008 World Service Conference started this discussion with the question: What might be the impact of further division or consolidation of the Areas:

- On the World Service Conference?
- Finances?
- Innovative approaches to the links of service?
- Growth of the fellowship?
- Diversity of the fellowship?

"At the end of the 2008 discussion, the Chairperson reminded the Conference that this is a conversation in progress. To read the full discussion from last year, please see pages 40-44 of the *2008 World Service Conference Summary*, also available on the Members' Web site.

"The Admissions/Handbook Work Group has continued this discussion since the 2008 World Service Conference with big thinking and has focused some of its discussion around considering if our current policy regarding consolidation/splitting of Areas is strategic or administrative. Is it old thinking?

"Allow me to read a portion of our current *Service Manual*, page 166

"*The AI-Anon Concepts of Service record the "why" of our service structure in such a way that the valuable experience of the past and the lessons drawn from that experience can never be forgotten or lost. Each new generation of world servants quite rightly will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will perhaps show up in time. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. These contingencies should be squarely met, and suitable alterations effected. When structural change does seem advisable, its advocates need only present a strong case for such a change to both the Trustees and the World Service Conference for consideration. This is no more than would be required for the transac-*

tion and passage of any other piece of Al-Anon business. For an appropriate period, any far-reaching structural change should be labeled a “trial.”

“This year, the Work Group was again encouraged to think ‘outside of the box’ to formulate a ‘Big Question’ for the 2009 World Service Conference to continue this big conversation.

**“Is the current World Service Conference model providing the spiritual bridge we need to expand into the future in order to meet the needs of the fellowship?”**

Following are the questions Conference members considered, along with their comments. They were asked to keep the Conference theme—“Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future”—in mind when thinking about these questions.

**If Lois and Anne were with us today and were thinking about designing a World Service Conference (WSC), what criteria would they use in their plan and how would they go about constructing a WSC to provide the spiritual bridge?**

- The first thing that comes to my mind in answering this question is that Lois’s goal was always to include as many people as possible. If that means allowing more representation so that larger Areas could participate, I think that’s something she would embrace.
- Lois was a woman of her time who embraced future thinking. If Lois were around today, I think she’d participate in things like “Twitter” and blogs that change the way information and decision-making occurs. Because I see her as such an incredibly forward-thinking person, I think Lois would look at new technology and all other ways of communicating with the groups. She would be innovative and she would be responding to the current time.
- I think Lois would have wanted as much representation as possible, but also equality. Some Delegates have 400 to 500 groups; others that have 70. Is that fair?
- As a point of clarity, last year’s *Conference Summary* said Pennsylvania had over 700 groups. We have about 430. I think logic prevails. There should be two matters considered: 1.) Geographic distance or size. Pennsylvania is big, so it takes a long time to get to other parts; 2.) Population density. If you’re in a small Area, but have a large number of groups, it would make it hard to attend all groups.
- Maybe we could divide by number of meetings. Rather than being state-oriented, let’s have it based on the number of groups.
- Along with the founders of A.A., the cofounders of Al-Anon were visionaries. We haven’t changed a whole lot along the way. If we’re talking about dividing, I’d like to change that word to “creating.” The purpose is to represent our membership in a certain way. If an Area is growing so large that it can’t serve a large portion of its membership, we can’t be effective. I don’t think one state gaining too much power is a huge issue, because in my state the North and South Areas seldom vote the same way.
- Can a Delegate serve 600 groups? Are groups getting the necessary information? Do we need to expand the number of Delegates?
- I think Lois would want to make sure groups are served. On the other side, I think she would want us to empower our District Representatives to make them good leaders to carry the message to their groups.
- In my Area, we experience both issues. We have a huge geographic area and a dense population. When we look at our Area, it’s divided into sections. Ours is in three sections with about 200 groups each. One section is a small area with a big population; the other two areas are big, not so dense. I’d like this body to consider the political boundaries and start looking at where geographic centers are and build on that. I think we’d be much more successful. We haven’t begun to do it, but we now have technology to have meetings where someone in Eureka could participate in a meeting in Sacramento.
- Newfoundland used to be part of Atlantic Provinces and we did petition to divide. We’re a small population but a big geographic region. With respect to money, my understanding is that it’s an equalized payment formula so I don’t think cost should be a consideration. I agree with the last speaker about doing away with political boundaries.
- If Lois were here today, I think her criteria would be the same as in 1961. She had three points, and I’m referring to page 126 of the *Service Manual* on the bottom. 1.) It would be simple; 2.) It would be inexpensive; and 3.) There would be equal representation. Interestingly, the first

Delegates were chosen from states and provinces with the greatest number of Al-Anon groups, so she was thinking about equality at that time.

- As a small town country member, we don't have a problem with travel. I think Lois would've said, "The greatest good for the greatest number." We need to create leaders to look over boundaries.
- At the Canadian Delegates' meeting, we struck up a Committee to look at serving and communicating better with groups. We have a large area with very few groups; we're continuing with this Committee to continue to explore how to serve these people who are isolated, remote, and not necessarily English-speaking. We're already working on how to best serve them. We're looking at communication and means of travel.
- There is some flexibility for Areas that are geographically large. We have groups in New Hampshire that are actually registered in Vermont. When two Areas both agree, because it would be more realistic for them to attend a district meeting in another Area, there is some flexibility.

### **What role would today's evolving technology have in that design?**

- What I need to constantly remember is that because I don't have information, it doesn't mean that it doesn't exist. I need to encourage those people in the membership who are really comfortable with technology to share their knowledge with me.
- My Area has been described as a small town with *very* long streets. Keeping people together and active is a real challenge. In places like this, or even in very populated cities, technology is a must. Some of the issues are: expensive training, equipment, and the lack of phone service in some places. We need to be forward-thinking and very flexible in how we communicate, reach out, and build those bridges.
- Our Area had a discussion on technology. One important thing for them is to always have face-to-face contact; they want to be tech-savvy, but they always want to have face-to-face, too.
- We started our big thinking conversations three years ago. In order to conserve Area funds, we started thinking about cutting our four Area World Service Committee meetings down to two face-to-face meetings. We had one on Skype; we were able to successfully conduct certain points. It's a learning curve. We have an additional concern—Bermuda is part of our Area, and it's very expensive to have them come to the AWSC. We're going to have a conversation about inviting their Group Representatives to our meetings via Skype.
- "I think the role of technology would be vital as we move forward, but it would have to be supported with training. In my Area, we are using teleconferencing; we're also using e-groups for Area communications. It doesn't take the place of face-to-face communication; there is no one-size-fits-all. I think another criterion to think about would be language.
- Areas could financially sponsor some of those remote districts.

### **How would our design address the diverse needs of the Areas?**

- We have one city (three districts) that you have to go over a bridge to get to. Sometimes, they act like part of our Area, and other times they act autonomous. I don't think it's our job to imagine everyone's diversity—it is our job to realize that diversity is a universal concept and to encourage Delegates to start thinking abundantly to approaching their diversity.
- I suggest that we combine Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, and we still wouldn't have the same number of groups as California. At this point, we have five-hour Area Assemblies and others have weekend Assemblies. It would be impractical for us to invite someone from the WSO to attend a five-hour meeting.
- I was concerned about my Area representation when I came here. The Hispanic district is Spanish-speaking only and they are not represented here. They don't know where the links of service are.
- I was thinking about zonal meetings. Why can't we do that here? We could have all the zones here at the World Service Conference and have universal translation equipment.
- We have weekend Assemblies. We have a large Hispanic community. I have seen them create their own "Intergroup," but they are not connected to the WSO or WSC. Unfortunately, I only speak one language. I don't know how we should divide, but we should consider language. We're here to unite, not divide.
- We have to address all the needs our fellowship has. We have 15,000 groups. Think about the number of groups to Delegate ratio: 200 per Delegate. Technology is already being used. We are always going to have remote locations; we won't be able to serve everyone. We spent



12 years in Florida trying to figure out how to divide before we actually petitioned to divide and share in serving all the needs. We need to strive for Tradition One, progress for greatest number.

- I think the beginning of it all is having conversations with those groups that are somehow seen as either too far away, too close, too populated, whatever it is, to find out what their needs are. The biggest thing is that they just want to be able to talk to others who have the same concerns.
- This is a complicated problem. We need to do some research and then we have to be really clear about which problems we're solving. We can't fix everything by one change.

### **Would we design Areas differently?**

- We need to think spiritually. Yes, Lois used what she had; basically what she had was Bill's structure in A.A. I think we would design it differently. We get stuck in "we're all equals," but we're not. We have different talents and skills. In a meeting, we share as equals, but we don't want Al-Anon to be homogenized; we want to celebrate differences. The other part is unlimited, abundant resources.
- The Hispanic groups have been talking for many years, and we have been talking about forming Hispanic districts and having a Hispanic representative to send to the WSC. We're applying Knowledge-Based Decision-Making; it's an ongoing discussion.
- I give myself permission to change. It's almost as if our structure, which we seem to view as cast in concrete, has become almost hierarchical without meaning to. I think our society has changed. In Lois's time we were housewives; our needs are different. It's like sticking a big toe in service water, just having the time to leave home to represent the group.
- I need to bring up geography. In our Area, it's about 1.5 million square miles, and it's about 123 groups. The geographical issue is a concern when we look at it as 200 groups per Delegate.
- Maybe we need a Task Force to look at this—I don't think we're going to solve the problem in this big group.
- We had a PO Coordinator just quit because she was so far away. We have to build that bridge.
- I'm afraid if we relied on technology for Area Assemblies, it would limit our officers to people who had the money to have all the necessary equipment. And we tried to make it so that money didn't matter. The other thing about money—are we afraid that a larger Conference would cost more money?
- We've been talking about combining and separating Areas, but we don't have to do that on a geographical basis. We could have Spanish Texas as an Area; you could have on-line meetings as an Area; there are things other than geography.
- Our Area just recently created an ad hoc Committee to look at district boundaries because we feel some are not operating in healthy fashion, and we think we can better serve our groups and members.
- I think while we may divide Areas differently, Areas have a great responsibility to deal with what they have. I'm 2,000 miles from the furthest group in my Area. There are different mindsets. When I come to Board, I have to go to Vancouver the night before, that's just the way it is. I think it's all in the mindset, and we have to be very careful to talk to the groups."
- I just want to say that this conversation will continue. Every time we have this conversation, we have more ideas so we can take what we've heard, play on that, and take it into next conversation. This is the beauty of the KBDM process.

### **Considering our future design, how large would we want the WSC to be and what would the implications be of our decisions?**

- I don't think we can give an answer as to how large the Conference might be. It will be as big as it needs to be.
- I don't know that the size has to do with the design as much as it has to do with where are we going to meet? If we stay in the Hampton Roads area, there are few places for us to meet. We send out bids to about ten hotels, and we're lucky if we get three. Maybe we wouldn't need to meet in the Virginia Beach area. That might be one of the things. We could figure those and other things out. I'm not sure that size is the sole problem.
- I certainly hear a lot of negativity. I think how big the WSC might be should depend on the needs of membership. It isn't like it was ten or five years ago. I want to throw out some statistics, and I'm thinking globally. In our Area, we have a Spanish district. We have more than 1,300 meetings in the south and 2,000 in all of the state. Instead of calling it "dividing,"



it's more "creating" something new. We need open-mindedness, think spiritually, and presume goodwill. I think we have to meet needs of the existing world.

- I want to answer the original question, "Is the current World Service Conference model providing the spiritual bridge we need to expand into the future in order to meet the needs of the fellowship?" with a "yes" and a "no." Are we telling our fellowship what they need? I'm hearing we have needs in all our Areas. In my Area, with our policies, we cannot divide. But we're not meeting all our groups' needs in our state. We're not meeting all of our groups as it is. In our discussions to embrace the Legacies, to expand Al-Anon Family Groups into the future, our own barriers are keeping us from expanding. Our current policies will need to be changed as we continue to grow as a WSC in an ever-changing world, just like our own personal recovery. I'm also hearing barriers, too. We're limiting ourselves; we're not embracing our Task Forces; we're not embracing our Thought Forces. We're sticking to our old ideas of Committees, and to me, they're kind of the same. We're going to come here, and we're really going share what we think of Al-Anon Family Groups as a whole. We just need to hear what everybody needs in order to do that.

## CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS



The purpose of the Chosen Agenda Items sessions is to provide time on the agenda for the Conference as a whole to discuss topics that are general in nature and pertain to Al-Anon worldwide. Prior to this year's World Service Conference (WSC), the Conference Leadership Team invited Conference members to submit such topics, which Conference members would like to discuss during the WSC.

Before the Conference, the submitted topics were combined into a single document by a Thought Force of Delegates and sent back to the members. From this list, each Conference member was asked to select two topics for 80-minute discussions. The votes were tallied and the two topics receiving the most votes were placed on the agenda. Two Delegates were invited to give a brief presentation of each topic followed by open discussion.

## Open Discussions and Presentations

### Chosen Agenda Item #1

**Al-Anon's Public Relations Policy—Is it becoming more like promotion rather than attraction? Are we embracing Traditions Six and Eleven in all Al-Anon's affairs?**

Dennis G.

*Panel 47, British Columbia/Yukon*

Paula M.

*Panel 47, North Carolina/  
Bermuda*

The Delegate from British Columbia/Yukon started the presentation by giving some background information:

- The comments from the Area submitting the question indicate that more and more their members see and hear 'promotion,' not attraction as they read and listen to Al-Anon communication from the WSO, Delegates, and other Area World Service Committee leaders.
- The Area's longtime members express fears that the spiritual bridges built by Al-Anon's pioneers are being eroded as we try to adjust and keep abreast of social, cultural, financial, and information technology changes in an attempt to preserve Al-Anon's past and protect its future.

He continued, "If this is the voice of the majority, things are going to change. I don't think it is. If this is the voice of the minority, then I think of Concept Five and how the right of appeal protects and encourages minority opinion. Let's remember the open Board of Trustees meeting that we sat in on last year where the voice of one changed the thinking and the vote of the group because it was sound judgment.

"The primary concerns are: promotion versus attraction; compromising Tradition Six and Eleven; sounding more like a business and less like a spiritual fellowship; and trust. We need to ask ourselves some questions. What is our public relations policy, and how does it address promotion and attraction? Is Al-Anon sounding more like a business? Are we losing sight of our Twelve Traditions? Do we promote?

He then read the “Public Relations” section from the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.” (See page 98 in the *2006-2009 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual*, P-24/27)

The Delegate continued: “Like many of you, I have always trusted our process. The balance is created through the union of our Delegates here at the Conference—carrying the group conscience of our membership—and our Trustees along with the Executive Committee members, who are responsible to direct the business operations of the WSO while observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and guarding the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship.

“We have only been self-supporting through our voluntary contributions for one year in our existence. The income from literature sales far exceeds our voluntary contributions. Also, we bought, have almost paid for, and manage our own World Service Office. If owning and managing property and earning income from literature sales constitutes a business, then you bet we are. We guard our business with special care. We have given the Board of Trustees the responsibility to determine policy and manage the business affairs of the WSO. In Concept Six, we acknowledge the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.

“The Traditions that follow bind us together in unity. They guide the groups in their relations with other groups, with A.A., and the outside world. They recommend group attitudes toward leadership, membership, money, property, public relations, and anonymity.” (Page 17, *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*) No, I don’t think we are losing site of our basic message found in our Traditions.

“Our public relations policy as stated previously on page 98 in the *Service Manual* states that we need to continue to grow. We need to fulfill this primary purpose most effectively by attraction and cooperation—not promotion or affiliation.

“We have all heard the results of the latest membership survey where over a three-year span the profile of our average member became three years older and is still female. Our public relations policy tells us that we need to grow through attraction by telling people why we are, what we are, what we do, and how and to let these people know there is a seat for them and where it is when things get bad enough.

“Throughout our Al-Anon existence, our primary public outreach tools have been printed. As much I am endeared to them and will continue to use them, they just do not cut it for a lot of people anymore, especially the younger generations. We are moving into an age of such rapid technological development that it seems what is current today is passé tomorrow.

“We have done some very remarkable things in a short period of time. Where we, the Conference, can help is through good communication and strong leadership with our membership. Through this evolution we need to help and communicate with our membership, especially our longtime Al-Anon members, that these are good things. We need to tell them that we are doing our very best to be in places where the people who need Al-Anon will find us. Whether it’s leaving *Troubled by Someone’s Drinking?* (S-17) on a bus seat or having a hyperlink to click to our Web site, it’s about attraction.

“There is a responsibility for all of us—Delegates, members of the Board, the Executive Committee, and staff—to assure all members that the same checks and balances between the Conference and the WSO that were adopted years ago are still in place and working very well; that we make sure that all new ideas, programs, etc., do meet the standards found in our public relations policy; that we are protecting our program; that this is not promotion, this is attraction; and that we are following our Legacies of service, so that this will always will be a spiritual program.”

The Delegate from North Carolina/Bermuda continued the discussion: “One of my favorite ‘longtimers’ explained attraction vs. promotion so simply: Attraction is when you give someone the information and invite them; promotion is when you drag them.

“A couple of years ago, our Area Convention played a word game with the Traditions. The objective was to describe the essence of each Tradition with a word or two. We learned a lot. Two words, ‘grace’ and ‘discretion,’ were constant, and we felt they best described Tradition Eleven: ‘...public relations is based on attraction rather than promotion; ...personal anonymity at the level of ...’ The second sentence tells us to ‘...guard the anonymity of all AA members.’

“An excellent source for clarification is in the ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies’ from the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* entitled, ‘Al-Anon as It Relates to Others.’ Our Al-Anon history indicates that discussions on this topic have been held since the beginning days of Al-Anon. In 1962, the discussion was about submitting personal stories to a newspaper syndicate. The decisions that were made ensured that the public image of Al-Anon was ‘unified and coordinated.’

“In 1963, the discussion was about confusion between practicing Step Twelve and breaking Tradition Eleven, and it was stated: ‘Carrying the message to others is the very life blood of our program.

If we sit back comfortably and enjoy our own little group without doing anything to “attract” others to us, our group may soon stultify through smugness and self-satisfaction and the many unknowing and hopeless mates will be still unknowing and hopeless.’

“In 1966, it was the consensus of the Sixth World Service Conference that, ‘if Al-Anon is to continue to exist, it must continue to grow. There is no standing still without retrogression. Al-Anon must continue to grow if it is going to fulfill its primary purpose of reaching the millions who need Al-Anon’s help, but who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.’ They provided ‘authoritative definitions’ of these sometimes controversial terms, which were reaffirmed at the 1971 WSC and included in the *2006/2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* on page 98.

“The subject was discussed again in at least 19 other World Service Conferences.

“It seems we contact the World Service Office and ask for clarification on a lot of discussion items. It is a part of our history to send our concerns to the WSO—after all, the World Service Office was originally called the ‘Clearing House.’ As with any organization, we must take care of business if we are to continue to function properly. We look at our budget, we look at our income, we take an inventory, we discuss situations and questions, and we discuss solutions, all within the parameters of our Legacies.

“Some of our concerns exist, I believe, because of the increased use of technology within our fellowship. Technology has created a new environment. It really does look like our world is changing. Our predecessors were eager to see each other at service meetings; today we can see each other on Skype! We are going through growing pains; and some things will be good and stick, while others will be cast aside.

“Not all of us are comfortable functioning within the technological environment. As we break ground on these new frontiers, we must continue to take inventory, ask questions, and discuss solutions. We do this within the basic spiritual foundation of the three Legacies, the theme of which is: Pass Along Understanding. We read of these three Legacies on p. 165 of the *Service Manual*:

“The summary of this theme is in our Al-Anon Declaration:

“**When:** today, tomorrow, next year, ten or twenty years from now

“**Anyone:** regardless of color, nationality, religious belief

“**Anywhere:** Liberty, North Carolina or Indonesia

“**Reaches out for help:** even if they don’t know about Al-Anon Family Groups

“**Let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen:** I can’t be everywhere

“**Always be there:** and this can’t happen if I am not fully self-supporting in my recovery, in my group, and in service opportunities

“**And let it begin with me:** it is up to me!

“With new technology, big thinking, and new ideas, we must continue to take an inventory of our actions. We must continue to measure our actions to the principles established in our Legacies. It is only by doing so that our fellowship can continue to follow a spiritual path of recovery for all people, anywhere, who reach out for help.

“It is our Concepts of Service that reinforce our Traditions, assign responsibility, and give us certain rights—such as, the right of decision, the right of participation, the right of appeal, and the right of petition. The Concepts bring us here today to discuss this important topic and to bring forth more questions, more exploration.”

The Conference members responded:

- I can understand how some of the fellowship worries about Al-Anon turning into a business. A lot of management/business terms have been brought in, which need some gentle discussion. One term is ‘bequest,’ which we’ve heard for a couple years.
- One of the things about attraction is that we can be as attractive as we want to be; that doesn’t mean anybody’s going to come a-calling. But if we don’t put ourselves out there, no one’s going to find us. There are millions of people who have no idea that we’re out there.
- When I looked at this topic, I went back to this old book [*Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*] that I acquired in 1985. I went to those articles in the front because they were written by credible professionals. It’s no different than the information that we have today.
- This seems to be one of the barriers that we have. Some people think we can’t say our full names in our meetings. Anyone who comes to a meeting I’m attending can know who I am. Professionals can know who I am. I don’t want to use this as a barrier. To me, we’re here to break those barriers.
- One of the things that we discuss quite often in my home group and in my Area is the timing we use when we introduce a newcomer to service and that Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc. is a

business with a spiritual product. There has to be a business behind it that goes beyond just our meetings. Finding the right time can be a tough call. If we try too soon, they run off. If we wait too long, they get bored.

- I recently listened to a tape where Lois said that we make too much of anonymity within the fellowship. Bill W., A.A.'s cofounder, and Henrietta, our first General Secretary, spoke before a Congressional Committee about alcoholism. We have put full faces in PSAs since before I came in Al-Anon, but let me read you what the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" states: "When appearing on a TV program as the relative of an alcoholic, a member can face the camera and give his full name, providing he does not reveal his membership in Al-Anon or Alateen." We need to be sure that PSAs do not show members speaking. They show actors representing people being attracted to our program. When we talk about protecting the alcoholic's anonymity, it's only when he comes to A.A. that he gets the right of protection.
- The first meeting I went to, we had a business meeting. Every Assembly and district meeting has been a business meeting—I've grown closer to my Higher Power. There are three legs of my step stool. If I'm not doing service, then my stool is wobbly.
- "Public Outreach" is my middle name in Al-Anon Family Groups. I've embraced it since I came in. My Area is powerful in public outreach. When I go out in public, I decide whether to disclose my membership or not. The *Outreach to Professionals* guideline (G-29) is vital.
- The *Service Manual* states that the WSC approved the idea of the Appeal Letter. How do you write an appeal that isn't promotional?
- The word I'm going to bring back to my Area is "transparency." It seems that the more the Board of Trustees tries to be transparent—they're sharing about more of their business activities—the more people are complaining because they're not used to it.
- Many of us think Warranty One says "prudent reserve." It doesn't. It says, "ample reserve is our prudent financial principle." If you're always with the same people and everybody has the same view and others reinforce it, that's how misinformation perpetuates.
- Trying to get Alateen Group Sponsors, it was always better if we brought teens in because they reached members' hearts. Sometimes for me the problem is how I'm translating information to an audience at a level that they can handle. Am I giving WSO-level information to a Group Representative? I had to learn to talk to members at a membership/recovery level and then their minds would open.

## **Chosen Agenda Item #2**

### **How can Areas, districts, and groups look at unhealthy groups in a positive way?**

The Delegate from Colorado introduced the topic: "When I re-read the background information for this topic, I found myself becoming agitated. Words like 'violation'; 'blatant'; 'strong personalities'; 'dilution'; and 'unhealthy' jumped off the page at me. Mix those words with combined meetings, the A.A. "big book," other non-CAL meetings, and meetings integrated with ideas from particular philosophies and religions, and I began to twitch.

"These problems have been issues for many years, and in order to be part of the solution, I must first accept the fact that these issues exist and will continue to be issues. I must also acknowledge that there are no quick answers we can give to make them go away.

"I can almost quote chapter and verse from our literature or know exactly where to send a newer member on his/her quest for 'the answer.' I hear myself say things like: 'Our literature tells us that...' or 'You may want to look at Tradition...' If I am to be part of the solution, I must take the newer member on a journey through our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, working hand-in-hand until we find the answers.

"Step Four instructs me to take a fearless and moral inventory. Fearless tells me to look deep within myself while moral reminds me that I must suspend judgment and search for the fundamental principles and truths that I may have violated. When we begin to look at the issues contained in this agenda item, the principles contained in the Fourth Step must be applied. If we are fearless and moral in our discussion, we may begin to see some of the root causes to these issues. We must ask ourselves what we are afraid of. How have we continued to spread fear or misinformation to others in the fellowship? These discoveries may not be pleasant and will most likely make some of us uncomfortable, but they must be looked at in greater detail. As part of this type of inventory process, we will also discover positive awareness, alternatives, and answers that we can continue to build on.

Tom B.  
Panel 47, Colorado

Melissa F.  
Panel 48, Maine



“Tradition One speaks of our common welfare and unity. While studying this Tradition with someone I sponsor, we had a lengthy discussion of what common welfare meant. After much discussion, we came to the understanding that common welfare equated to survival. How did I survive when in the disease of alcoholism? I hid from issues, lied to myself and others, and blamed others for my problems while believing that I had all of the answers. Today, these survival techniques are no longer options in my life. Today I am willing to search out new and different answers.

“Not too long ago I was having what some might call a spiritual crisis and found myself dying from the inside out. Because I have been around for a few twenty-four hours, I knew what the answers were and knew how I should look, sound, and act. Skipping the process of growth and understanding, I moved directly into what appeared to be the solution and almost died. A program friend reminded me that the answers are found in the journey through working the Steps. She cautioned me that moving directly from awareness to action without first moving through acceptance was not an act of faith on the road to recovery.

“Concept Four tells us that participation is the key to harmony. Today we have the opportunity, the privilege, and the responsibility to begin a much needed spiritual journey not just to find the answer, but instead to acknowledge that there are issues affecting our fellowship as a whole, to seek out a complete understanding of these issues, to search for the root causes of these issues, and to provide input for possible solutions. Hopefully our discovery will help us to begin the spiritual journey to bring unity, healing, growth, and understanding to our fellowship and expand our future.

“As we discuss these matters, I would challenge all of us to:

- Move our thoughts and beliefs away from fear and into faith.
- Embrace the spiritual principles contained in our Legacies for solutions.
- Become willing to seek out the root causes of these issues and address them head on.
- Look for ways we can develop all members to be leaders and bridges in the preservation of our Legacies.
- Encourage and help others to recognize the value in the meaning and understanding of the phrase, ‘obedience to the unenforceable.’”

The Delegate from Maine then took over the presentation. She continued, “‘As in life, freedom in Al-Anon carries with it responsibility.’ That quote from *Paths to Recovery* (B-24), Tradition Four, speaks clearly about the responsibility we all have to be leaders in protecting the health of our program. It’s important to remember that our founders describe *responsibility* as one of the important attributes of leadership.

“Good leadership is a key component to the health of our program. Concept Nine states that, ‘Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity.’ The dictionary defines the word necessity as ‘the state or fact of being required or unavoidable.’ So for those of us in Al-Anon service, leadership is unavoidable.

“I’ve learned three important lessons in Al-Anon leadership:

- 1.) Successful leaders know they are not alone.
- 2.) Successful leaders do not try to control others; instead, they serve as guides.
- 3.) Successful leaders see themselves as real leaders, not as someone just volunteering for a job.

“The suggestion of a self-survey made me think back to my personal feelings during Area conversations about these two unhealthy groups. I have to admit I did not display genuine patience. My quick solution was to de-list the meetings from the Area directory. The longtimers reminded me that leaders in Al-Anon should not take any action that would be considered personally punitive, given the spirit of Warranty Four.

“Instead they focused my attention on the opportunity that these challenges provided for the Area to educate itself about the meaning behind the principles of the program.

“It should also be noted that the *Service Manual* reminds us that, ‘weak leadership can hardly function at all, even in the best of structures.’ So, we’re blessed that the Traditions and Concepts give us the best of structures, but without good personal leadership at all levels, the long-term health of our program is uncertain. I always hear in Al-Anon that you never graduate. That certainly has been true for me when it comes to the study of the program’s principles.

“So what are the blocks that stand in the way of good personal leadership when it comes to the challenge of unhealthy groups?

“*Paths to Recovery* is clear about one block: ‘...if we ignore the discomfort we feel when our group seems to wander too far from the Traditions, we ask ourselves if we are seeking peace at any price as we may have done in our alcoholic homes.’

“Or, perhaps another block is that we expect the WSO to give us a made-to-order solution, one that



enforces a strict code of conduct and withholds membership from those who violate it. Do we really only want autonomy for those who behave in a manner we deem appropriate? Universal principles declare that autonomy for one is autonomy for all. That leaves us, I believe, with the last and possibly the best option, which is to lead by example.

“It’s comforting to know that Al-Anon literature offers ideas regarding what to do when Tradition Four is challenged. But the literature alone can’t give us the confidence we need as leaders to face disagreeable members, restore harmony, and not be personally punitive.

“Instead, that confidence comes from working together to support one another, and once we receive support, we take action. Confidence also comes from learning how to trust one another, and seeing that this challenge, like all challenges, is a way to grow in the program and deepen our connection to a Higher Power.

“The *Service Manual* offers some final inspiration by stating on page 187, ‘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.’

“When I take a leadership inventory, I know there is a lot more for me to learn, especially when it comes to putting principles above personalities and inspiring my fellow members, even the resistant ones, to be obedient to the unenforceable. It’s a big challenge, but I think I’m up to it, and I bet you are too.”

The Conference Chairperson then opened the floor for discussion. Here are some comments made by Conference members:

- A few years ago, our Delegate brought to the World Service Conference the increasing problem of high-pressure groups in our Area. She spoke about someone she sponsors who had just left “the group” after 21 years under the thumb of a Sponsor. This woman and her family were severely affected by her group membership in every aspect of their lives: spiritually, emotionally, financially, socially, and had a very warped view of Al-Anon and A.A. Another former member told me she had decided to leave the group, but her husband wasn’t going to. Divorce papers were waiting for her immediately. The *Sponsorship—Working Together to Recover* bookmark (M-78) was an immediate response to bring the situation to the member’s attention. It’s important to remember that the problem still exists, and it is our responsibility to be informed and aware. In my Area there are several large high-pressure meetings. There are affiliated meetings all over the country. Using the name of Al-Anon, they shut members away from others, arrange marriages, approve the types of jobs members can hold, require members to recruit new members, and require members to pay dues. One solution is to love and support the members and welcome them to Al-Anon when they leave the group.
- I think this gets back to: “educate, educate, educate.” When I was a District Representative, we had a group in the county and the Al-Anon meeting had turned into something other than Al-Anon. I couldn’t get any participation from any group in the county. But I think God handled for me what I couldn’t handle. A young lady went to that meeting one night, and 30 minutes into the meeting she said, “This is not Al-Anon.” She proceeded to tell them what Al-Anon is—and that meeting changed. Sometimes all it takes is giving an explanation to the group—part of it is from not studying the Traditions and the Concepts.
- Before I knew better, I really came across as the Al-Anon police. We’ve been talking a lot this week about “presume goodwill.” I did it because I was afraid; I was afraid that if I didn’t get pushy and state it strongly that Al-Anon wouldn’t be there for me. What I had to learn was to be gentle and to be loving. What I really had to think about was, “Am I being an attractive member of Al-Anon?” Was I preaching? When I’m loving, gentle, and modeling what I want others to get, I’m a healthier and more attractive member of Al-Anon. I also make sure the *Service Manual* is on the table to remind members that it’s a resource.
- There’s a meeting where conflict and cursing is accepted, and I say, “A lot of us come to meetings to get away from the conflict and cursing we live with at home. This is where we want to feel comfortable and loved.” Another problem we have is that alcoholics don’t leave their A.A. programs outside the door. There’s also a group that isn’t active in the Area with Al-Anon. Instead they are active in the Area with A.A.
- We brought the Alateen issues and the sponsorship issues to this body for guidance and received the Alateen guidelines and the *Sponsorship* bookmark. Perhaps it’s time for a Thought or Task Force to guide us with this concern. Our AIS has a Board of young members who are unwilling to discuss unhealthy meetings. We have a member who registered two groups that only use the A.A. “big book” and the A.A. “Twelve and Twelve.” I’ve visited those meetings. I can’t

approach the member because he explodes. He intimidates a lot of the smaller groups. They're calling me for guidance, so I assured them that I would bring this issue.

- I keep going back to our big thinking question, thinking about this spiritually. From the death of my son, I've learned there is a positive and a negative, and it depends on where I'm at in my recovery. When he died it was negative; but I believe in my recovery that nothing happens by accident. I know God has physically taken me out of situations I was not meant to be in. I want our Conference to focus on embracing our Legacies and using them as empowering tools. I want to change "educate, educate, educate" to "communicate, communicate, communicate" because I'm not above you, you're not above me. If I'm not attracted to a meeting, I go to a different one. We're approaching a troublesome area: are we going to start instilling fear in our fellowship? Who deems a meeting unhealthy? Who has that right? I don't think that's what our fellowship is about. It's about being the example and trusting in our Higher Power.
- My group is pretty healthy. So, how does my group stay healthy? We've worked through situations that could have become group problems by taking regular group inventories. We had a group inventory where a member shared that she felt left out because she wasn't allowed to express her A.A. membership in our meeting. We talked about the principle behind that. It's because we want to keep Al-Anon, Al-Anon. Taking the time to talk about the issues and work through the principles has helped.
- I tried to mediate a conflict resolution session. I thought I could do it, but wasn't successful. I finally had to say, "I need help. I'll talk to members at Conference." One thing I heard was that I have to face the problem and face my fear of the problem. There is help for me. I think I'm going to put together a Task Force to look at the problem.
- I hear, "Obedience to the unenforceable," and "Our very survival depends on adherence to these principles." Then I hear from the people who talk about group autonomy and how the program is merely suggested—they don't have to use the Welcome, CAL, or the Closing because it's merely a suggestion. A lot of these groups are "combined meetings." As long as the program is merely suggested, what are we to do?
- When I was the DR, there was a group that a dual member had actually started. When they elected a GR who had some time in the program, the group realized that one member was writing non-Conference Approved Literature and running the meeting with an iron hand. She said, "This is my meeting, you'll do what I say," and she got physical with some of them. The GR came to me. I went to the meeting with some materials. In a calm manner, I said, "The group asked for a group conscience. We're going to do it in a calm, civil manner. We're going to fill out the papers and come back in three weeks so that everyone who isn't here tonight can get a copy." The group made the decision, without influence from me, to move and get rid of pamphlets that this woman wrote. Today, they're a good, healthy group.
- The thing that I kept thinking about is what would our pioneers have said about this discussion? It's all here in the *Service Manual* on pages 208-212 in Warranty Four. It talks about all of these things that we've talked about: unhealthy groups, unhealthy individuals, unhealthy outside entities, people using our name for the wrong reason. Basically what it says is that the best response is no response. One of the things we often talk about is that when you keep pushing, the response is for people to push back. When you drop your hands, there's no more resistance. While one Delegate said, "Educate, educate, educate," it has to be that we're offering something that's important. We have to model a program that someone wants to catch. Evidently, if lots of people are going to those meetings, there's something going on there that they want to catch. And if it's not what we want them to catch, we have to figure out a way to model it in a way that attracts them because that's really the spiritual part of the program. The reality is that if you tell some groups, "You're not doing it right, you should do this," they'll either say they understand that, or if they want to do it their way, they won't care. And I think the response is, "Okay."
- When we had to go through the Alateen guidelines and get Alateen certification, we had a very healthy Alateen group that had two A.A. Sponsors and one Al-Anon Sponsor. The group did not want to lose their A.A. Sponsors, so they were not willing to go through the process. The Al-Anon Sponsor and I (the DR at the time) decided to have a meeting with all of them. It was very difficult; we did conflict resolution, we talked about pros and cons. They decided not to register and they have their own meeting that does not use the Alateen name. We're very sorry to have lost that Alateen group.
- There's a meeting in my Area that has taken text about the slogans and created new literature [in violation of our copyright]. I have had this feeling for a couple weeks that if they heard it

from the Delegate, it would make a difference. So I took a copy of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22) and read along. I was able to fill in the parts that the person didn't copy. Hopefully, someone will do the same and realize they're missing something.

## CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS EVALUATION

An evaluation of the Chosen Agenda Items Process was introduced by the Delegates from Nebraska and Maritime Provinces.

The Delegate from Nebraska began by saying, "In 1976, the World Service Conference recognized the need for Delegates and other Conference members to have input into the Conference agenda. Although the name has changed—from Red Light/Green Light to Timely Topics to Chosen Agenda Items—and the selection process has evolved, some things have stayed the same.

"Since the beginning, WSC members have been asked to submit questions for discussion and decide through a voting process the topics that would be a part of open discussion on the floor. It's also consistently true that in any given year, all questions submitted received a response. A variety of methods have been used over the years to develop responses to those questions that did not become a part of the open discussion agenda. Most frequently, those methods were workshop breakout sessions held during the WSC and the Ask-It-Basket.

"As technology has changed, the WSO has changed with it. Conference members now receive more information ahead of arriving at Conference than at any other time in our history. The wide availability of e-mail and document sharing Web sites makes it easy and convenient for the Board of Trustees to ask questions and get responses from Conference members well ahead of arriving at the Conference. It used to be that agenda items were not submitted or voted on until members arrived for Conference. This left little time for thoughtful deliberation. The current process consists of Conference members submitting up to two topics for discussion by a February deadline the same year as the WSC.

"This year, the submitted items were referred to a short-term Thought Force for consolidation. The purpose of consolidation is to allow representation of a number of individual topics under the umbrella of a broad idea that can be voted on for discussion. In this way, topics that are small, but plentiful have as good a chance of being voted on as topics that stand alone. Some issues are broad enough and include sufficient background material as to make it unnecessary or counterproductive to group them with other issues. Of the 42 original topics submitted, 15 were left as stand-alone issues. The remaining 27 topics were consolidated into nine broader issues. A total of 24 topics, still including all 42 original items, were presented for consideration by Conference members."

She continued by sharing her personal experience while serving on the short-term Thought Force, "The CAI Thought Force was asked to read through the 42 items submitted and, where appropriate, group them into categories that were similar enough to be presented together in the list of topics presented for Conference member voting. Each Thought Force member worked independently on the grouping and shared results via e-mail. We worked out the variances in a phone call. In this way, we were able to return a single list of grouped topics to the Conference Leadership Team (CLT).

"Members of the CLT who reviewed the list asked for a follow up conference call to further revise the list. The CLT members felt that there was a little too much consolidation and that more questions were able to stand alone or that fewer questions were desirable in each consolidated category. Again, we worked out our differences amicably and united behind a single list of Chosen Agenda Items for Conference member voting.

"What I learned from this experience is something I've learned in other Al-Anon settings—that it's possible for two people to look at the same object and see two different things. It's even more likely with five people. It takes careful communication and open-mindedness to see the object from another perspective. My best Al-Anon self is someone with the ability to 'see it both ways' and the work of this Thought Force reinforced those abilities in me. It is always a privilege and a challenge to be asked to do Al-Anon service."

The Delegate from Maritime Province shared, "At last year's Conference, I participated in an open discussion session on 'The Future of Chosen Agenda Items.' In a follow-up conversation to the letter from the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, dated November 2008, I shared with a Trustee

Kerri K.

Panel 48, Nebraska

Judy C.

Panel 47, Maritime Provinces

my comments in the question, ‘What is the value of the current Chosen Agenda Items process to the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide?’ I questioned why they wanted and needed all this discussion.

“Then last month I was asked if I would like to participate in a Chosen Agenda Item Thought Force. My first thoughts were ‘I cannot—I am struggling too much with the whole Chosen Agenda Items idea and process—I will be too negative.’ This is a spiritual program and with the help of my Higher Power, I accepted. As always, I am grateful for the opportunity to share my experience, strength, and hope as we evaluate the Chosen Agenda Items purpose and role in the future of Al-Anon’s World Service Conferences.

“In an effort to be fair to each submission I had to read and re-read those 42 submissions to the point of frustration and many times asked the question, ‘How does the Conference Leadership Team make sense of all of this?’ It was at this point that I questioned the value of Chosen Agenda Items, the value of it to the Conference, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the process. As I reviewed each submission thoughtfully and carefully, I had to keep the Chosen Agenda Item *purpose* in the forefront of my thinking—‘It is an opportunity for Conference members to discuss *new* ideas, concepts, and issues that affect Al-Anon worldwide.’ Many times I had to ask, ‘Will this topic or question prompt good discussion? Is it an issue that could affect Al-Anon worldwide? Does it relate to the Conference theme? Is the Chosen Agenda Item at Conference the place for this discussion?’

“Each year when I received the request from the Conference Leadership Team for submission to the Chosen Agenda Item, I felt obligated to submit ‘something,’ and so I put together ‘something’ and submitted it, truly believing that it was worthy of a great discussion. I know now that all topics and all questions from Al-Anon members are worthy of attention and respect, but are not necessarily appropriate as Chosen Agenda Items. What do we do with the other 40 topics?

“After three years of hearing the Conference Leadership Team talk about big thinking and Al-Anon worldwide, I realized, just a few months ago, that I am finally getting it! All of a sudden I am not always thinking and talking ‘my Area, my district, my Al-Anon Family Group.’ I became aware that I was having another one of those wonderful Al-Anon ‘having had a spiritual awakening’ moments! With my big thinking and Al-Anon’s Twelve Traditions as my guide, I thoughtfully put together my Chosen Agenda Item for this year’s Conference. It felt right this year because I had changed my thinking, and I had accepted the Chosen Agenda Item process for where it is today. I now believe that big thinking discussions, activities, and some form of Chosen Agenda Item process are vital to the future of a strong and united Conference. I feel we need to have a further discussion of the future of the Chosen Agenda Items:

- Is this an effective way for Delegates to have input into the Conference agenda?
- Is this an effective use of Conference time?
- Do we need to continue with Chosen Agenda Items? If so, can we develop a guideline?
- Is the Chosen Agenda Items process working? Is there a misunderstanding on the real purpose of the Chosen Agenda Items?
- If we don’t have the Chosen Agenda Items process, how would Delegates get input into the Conference agenda? What would replace it?
- What message is the name ‘Chosen Agenda Items’ sending to the Conference /the membership? Should it be renamed?”

Before discussing the issue, the Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference provided Conference members with voting statistics. Out of 94 voting members, 24 members submitted the original 42 topics up for consideration. Fifty-seven Conference members voted (60 percent of all Conference members): 44 were Delegates; 5 were volunteers; 6 were staff. There were two anonymous votes. From Panel 47, 15 Delegates voted; from Panel 48, 14 Delegates voted; and from Panel 49, 15 Delegates voted.

#### **Here’s what Conference members had to share:**

- Chosen Agenda Items are an effective way to get a couple of key issues on the agenda. It’s valuable to have the entire list to show what’s on people’s minds and to bring that back.
- I think the process that’s in place now is a lot of work, and it’s the best process I’ve ever heard of to get a lot of diverse ideas congealed. To have managed the process to get it to what it is, is extraordinary. In my experience, I asked for ideas about Chosen Agenda Items; I asked members well in advance. They waited until four days before Conference to bring something to me. The fellowship has no idea how much we do in such a short amount of time. We would not be able to discuss everything everyone in the fellowship is all in a twitter about. I’ve already thought about what I’m going to submit to the Delegate next year.



- I'm not sure that the CAIs are working. I believe that the Conference Leadership Team is putting together the agenda now for next year's Conference. Maybe we could have a Thought Force of second- and third-year Delegates who could feed into that process.
- I really like the way we had to have background information when submitting a CAI. If a question came to me, I required the members to submit the background. It came to the point that my Area did not send in a question; but I enjoyed the process of having to have the background.
- My Area has had difficulty generating questions. I took a different approach. I thought it was my responsibility. I asked for the District Representatives' minutes from district meetings to get a sense of what's going on in my Area. Prior to the Conference, I made phone calls, and I asked questions. I got a sense of what's going on in my Area. What I heard was that gossip and criticism are concerns in my Area. Because of that, I was able to generate questions that relate to the fellowship as a whole."
- I liked when the request came out because it gave me a chance to think about my Area. We had discussions at our Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meeting. I'm disappointed that only 57 of 94 Conference members voted. It's like one of three hasn't had a voice. I think that maybe we need to respect the process.
- Being a part of the short-term Thought Force that sorted through questions for CAIs, I'd like to suggest to the WSC that a Thought Force be formed. I'd like to see creating formal guidelines as one of the main responsibilities of the Thought Force because I was asking too many questions. If I'm asking too many questions, the process isn't simple enough.
- Last year, I was truly clueless; I wasn't even sure what a CAI was. I really had no idea. Well, after last year and now this year, I really appreciate the opportunity to bring questions or concerns from my Area. Now I can go back to my Area to begin—through Knowledge-Based Decision-Making discussion—to identify topics that my Area has questions about or wants to know more about. Their concerns really are a part of worldwide Al-Anon. Perhaps, we'll be able to bring something that has meaning to more than one Area. Is it working? Maybe not as effectively as we would like it to be. Is it effective? It's a process; it's an open-ended process that gives us chance to bring our thoughts and bring one and not the other. I see no reason to change it at the moment.
- For me, this is the first year I put in a question that I felt represented Al-Anon worldwide. Personally, I don't think it's working all that well, but I'm not sure what to suggest to replace it. There's still a repetitive theme to them. I think we could look into a Thought Force to think broader about this.
- I love CAIs. I took my AWSC list and cut it into 15 submissions and sent it to different levels of service so that those members could help me. I got ten items. I organized them without changing the spirit of the topic. We narrowed it down to what the requirements were. Now I also have a resource to talk about issues within my Area, even if we never look at them here.
- My first thought when I saw this year's topics was that we have talked about these before. We are an old organization. We have a lot of history summarized in *Conference Summaries*. If we do our own legwork, there's not a whole lot of need in having CAIs unless you have a whole lot of people who are big thinkers. I think we need to weed out those things that have been hashed and rehashed.
- We do ask for CAIs at our Area. I don't know that we've ever submitted one. It's not the job of my Area to think about 'worldwide' Al-Anon; they're not in the mindset. They're thinking about their problems. The Conference Leadership Team has no recourse. They can't send it back and say, 'Do a better job.' They just accept what comes in and throw it on the list. I think there are some improvements that could be made to the process. I'm sure that we can figure it out.
- I'm one of those people who didn't make the deadline because I felt overwhelmed with all of the deadlines. I talked to my predecessor and she helped walk me through it. When it came time to identify barriers, I took it to AWSC. There's no reason I can't do that with CAIs. I encourage outgoing Delegates to help mentor incoming Delegates.
- We need to do something different. When we discuss CAIs, we're really giving power to barriers. I would really like the option to go to a workshop of my choice. Some of the workshops I have been attending, I feel like it just didn't help me grow spiritually or as a Delegate; I don't like rehashing, but I think it's important for us to come as a body and figure out how do we do this.
- Members in my Area submitted two topics and I made the decision to not send them in. One was on becoming fully self-supporting through contributions; the other was on attraction vs.

- promotion.
- We're working at 60 percent (number of votes), so it's a "D." Is this an effective way? No. I have no idea how to get an item on the Conference agenda. If this is the only way to do it, I have a one in 42 shot to get it on, and that's not fair. The discussions have been repetitive; they lead to confirmation of a problem, rather than a solution. If we want to continue with CAIs, do 20 workshop rooms and let us pick—don't debate the topics on the WSC floor.
  - I asked my Area many times about this, and I got no response. It's a lot of negative attitudes; I think it needs to be changed. I enjoyed the floor discussions, but I agree with other Delegates. Maybe we need to have workshops because certain topics keep coming up that have to do with the barriers. Districts aren't going to tell me what the issues are; I have to ask them.

**A Delegate summarized the discussion with these main points:**

- We're wondering what the value of the CAI process is if only 60% of the Conference members voted.
- Maybe we need a Thought Force to consider the process.
- We like how we were asked to include the background information.
- Areas have a difficult time thinking worldwide, so as a Delegate, I do the work. Are we being responsible in our roles?
- We'd like more formal guidelines.
- Could we have a similar process to submit ideas and then attend workshops?

## DIVERSITY PRESENTATION

**Barbara O.**

*Director of Member Services*

**Marsha W.**

*Associate Director of Membership  
Outreach—International*

The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International began the presentation with a quote from page nine of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. "Al-Anon is a unique fellowship that unites members of different backgrounds, races, and walks of life in an inspiring endeavor: helping themselves and others to lead purposeful, useful lives overcoming the frustration and helplessness caused by close association with an alcoholic."

She went on to say, "Although the World Service Office serves worldwide Al-Anon, our service structure is the U.S. and Canada, and in the 58 years since Al-Anon began, our world has changed and so have the people that need our fellowship."

"In 1952, the 'World Group Directory' listed 175 groups representing 35 states and the District of Colombia, three territories, and four provinces. Today Al-Anon can be found in all 50 states, the District of Colombia, Puerto Rico, three territories, and ten provinces. The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International presented a chart showing group growth from 7,295 groups in the U.S. and 1,367 in Canada in 1977, to 12,969 groups in the U.S. and 1,386 in Canada in 2008, noting that group numbers peaked in 1992 with 17,112 groups in the U.S. and 2,042 groups in Canada.

A chart comparing the population age ranges from the U.S. Census and the 2006 Al-Anon Member Survey illustrates the fact that we are not reaching the 18-44 age range—49.2% of the U.S. population is 45 years of age or over; 81% of the Al-Anon members are in that age range.

The Director of Member Services continued stating, "The 2009 Diversity Presentation at the WSC has grown from an optional Spanish Luncheon and working dinner for Delegates with French-speaking groups in 2005, to a comprehensive presentation that includes age, gender, race, as well as language. In 2006, the Spanish/French presentation moved to the General Session room at the WSC! A new public outreach tool, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007*, was introduced in English, Spanish, and French. In 2007, Conference members learned greetings in Spanish and French; and members were encouraged to visit the Spanish or French (or another language) meetings in their Areas. Also in 2007, a Chosen Agenda Item discussion focused on Al-Anon's future, asking the following questions: Where will we be 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 we meet attractive to a diverse audience?"

The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International continued the history by stating, "Abundant Outlook discussions also took place in 2007. Members of the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Directors participated in presentations on new thinking, new energy, and abundant outlook."

The Director resumed, “In 2008 the discussion continued. Conference members discussed the question: ‘How can we build bridges to meet the needs of our diverse current and future membership and strengthen the Al-Anon Family Groups’ foundation of unity?’”

“The discussion about reaching out to diverse groups has been ongoing at the World Service Conference. Conference members are leaders and trusted servants, and are at the Conference for one primary purpose: the good of the whole of Al-Anon. Our Legacies—the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service—are the foundation of the Al-Anon program. They are one integrated piece that can’t be pulled apart. Each of us is attending this Conference for a particular purpose—Trustees, Delegates, Executive Committee members, and staff members.”

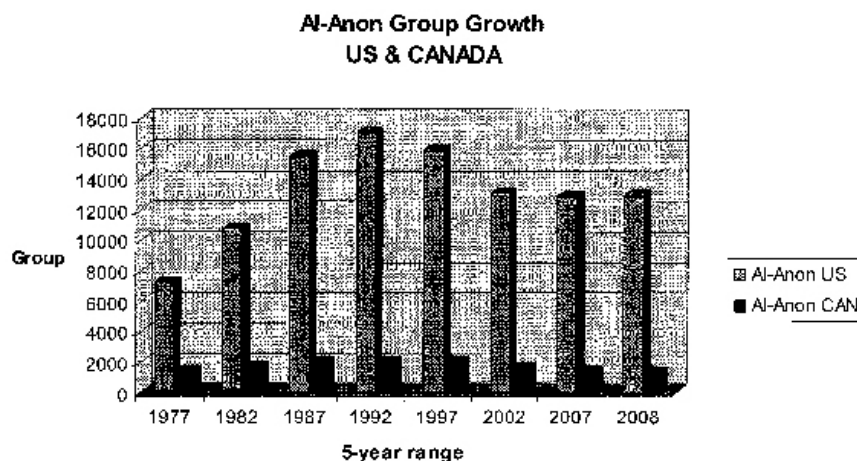
A member from each of the four roles at the WSC, Trustee, Executive Committee member, Delegate, and staff member shared about reaching out to diverse populations:

Trustee: “Earlier this week, we saw the new public service announcements (PSAs). We are reaching out to several diverse populations in these PSAs—men, African-Americans, Latinas, and the gay and lesbian community. Over one million gays and lesbians abuse alcohol. The odds of alcoholism are higher than for the general population, so there’s definitely a need for Al-Anon in the gay and lesbian community. Sometimes we fear those on the other side of the bridge. They might fear us as well. But if we embrace the Legacies, we can set aside our fears and cross those bridges to carry the message of Al-Anon to others. I’d like to quote from *Al-Anon Family Groups Welcomes Gays and Lesbians* (S-70): ‘Alcoholism is our common bond. No matter what our life experience may be, we are united in our gratitude for the countless open doors that welcome us to the rooms of Al-Anon where we find peace, understanding, contentment, and even happiness, whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not.’”

Executive Committee member: “The right of decision makes effective leadership possible. I have a responsibility to consider all the facts; to know the background on Al-Anon issues before making decisions. In serving on the Executive Committee, I have found it essential to apply the same principles to decisions that have to be made to serve the organization. Perhaps the most important role of the Executive Committee is to insure that the World Service Office meets the needs of the membership it serves. In Concept Eight, the Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon headquarters to its executive committees. In an effort to reach out to different cultures and languages, the Executive Committee has given approval for the pamphlets—*Alcoholism, A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7); *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13); and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32)—to be printed in different languages for use when needed in different countries.”

Delegate: “As a Public Outreach project, we decided to reach out to the indigenous population. The first resource we used was our indigenous Al-Anon members. We sent e-mails, any kind of networking we could do, and also ordered some Al-Anon literature. This is where the Twelve Steps come in. Our indigenous people see the Twelve Steps in a circle, as do the rest of their family. We ordered quantities of Al-Anon’s pamphlet *Al-Anon’s Path to Recovery—Al-Anon Is for Native Americans/Aboriginals* (S-67). At the time, Prescription Al-Anon was still new and the first *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* was going to come out that September, so we did some outreach. We did it in two directions: having Al-Anon members approach some of the reserves, as well as going to the top—the Yellowhead Tribal Council—to find out other ways. We participated in a conference they held called, ‘Healing Our Spirit Worldwide.’ In manning a booth, we took the names of people who were interested in receiving *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.

Staff Member: “Because I’m talking with the professional world in my position at the WSO, I’m a little bit ahead of the rest of the office in terms of trends. I’ve heard many medical science lectures that have come up with the conclusion that alcoholism is a brain use disorder. Now, I could have told you that after my first Al-Anon meeting, but people need evidence. We’re able to share our stories, that’s our most comfortable level, but when we do provide evidence and information, many profes-



	1977	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2008
Al-Anon US	7295	10782	15555	17112	15914	13141	12046	12969
Al-Anon CAN	1367	1678	2008	2042	2006	1593	1393	1386

sionals will get comfortable and listen to us and accept our program. Participating with professionals is very helpful. It is the key to harmony in our professional relationships. They are our friends, and it is extremely important to be friendly with our friends because anyone can make a referral to Al-Anon, but it has great weight when a professional makes a referral. It may be the defining thing that sends someone to their first meeting.”

The Director and Associate Director then asked Conference members to break into groups and discuss how the Areas could unify to build new bridges, how the WSC could unify to build new bridges, and how the following question could be taken to Areas for discussion.

“This year, in the spirit of shared leadership, you are asked to discuss the big question in your Areas. We will be breaking into groups to share your ideas on the steps you can take to have the discussion in your Area and how the Area and the Conference can unify to build new bridges.”

**As we honor the past and inventory our present, how can we embrace our Legacies to reach a wider range of diverse friends and families of problem drinkers and build new bridges of hope in a changing world?**

In response, Conference groups had the following comments:

**1. What steps will you take to encourage your Area to continue this conversation?**

- Let our Area World Service Committee know; present this material to them
- Start a discussion of attraction rather than promotion
- Encourage the use of resources we already have
- Hold workshops

**2. Within the Area, how can we unify to build new bridges?**

- Address the myths that may be circulating (educate and communicate)
- Familiarize ourselves with diverse populations that we don’t normally think of as diverse; find a diversity buddy
- Invite diverse groups to participate
- Share information with Coordinators and districts

**3. Within the Conference, how can we unify to build new bridges?**

- We’ve had this discussion every year, and it seems to stop; we’re not putting legs to it. Include a question from the Chairperson of the Board (in the quarterly calls to Delegates from the Board): “How is your Area progressing with reaching out to diverse populations?”
- We could have some kind of forum where we identify diverse groups in our Area so that we can make contact with someone from that group.

## EMBRACE THE LEGACIES: OUR SPIRITUAL BRIDGES TO EXPAND THE FUTURE

Mary Ann R.  
*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

Karen R.  
*Trustee*

Before the World Service Conference, the Conference Leadership Team invited Delegates to submit one or two examples of how the Legacies have been used as barriers to progress in the past. At the Opening Dinner, Conference members learned that the walls of the general session room were lined with posters displaying the barriers that Delegates had identified. Delegates were asked to read these barriers before the presentation began the following afternoon.

On the day of the presentation, the Trustee introduced the session: “You have all read and heard us share this quote from our *2006-2009 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual* on page 166 under the Introduction to the Concepts of Service:

“Each new generation of world servants quite rightly will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will perhaps show up in time. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. These contingencies should be squarely met, and suitable alteration effected.”

“I don’t know about you, but when I take on any new service position, my first inclination is to begin the overhaul process. Of course, there are always changes that require new procedures; procedures in place that aren’t working that require new procedures; and new ideas from me and other



new trusted servants. However, as these new ideas and/or procedures are brought to the forefront and discussion begins, there is inevitably the member who explains why we cannot implement the idea or procedure. All discussion stops at that point and the body moves onto another topic. Historically, it is an interpretation of one of our Legacies—the Steps, Traditions or Concepts—that is used as the reason, the barrier, for not moving forward.

“I am as guilty of feeling this way as anybody else. Anytime there is a new idea, my mind immediately goes to protecting what I think needs protecting. Of course, as a group, the Conference and the Trustees are the designated guardians of the Legacies, but as a ‘group conscience,’ not as me adamantly arguing *my* position. However, when I decide one of the Legacies would be hurt by the new action, I lobby for my idea, ignoring all other points of view. This thinking is all about believing that I know what is best; it is quite self-serving and self-centered. I have forgotten about the group conscience of the Board and the fellowship; the idea of presuming goodwill, of trusting our trusted servants. So as our Declaration suggests, ‘Let It Begin with Me.’”

The Conference Chairperson then addressed the Delegates, “Now, I think that this Conference theme asks me to explore what could happen if I push past my first stumbling block with the new idea.

- Change my perspective.
- Be willing to consider that the Legacies offer us a way to discover a new angle, a new outlook.
- Look at it from the point of view that says it could be done instead of it can’t be done.
- Don’t use the Legacies to limit our effectiveness, use them to discover how we can embrace new philosophies, new ideas, and new technologies.
- Acknowledge how the Legacies can bridge our past to an ever expanding future to ensure that Al-Anon’s message is available to everyone, everywhere.

#### **This requires me to change:**

- Push past my old ideas.
- Work my program by allowing the Al-Anon program the opportunity to try new ideas and succeed or maybe fail, just as I have done as I changed my life.
- Know that Al-Anon is strong because of the members—we all know what we have and want to insure its survival, while making it available to as many people as possible.

“Let’s have the conversation; be willing to engage each other in thoughtful, sometimes painful, discussion. Push the envelope until there is nothing left unsaid. We need to work together to establish Al-Anon as the most well-known resource for every person who is affected by someone else’s drinking.”

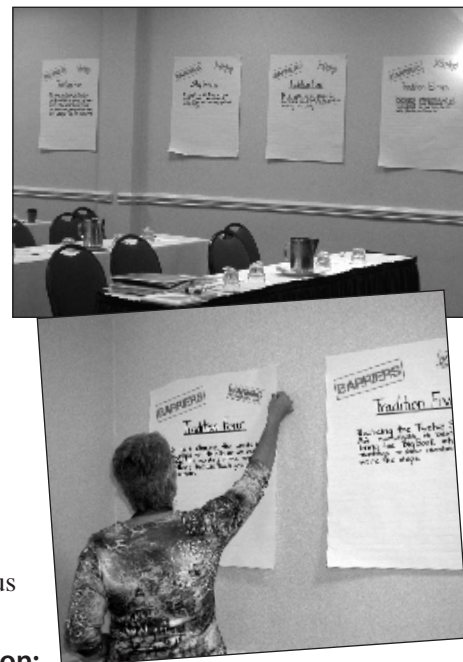
Before the conversation began, the Trustees and Executive Committee members removed all of the barriers posted on the walls. Delegates then assembled in small groups to discuss the question below before sharing in front of the whole Conference how each group answered the question.

#### **As we think spiritually, how can we use the Legacies as empowering tools rather than barriers to expand Al-Anon Family Groups into the future?**

- Keep our focus on spiritual thinking, not looking for the legal aspect
- Keep our focus on the common good
- Be willing to hear all opinions
- Share personal experience
- Define what a Legacy is: it’s something we hand down to future generations
- Use different pieces of Conference Approved Literature when chairing a meeting
- Model strong leadership, positive behavior, and practical application
- Direct members to places like the Traditions blog for more information
- Use the Legacies as tools, not weapons—talk about them, know what they really mean, think about how we can use each one
- Study the spiritual principles contained in the Legacies
- When sharing at a meeting, identify the tool/Legacy that was helpful
- Adopt a positive mindset always; our Legacies are understood according to our perspective
- Hold workshops on the Legacies
- Explain how the Legacies are based in faith (consider what we can do), not fear (focus on what we can’t do)

#### **The Delegates from Rhode Island, Louisiana, and Oregon summarized the session:**

- Get to know the Legacies
- Remain positive, rather than dwelling on the negative



- Use the many resources we have
- Presume goodwill
- Encourage sponsorship
- Share how and why a Legacy has offered a new way to look at a situation

From time to time throughout the week of Conference, the idea of hitting a barrier surfaced and Conference members were able to get past the barrier and to expand Al-Anon Family Groups into the future.

## EXCESS BEQUESTS PROCEDURE

Frank R.,  
Trustee

The 2008 World Service Conference discussed at length (see pages 72 and 73 of the *2008 Conference Summary*) the Policy Committee's recommendation to amend the "Bequests" text on page 85 of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies." Following the discussion, a motion was made and carried to amend the text as proposed (see the amended text below).

### Bequests

"The WSO may accept a *one-time* bequest from an Al-Anon member in any amount, provided its use is not restricted by the donor. Bequest amounts, up to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit, will be placed in the General Fund.

"Members may give more than the ten percent; however, the portion of the bequest above ten percent will be reported separately on the financial statements. The World Service Conference will authorize the use of these excess amounts and the authorized expenditures will be administered by the Board of Trustees. These excess amounts are not available for general purposes, unless further authorized by the Conference. (Contact the WSO for details.)"

Due to the nature of the new wording for Bequests, Conference members were then asked to look at a procedure for managing excess bequests. The consensus of the 2008 Conference was to ask the Finance Committee to continue researching a procedure for managing excess bequests and to revisit the topic at the 2009 WSC.

At the 2009 Conference, members discussed the Finance Committee's proposed procedure for managing excess bequests.

Each excess bequest, as defined in Motion 9 of the 2008 World Service Conference, is to be spent within 5 years of receipt. Further, should the excess bequest funds exceed the cost of the projects submitted, the Conference has the ultimate authority to extend the timeline or to modify the procedure. This procedure will be used:

<b>WSC</b>	Conference members will be reminded to encourage their Areas to identify projects in the event that the excess bequest funds become available.
<b>September 30</b>	Conference members will be notified of the amount of money in the excess bequest funds to date and will be asked to submit ideas for projects that support the Strategic Plan, using the amount of funds available as a guideline.
<b>November 30</b>	The deadline for projects to be submitted.
<b>Prior to January Board</b>	The Finance Committee will research the costs associated with the proposed projects.
<b>January</b>	The Finance Committee's findings will be presented at the Finance Committee and Board meetings respectively for prioritization.
<b>February</b>	The findings and priorities will be sent to all Conference members.
<b>April</b>	The Conference members will accept or adjust the prioritized projects at the WSC. Once accepted the projects will follow the normal process of staff implementation and volunteer oversight.

The following questions, answers, and comments arose during the discussion:

**Q.:** How does this play into the IRS guidelines for 501(c)(3)?

**A.:** *There are guidelines on accumulation, which is the reason we would need to spend this money. That's why we say we're going to spend it all within five years.*

**Q.:** What does 501(c)(3) mean?

**A.:** *It's a section of the IRS code that governs charitable organizations and if you have that status, contributions to that organization are tax deductible. There are restrictions on what we can and can't do.*

**Q.:** Will there be guidelines for applications and different projects, and how will that be overseen? Will there be accountability?

**A.:** *When money is available, the WSO will ask the Areas to submit ideas for projects. There will be guidelines. There will be accountability on how these projects are carried out.*

**Q.:** There was a concern in my Area that when an Area submits an idea, the project encompasses all of the Areas. For example, if excess literature is sent to an Area, will it go to all Areas?

**A.:** *These are funds to support the Strategic Plan. If that was part of the project and it was broad enough, it could be.*

**Q.:** Will it cover all Areas?

**A.:** *Yes, it will be broad.*

**Q.:** My question has to do with the schedule. We would receive the information in February that we would vote on in April. Is there going to be enough Conference time to debate issues and consider all projects submitted?

**A.:** *I'm not sure we would ever get that much money. That's why we have five years to spend it; we don't have to act the first year. We are giving ourselves some time to get things in place.*

**Q.:** Will there be a new list of projects each year, or will the list carry over from one year to the next?

**A.:** *We're asking that you go back to your Areas and think about projects. If we don't receive a bequest, we won't need a list. It's just to keep you thinking about it.*

**Q.:** My understanding is that the projects the Areas submit would not be projects for just that Area. Is that right?

**A.:** *Yes.*

**Q.:** On the prioritization that the Board is going to do, would projects that have an opportunity for use in all Areas get prioritization over a project that would be in the Strategic Plan as well, but would not have the impact over all the Areas? Which is it that gets the greater priority?

**A.:** *We put ourselves into these boxes, and we make these lists, and then we need to check off the lists. We're not trying to emphasize the list. What we're trying to emphasize is the procedure. If your Area comes up with something really fantastic, send it in. It may be ten years. Ten years from now, there are going to be some other opportunities for us, and we always say we don't want to get locked into a list of things that we have to do because next month, some fantastic opportunity may come in. We never want to pass up a great opportunity to carry our message and so the Board and Executive Committee have always made ourselves available so we don't miss that opportunity. The answer to the list is that we need to be flexible and nimble and the list is just there in case we want to get ideas to spur other conversations. Someone wanted to know if it was going to be equal and fair, of course it is. It's going to be coming to the World Service Conference. It wouldn't come here if it weren't fair. If we said we were going to put every AIS on the Internet and give them a computer, every AIS will be served, but some Areas may receive more funds than others because they have more AISs.*

Follow-up answer from another Trustee: *There are Areas that have remote places and they just don't have the money to be able to reach out to people in their Areas. So would that be unfair if we were able to come up with a way to reach out to these places, even though it would only affect certain Areas? Would we object because we only selected the Areas that have remote places? In that particular instance, yes, we might be more selective of the Areas we reach out to, but wouldn't that be fair because an Area could never afford to bring the technology necessary to be able to include those places in the Assemblies.*

**Q.:** The proposed wording says that up to 10% will be placed in the General Fund. We didn't designate that it was 10% of each bequest. Can you expand on that?

**A.:** *We would place the portion of the bequest up to 10% of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund into the General Fund; the rest of the bequest would go into an excess bequest line. With the previous bequest policy, we could accept any number of individual bequests up to 10% of the WSO General Fund.*

**Q.:** What is the history of bequests received and accepted; received and returned? Do we have the facts?

**A.:** *You have to keep in mind that this answer is based on what we've done since 1992 when we changed the policy from being able to accept \$10,000 to \$100,000. In 2004, we changed from being able to accept \$100,000 to being able to accept 10% of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund. Prior to that change, we received one bequest that exceeded \$100,000. We refused \$76,000 and the interest the entire bequest earned between the time we were notified and when we received it. After 2004, we received a bequest for \$340,000 and some residual money the following year. The estate withheld part of the bequest until taxes, etc. were paid. We received a bequest that was just under \$100,000 some time in 2005 or 2006. We got a bequest of \$80,000 one year and then a second payment of \$15,000 or \$20,000 the following year. This year we received an IRA account around \$98,000. The other piece is that our members knew we couldn't take more than the limit so that's what they wrote in their estate plans. But in the last four years, I know of at least four people who want to leave us in excess of \$1 million, so I've had those conversations. They've wanted to leave the money to the program that gave them a quality of life. And we have received in any one year, multiple small bequests in the area of \$5,000-10,000 each, but we don't receive those every year.*

**Q.:** How do you know if the person making a contribution is an Al-Anon member?

**A.:** *If it's a bequest, we look to see if that person has contacted us. If we don't have letter, we contact that person's attorney and ask if he/she divulged that they were an Al-Anon member. Many times the person had a discussion with the lawyer. If that doesn't work, we contact the Delegate and ask the Delegate to try to verify membership. We give the Delegate the general vicinity of where the person is from and ask the Delegate to ask the groups if anyone recognizes the name. If that doesn't work, we contact the family to try to learn if the person was a member. If the person doesn't have any family, I ask the attorney if there was any Al-Anon literature in the estate. I think we're fairly successful. There are times when we can't validate that person is member and we have to return the gift. It puts us in an awkward position when the family is the alternate heir. We need to talk about the need for Areas, districts, groups, Al-Anon Information Service Offices, etc. to develop their own procedures about verification of membership, as well as setting limits on what they can receive.*

**Q.:** On the chart that comes with the procedure, it says, "Conference members will be asked to remind their Areas to identify projects in the event that excess bequest funds become available." Given that there's already a long list here, is there a need to go to our Area and ask for ideas? Should we be generating ideas from the Area, or do we have enough? Is that sort of a waste of time because we have so many ideas already?

**A.:** *Things are changing all the time. I don't think we can ever have enough ideas on the list, although many of the ideas on the list might not qualify because they aren't related to the Strategic Plan.*

**Q.:** It is my understanding that projects are associated with individual bequests, and not the aggregate of funds available. Is that correct? If it's not correct, it's unclear. Are projects tied to individual excess bequests?

**A.:** *No. Projects would not be tied to specific bequests. Money would be commingled if there were multiple excess amounts at the same time. So projects would be funded by money, not a specific bequest.*

#### **Comments:**

- My understanding is that we're avoiding accumulation of perilous wealth; there is a spiritual principle behind this.
- I really appreciate this whole discussion as a way for me to move into the idea of abundant resources. None of this is anything we can plan on; yet miracles happen every day. If this were to happen, we would have something in place to deal with it.
- I think this is a great way to reinforce the Strategic Plan. It's so important to communicate that. This is to really think big and be strategic about it.



- Why would we ever want to extend it after five years? I like that we included that because it allows us to remain current, flexible, to have guidelines in place that don't bind us when we're experiencing it.
- When I heard about the motion and the decision made, I was concerned. Now I really feel that the checks and balances are there to allow us the opportunity to do some things in the event that the money should come. I'm appreciative of an organization that is willing to lay a foundation for the future.
- I don't think five years to spend the money is too long. If it's important, it's not urgent. I think we need to take time to do things. It takes time to do things properly.
- When I was the Chairperson of the Board, I went to all of the Regional Service Seminars and had an opportunity to talk about money, bequests, and the Seventh Tradition. I was amazed how many people would come up to me and ask about leaving a bequest. Many didn't understand the difference between leaving it to a group, to an Area, or to the WSO. If they wanted to give it to the WSO, I'd ask them to speak to the Executive Director so the opportunity is documented. I think it's important for you all to have the information. The conversation needs to start some place.

Following the discussion, Conference members considered possible wording to ensure clarity in the motion. A motion to adopt the Procedure for Managing Excess Bequest Funds was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #6 on page 87.)

## MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS THOUGHT FORCE

Frank R.  
Trustee, Chairperson

The Board appointed Thought Force of Delegates, staff, and Trustees was given the following charge: "To develop a big question concerning member contributions to bring forward for discussion at the 2009 World Service Conference." This Thought Force supports Objective 1, under Goal 2, of the Strategic Plan's Unlimited Abundant Resources theme.

"Goal 2: The Finance Committee will ensure that the budget reflects the priorities of the Strategic Plan as set by the Board of Trustees.

"Objective 1: Increase the contributions 30% by the year 2012.

The Chairperson began the presentation, "In preparation of our assignment, members of the Thought Force reviewed various sections of our *Service Manual*, multiple pieces of our literature, the last 25 years of the *Conference Summary*, the financial history for the last 25 years, and brainstormed various issues and concerns.

"While our Traditions and Concepts are spiritually based, they also contain practical and business principles. Our Traditions direct us to trust God as our ultimate authority and also remind us that we must be fully self-supporting. Our Concepts speak to us of trust, leadership, and responsibility; along with operational and administrative duties of the World Service Conference and the World Service Office.

"In keeping with the Board of Trustees' vision, the Finance Committee has the responsibility to see that the World Service Office remains financially sound, while aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program. Each year the Committee must estimate the annual income along with expenses and adjust the budget accordingly. With both individual and group contributions increasing by 2.3% annually, the objective to increase contributions 30% by the year 2012 is a monumental task.

"Our literature discusses the responsibilities each group has to be fully self-supporting, making sure that all group expenses are covered. We have only a few references in our literature that discuss the importance of contributions to the World Service Office and how these contributions can make a difference, taking us (the fellowship) to places that we could never go. Concept Twelve, Warranty One informs us that group contributions pay for only a portion of the World Service Office expenses and that the balance is financed by the sale of our literature. Discussion of Warranty One describes how as the groups understand the situation more clearly, their contributions will continue to increase. If we are to believe that with greater understanding of our needs, groups will increase contributions, then our conclusion could be that groups do not have a full understanding of our needs for continued service and outreach.

“Members of our fellowship see the need for public outreach at a local level, national level, and worldwide level. They also know the importance of meeting local needs such as Al-Anon Information Service offices, answering services, and their group rent for meeting space. When members make contributions at the group level, they have a complete understanding of what the funds are being used for and see the immediate benefit. As the contributions get further away from the group, the actual use and benefit become less obvious to the member. There is a lack of understanding by members on how a contribution to the World Service Office provides benefits at a personal level, the group level, and the worldwide level. Members do not want to manage the funds at the World Service Office; they simply want to know how the funds are being spent and the benefit received.

“In years past, as special needs arose, we saw the members of our fellowship rise to the occasion, whether through financial contributions or through the contribution of their personal time, services, and talents. Al-Anon Family Groups are rich in resources, many of them remaining untapped.

“We must also take into consideration some current realities, such as the slowing economy; the need for families to tighten their belts; inflation; rising fuel costs; and increased expenses at the group, district, and Area levels. All these and more have a direct impact on the ability to increase contributions.

“As a fellowship, we have choices to make: Do we continue services at the current level or do we decrease them? How can we increase our services? At what level should we do outreach? Do we have the belief and trust that the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen will always be there in the time of need? How can we guarantee this? Are we placing undue burdens on those groups and members that willingly support the World Service Office and its work? Are we trusting God and being prudent in our actions and efforts?

“A historical review of some facts and figures may shed additional light to the importance of this issue:

- The number of groups has continued to decline since 1990 (19,442 groups) to 2006 (13,979 groups), a decline of 28.10% in groups.
- Total annual contributions continue to increase.
- Total per group contributions continue to increase.
- Contributions account for 21.46% of total income for the last 25 years.
- Income from literature sales accounts for 67.82% of total income for the last 25 years.
- Contributions received annually are not sufficient to pay for salaries and rent with an average shortfall of \$1,791,000.
- The WSO operating costs have gone down.

“For your consideration and discussion, the members of the Member Contribution Thought Force would like to offer the following question for discussion:

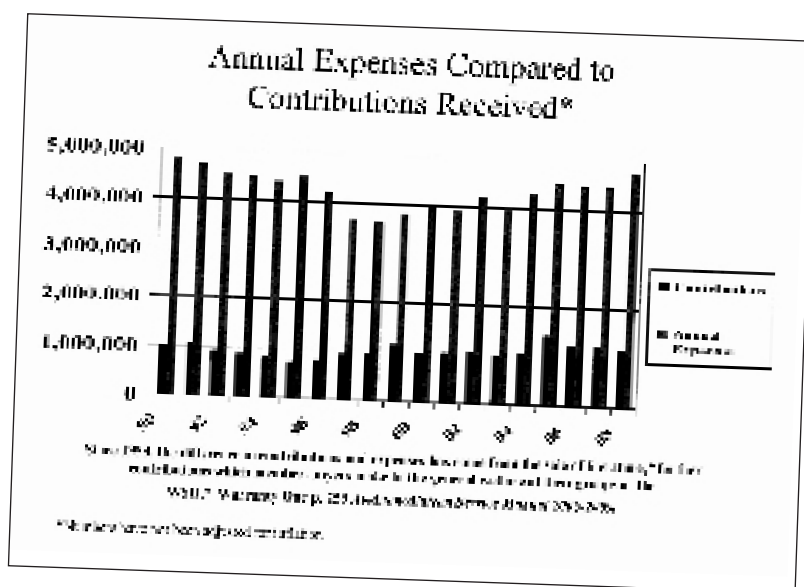
“Embracing our Legacies, how can we help the general membership of Al-Anon understand that member and group contributions are spiritual bridges that help support the World Service Office service work in order to fulfill our vision that all people affected by someone else’s drinking will find help and recovery in every community?”

The Thought Force presented the following chart on expenses vs. contributions from 1990-2008. In considering the Thought Force’s question, Conference members made the following comments:

- I had an interesting conversation about how other organizations have to rely on grants for funding. I thought to myself, how wonderful that we don’t have to worry about that. It’s up to us, only us, to do this.
- I want to reiterate the point that the Chairperson of this Thought Force was making about inflation. The WSO budgets have remained consistent. Since 1990, inflation has been 65%. The chart shows that the WSO costs have come down; it’s taken very skillful management to have managed costs so well. When I was a Group Representative (GR), all I heard about the WSO was the Appeal Letter. My focus was on me and my recovery. The average member doesn’t have any idea of worldwide Al-Anon.
- At our last Assembly, we had a similar discussion about how to get our groups to support our Area. I support my group because I remember what a small price it is for my serenity, so I give whatever I can to my group. Then it dawned on me—I can do that for my Area. My plan is to support, on a monthly basis, my Area. Why can’t I do that for the WSO, too?
- In my Area we have really started using the Al-Anon Declaration; we encourage people to remember that our Declaration begins, “Let It Begin with Me.” The amount of time between when I was a newcomer to knowing I was a member of Al-Anon was less than three months.

One of the things I try to do as a Sponsor is to ask the people I sponsor if they are a “member” or a “visitor.” I don’t expect the visitors to get it.

- When financial subjects come up, if you appeal to my heart, I will appeal to my pocketbook. It worked with the alcoholic, it works with my children, and it works with my church. I believe that if we appeal to the heart, the money will follow.
- When I was a Delegate, I hated to talk about money. It was difficult to express the connection between the members and the WSO. It was the furthest thing from their minds. The Special Project changed my focus—having WSO staff and volunteers visit the Areas made the WSO real to the members.
- In my home group when the Appeal Letter arrived, the Group Representative asked me what it was all about. In our group announcements, she made sure to let the members know what the WSO is. My home group donated \$87 and I thought, “Wow, when it works, it works really well.” I think the solution is educating the members about the purpose of the Appeal Letter and how contributions are being used.
- When I was a District Representative, I remember seeing a flyer about contributions and how much inflation has affected a \$1 donation. I think it’s time to do that again. A latte is about the equivalent of a dollar in 1960. I used that in an appeal letter with the district. That’s what we need to understand: the dollar we’re used to giving is worth 20 cents of what it was. We need to see that and what we get for our contribution. I think combining that with the concept of abundance would be useful in increasing contributions.
- I started to calculate how much money I spent on coffee. I started giving \$5 a week. When our group gives a financial report, the members of the group are realizing that people are giving more.
- We have a couple of groups proud of their large bank accounts. I keep trying to tell them that holding onto that money is not good. Those groups don’t understand the benefits of dividing it between the district, the Area, and the WSO. They just want a big bundle.
- I have no trouble asking for money. It’s the mindset. I think the ideas here are what we need to take back.
- I consciously chose not to make electronic contributions to the WSO. In doing that, I had enough extra cash in my purse to put some money into the Appeal Letter envelope, so that I could model behavior. It gave me an opportunity to talk about it.
- I was thinking about doing the same thing over and over again and getting the same results. We’ve been sending the Appeal Letter since 1952. We have technology now, and members can contribute electronically, but it’s hard to find that feature on the Web site. We’re expecting people to give at the highest level of giving. We need to broaden how we ask people to give.
- We need to educate, educate, educate. When I read the Appeal Letter, I tell the group that the WSO is a 501(c) (3) and that contributions are tax deductible. It’s about being visible—it’s up to us to carry the message.
- How can we help our members understand that their contributions are spiritual bridges? I think sometimes there is a perception that all the WSO wants is money, and I think that’s why some people don’t give. Every dollar that comes to the WSO is an investment in providing services back to the membership. We only need so much money, which we get it from the sale of literature and contributions. It isn’t that we want to create stockpiles or large amounts. Understanding that we have this poverty mentality, we really need to think that there is enough money, enough people, and enough resources. We have to stop talking about what we don’t have. Under Warranty One, Lois said there are a lot of opportunities. I’ve heard people say that if we go overseas, there’s not enough money left. There’s plenty of money to go to Areas and to have TEAM events, and there’s still enough money to reach out beyond our structure to bring the voice of Al-Anon to other places.
- I thought about going back to my Area and giving them 45 cents worth of a pamphlet (by ripping the pamphlet into two pieces), and saying, “This is what your dollar is buying.”



## LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

The Leadership Workshops were offered on two separate days in one-hour sessions. Conference members selected two of the three sessions according to their interests. A Conflict Resolution Workshop was presented to the full Conference. Additional information about Leadership Workshops can be found in the *2008 World Service Conference Summary*.

### Conflict Resolution Workshop

Ric B.  
*Executive Director*

Jacki S.  
*Panel 47, Oklahoma*

Don F.  
*Panel 47, Virginia*

The Executive Director opened the workshop in part by stating: “It’s important to realize is that if an issue keeps coming up, it’s because the people didn’t feel like they were heard. One of the goals of trying to use the process of Conflict Resolution is to help people know that they’ve been heard.”

He continued by saying, “This is a self-directed workshop. The goal is not to tell you that you must do it a certain way. We’re going to demonstrate some techniques so that you can identify what tools of the program or what situations or things that would help you remember how to use them.”

- Conflict is neither bad nor good—it is a sign that something hasn’t been addressed
- Most of our conflict results because of different opinions

The Delegate from Oklahoma explained and defined the three styles of conflict:

- Avoidance or denial
- Confrontation or dominance
- Problem-solving

She went on to say, “Active listening is one of the most important parts of conflict resolution.”

- Stop talking—listen
- Imagine the other person’s viewpoint
- Look, act, and be interested

The Delegate from Virginia continued the discussion by describing the steps to resolve conflict.

- The very first step is to clearly define the goal
- The second step is to develop a list of questions to be answered or addressed
- The third step is to determine a preferred outcome, a win-win idea

The Executive Director then shared how to understand that when you’re trying to resolve conflict, if something happens to cause you to not be able to listen, you’re not going to be able to resolve the conflict. “I think as people begin to learn that having discussion is important, when their issues pop up, they know their issue will receive the same time and respect as other issues.”

- Separate the person from the problem
- Take time to build a relationship
- Admit previous history
- Presume goodwill
- Make a verbal commitment—ask every person if they can support the common decision.

The Delegate from Oklahoma discussed the process.

- Include all those who need to be included
- Listen, hear, acknowledge, and repeat it back
- Set ground rules for balance and participation
- Determine the outcome
- Suspend judgment
- Let people ventilate

She also highlighted the “Five Guides to Communication,” which can be found on pages 30-32 in *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4).

- **Discuss, Don’t Attack**
- **Keep the Voice Low and Pleasant**
- **Stick to the Subject**
- **Listen to His Complaints**
- **Don’t Make Demands**

The Delegate from Virginia continued discussing the process.

- Start with the easy—establish momentum by identifying points that you can agree on
- Acknowledge feelings
- Seek to understand rather than be understood



- Take a break if you need to
- Face any hostility
- Accept responsibility for one's own words and actions
- Be patient—it's okay to agree to stop and get back to it later

The Delegate from Oklahoma shared, "Summarize what we've agreed on and what we haven't agreed on. We don't have to take offense. Celebrate success—even if there's no solution, we've heard all sides."

The Delegate from Virginia asked, "Are you ready to try it out? Can you do it? Is this something you think you can use in your groups, Assemblies, family?"

Before the session ended, Conference members were invited to comment. One participant shared: "This is the fifth time I've attended a conflict resolution workshop. I've finally gotten it through my head. I'm not going to learn how to avoid conflict. I need to remember that I already have the tools in AI-Anon to deal with conflict."

## **Knowledge-Based Decision-Making to an Informed Group Conscience Workshop**

**Members in this workshop discussed the following ideas:**

- Open communication between leadership and membership
- Dialogue before deliberation including the minority opinion is part of the process
- All decision makers will have common access to full information
- We have confidence in the competency of our partners. "Presume Goodwill"
- Frame and Summarize Discussions
- Create a Culture of Trust
- Use Knowledge-Based Questions to gather information prior to and during discussion
- Understand that not every discussion leads to a motion or a decision
- Take the time it takes to fully discuss an issue

## **Shared Leadership—Bringing the culture of trust to the Area level Workshop**

**Members in this workshop discussed the following ideas:**

- How the principles of the Concepts are transferred to the Area
- How the Concepts can assist the Delegates in working with the Area Chairperson, Alternate Delegate, Area Treasurer, and all Coordinators
- Use the Concepts to resolve Area problems
- Use the Concepts to help transition from one service position to another
- Use the Concepts to motivate Area Trusted Servants
- Demonstrates unity and support for one another
- Provide variety—avoids monotonous presentations
- Lessen the workload
- Build relationships with other trusted servants
- Allow others to grow in service

## **How to expand the broader vision of what AFG is beyond the Area's perspective Workshop**

**Members in this workshop discussed the following ideas:**

- Through the World Service Office
- Through the International Coordination Committee
- Through the International AI-Anon General Services Meeting
- Through the World Service Conference Charter
- Through the Board of Trustees' Vision and Mission Statements
- Through the Board of Trustees' Strategic Plan Theme: Everyone, Everywhere

## PRESERVING OUR ALATEEN TRADITIONS TASK FORCE

Lorraine F.

Chairperson, Trustee

Mary Lou M.

Associate Director of Group  
Services—Alateen and Special  
Services

Jeff G.

Panel 47, Georgia

“The Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter is a body of principles and relationships through which Al-Anon as a whole can function. The provisions of the document are not legal, but traditional, since the Conference is not incorporated. This Charter is an informal agreement between all Al-Anon and its World Service Office.” (Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter, 2006-2009 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, p. 152)

“At the 2007 World Service Conference, after several years of research and discussion, the Alateen Traditions were approved. Although approved by the Conference, the Alateen Traditions are not currently recognized in the Conference Charter. Consequently, they do not have the same protection, that of not being changed without approval of three quarters of the groups worldwide, which Al-Anon Traditions have. In order to afford the Alateen Traditions the same status as the Al-Anon Traditions, it would be necessary to make some changes to the Conference Charter.

“After a lively discussion on the Conference floor at the 2008 World Service Conference, it was determined that more information was needed before arriving at a knowledge-based decision on the matter. In our efforts to keep the Charter flexible and preserve the Alateen Traditions, a Task Force of Trustees, Delegates, and staff was formed to bring recommendations to the 2009 World Service Conference in a knowledge-based format. Our charge was to ‘Recommend changes that may be made to the WSC Charter that would elevate the Alateen Traditions as approved by the 2007 WSC and as written on pages 19 and 20 of the 2006-2009 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* to the level of the Al-Anon Traditions.’

“During the past several months, the Task Force has diligently collected data on the origin of the Charter and tracked changes (additions, deletions) to the content of the Charter, always keeping in mind the distinction between the Conference Charter (traditional), and the By-Laws of AFG, Inc. (legal). As we investigated the background of the Conference Charter, we always considered the intent of the discussions and actions taken by the World Service Conference at any given time during this process. It is evident that the intent of all actions was to preserve the Alateen Traditions and afford them the same status as the Al-Anon Traditions.”

The Task Force considered these questions in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process:

### **What do we know about our fellowship needs, wants and preferences that are relevant to this discussion/decision?**

- The WSC wants to preserve/elevate the Alateen Traditions
- Al-Anon/Alateen Steps and Concepts and the Al-Anon Traditions are already protected
- The fellowship wants to give the Alateen Traditions the same status as the other Al-Anon Legacies
- We have an impediment to this in the wording of the Charter (the impediment is the wording of “3.f.”)
- We want to restore the flexibility of the Charter related to the ability of the WSC to modify certain text
- The fellowship does not want to change the Charter

### **What do we know about the “capacity” (resources) and “strategic position” of our fellowship that is relevant to this discussion/decision?**

- Alateen is part of Al-Anon Family Groups
- A large part of the fellowship does not even know we have a Charter

### **What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of our fellowship’s environment that is relevant to this discussion/decision?**

- There was a passionate response at 2007/2008 WSCs to protect the Alateen Traditions
- The fellowship often has a fear of change and a lack of trust that we (WSC) will do the right thing
- The fellowship does not have enough knowledge about the Charter

### **What are the ethical implications of our choices? (pros/cons)**

- We need to respect the decisions made in the past
- Item 3.f. can be changed; we need to be sure we don’t change it “just because we can”

- Will a change be seen as overriding the spiritual foundation of our fellowship? (This shouldn't be an issue related to elevating the Alateen Traditions; it does become a consideration, if addressing the issue of the Charter's inflexibility.)
- We want to be sure that this decision is for Al-Anon/Alateen as a whole rather than just a few

### What do we wish we knew, but don't?

- When/how was item 3(e) added to the Charter?
- When/how were the words "Concepts of Service" added to item 3(d)?
- In 1984, the WSC passed a two-part motion stating: "That the Third Warranty procedure to define substantial unanimity continue to be followed when voting to change the descriptive text of the Twelve Concepts of Service as in the past. And, that the Concepts themselves (not including the descriptive text) be accorded the same stature as the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." (yes 86; no 5; abstaining 3)
- In 1987, the Admissions/Handbook Committee worked on revisions to section 3, including the addition of item 3.e.
- In January 1988, staff was directed to add letter (e) with the wording of the 1984 WSC motion, and move (e) to (f), with a change; however this update was not made in the 1988 printing. A Panel 26 Delegate pointed this out to the WSO, and a corrected page was issued in 1989.
- It is always hard to read between the lines, but since the Admissions/Handbook Committee (Delegate, Board, staff members) worked on it, and a Delegate wrote about it, it would appear that all members of the WSC were operating under the understanding that the intent of the 1984 motion was to change the wording of the Charter.
- When/how was the note at end of the Charter added?
- 1971 WSC motion: "that the title on the cover of the HANDBOOK be changed to: 'WORLD SERVICE HANDBOOK—For Al-Anon and Alateen Groups.'"
- 1971 WSC motion: "that the CHARTER be revised in keeping with the terminology used in the 1971 WORLD SERVICE HANDBOOK—For Al-Anon and Alateen Groups."
- The note to include Alateen was added with the 1971 printing of the World Service Handbook; this printing also changed the title to "World Service Handbook for Al-Anon and Alateen Groups."
- 1972 Delegate's Brochure, Conference Committee Report (approved by 1972 WSC): "The 1971 revision supersedes all previous editions and it clarifies the Alateen GRs' participation at District Meetings and Area Assembly Meetings."
- Can we add to the Charter like they did in the past?
- Can we add to item 3.f.? The current wording removes flexibility.
- Is adding to the Charter "changing" it?

The Task Force also compared the original text from the Charter to the current text. This allowed Conference members to understand in more depth what text had been changed and why. The Task Force did not make a motion right away to allow time for discussion, revision, and modification of the proposed wording.

During the discussion, which took place over several days, Conference members made recommendations for revision. They considered the impact of the proposed wording. They wanted to be sure that they were providing protection for the Alateen Traditions, but also wanted to assure they weren't limiting flexibility to modify the Conference Charter or the descriptive text of the Legacies in the future. They agreed that they wanted to preserve the requirement that the Legacies themselves could not be changed without a three-quarter majority vote of all Al-Anon groups. They also wanted to avoid redundancy and be as clear as possible so that future Conferences would not have to guess what this Conference was trying to accomplish.

After considering all the options and possible implications from revisions, the consensus of Conference members was that they were comfortable enough with the revised wording to consider a motion. A motion was made, seconded, carried to approve the change of wording to the Conference Charter. (See WSC Motion #8 on page 88.)

## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Patrick Q.  
Associate Director of  
Communications—Media

For two years, the WSO has used the “Sketches” format in our public service announcements (PSAs). This year, the WSO decided to use a slightly different version of that format. In the past, artist sketches (hence the name) were used rather than actors. This year, the decision was to use still photographs. Separate radio PSAs will be produced later this year.

Each Delegate received a DVD with all versions (English, Spanish, and French—30 and 60 seconds) to take home to share with their Areas. The Associate Director of Communications—Media noted that this DVD was not broadcast quality, but could be copied and viewed within the fellowship. The final broadcast version will be mailed this summer. Individual copies for Area distribution to other TV and cable stations will also be available. The Conference members then previewed the three 60-second PSAs in English, Spanish, and French.

After viewing the PSAs, some Conference members had questions. One asked if there was going to be a PSA for adult children of alcoholics. Another member asked if it was possible to alter the age of the individuals in the PSAs to represent a more diverse age group. The Associate Director of Communications—Media responded that the WSO has targeted those key audiences in the past, and that it was targeting different key audiences this year.

Some Conference members were concerned about the use of full faces in this year’s PSAs. They were worried that this may be a breach of anonymity. The WSO has used full faces in PSAs for more than 35 years. The “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” states: “When appearing on a TV program as the relative of an alcoholic, a member can face the camera and give his full name, providing he does not reveal his membership in Al-Anon or Alateen.” The WSO is careful that PSAs do not show members speaking. The PSAs show actors representing people being attracted to our program.

The Associate Director of Communications—Media assured Delegates that we are not compromising anyone’s anonymity because the actors are not Al-Anon members.



## RESPONSIBILITY WORKSHOP

Roger C.  
Chairperson, Trustee

The Board Presentation Task Force presented a workshop entitled “Responsibilities” that was developed as a resource for Area and district use. The presentation described the responsibilities of group members, Group Representatives, and service positions at the district and Area levels including: District Representatives, Area Coordinators, Area Secretary, Area Treasurer, Area Chair, and Delegate. Due to Area autonomy, actual Area and district responsibilities may differ from this presentation—in keeping with the Twelve Traditions and Warranty Five.

Responsibility was defined as “being able to fulfill obligations.” The dictionary goes on to use words such as, trustworthy, dependable, and reliable. A copy of the PowerPoint, including a list of equipment needed and suggestions for discussion points during the presentation, is available to Delegates on e-Communities and will later be made available on the Members’ Web site.



## TASK FORCE ON UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY

Doris W.  
Chairperson, Trustee

The principle of anonymity has been misunderstood by many of our members for years. If we want to carry our message of hope to everyone, everywhere, it is necessary for this principle to be understood. It is important for us to follow our Traditions as they relate to anonymity, but Al-Anon/Alateen should not be invisible. Our members are anonymous; however, the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship is not.

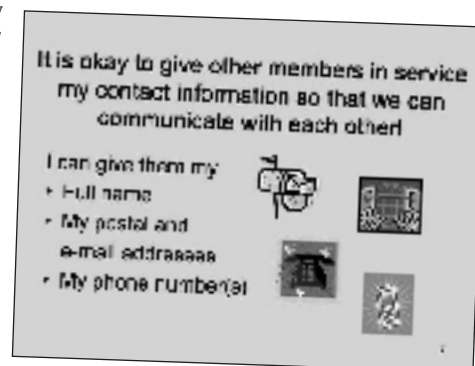
The theme, “Everyone, Everywhere,” part of the Board’s Strategic Plan contains Goal 2, Objective 1, which is to establish a resource bank for use in the Areas that would include three different approaches to address anonymity. A Task Force, consisting of a Trustee, a staff member, and five Delegates began working on this objective during the 2008 World Service Conference. Throughout this year, the Task Force worked via e-mails, conference calls, and three different sub-groups to put together two presentations.

The Task Force presented a PowerPoint presentation and a skit, both of which show the three approaches to anonymity as outlined in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) beginning on page 83.

The skit is designed to bring forth participation and discussion from the audience. It features Goldilocks and the three Anonymity Bears.

The Task Force’s objective in the presentations was to bring about a better understanding of Al-Anon’s principle of anonymity on a personal basis, within Al-Anon, and outside Al-Anon.

Following the presentations, Conference members commented and asked questions.



**Q.:** My question has to do with Area newsletters that are posted on-line. I googled myself and it’s amazing to see what I get. A number of Areas have my full name in their newsletters on-line. Do we need to secure these a little better?

**A.:** *The issue about Web-based communication is dealt with on the revision of page 84 in the Service Manual. It’s a violation of Tradition Eleven to put a member’s name on a Web site unless it’s password-protected.*

**Q.:** My Area asked me to take some pictures of the office and I’ve been taking pictures of the office and Conference members. What I plan to do is post a few pictures as I know our members would be interested. Would you have objections if I did that and it stayed within the fellowship?

**A.:** *Several years ago we had a member who took pictures at the WSC and put them on a Web site. Many objected. When we talk about anonymity and we take a vote about whether to allow still pictures, remember to ask before you take the picture and make sure that all the people who are in the picture have given permission to have their picture taken. If you’re going to use it within the fellowship it might be okay, but what if my sister-in-law is in that Area and I don’t want her to know that her brother is an alcoholic. As far as staff goes, we suggest you ask. As long as you ask, there’s no problem. Please don’t put job titles up because then people will think they have a personal contact.*

**Q.:** I still need clarity. If I post my report on the Area Web site, can I use my last name, e-mail address, and cell phone number?

**A.:** *I want to make it clear that in answering this question, I’m speaking as the group conscience of the Policy Committee in interpreting Tradition Eleven: On a public Web site, it is a violation to disclose full names. We suggest that you not disclose your e-mail address if your full name is in it. The issue of putting up phone numbers is more complicated. It is possible to type a phone number into Google and get that person’s full name, address, and a map to their house. It doesn’t really work that way for cell phone numbers, but it’s just a matter of time. I recommend not posting your landline number and you have to decide whether to disclose your cell phone information. I wouldn’t, but I think you have to decide that.*

**Q.:** Last year we talked about putting out a help sheet on technical issues about Web sites. How do we prevent search engines from accessing information on our site?

**A.:** *The Group Services Department is looking at that. We do have a Guideline for Al-Anon Web Sites (G-40) and we’ve talked about revising and updating the anonymity section in the*

*'Groups at Work' section of the Service Manual. For additional guidance, staff can answer questions regarding anonymity.*

"We've had our Web site for a long time and we've resolved a lot of these things. We have a 'Contact Us' page. You click and it goes to the service position, e.g. 'Delegate,' without you receiving personal information. We do post our newsletter, and our Web Site Committee makes sure there are no last names, no e-mail addresses, no phone numbers, and makes sure that information is reviewed before it's posted on-line."

## UNLIMITED ABUNDANT RESOURCES WORK GROUP

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Carol V.

*Chairperson, Trustee*

The Chairperson began, "Four Work Groups have been formed for the Strategic Plan. This Work Group, comprised of five Trustees and two staff members, is called the Unlimited Abundant Resources Work Group. Our definition of 'unlimited, abundant resources' is: 'Tapping into the vast resources within and outside the fellowship. We have the ability to reach everyone in Al-Anon Family Groups, regardless of cost, experience, location, situation, etc.'"

Another member of the Work Group introduced a skit by saying, "In the past few years, the Conference has been exploring the notion of abundance. We have come to understand that Al-Anon Family Groups has unlimited resources available to us if we open our minds to find ways to identify and access them. One of the deepest abundance pools is our fellowship of members who have an enormous wealth of talents, skills, and abilities.

"The Board of Trustees would like to tap into this abundant pool. We would like to identify members to assist us with carrying out our Al-Anon message of recovery on various Work Groups, Task Forces, or Thought Forces. One of the Strategic Plan Task Forces is focused on identifying and expanding our access to these members."

After presenting the skit, a member of the Work Group concluded, "We're going to try something new. We have the capability to find out who in our membership is available, and we've set up an interactive questionnaire to find those who are willing. We'll be able to set up a database and actually draw on the skills, talents, and abilities of people who are already in our fellowship. When a project comes up, we can find those who are willing to assist us. Members could serve without taking on any long-term or travel commitments.

"You can read about this effort in an article to appear in the May *Forum*. We've posted it on the Members' Web site and in the Conference Mailing e-Community. There are flyers you can take back with you for use in your Area. We need everyone's help. You are all part of our unlimited abundance and so are all of your Al-Anon friends."

## DELEGATES (PANEL 47) SHARING OURSELVES

### Rodney B., Alabama

When I got to Al-Anon, I came as so many do—looking for answers on how to keep the alcoholic sober. I received no answers and thought I didn't need this program. Anger was the only emotion I knew.

I went to a group anniversary and saw how happy people in A.A. and Al-Anon were. That became the turning point in my life. I began going to meetings and soon learned that Al-Anon was for me and that I needed to focus on myself. I began service as the Group Representative (GR) for my group and began a journey that I could not have imagined. I believe it changed my life for the better.

After serving as GR, I became the District Representative for my district and Literature Coordinator for my Area. I have served as Secretary, Chairperson, Alternate Delegate, and now as Delegate for my Area. This year ends my term as Delegate.

As I look at the theme for this year's Conference, "Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future," I realize how much those Legacies have provided me with a spiritual bridge to my future. Recovery through the Steps provides me with the tools to look at myself and gain my understanding of God and not that of my father. Unity through the Traditions helps my group to prosper and continue to be around for those who suffer from the effects of alcoholism. Service through the Concepts has led me to a greater understanding of this fellowship and its service structure. Can you imagine how well businesses could do if they adopted even some of the Concepts?

I have gone from a man who wanted to blame life's troubles on everyone else, to a man who is willing to accept responsibility for his own actions. I have gone from a man who was afraid to speak publicly to a man no longer afraid, because you have shown me that I am worthy. I believe today I am the man my Higher Power intended me to be, because of this program and you.

My parting request to those who come behind me: protect the Legacies and embrace them so there will continue to be help for those who come behind us. Keep building the bridges for our future. I intend to be of service even after my term as Delegate ends. Thank you for being such a positive part of my life—and my prayer is that I have been the same for you.

### Rose Anna J., Alberta/Northwest Territories

Our theme, "Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future," describes the process of how, over time, the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups came to expand and transform my entire life. I will share with you how these three Legacies transformed the human "doing," who only wanted a few quick tips to deal with my husband's drinking, into the spiritual human being I am today.

As a newcomer, I listened to my home group members share their experience, strength, and hope. They also suggested that

if I wanted to find recovery, I would need to study the Twelve Steps. I went home and quickly read the Steps and of course, it didn't help a bit!

Although I did get the message of hope, I found it strange that many of you exclaimed, week after week, that you were grateful for the alcoholic because you found Al-Anon. You also suggested that rather than focusing on my problems, I could find solutions if I focused on myself. I did not know how a responsible mother and wife could do that, especially since my husband was buying vodka rather than food. I said I would never be grateful for that.

Every week, you focused meetings on the three Legacies—Steps, Traditions, and Concepts—and suggested I study our Conference Approved Literature. In time, I realized that each of you not only, "talk the talk," but you actually "walk the walk"! I struggled with the difference between religion and spirituality, and refused to say any slogan with the word "God" in it. Later, slogans became daily tools.

By breaking down the Serenity Prayer, which I did not consider religious even though it had "God" in it, I learned to set boundaries that helped me sort my affairs from others. "One Day at a Time," I began to apply the Steps to my life. As I steadily developed a relationship with my Higher Power, I was able to not only use the Steps, but also the Traditions. Later, participation in district meetings and Assemblies as the Group Representative showed me how to apply the Concepts of Service.

Through the grace of God and my Area's trust, I became the Delegate. At the World Service Conference, I discovered that although I was a vital link between my Area and the World Service Office, my main responsibility was to be a voice for the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups. By presuming goodwill, sharing leadership, and encouraging Knowledge-Based Decision-Making, you have helped me build a culture of trust in my Area.

Today, I am a truly grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups, and feel blessed by the privilege of serving with you all. I will continue to serve Al-Anon Family Groups so that anyone, anywhere, whose life has been affected by someone else's drinking can find the hope and help that I have found in this wonderful program. I believe that as Al-Anon members continue to "Embrace the Legacies" established by our pioneers, the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups will build "Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future"!

### Virginia S., Arizona

"Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future" takes me back to my early childhood days in the cotton fields of Mississippi. Our family worked hard in those fields and looked forward to the weekends where we often crossed the Mississippi river into Arkansas to visit relatives.

There was no bridge over the river in those days and I remember the fear I felt each time my daddy drove our vehicle onto

the small ferry boat that took us across. There was only a rope around the edges and it seemed that we were always the first or last on and were always touching the rope. I was so afraid our vehicle would go into the river and we would all drown!

On the way back across the river, after my daddy had spent the day drinking with his many brothers, I quickly forgot the fun time I had visiting my relatives. Instead, I daydreamed about the day I would graduate, get out of that house, and not have to be afraid anymore.

I did not know the disease of alcoholism had affected me or that it would for years to come. I tried very hard to *run* from the disease, but each time it closed in on me. I left my first marriage, taking our four kids with me, thinking I had left the disease behind. As the children grew, so did the disease, and by the time I stumbled into the rooms of Al-Anon, all three sons were actively drinking and I was living in total fear and insanity. I only planned to stay long enough for you to tell me how to get them to stop drinking.

At my first meeting, when I heard that I was not responsible for my adult children, I was aghast. How could that possibly be? But I took that idea home with me and I thought about it daily. I was very anxious to go back to that meeting to hear more. I have continued coming back to that meeting and many more for almost 23 years.

Today there is a bridge over the Mississippi River and now when I go back to visit, I'm not afraid to cross. It's been through the many opportunities provided by the Al-Anon program that I have found several ways of learning new behavior. One of those ways is service work. Being of service to the fellowship has given me my personal bridge that has led to humility and continued growth. Today I am spiritually connected thorough the Steps, Traditions, Concepts, literature, meetings, having a Sponsor, being a Sponsor, slogans, Just for Today's, the hugs, and the God of my understanding—and for that I am grateful.

## Dennis G., British Columbia/Yukon

“Embrace our Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand our Future”

What a bridge this is: from about 18 years ago when I was feeling hopeless and helpless and pining for the freedom that we would have if she would just stop drinking, to standing before you here at our 2009 World Service Conference.

How did this all happen to me? I was somebody who felt so undeserving and ashamed of myself and my situation—a failure. The pain I felt surpassed the fear I had to get me to my first Al-Anon meeting. I knew I was not alone. Personal recovery had started for me.

My journey, like many of yours, started with our first Legacy of personal recovery through our Twelve Steps and continued through a willingness to understand and apply our Traditions and Concepts. I resented the Traditions because we wasted time reading them at the start of our meeting. It was suggested that I look to them when we had a group problem.

Low and behold, I remember the fear I felt chairing my first meeting at a men's group in West Vancouver. What if I do something wrong? As my service path flowed to our Group

Representative, our Alternate District Representative, and so on, I felt I could do these things and my confidence grew. My growth came from the simplicity of my willingness to raise my hand to volunteer and belief that this Power greater than myself would help me with my fears, if I just trusted.

I am truly God blessed to have found the Al-Anon Family Groups. Just being willing has put me in situations that I would not have chosen. Whether these situations were chairing a meeting, helping to resolve conflicts in a district, or being a Service Sponsor, I have grown from each and every experience.

The paradox is that I came here to pick up a couple of tips to get my wife to stop drinking and I ended up getting a life. Embracing our Legacies has been the spiritual bridge that has given me and will continue to give me a God-given life.

I'd like to share a story with you:

Once a dad was doing an odd job around the house. His impatient son wanted to go to the playground. Dad needed half an hour so he took his son inside, found a geography magazine, and cut up a map of the world into many pieces and said, “Put it together.”

His son was back in five minutes. “How did you do that, Son?”

“It was easy, Dad: on the other side of the map of the world was a picture of a man. When I put the man together, the world came together.”

## Tom B., Colorado

Our Legacies keep me grounded in our history and purpose while service has allowed me the opportunity to contribute to the expansion of our future.

As with every service position I've had, I have made mistakes, questioned things, challenged everything, and believed I could change our fellowship. Unreasonable expectations? I think not. As a Delegate I have learned that every member is responsible for the future of our fellowship and I must be part of building that future. Often I push when I should carry, question when I should be silent, and judge when I should pray.

I have discovered that being Delegate is not the highest position in our fellowship; membership is. It is not about having all of the answers, and it is not about being unique or special. I have learned that it is about being part of the process, learning more about my weaknesses, developing my strengths, taking risks, and making and learning from my mistakes. My personal recovery has been enhanced so much by this journey; it would be selfish not to share my struggles and growth with others.

Powered by my deep passion and love for this fellowship, I took what some might view as unfavorable, challenging, or defensive positions on some issues. I believe in our Legacies and as a member of this fellowship, I have a responsibility to protect them. I rediscovered the power of voice and the honor of vote. I have tried to pass this responsibility and power to the members of my Area so they too can learn about and protect our Legacies.

My wife sent a card to me at my first Conference that read, “When our story is told, and it will be told in song and fable



and interpretive dance and puppet show, people will weep with joy and, through sobs, say, “Today we have witnessed love. How can our lives not be bettered by this?” The card refers to our personal love, but continually reminds me of the love that we, as Delegates, carry.

I have been blessed by the support and encouragement from friends, members of my Area, WSO Trustees and staff, new friends I have met along this journey, and most of all by my wife and family. You have supported me and challenged me, given me a new perspective on issues, offered an ear and a shoulder when they were much needed, and most of all, loved me when I was unlovable. You are all my teachers and for that I am grateful and humbled to be of service to this fellowship, my Area, and most of all to you.

## Judy C., Maritime Provinces

I have had a number of amazing spiritual experiences since I walked through the doors of Al-Anon feeling emotionally, physically, and spiritually broken. I had become “irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.” I could not imagine how I was ever going to embrace the words of the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts of Service in such a way that I would be able to live, “One Day at a Time,” with love and peace in my heart, while reaching out to “Everyone, Everywhere.”

My first Al-Anon spiritual moment happened when I was little more than a newcomer. I agreed to share, for the very first time, at an open meeting. As I waited for the Chairperson to introduce me, I had the usual insane thoughts, such as, “Will I say the right things? Will they like me?”

I stood up with a new energy and faced my smiling Al-Anon and A.A. friends. I allowed the love and peace of the program to simply take over my mind, body, and spirit. It was the beginning of my spiritual journey in Al-Anon, the beginning of letting Al-Anon members carry me through the most difficult of times, and the beginning of my giving back to Al-Anon in gratitude.

Until I became a Delegate, I did not understand or appreciate the spiritual bridge-building relationship between Canada and the World Service Office that has existed since Al-Anon’s beginnings. When I took advantage of the invitation to sit in on the Open Annual Board Meetings that follow the Conference each year, I was unexpectedly overwhelmed with feelings of pride and gratitude. I thought of the Canadian Delegates and Trustees who had gone before me and had worked alongside so many other Delegates and Trustees from the U.S. to expand Al-Anon’s future. I silently prayed that I, too, would be able to embrace Al-Anon’s Legacies and use them as tools to strengthen and expand Al-Anon and Alateen for future generations of families and friends of alcoholics.

Each time I reach out to Al-Anon, and for Al-Anon, I believe that I am strengthening the spiritual bridges made of trust and caring; of love and forgiveness, of peace and serenity. With the help of my Higher Power, I want to fully embrace Al-Anon’s Legacies as I move forward through the joys and challenges of living and serving Al-Anon—“One Day at a Time.”

## Pat N., Massachusetts

Last year at Conference I asked for the reason we were no longer calling gifts of money to Al-Anon “legacies,” but now calling them “bequests.” The answer had to do with “legacies” having requirements for use or strings attached.

I see our Legacies of the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts as our inheritance from those who came before us. They come with the requirement that I safeguard them for those who come to Al-Anon in the future. I need to remember our primary purpose and focus on that in every effort to share my experience, strength, and hope. To be diverted from this primary purpose, even in well-intentioned efforts, is a disservice to Al-Anon as a whole.

As a Delegate to the World Service Conference, I am the link of service from Massachusetts to the worldwide fellowship. I need to share our particular concerns, opinions, and successes with the larger group and I need to be the link of information within Al-Anon beyond my particular geography. Our cofounder, Lois W., often said it was a simple matter to start something; it is more difficult to keep it going.

Am I willing to embrace this Legacy? Am I willing to be open-minded and open-hearted? Am I able to be connected to a worldwide fellowship? We are asked to continue to reach out and to be the willing participant in extending the hand of Al-Anon to everyone, everywhere, who is looking for help in dealing with the effects of someone else’s drinking.

This Legacy is a spiritual one and it is the only way we can expand into the future. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this great adventure.

## Mary M., Minnesota North

I came here to fix my mother and my husband. My first Sponsor introduced me to the Steps and I learned to take action. The more times each day I worked them on the “problems” in my life, the more the Steps became a way of life and my perspective changed.

The first ten Steps put me straight with God and myself. They clear my mind so that in Step Eleven, I can hear God’s plan for my life as I move into Step Twelve. My second Sponsor introduced me to the Traditions and Concepts. I tested them out in Al-Anon service. I began to apply them in my work and home life. Once again, the more I applied them, the better they worked and my relationships with others continued to improve.

Our Legacies are our spiritual bridge. We build a bridge to get over tough terrain or to get to hard-to-reach places. As a fiber artist, I think of the warp and weft threads, which make up fabric. Steps, Traditions, and Concepts work in sequence and are the warp threads. Weft yarns are the cross alignment between Step One, Tradition One, and Concept One, etc. These threads become the strong fabric supporting our spiritual bridge.

When I think I understand what God has in store for my life—that I know where the bridge touches down—She shows me that my perspective is too narrow. An Al-Anon friend told me she wasn’t leaving before *all* her miracles happened. Sometimes we get complacent and think the program has stopped working. I know today it is because I’ve stopped doing my

part. When I recommit myself to working the Legacies, my life changes and my future is unlimited.

Today I am either living in love or fear. If I am not acting from love, I'm afraid of something. Today when I ask God why something is happening, it's in looking back that I see the reason. I identify miracles in every moment and am amazed how my Higher Power works things out. My part is to apply these 36 simple principles in all my affairs to be a channel for God's love.

A new work assignment provided a spiritual awakening when my perspective shifted from thinking that no one else wanted this volunteer job to this is an opportunity for which God has prepared me. I am invited to bring Al-Anon principles into my work in a new way. I have led two meetings, and the conflict has moved to peace and serenity.

Our Legacies—this spiritual bridge held in God's care—are strong enough to hold me, you, and everyone who wants to come along on this amazing journey.

## **Skip G., Mississippi**

When I think of my continuing recovery and our Steps, I think of the six words I use to describe the Twelve Steps: "Trust God, fix self, help others."

Steps One to Three are my spiritual bridges, or "trust God." I now know that I am powerless when my kids are in trouble with the law or are incarcerated in an addiction treatment facility. As I gain a better understanding of my Higher Power, I gain a new and richer feeling of spirituality.

In Steps Four to Eleven, I work the bridges that help me to "fix self." After growing up in a family where both parents abused alcohol, the Steps are a great help in allowing me to find out who I am and to identify and work with my feelings and low self-esteem. I knew about feelings—mostly anger, but that was okay because I usually felt it was someone else's fault. Improving my self-esteem meant I could undertake a task without the usual fear of failure.

In Step Twelve, I help others because the bridge to keeping my serenity is to give it away. By the time I reached this Step, I had enough gratitude to really want to "help others" with the same plight.

The Traditions have guided me in working with my home group and other relationships in unity. I find as a human being I have a tendency to focus on personalities not principles. The Traditions help me solve my challenges with Al-Anon principles.

The Concepts and Warranties are my guidelines to working in Al-Anon service. Much of the joy in my recovery has been in service. I will always remember answering the telephone at our Literature Distribution Center, letting friends and families of alcoholics know they are welcome and where and when our meetings were in Mississippi, working with other Al-Anon members in planning and putting on local and Area events, and working with our Al-Anon Information Service. But my most memorable service experiences are being elected Delegate and attending my first Conference. What an unforgettable ride, bumps and all!

The Legacies and the spiritual bridges that bind them have allowed me frequent serenity over the effects of alcoholism and to be a survivor.

## **Pennie K., Montana**

I am a daughter, sister, wife, and mother to several alcoholics. The family disease of alcoholism took our mom from us and left the legacy of the family disease to my two sisters and me. My younger sister was taken by the disease seven years ago. Two of my three kids have gone to A.A. My oldest son says he isn't done drinking yet. My daughter does not have time to work her program and go to meetings.

The legacies that were passed on to me being raised in an alcoholic home were that life hurt and I had to fix everything. I had to make sure that I was not the cause of the pain in your life. I lied, cheated, and stole money and feelings from the people in my life. I took their pain, obsession, anxiety, anger, and denial and made them my own. I took these legacies into my marriage and my family. I had to bear the pain of my mom, sister, husband, and kids to make their lives livable; to endure the pain in their lives. They could have everything they thought they needed even if it meant going into debt to fix it.

The Legacies that have been passed on to me in Al-Anon are the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts. They bring a sense of responsibility. I'm learning to feel my own feelings—feelings of self-worth, love, and spiritual growth. I came into Al-Anon ready to do what I needed to do to get what you had.

I heard people say, "If you want what I have, do what I do." I had been in the program a little over a year when I jumped into service and became an Alateen Sponsor, a Group Representative, and a District Treasurer, all in the same month! I don't recommend this to anyone.

I got a Service Sponsor and a new Al-Anon Sponsor and started working the program. Now I try to do only one position at a time. When anyone asks me about service, I tell them what I did, what it was like, and what it's like now.

The ideal way for me to receive Al-Anon was through the power of example. The Legacies were passed on by the members before me, who kept Al-Anon here until I was in a bad enough place to find the program. Now I can be involved in service that will help Al-Anon be here tomorrow and for years to come.

May we embrace all the rich legacies of our Al-Anon Family Groups' heritage.

## **Fran M., New Jersey**

Over the past six months my life has been filled with one crisis after another. The latest occurred a month ago when my 92-year-old father fell and fractured his femur. I stayed with him for hours in the emergency room and made calls to the assisted living facility to have them look after my mother who has Alzheimer's and can't be left alone. The week was spent coordinating my parents' care, running errands, and visiting them both daily. Add to that my "normal" responsibilities of work, Al-Anon service meetings, and my home life. I ended up sacrificing my well-being.

While trying to write this three-minute talk and think about how the Legacies fit into my life, I have to start with the Steps and their importance to my personal recovery. I was at the starting point, recognizing my powerlessness. The Steps remind me that I don't have all the answers, I'm not God, and I need to have faith. I need to remember to be honest, open, humble, and have the courage to make positive changes in my life.

The Traditions help me to maintain an honest view of my part in relationships with those around me. I am no better or worse than anyone else. The Traditions also teach me about cooperation, and leading by example. Also, they help me to remember not to stir up controversy. I need to keep my Higher Power in the center of my life to maintain unity in my family.

Now, I am using the Concepts to keep me grounded in how I give service, not just to Al-Anon, but also to those I am personally trying to help. I am reminded how important mutual trust and respect are and how I need to give others the right to be heard. I am trying to be financially responsible not only for myself and my husband, but also for my elderly parents.

I have found these principles of the program are creating that "bridge" from chaos and control to my spiritual future. I have faith that my Higher Power has not brought me this far just to leave me all alone. I have to be conscious of His presence in every moment to get and keep that serenity that I want so dearly. In every crisis that I meet, I have a lesson to learn. I may not understand it right away, but it's there for me when I'm ready. These are the qualities that I want for my future.

## Paula M., North Carolina/Bermuda

The spiritual bridges of recovery, unity, and service have expanded my life. The first bridge I crossed was just walking into the doors of Al-Anon Family Groups. When I saw the smiling faces, I knew there was a chance that I could have what those people had (or at least some of it). They shared their experience, strength, and hope so that I could get better. I learned the importance of a group conscience. More importantly, I learned how to accept and support the group conscience when it is different from what I want, and that I don't have all the answers. My future expanded!

The only "bridge" toward growth that I could see was "fellowship." We had eating meetings and meetings before or after the meeting. We traveled to other meetings, to district meetings, to Assemblies, and to conventions. These activities made me feel "a part of" and I was gradually introduced to the Twelve Steps. I felt great freedom when I found out that I didn't cause it, couldn't control it, and couldn't cure it. My future expanded.

Pretty soon I was washing coffee cups and ashtrays, and asked to chair a meeting—my introduction to the Traditions. I started learning about interaction within the group. I was elected Group Representative, and a Past Delegate gently introduced me to the principles in the Concepts of Service. I started giving back some of what was being given to me. I also started to learn the importance of bringing energy and enthusiasm to each of the service positions that I was given the honor of holding. I became hooked on service in Al-Anon. Service positions have pushed me beyond my self-imposed limitations and have

taught me that I can be more than I thought I could be, taken me places I never dreamed I would go, and given me friends I never thought I would have. I have received far more than I have given. My future expanded.

Prayer and meditation guide us on the bridges of recovery. My journey of recovery has been based on the bridges of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service, putting me in conscious contact with a Power who, when asked, guides me in my life. My future has expanded.

Like bridges, our recovery is built on bedrock—the bedrock of love, humility, and service to others. The bridge stands solid and secure when, through the tears and fears, through the sharing and laughter, I feel the presence of my High Power in the meeting rooms. My future has definitely expanded!

## Darcy A., North Dakota

Embrace the Legacies: Insights; tiny lights; insert them to a line; unite with Higher Power; and let your lights so shine.

Delegate Selection: Are you willing? A shaky, "Yes, okay." Am I ready? Can I do this? Will someone help me please?

Delegate Support: Of course, there's help. Your Mentors, Sponsors, and Trustees, your Area and Assembly, and CAL—please don't forget all these. The WSO staff sends messages on File Exchange for you to make sure you are ready for the World Service Conference, too.

Embrace the Legacies, the theme for 2009: Recovery, unity, and service, the meeting of all three; work to reach affected families and offer recovery. Just plug a tiny insight into their weakest link and energize it lightly until you see a blink.

Unite with Higher Power: And yes, we have it now—the magic of the program; just be willing and we'll show you how. Insecurity—facing fears and daring to risk the unknown; my first safe voice of welcome said, "We want you to succeed." I was prompted into action in an environment of hope and trust. Each voice is important and each Delegate participation a "must." Conflict Resolution, Knowledge-Based Decision-Making, too. We learned how to participate with our Traditions and Concepts true.

Information, communication, diversity galore; how do we reach other—how do we open doors? Technology for future, yet useful for the aged—problem-solving choices—we all become engaged. These bridges from the Stepping Stones from Lois's days of yore—are foundations for our future—which we continue to explore.

Building Bridges: Love, acceptance, respect, listening with open mind—gaining strength from others and expanding from human kind. Connecting to the countries—so different from our own—adding diversity and perspectives from those we would have never known. To reach families affected by alcohol remains our common goal—yet as we stay focused to the task—be nimble, flexible, and bold.

The World Conference Staff supplies Delegates with an abundance of supports—from Task Forces and Thought Forces, to Assemblies and Delegate reports. There are skits and Board meetings, and role-play; Big Thinking, too. Let's not forget the motions and Knowledge-Based Decision-Making and frame-



work review. PowerPoint and education—communicating roles and Conference rules to do; the World Service Conference energizes and enlightens each Delegate anew; thus embracing our program Legacies—and now, Delegates, it is up to me and you.

## Jacki S., Oklahoma

I had a hard time at first, trying to embrace the theme, “Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future.” Our literature tells us to look back, not to stare, but to learn. To embrace the Legacies required me to look back. After looking up the definitions of the key words, the theme became real to me. To rephrase the theme per those definitions, “To accept willingly something handed down from an earlier time: Our spiritual structures span vast chasms to increase the range and scope of times to come.” What a legacy Lois and Anne have given; a program that has spanned nearly 60 years, through changes they could not have imagined.

Our program is based on Three Legacies, the three sides of our triangle. Recovery through the Steps has taken me from arriving at my first meeting with the intention of getting a guilt-free divorce to the ability to look at myself and the opportunity to celebrate 30 years of marriage, with the spiritual growth to know that each of us is a unique child of God. My recovery has also enabled me to have a physically disabled daughter and two grandchildren live with us for five years. The Steps allow me to face what life gives me with the help of a loving Higher Power.

Unity through the Traditions has allowed me to participate in, walk away from, and see groups fold that do, and do not, follow the Traditions. The Traditions have also allowed me to leave my home group after trying for too long to keep it going. I was able to explore other groups and find a new home group.

Service through the Concepts has allowed me to come here and be a part of the World Service Conference, even when I felt less than and doubted the strength of my program. The Concepts allow me to respect shared leadership, participation, and minority views.

Each year the World Service Conference meets and builds on the experience of the past Conferences. As long as we continue to build bridges from the past to the future, our program will continue to expand. My term as Delegate has been an exciting journey and I will take its gifts with me into the future. The things I have learned and shared with my Area—big thinking, diversity, Task/Thought Forces, conflict resolution, Alateen Traditions, bequests—give me the assurance that the program is sound, and that the Conference is keeping up with the changing times to leave a legacy for the future.

As a Delegate I have been given a personal legacy that I will cherish. My sign-in on the File Exchange was simple; panel number, first name, last initial, and the two-letter state abbreviation, 47jackisok, or the way I read it, “Jacki is OK.” I took that as yet another nudge from God. I am okay today, and I will be okay as long as I remember the tools and Legacies of our program.

## Roland C., Oregon

I understand the “Legacies” of this year’s Conference to be the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts of Service. As I spent time thinking about how to address this, my thoughts were continually engulfed with big thinking.

I often say I am a traditionalist. Not in the sense that we have to do things because that is the way we have always done them. No, we need to do things as the Traditions guide us. That will keep Al-Anon what it was, is, and should be. That will ensure we have the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Concepts. I will always embrace the Traditions. But, there is more.

As I participated in various activities as a Delegate, it became clear to me that the legacies of this program were the people who came before us. Lois, Anne, and those other early pioneers that brought our Clearing House and the World Service Office together are legacies. The early members of our program, unrecognized, yet just as important, who opened the meeting doors, made the coffee, and gave the hugs in the early 1950s, are also legacies.

More big thinking ensued. The Conferences and all of the past Conference attendees were legacies. I was then overcome with a deep sense of humility. I thought about looking out over all of you and thinking you were about to become legacies in your own right and God has given me the opportunity to be a part of this. This is our spiritual bridge, our opportunity to expand the future of Al-Anon Family Groups. Let’s not squander this opportunity to fulfill God’s will for each of us. Some day in the future, after our work is done, a member of our fellowship will look back and examine the legacies of his or her program. I hope they will embrace them.

Just as I wrap my life around the Legacies of our program; I would like to wrap my arms around each one of you and thank God for this life-changing opportunity to be of service.

## Trudy C., Quebec East

Looking at this theme, “Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future,” I imagine three islands at a distance from one another, the islanders unable to reach one another because of stormy waters and tumultuous torrents. Despair, frustration, and helplessness would be experienced. However, building bridges between the islands would break the isolation, thus improving the lives of those people and offering them countless possibilities. This would give them a promising future!

Like these islanders, I felt despair, frustration, isolation, and helplessness. I couldn’t communicate with people around me because of the stormy feelings and tumultuous emotions that were omnipresent. The solution came as I entered the doors to Al-Anon. Love, hope, and faith were there for me.

I crossed the first bridge when I familiarized myself with the Steps and gradually integrated them in my life. The numerous tools provided by the program helped me to feel love for myself, for others, and for my Higher Power. As I allowed it to immerse me, I regained a zest for living unknown until then.

I then dared to cross the second bridge and took a closer look at the Traditions. The Traditions helped me to remain on course



and be relatively stable emotionally. They also allowed me to grow harmoniously with myself and with others. I finally had room to express who I was. The hope to have better days was mine!

The bridge leading to the Concepts was harder to cross. The Concepts, although arid at first, offered me faith in the decision process. For me they set boundaries and allowed me to function in respectful ways with those around me. As I developed faith in the process, I started to live more intensely the richness of service.

The three bridges were built for me and I had crossed them. I had expanded my horizons and given my future all the chances it deserved by crossing the spiritual bridges offered to us with so much love, hope, and faith by our cofounders.

This is what I wish for each member in our wonderful fellowship, so together we can fully embrace the Legacies and cross the spiritual bridges, thus expanding the future of Al-Anon.

## Christa A., Vermont

I'm a fairly quiet person—usually the words that do leave my mouth are well thought out. Imagine my surprise when I heard the slogan “Think”! I think I've learned to practice letting go each day. When I release my clenched fists, my hands open and I become able to hold. When I relax my sustaining protective stance, I become able to reach out. When I can reach out, I can embrace.

I think I've learned to practice trusting my Higher Power each day. When my hands are open, I'm given the precious gift of recovery. When I'm able to reach out, I'm given the opportunity to be a part of—to experience unity. When I embrace, I'm able to serve, to be strengthened, and to strengthen the program.

I originally got involved in service only because I wanted to spend more time with recovering people. A district meeting, an Area meeting—I wasn't sure what I was doing there, but I was sure I was with recovering people. I eased into service, always being careful to maintain the fragile balance that my life was. I didn't do things as perfectly as I imagined I could have, but my efforts were always appreciated. This encouraged me, and my willingness grew to the point that I became a District Representative. When the position of Delegate was to be filled by drawing a District Representative's name from a hat, a great fear arose in me and I respectfully withdrew my name. Sure enough, my Higher Power filled the position with a former Delegate, someone far more experienced than I, who immediately turned and nominated me as Alternate Delegate. I easily accepted what I thought was a “lurking in the shadows” position and was boosted by the thought that my peers elected me. Resting comfortably in my new position for about 30 days, I was asked to fill the Delegate position, as the Delegate was stepping down for health reasons. Well, I wrestled and wriggled and writhed, finally accepting the faith and encouragement of my Area and Higher Power. Here I am, participating as best as I can, mostly awestruck, realizing the collective wisdom of this large gathering of which I am a member, expanding the future of Al-Anon Family Groups, and I gratefully serve. Thanks so much.

## Don F., Virginia

The Friday night that I finally gave up and opened the door to my first Al-Anon meeting was a big step for me. Although I had made this step after being beaten in my struggle to fix the alcoholic in my life, I was really not ready to give up completely!

I wish I could say that I was ready to pick up at least some of the tools that were offered—the slogans, sponsorship, Step work, and service. But I was still too stubborn and thought I had to control everything and everybody.

While I continued to attend meetings, I held onto the hope that I could get my life in order by myself, that I could get the alcoholic sober by myself. As I sank lower, you loved me, allowed me to come to meetings, and shared your experience with me. I am still in awe of your patience.

It took two failed marriages and years of pretending to be in charge of my life before I picked up the first tool, which happened to be service. After that, I gave in and got a Sponsor and then he, my Higher Power, and I began to work on the Steps. The woman who is my Service Sponsor showed me how the Traditions and the Concepts of Service could be applied to my life experiences and could help guide me in my personal recovery.

Let me offer an example or two of how the Traditions and Concepts have helped in my personal recovery. Control issues being among the top issues I have had to confront in my lifetime, the first three Steps were both crucial and difficult in my healing process. But when I learned that when Tradition Two says “For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God . . .” it also says to me, “For our *family* purpose there is but one authority—a loving God . . .” This Tradition helped me to apply what I was learning in the Steps to my other relationships, especially my family.

Similarly when Concept Five told me I might hear a solution to my problems if I was open enough to listen to the voice of the minority, I scoffed! After all, I knew that I always had the right idea in every situation. But service was where I first took a chance and put this idea into practice. I listened and was amazed at how my thinking was invigorated. Today, “You could be right!” is more than just a catchy phrase to dampen an argument—it's a reminder to me that I'm not always right.

Years later I'm still discovering ways that our Legacies are opening my eyes to new and better ways of living with those I love.

## Leslie N., Washington

I had only been in the program a few months when an Al-Anon member told me she was speaking at a recovery unit. She did not ask me if I wanted to go with her, but told me what time she would pick me up. She recognized the scared introvert who hid from any challenge and never completed anything. My friend also recognized the leader in me who would benefit from service work if only someone could drag me to the first opportunity. This was one of many bridges I was helped to cross.

My friend picked me up and told me the audience would be patients and their family. The medical staff wanted speakers to

share their recovery gained through self-help groups. My friend shared her recovery story and then announced I should share mine. I was shocked. All eyes were on me. I began to speak because I was afraid of failure. I have no idea how long I spoke or what I shared. After the meeting several people approached me with gratitude for my sharing. I wanted to ask them what I had said, but I was too stunned to say anything.

I love Al-Anon. I am so grateful to the members who taught me to never say “no” to service work. I am no longer a scared mouse in the corner who wants to disappear into the woodwork. My Higher Power has given me the opportunities to practice different behavior, and service work has given me the challenge to practice what I preach. I have learned that character is the ability to follow through on a project once the thrill has worn off.

I believe we are diamonds in the rough that need a little polishing. Sometimes I need a good soaking. Because you taught me to listen to my own council, I have crossed some bridges with ease. Some bridges I burnt before I stepped foot on them and had to humbly build new ones. When I listen to those of you who have found the path and practice what you show me, I can find serenity. Al-Anon members have found the path through the use of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. They are willing to share their recovery with me. I am so grateful for their loving interchange.

## **Renee H., Wisconsin**

At my very first Al-Anon meeting, we read the Twelve Steps and Traditions. I could see the value of working the Steps, but at that point the Traditions were beyond me. I trusted no one, but I could feel something in these meetings that kept me coming back.

After becoming a Group Representative (GR), I realized how important the Traditions are for the groups to function in unity. Later, I discovered that the Traditions also work in my personal life. At the time I was a GR, we didn't have a very strong district and I felt like I was missing out on something.

Later, our district became stronger and when I became a District Representative, I discovered the true joy of service. I finally had an understanding of the Traditions and felt connected to the Area, enthusiastically working in unity with the groups in my district all while keeping in mind that our ultimate purpose was to reach out and create bridges to the still suffering family members.

I placed my life in my Higher Power's hands and asked my Higher Power to guide my journey. When I became involved in Area service, my excitement grew as my world became larger. I started studying the Concepts and my program became solid, for now the Third Legacy firmly set my program, flowing evenly between myself, the group, the Area, and the WSO.

Although I faced the position of Delegate with some trepidation, I soon realized that my fears were groundless. Upon reflection, I saw that the spiritual nature of the program opened my life in ways I never thought possible. I no longer fear being in different groups, and know that I can trust my fellow members anywhere in the world. Because of the Three Legacies, we

have a solid common ground so that we are able to reach out to each other, content in knowing that our Higher Power will work through us to create bridges to reach out to those family members who are still suffering all around the world.

Each time a newcomer arrives at my home group, I feel honored to be able to reach out to them and aid them in their first steps, crossing the bridge to their spiritual future. As long as our base is solid, as embodied by the three Legacies, we can freely and enthusiastically cross our bridges to reach out to others and embrace the changes that will result in creating new bridges to the future.

## INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

### Hartmut G., Germany

I'm Hartmut, a grateful member of Al-Anon, living in Dusseldorf, Germany.

My wife is an alcoholic. Today she is sober and we both have been "in the program" since 1985. But these days I feel totally new in Al-Anon, visiting the World Service Conference, this "Mother Conference" we looked at in Germany for years, 7000 miles from home. Last year Inga told you a lot about our German Al-Anon structure, so I will leave this part out.

Embrace the Legacies is my feeling today. At the beginning in Al-Anon I thought the Steps were all I needed for personal growth, but now I know better. The biggest personal growth I achieved in Al-Anon was a gift I received when I wasn't expecting anything. The most growth I've gained was in service.

One day my home group wanted to send me to the regional service meeting. I didn't want to go; I didn't think I would be the right person to represent my group. But they said, "You are the right person. You will do a good job." So I went. And my journey in service began. It has been the most important and impressive journey I have made in my life.

After a couple of years in service on regional level, a friend asked me to be his alternate as Regional Trustee. Then it started again: I was unable to accept. I thought I would not be able to do this "job" because of my defects of character. My friend—and others at the service meeting—said, "Yes, you can and I will help you do this job and then you will see that you can become a Trustee after my turn." So I did.

And I became a Regional Trustee for three years. I was a member of our Service Conference and I realized how great it was to be part of our fellowship.

After that term, the other Trustees asked me to join the Executive Committee for three years as an At-Large member. Oh, I said to myself, what a fantastic chance to be part of our Service Conference for another three-year period, without the responsibility of a Trustee. Okay, I'll do this new "job."

But I didn't know that these lovely friends had another intention.

They knew that the General Secretary of the Service Office was going to retire and they were considering the future of Al-Anon Germany too. They wanted me to be part of the Committee so I could be exposed to learning how Al-Anon works as a non-profit organization, how to run the "business" for our fellowship, and I learned a lot. So after that three-year term they asked me to become the successor of our General Secretary in the German Al-Anon Service Office.

My first thought was: they cannot be serious. Not me, and then I remembered all the years in Al-Anon service, all the wonderful friends I met, all the never-ending talks we had, and all the really great personal growth I got. I asked my



wife and our sons if they could imagine leaving Berlin to live in another part of Germany in the "Ruhrgebiet." They said, "Let's go and explore the possibility," and I agreed to become the Secretary General.

If I had not agreed, I would have missed the chance to visit your Conference, our guide, and would not have had access to the group conscience of all Al-Anon worldwide.

Thank you for being here, thank you for listening.

### Nadia M., Italy

My name is Nadia, I belong to the Italian Al-Anon Family Groups. I'm greeting all of you with gratitude for being here to share your experience and our cultures.

Al-Anon Family Groups Italy was born in 1976. The first group was in Rome and it was sponsored by an A.A. member who enthusiastically believed in Al-Anon. We started to translate CAL in the early 1980s, but our structure began forming in 1984, when eight inter-regional groups were set-up.

In the following years, Al-Anon kept growing. We created our bi-monthly magazine, called *Incontro*, and we opened a call-center service [answering service]. In 1990 our General Service Office relocated in Milano, where it's still based.

As the number of groups was growing, an extraordinary assembly was called in 1994, where all the Group Representatives voted a new structure composed of 12 Areas.

The first National Service Conference was held in May 1995 and four years later the Conference approved to adopt the "World Service Handbook" in its complete, translated form. In 2000, we created our Web site, used mainly for Public Outreach and for information on meetings. We also registered with the World Service Office an official on-line meeting, which is very active and gets a lot of participation.

Today we have around 400 Al-Anon groups and 30 Alateen groups organized in 15 Areas. In our GSO we have two employees, one of them is an Al-Anon member who is supervising and coordinating the operations of the GSO. Our Service Structure is composed of a Board of Trustees and most of the Selected Committees described in the Eleventh Concept. We have two International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Delegates. I am one of them and I had the great honor and fun to attend the 14th IAGSM in Finland last year. Italy has been away from the international service activities for several years. Now we commit to again take our place in the global process of sharing and expanding our unique culture of hope.

We believe that a huge part of building our future comes just from participating in the international events linked to service.





Many ideas and suggestions come from the WSO, the World Service Conference, the IAGSM, and from other national structures. This way we can exploit our immense global experience and at the same time, contribute to expand the message of Al-Anon in the world.

Our Italian structure is facing its Fourth Step Inventory for the second year in order to define our strengths and weaknesses, with the objective of better knowing and improving our service structure. The main issues to expand our future will be: reorganizing our GSO, reviewing and reforming our districts, enhancing the role of the Area Delegate, and improving the communication between our GSO and our groups. Our Legacies must be our guides: Steps, Traditions, and the best kept Al-Anon secret, our Concepts of Service.

After introducing the Italian structure, I'd like now to introduce myself in the light of the theme of this Conference: "Embrace the Legacies." In my family of origin the future was always uncertain. My parents struggled every day to build a future for us; nevertheless I felt lack, fear, and uncertainty.

Rage, rebellion, and a feeling that I could never get what I really deserved were pervasive. Later, in my new family, these attitudes were repeated. Hostility and rage were expressed by silences and hidden by putting physical distance between me and my husband.

Work was my excuse for not taking responsibility about my family and my own life. I tried to cover the growing emptiness by spending money on myself. I became a compulsive shopper and didn't realize the walls I had raised and the progressive solitude in my life. I was more and more withdrawn from reality.

When I came to Al-Anon, it was because my life was broken into pieces. There was no future: my family, my job, and even my house were lost. More importantly, I didn't know where Nadia was.

It was my beloved brother, already years sober, who showed me Al-Anon. I never gave any significance to the word alcoholism, nor did I want to hear from my brother when he tried to talk to me about his dependence. Also, I didn't realize that my ex-husband had alcohol problems as well.

To me, it was all about a matter of people having "character flaws," which seemed normal to me, as there were always "character issues" in my life.

In Al-Anon I immediately chose a Sponsor and with her loving but firm guidance I started studying and practicing the Twelve Steps. That was the first bridge to expand my future. I saw my insanity, I found my Higher Power, and I progressively got to know myself, but freedom came only after amends were made to God, myself, and my loved ones, my daughter especially.

From there, expanding the future was possible and my life started changing, "One Day at a Time." My home group has been the workshop and my example for understanding how to restore relationships and build supportive structures, staying away from destructive attitudes. My recovery became central in my life. With the Twelve Traditions, I learned that for our common welfare love isn't enough and unity means working together for a common purpose. I also learned that my actions don't have to damage others, anonymity goes well beyond not gossiping, and we are all guided by a loving Higher Power.

God gave me a beautiful special person to share my life with and we built a new family. For this purpose, I had to relocate, facing a radical change in my lifestyle. It has been hard; in the beginning, I felt a great sense of loss; but I had faith. Al-Anon was with me and this time, change was not for escaping, like in the past, but it was to build my future and let others do the same.

My Sponsor always explains that we are here to love and serve and this is why I always volunteer to serve in Al-Anon. To serve, it's not enough to do it willingly. I need something that gives me balance and this is what the Twelve Concepts hold. There I can find help to make decisions. I can be guided in building my sense of what is my ultimate and delegated responsibility. I can develop the capacity of vision and leadership, always sharing with others.

I came representing people who can't be here and I couldn't be serene without the strength of the commitment they gave me and the enthusiasm and sincere willingness of our structure. Today I know that when I work in service I can expand Al-Anon credibility, not only for my future, but for the future of many other people, too. I couldn't do any of this sustained by my ego, like in the past. I need God, you, and the three Legacies. In Al-Anon lies all my future, always "One Day at a Time." Thanks for listening to me. I love you all.

## María Del Carmen T., Mexico

Good morning, my name is Carmelita. I was born, raised, educated, and distorted in an alcoholic home, because I am a daughter and wife of alcoholics. When I came for the first time to Al-Anon, approximately 27 years ago, it never was with the intention



to remain in the program for a long time. I only wanted to be there for a short time to learn what to do so that my husband would stop drinking. They gave me a book and the first thing that I read was the preface that said: "We come together in an inspiring endeavor to help ourselves and others to overcome the frustration and helplessness caused by living or having lived with an alcoholic."

I identified with it and I said, "I will try it." Fortunately I came to an active group where they talked to me with clarity. They were old women and I thought, "Poor women, they need help." (Now I am the old woman.) They used the word "service" a lot. In that group I met my first personal and Service Sponsor. She was the first Delegate in my state and I was attracted by her lively personality and the clarity with which she explained all things. I grew up in Al-Anon in that environment and naturally I was attracted to positive things, I wanted to do things, and I did them.

I started working in the group by accepting service; I wanted to grow as a human being. I wanted to regain myself, so I started to go out with other members to carry the message working



with the Public Information Committee. I held all service positions of the structure until I became a Delegate of the State of Sonora, receiving great benefits by accepting the third Legacy as part of my life.

Currently, I am the Regional Trustee of five great states in northern Mexico, one of our greatest responsibilities in the service structure in my country. I come here with the support of my fellow Regional Trustees and Trustees at Large, who besides serving their Regions, chair the several Committees and Task Forces we have formed to serve Al-Anon with all of our capabilities and above all, love.

I believe my Higher Power, in his infinite wisdom, has occupied my mind and body so that I can heal from this disease that is in my house stronger than ever. Today I know I cannot do anything for my family and thank the God of my understanding for giving me the ability to offer them the support, encouragement, love, and understanding that they need. Today I am accepting this disease with love; I know I cannot live with resignation, sadness, or despair, but with joy, enthusiasm, desire for improvement, peace, love, and the ability to love without demanding love.

I travel every month to our General Services Office in Mexico City, where we have 16 employees providing service to 3,400 groups in the country by distributing CAL to be reprinted in our country. In March we created the department Media and Quality Control of Printed Materials. Its job is to monitor quality and to improve our Web site.

During the month of August, our National Convention was held in the city of Querétaro with an attendance of 4,676 members.

In December, the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee organized and conducted a symposium on alcoholism, with the participation of specialists in the field. Our objective was to inform professionals in the fields of health, education, and employment on the existence of the Al-Anon Family Groups as a resource to help families of alcoholics. This event opened the doors of the institutions in our country. Our commitment now is to prepare and have enough volunteers to meet all of the requests to open institutional groups.

In February we held the 36th National Service Assembly Conference. It was attended by 36 Delegates from 36 states of Mexico who heard the reports of the Board of Trustees, Executive, Finance, etc. The Delegates' questions were answered; they agreed to bring to life the work generated at the Assembly Conference in their respective areas.

We also gave the report of the 48th World Service Conference (WSC) and the 14th International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM), which generated great interest and willingness between Delegates while giving meaning to the work they initiated in their Areas. By 2009 we plan to continue to support structurally the weaker Areas through visits by the Regional Trustee. Most Areas are carrying out the Certification Process for Alateen Sponsors. During the month of July, the Regional Service Seminar for Southeast Region will be held in Mérida, Yucatan, in order to promote the service at national level.

Due to the benefits we have received from the attendance of our International Representative to the WSC and IAGSM, it was decided to continue attending these events including the

Ibero-American Al-Anon Service Meeting. We are constructing a third level for our GSO building due to its growth—we needed more space for the warehouse and a garage for supplies. We only hope that the economic situation becomes stable. We know that there are many things to do and despite the looming economic crisis, we are confident we will continue working with more enthusiasm than ever and not falter in our dreams of achieving the continuous improvement in the services we provide to our groups.

I express my gratitude on behalf of my beautiful country, Mexico, and I thank you for the confidence which you have shared, as we honor and trust ourselves to match it with our goodwill and dedication. With all the love that Al-Anon has taught me.

## Nuala C., UK & Eire

My name is Nuala and I am the General Secretary for the UK & Eire Structure. It is a privilege to be part of the World Service Conference 2009.

I came to Al-Anon in Ireland 22 years ago. My husband is the alcoholic and when his drinking got to a stage where he had reached his rock bottom, he was persuaded to attend a treatment centre in Dublin.

The treatment centre, which treated the family disease of alcoholism, told us about Al-Anon. They insisted I had to go to Al-Anon in order to take part in an after-care course at the centre. I did not go willingly. I was very much against the idea of attending meetings as I thought I didn't need help. I was perfect in every way and my life was unmanageable only because of the alcoholic's mad behavior and the lack of money due to his spending most of it on drinking. I say his mad behavior, but realized in Al-Anon that in fact I was the mad one in our home. My children were frightened of me and not of their alcoholic father.

In Al-Anon I learned to live in the day; to be grateful for a husband who had taken the program of A.A. to his heart and was trying to be a better person and to stay sober "One Day at a Time." I needed to get a Sponsor and start making changes in my life. I found a Higher Power, a God of my understanding, who would support me through every aspect of my life. I no longer felt alone. I heard about the Legacies—Recovery through the Steps, Unity through the Traditions, and Service through the Concepts.

I became involved in service, but my family immigrated to the UK. I found myself a home group in London and continued my involvement in all aspects of service. It helped me feel involved and included, which was a feeling I hadn't experienced before Al-Anon.

I became a Trustee at Large and I was also asked to join the Finance Committee due to my accountant experience. After some years I became the Treasurer of Family Groups, Ltd.

Whilst I was in the role of Treasurer, our General Secretary



decided to retire. I applied for the job in the safe knowledge that I would definitely not be a suitable candidate, but here I am.

Al-Anon arrived in the British Isles in the 1950s. In 1970 we incorporated, opened our first office, and held our first Conference. There are now 31 Areas and approximately 800 groups. A telephone helpline service is provided throughout England, the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. Each Area sends a Delegate to Conference and they serve a three-year term.

The General Service Board is made up of 14 Trustees who may have a service role as a Chairman of a Standing Committee or may be a Regional Trustee. There are six Regional Trustees whose responsibility is to bring regional diversity to the Board. The General Secretary is also a Trustee. The General Service Board (GSB) meets three times a year. Two of the Trustees of the GSB serve as IAGSM Delegates.

The Executive Committee is composed of past Trustees and the Chairman of the Finance Committee and has responsibility for the routine administration of Al-Anon Family Groups in the UK and Eire. At the present time one of its major projects is finalizing the implementation of a new and colorful Web site with more information available to members and the addition of an eShop to enable purchase of literature on-line.

Regional Service Seminars are held in rotation throughout England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. The General Secretary, Treasurer, and a selected Chairman of a Standing Committee give a presentation. This is also an opportunity to report on the IAGSM and European Talk, our triennial zonal meeting.

The Standing Committees work hard. The Conference, Public Information, and Finance Committees all meet at the GSO and the Editorial Committee, which produces our monthly magazine, *News & Views*, meets within their editorial areas.

Our General Service Office is the hub of all activity in our Structure. Committee meetings are mostly held on weekends and there is a lot of work generated for staff by the organization of Conference and Regional Service Seminars. The Literature and Public Information desks also require full time staff. Alateen membership continues to decline, but the paperwork increases with the continuing responsibility of our duty of care to Alateen members. We also have to deal with five different legislative bodies—England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and the Republic of Ireland—which makes our work even more complicated.

I am enjoying the role of General Secretary, but also feel a huge sense of responsibility to the fellowship. Having been in Al-Anon for a long period of time, I felt I should know everything there was to know and was horrified to find out that I didn't. I am learning in the role as I go along and so far I have been shown only love and patience from staff, members, and Trustees.

And what of the future?

We don't have an opinion on outside issues, but we do have to acknowledge what is happening globally. Financial turmoil will hit our members, and in turn, our structure. So we anticipate a downturn in donations, but we also anticipate an increased need for the help that we offer to the families and friends of alcoholics. This year we have tried to put the name of Al-Anon into the public consciousness with a two-week concentrated

Public Information campaign and we will continue to develop new PI strategies. Our members have demonstrated clearly that, given support and encouragement, they will carry the message to every corner of the structure.

My predecessor attended the World Service Conference in 2006 and brought back to us at our Conference a message of encouragement, enthusiasm, and the need to grow by making positive changes. I hope I bring to you, in turn, some idea of the energy, creative thinking, growth, and recovery that you have inspired in us.

## SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

### Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—Literature

I feel very honored and grateful to be given the opportunity to speak with you tonight. At my first Al-Anon meeting, I had trouble getting out more than a few words to the other dozen people there. I couldn't look people in the eyes; it appeared as though my chin was permanently glued to my chest. I wasn't accustomed to opening up to anyone about anything. I was someone who had spent as much of my life as possible escaping into fantasy worlds, and yet I never could have imagined where the journey I began that night would take me.

I was only 21 years old when I attended that first meeting, but I felt dried up, out of hope, and at a point of total desperation. I came from a family deeply affected by alcoholism. I say that, rather than that I was the child of an alcoholic, because it wasn't just my mother's drinking that affected me. My whole family was affected, and each of those relationships affected me as well. Of course, I say all of that in hindsight.

Someone read the Twelve Steps at the meeting that night as part of the opening, but I was in such a fog, I didn't really pay any attention to them. All that really mattered was that for the first time in my life, I sensed that these people somehow understood where I was coming from. It was as if they had video cameras aimed through the windows of our house and knew exactly what was going on there, despite all of our best efforts to hide or deny it. Yet because of their warm welcome and friendly nature, I felt comforted, not threatened by this. I actually felt like this might be a place where I could eventually share without receiving judgment, pity, or just more denial in return.

My first group was named "Keyword," because they focused on a word like "acceptance," "resentment," or "gratitude." They usually read the Twelve Steps each week, but the only time we discussed them was when we had a First Step meeting for a newcomer. They never even mentioned that we had Traditions. That was okay with me at the time, because I really didn't see how important any of this was anyway.

I did understand at least part of Step One. I had tried everything I could think of to stop my mother's drinking, and had failed miserably. I could admit that I was powerless over alcohol, because that had been proven to me time and time again. Finally, I got it. But because I was still so focused on everyone else, it took longer for me to see how thoroughly unmanageable my own life was.

I've heard it said that positive changes in our lives occur to the degree we are willing to practice the principles of the program. For the first several years, I was willing, but only so far. I didn't really have to get a Sponsor, did I? Working the first three Steps was enough, wasn't it? Why read Conference Approved Literature every day, when there were so many other outside books that promised instant results? As for service, who had the time?

It took a consecutive series of difficult situations—like my father being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and my girlfriend running off with my best friend—before I really became

serious about applying the program on a deeper level. Pain can be a great motivator, and I was really hurting. It seemed like the bottom had dropped out of my world, and I grabbed on tight to one of the only things still there—Al-Anon. I increased the number of meetings I attended. I got a new, more Traditions-centered home group. I asked someone to be my Sponsor and developed close friends in the program. I also read Conference Approved Literature daily and took on new service challenges, like sponsoring Alateen. In other words, I started doing what members had suggested all along.

Working the Steps consecutively at the urging of my Sponsor, I started to understand why longtime members said our first Legacy, recovery through the Twelve Steps, was such an essential part of the program. I've asked myself how I could have procrastinated for so long in doing something so important. The main answer I come up with is fear. Fear kept me from doing many things, and the biggest fear I had was really getting to know me. I'm sure today that this is why I focused so much on everyone else. I could tell you all about everyone else's hopes, dreams, favorite color, or character defects, but I was hard pressed to reveal anything about myself—even to myself—because it scared me to death.

Perhaps that's why, although each Step was essential, my true turning point took place when I took a fearless and moral inventory, and then shared the exact nature of my wrongs with my Higher Power, myself, and another human being. Doing so forced me to face the underlying effects of having grown up with alcoholism. This meant looking at the ways I hid from reality, including stuffing my feelings with food. It also meant discovering what I had been hiding from, including the facts that I'm gay, and had been sexually abused as a small boy. None of these realizations came quickly or easily, but as I continued to work through the Steps each time, I uncovered more and more.

Prior to Al-Anon I had mastered the art of isolation and self-delusion. I had decided that friendship and a sense of belonging were for other people—people who were not missing a few pages from life's instruction manual. I had always thought that asking for help was the ultimate proof of weakness, as it would reveal my ignorance and vulnerability to others. Just the fact that I was showing up at meetings proved to me how much I had grown in that regard, but my Fourth Step also indicated how much further I had to go in crossing that bridge. Accepting myself instead of hiding was painful. Looking at these issues took all the courage I could find. But it also brought me in deeper, closer contact with the God of my understanding, showing me that I am never truly alone.

As challenging as Step Four was, it was easy compared to Step Five. The Fifth Step issued me a challenge: "Are you really serious? Do you really want to stop isolating? Are you really willing to change? Then prove it!" As a result of that experience, I felt this amazing connectedness to the rest of the world that's almost impossible for me to describe. I was no lon-

ger afraid of who I was. Nor was I afraid to let others know. As a result, I got to find out that most people liked me for who I really was anyways. Relaxing and being myself, instead of trying to be who I thought others wanted me to be, made me more comfortable, as well as most of the people around me.

Of course, just because I was now willing to let people get close to me didn't guarantee that all would be smooth sailing. That's where embracing our second Legacy, unity through the Twelve Traditions, helped. I first studied the Traditions as I attended Intergroup meetings at the local Information Service, and learned how to apply them to group problems. That's when I noticed that the groups that followed the Traditions seemed healthier than the ones that didn't. When I heard that the Traditions could be applied to my personal life, I wondered if they could help me have longer and fuller relationships. If the Traditions could promote harmony and growth in Al-Anon groups, why couldn't they do the same in my relationships?

The Steps were finally showing me how to be a friend to myself, but I still struggled with how to be a good friend to others. The Traditions helped me with issues like dominance, unclear boundaries, and unbalanced priorities by applying principles like unity, open-mindedness, and responsibility.

Applying the Traditions to my relationships helped me stop doing things that pushed people away from me and start being there for other people without losing or neglecting myself. As a result of practicing Tradition Seven, I was able to examine and change my over-developed sense of dependency on others, both financial and emotional. Because of Traditions Four and Twelve, I was able to get closer to my dad and share with him as he faced and eventually died from Alzheimer's. They also helped me come out to my mom, probably the second scariest thing I did in my life. (The first was deciding to start going to Al-Anon!) Using the Traditions helped me immensely in finding a partner who accepts me as I am, as I accept him. Twenty years later, our relationship remains strong. Applying the Traditions hasn't made all my relationships better, but it has helped the unhealthy ones to not last as long!

Our third Legacy, service through the Twelve Concepts of Service, seemed much more difficult for me to understand at first, but then I forgot that there was a time when the Steps and Traditions baffled me too. I first heard about the Concepts in 1986, when I read the pamphlet *The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best-Kept Secret?* (P-57) As with the Steps and Traditions, though, I didn't really pay too much attention to them until I reached a point at which it no longer seemed to be information I could adequately function without. That happened especially as I became involved ever deeper in service.

In serving as an Area Coordinator, a special worker for an Al-Anon Information Service/Literature Distribution Center, and eventually at the World Service Office, such principles as delegation, mutual respect, and shared leadership have been essential for the effective accomplishment of my responsibilities.

It took longer for me to understand how the Concepts could apply to my personal life. A surface reading of Concept Eleven, "The World Service Office is composed of selected committees, executives and staff members," for example, seemed to state little in terms of spiritual ideas to me. But once I was able to look at the underlying principles involved, it began to make

sense. For Concept Eleven, it tied in perfectly with my lessons from Step Five and Tradition Three, that showed me I no longer have to imitate the "Little Red Hen" of nursery rhymes and "do it all myself." I no longer feel I am all alone in the world, or that I have to work in isolation. When I collaborate with others and we share our most creative ideas, incredible achievements can result that never could have happened if I insisted on doing everything by myself.

One of my favorite examples of this is my work on the Literature Committee. I have seen firsthand the incremental changes that occur as a project moves from outline to first draft, to second draft, and so on. I have witnessed transformations that I can describe in no other way than a spiritual experience when what I perceive as a Power greater than myself works through each of the many members involved, resulting in a finished piece that far exceeds the input of any of its contributors. I refer to it as "my Higher Power in action." I feel forever in awe and in debt to this program that I have the opportunity to experience this on a regular basis.

So how does embracing our three Legacies—recovery through the Steps, unity through the Traditions, and service through the Concepts—expand my future? Every day that I put these spiritual principles to work in my life to the best of my abilities, I build a bridge to a better future. Although I have no proof or guarantee of that, today I have faith that makes it easy to believe it is possible.

My faith is not based on some fragile hope, but on the solid experience of my past. I have been observing my personal growth for a number of years now, with a somewhat vested interest, and I have seen a pattern emerge. When I have let my fear overtake me, when I have tried to cling to control, or when I have become complacent or self-important, I have stagnated at best, or have begun to fall apart at worst. But when I have applied these simple but powerful tools of the program, which were so freely and willingly given to me, I have seen amazing, miraculous things happen.

Embracing the Legacies has changed me from someone who had no trust in myself and little faith in any Higher Power or the world around me to someone who believes in myself enough to not be second-guessing all the time. I feel comfortable today that everything around me is unfolding just as it should, in a way far better than I could ever achieve in my days of control and manipulation.

It's allowed me to face an aging body and increased health concerns with grace, hope, and dignity, rather than fear, despair, and pessimism.

It has allowed me to take risks I never could have done otherwise. My younger sister once said that whenever life presents her with choices, she hopes to always select the one that will bring her closer to love. I've long appreciated that advice, and do my best to follow it. Sometimes, though, the route to love is difficult to discern.

For example, about eight years ago, a Past Delegate from my Area suggested I apply for a job at the World Service Office. The position sounded like a good fit, so I talked it over with my partner. He encouraged me to send in my résumé. At this point, we had been together for almost 12 years. We have both always encouraged each other to grow by taking healthy risks. We've



acknowledged that if recovery doesn't come first in our lives, the relationship probably won't be worth having.

I was offered the job, but my partner wasn't able to relocate with me. This presented quite a dilemma: Which choice would lead me closer to love? And how would I know?

As I sought knowledge of God's will for me, I eventually knew deep in my heart that I needed to accept the offer. An Al-Anon friend once told me that when God opens a door, she has learned not to ask questions. Well, I *did* ask a few questions, but then I stepped through the doorway anyway, with faith and trust in my Higher Power.

My partner and I are still together—close in spirit, if not in miles—and we see each other as often as we can. He respects and accepts my decision, as I do his, as the right thing to do.

## Margot M., Trustee

I am honored, humbled, and feel extremely blessed to be standing before you this evening. All of you, the faces and hearts of Al-Anon Family Groups, have been instrumental in the construction of my bridges.

As I contemplated our Conference theme, "Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future," I wanted to really understand what those words meant. So, I pulled out the dictionary and began to look up the meaning of each word. What I came away with was this definition of our theme.

"Encircle with our arms that which has come from our past, as we continue to build life-giving passageways that open up expectations of progressive growth."

I started to think how I have embraced/encircled the inheritance that Lois, Anne, and the early pioneers gave to us. How have the Legacies of service, unity, and recovery influenced my life? Has recovery through the Steps aided my own personal growth? Can unity through the Traditions build bridges for my survival? Will service through the Concepts give me expectations of advancement?

My personal growth began many 24 hours ago. The first time I walked through the doors of my very first meeting, I began to grow, even though I did not realize it. I came to Al-Anon a broken, angry, fearful person. By working the Steps with the help of my Sponsor and the love that you—my Al-Anon family—have shown me, I have grown into a confident, loving, joy-filled individual. Like a larvae, I crawled along the path trying to find the shelter and comfort that would allow me to be what I knew I was destined to be. Within the walls of these rooms, you provided a cocoon, giving me nourishment and refuge, sheltering me from the storms of this dreadful disease—alcoholism. And when I was ready, you prepared me to step out into the world.

Working the Steps gave me permission to forgive, not only the alcoholic in my life, but also myself. For too long, I carried guilt and shame like a chokehold around my neck. I could not shake it; it ruled my thoughts and actions. I put on the "pretty, I-got-it-all-under-control face," as I was slowly dying inside from the hurt, pain, and confusion going on around me. I didn't understand why my life was not turning out to be the dream I had held for all those years. What was wrong with me? What was I lacking? I could not separate myself from the disease

By embracing the Legacies, I am able to trust my Higher Power and take "One Day at a Time." I also trust that through it all, I still chose love.

The depth with which I understand our Legacies improves each time I move through them. And the more I understand any one of them, the better I seem to understand the others! I don't claim to be an expert at working any of them, but I do continue to learn and grow as I apply them to different situations or see them in a different light.

My reward for following this program has been true intimacy and a connection to life, love, and other people that I had never experienced before and never believed possible. Embracing the Legacies has been and continues to be my spiritual bridge to expand the future.

of alcoholism that was ruling my life. You patiently listened, showing me by your example that there was hope—hope that the alcoholic could get help; hope that I could choose to do things differently. When you shared your experiences, it gave me the strength to hold on and not give up. You inspired me to seek a better way.

When I was ready, you released me with gentle hands to influence the world with the uniqueness of my beauty; the beautiful spirit that you allowed me to discover within myself, as I trusted in my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God. Humbly asking Him daily to restore me to the person I was meant to be, free from the insanity of this disease. I sought through prayer to know His will and to ask for His power to guide me.

Guided by my God, I continued to learn about myself and the program of Al-Anon. Stepping outside of my home group, I discovered that there was unity among the groups, a oneness that enveloped the members. It was this continuity without change of purpose that I needed in my life. There was no unity in my home. I was at constant odds with the alcoholic. Things changed daily, sometimes hourly. There were no rules.

I flowed as the alcoholic flowed. My mood was determined by what kind of day the alcoholic was having. The only oneness I experienced during this point in my life was the loneliness and isolation of living with this disease. But when I went to meetings, picked up the telephone, talked with my Sponsor, read Al-Anon literature, or reasoned things out with someone else, I felt the unity and the oneness. This brought me a touch of serenity.

Growth in the program required me to move beyond the Steps, the selfish part of my personal program, and move into the Traditions, where I would learn to live and work with others. At the very first Tradition meeting I attended, there were three people, and I made four. It baffled me at first that whenever there was a Tradition meeting, everyone else became a newcomer. Gradually though I saw a shift and that Tradition meeting grew from four to 40. Now that is unity! Those Tradition meetings taught me that: "our common welfare should come first"; "we have only one authority—a loving God"; and "we should always place principles above personalities." These words of wisdom and action are the essence of our foundation,

upon which our bridges stand. I was building foundations for the bridges that would bring me from survival to recovery.

Using the tools of the program brought about changes in my life. I realized that if I took the Traditions with me wherever I went, things happened. At my workplace, decisions were made based on the good of all and not a select group. My family recognized that putting principles above personalities brought about harmony. The Traditions were no longer something I just read about once a month at a meeting; they have become a part of my life.

As I soared in my newfound freedom, you rejoiced with me and encouraged me to go higher. You told me that if I wanted to keep what I had, I had to give it away. It didn't make much sense to me in the beginning, but I trusted that you were telling me what was right and beneficial for my continued growth. Get involved, be a part of, help others, support the fellowship—words that enlivened my spirit to soar. I took small steps at first—I was still unsure of myself at that point. Would you like me? Would you trust me? Could I do what you wanted me to do? You see, I hadn't gotten that you accepted me just the way I was, showing me unconditional love.

As my Sponsor gently nudged me into service, I began to see the relationship of service to my recovery. The more I gave, the better I got. The more I got, the more I wanted. Service had a hold on me and I was hooked. Service showed me how the key of willingness would open doors I never knew existed. It allowed me to spread my wings.

As I accepted the challenge of each new service position, I grew. I learned that “participation is the key to harmony”; “the minority opinion has a right to be heard”; and “good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity” are the framework that holds our bridges together.

These principles held me in good stead as I took on more responsibilities in service. I soon learned that not everyone would like me, but that they did love me in a very special way (at least I think they did). Adhering to the principles of the program was not always popular, especially when someone wanted their way and they wanted it now. I sure could have used some conflict resolution suggestions back then, but I had learned to rely on my God and always went to Him in prayer when con-

fronted with a difficult situation. Service humbled me. I quickly learned that it wasn't about me at all. I served because of the gratitude I have for this program and this is just one small way to give back what has given me the foundation for a good life. Applying these principles in all my affairs has had a powerful effect on my personal life. Because of living the Al-Anon program, I have had success in my relationship with my children, my family of origin, my friends, and my coworkers.

As the worldwide fellowship unfolded before me, I discovered new bridges that would provide safe passage to unknown destinations: places where I experienced the unity and unconditional love of fellow Al-Anon members—where we shared our experience, strength, and hope as we celebrated the diversity of our common bond. The more I experience the magnitude of this wonderful fellowship, the closer I got to God. The unity, compassion, understanding, support, and love of those along my path were a direct result of the intimate relationship with my loving God.

Service has been a spiritual journey for me. It has allowed me to touch the hearts and lives of others. Through the grace of God, I have been able to give it away and always get back more than I could ever expect.

My friends, my Al-Anon family, you have given so much to me. You have challenged me to stretch beyond my safe, secure boundaries and to step out in faith, in return receiving serenity, courage, and wisdom. You have allowed me to share my tears of joy and sorrow, never judging me. You have loved me when I didn't love you. You have guided me down the path to recovery with kindness, gentleness, and sometimes good ole “black belt” Al-Anon. Because of the things I have learned here, I can break the cycle. My grandchildren may never have to know what it is like to live with the effects of alcoholism.

When I look back over my life, I know that a Power greater than myself has put people, places, and things in my life for me to be able to have a story to tell that will bring healing and recovery to someone who has been affected by another person's drinking. Thank you for reaching out to me when I stretched out my hand for help. My prayer is that we may always be able to say, “When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there, and—Let It Begin with Me.”

## Jeff G., Panel 47, Georgia

I've heard that the only difference between who we are today and who we will be in five years are the people we associate with and the books we read. Said differently, the expansion of our future depends entirely on what we embrace today.

My early future was shaped more by what embraced me and how I responded, while later I played a much more active role in what I embraced and its impact on my future. There are some things about me that, outside the rooms of Al-Anon, challenge logic and explanation, but I have confidence and comfort in your understanding as perhaps few others can.

I have always had this lingering feeling that I am just missing something. If I could figure out, or learn, what that was, I would understand life, people, and issues. Relationships would be normal, life's mysteries would be revealed, and I would be

comfortable and at peace with myself. It is as if I don't have the right key for the lock or I'm missing the one piece of the puzzle that would make all the difference in the world.

I grew up in a house where, on Saturdays and Sundays, we watched sports—usually in the afternoons which was a) when most sports were televised and, b) when my mother would take her afternoon weekend naps. I was a teenager before I realized that other families watched sports with sound. I did question at an early age why we watched with no sound and here was the explanation: If we were actually attending the event as a spectator, we wouldn't have the benefit of the TV announcers, so the experience was really more like being there. As a young and impressionable child, I accepted that at face value. It wasn't until much later in life that I understood ours was not your typical family.

Relationships were another area where my future didn't fully expand. I started dating when I was 15 and had opportunities to date casually, seriously, and often. One interesting (and telling) statistic was that by the time I was 35 (and still single), you could count on one finger the number of dating relationships I had been involved with that had lasted longer than 12 months. There was something about letting people get close, close enough to truly know me, which frightened me to death.

My introduction to Al-Anon started some 16 years before I entered the rooms. I worked at a state religious facility located in my home town where the director embraced me and became a second father figure while his youngest son embraced me and became a close friend (both still are to this day). My friend was in the initial years of his story and beginning his battle with the disease of alcoholism, while his parents were soon to enter the rooms of Al-Anon for the hope and help available.

As a result of attraction to the program of Al-Anon through them, I was fortunate to know where to turn when I had nowhere left to turn for hope. Because of the many conversations my friend's dad and I shared, I knew with certainty who I was going to Al-Anon to help when I walked through the doors. I entered with the understanding I was there to help me and not to learn how to fix anyone else or how to have them follow my direction.

The feeling of those first meetings, and every one since, was much like my visit to Stepping Stones last year. I had heard what an emotional high the visit had been for so many. I didn't fully appreciate that, as feelings are not my strong suit. That all changed the moment I stepped off of our bus. The Executive Director for Stepping Stones met us individually with the same greeting. She embraced me with a warm hug, leaned in, and whispered, "Welcome home." Each time I walk into an Al-Anon meeting today, I hear and feel the echoes and whispers of those words, "Welcome home."

Recovery in Al-Anon has been a gift of grace. My personal definition of grace is that which is freely given—without deserving or merit. On my own, I do not merit or deserve all I have received from the God of my understanding through Al-Anon. I am grateful daily only that it continues to be freely given and for my awareness of and openness to it.

One of those gifts of grace came very unexpectedly. As I sat in a discussion meeting one night, I listened with interest to an older couple who had found Al-Anon because of their son's drinking and all of its related problems. I had embraced them fondly because of their sincerity, honesty, and desire for help through Al-Anon. They were sharing of a particular incident with their son, how they had responded, and their feelings of hurt, anguish, and love. A light bulb came on and my future expanded. My perspective of, and relationship with, my parents changed in that split moment all because I was able to hear clearly the love and pain of these parents behind the very similar, almost exact actions of my parents, who were dealing with the drinking and other issues of my sister. However, I had been unable to see the pain and suffering of my mother and father in the true light of their love for a child, because of my resentments and frustrations towards them and my sister. I am grateful for the grace to love my parents today for who they are, to have made my amends for past actions, and to act in a responsible, respectful, and loving manner as their son.

Another way my spiritual future expanded through recovery was through prayer. Now remember, I had worked at a state religious facility. Not only did one have to have religion, but it certainly helped if it were the "right" religion. So prayer was not a foreign concept, but my ability to practice it was stunted. I had given up on prayer because of two things: 1) I never seemed to get it right. Certain outcomes I prayed for, knowing they were right, didn't happen. Others things I didn't ask for happened and I couldn't understand why. 2) As strange as it sounds, I knew in some way even then that I wasn't qualified to know what specific outcomes and results to pray and ask for—either for me or for others.

Step Eleven, once embraced, expanded my spiritual future exponentially. The simplicity and humility I found in those directions on prayer were understandable even to me. They enabled me to incorporate prayer into my life in a manner that was effective and rewarding. Today, I spend several minutes in gratitude and then several more asking only for the awareness of God's will (for me) and the strength to carry that out during the day. If you are on my prayer list, either as a regular or due to special circumstances, I ask the very same for you or for that special circumstance. I do not experience in Al-Anon my past frustrations or resentments based on God's answers to my prayers. This is truly another gift of grace.

Sponsorship, in Al-Anon, has been a gift of grace and an enhancement to my own personal recovery. I have had the privilege to be sponsored and to sponsor. Having a Sponsor in Al-Anon was the first time it felt safe enough to open the emotional door and allow someone close enough to truly know me. I initially embraced my Sponsor at that time by means of a speaker tape as I was transitioning to a different city and a new relationship. It must have been just coincidence, otherwise known as grace, that he lived in the city where I relocated. I connected deeply with the story and recovery he shared and planned to look him up when I had a chance. That only took about four years and a set of circumstances bordering on crisis.

We worked through the Steps as I went through a divorce, changed jobs, and relocated cities within a four-month period. I don't personally recommend this as a course of action, but it was a productive way to effectively learn to practice the principles of our program. One gift of grace was that I walked through the divorce process without creating a need for any amends, which was no small feat. Another gift, as I look back at where I walked through that experience, is that a size 12 footprint, belonging to my Sponsor, is often the only visible set of tracks in the sand I see.

I've also been embraced as a Sponsor. A doctor started attending my home group. He was a retired oncologist and widowed with two grown children—one of whom was in jail related to the effects of the disease of alcoholism. After a while, he asked if I would sponsor him through the Steps. We discovered we were only two buildings apart in a city of 5,000,000-plus people. We started working the Steps and alternated visiting each other's home for our time together. We had turned the corner on Step Three and were heading for Step Four. One day, when I arrived at his apartment for our weekly meeting, he shared with me his diagnosis of kidney cancer. Our Step work was suspended as he had a kidney removed and then discovered the cancer had already metastasized to his lungs.



Sponsoring this doctor went from walking through the Steps to walking through life. To this day, I don't know what he received from our relationship, but I clearly know the gifts of grace I received. I learned that it is okay to be angry with God. The fact that this man was an oncologist and had cancer was one of the meanest of ironies to me. I questioned how God could or would allow this—and God, through this sponsee, helped me work through that anger to reach acceptance. I learned from him how to go about the business of dying with dignity and grace.

Based on the information he had at the time and his background, he chose not to pursue a course of treatment. His quiet acceptance and dignity carried him through those remaining days with calm and serenity. I also learned how to love someone enough to let them go. It wasn't easy sitting at his bedside, as he lay unconscious, and whispering to him it was okay to stop the struggle; that his children and grandchildren were safely in God's hands; and that his wife was awaiting their reunion. When the angels came to take my friend "home" the following night, I learned that sadness and grief over death is about my loss, not my friend's.

My future, spiritual and otherwise, continues to expand based on sponsorship and working the Twelve Steps of recovery. I learned deep spiritual lessons that are, to this day, almost as ingrained in me as breathing. Some of those include: Am I focused on the outcome or the action? Is my thinking outside of my current 24-hour window—either in the past or future? If I am tempted to offer my infinite wisdom, did they ask? Sponsorship has truly expanded my life in many areas and continues to be a legacy worthy of embrace.

Service has been not only a gift of grace but also has turbocharged my personal recovery. Service expanded my horizons outside the four blue cinder-block walls of my home group and introduced me to people who continue to impact my spiritual future. Just for the record, it was my ego that catapulted me into service as a Group Representative (GR) when one of the group's longtimers approached me with the words, "Jeff, you know our elections are coming up in August and I think you'd be a wonderful GR." I did my due diligence with only one question and was informed that, of all things, the only requirement as GR was to attend Area Assembly three times a year. I am grateful today I didn't know any better then.

As a result, I've received gifts too numerous to count. One way my future continues to expand is by the encouragement to "Keep Coming Back." There have been times in my recovery where I wasn't motivated to attend meetings or fulfill responsibilities. Involvement in service kept me coming back when I didn't want to. The fact I had made a commitment, and usually the guilt of not fulfilling it, was sufficient motivation to maintain my participation. Another gift of grace through service was the lesson that it isn't always, usually, or ever about me. As our Area worked through the Alateen requirements initially, I clung to that lesson during heated discussions, emotional conversations, and the struggle for substantial unanimity that sometimes seemed personal. I was aware that these conversations, discussions, and struggles would be occurring regardless of whether it was me at the microphone or someone different saying the same words. That simple awareness was a powerful tool to help me not take things personally.

Service has also taught me that we are not all in the same place of recovery, spirituality, or service maturity at the same time. I learned that at the oddest of places—a district meeting. It was during a 45-minute discussion on whether ham, turkey, chicken, ham and turkey, ham and chicken, turkey and chicken, or all of the above should be provided at our district workshop. Well, that didn't take the entire 45 minutes. The rest of the time was spent discussing whether we should purchase the ham, turkey, and/or chicken, whether someone should prepare it, or some combination. Fortunately, for those 45 minutes, God placed His arm around my shoulder and His hand over my mouth. Although I questioned how important was it, any attempt on my part to circumvent the discussion may have deprived someone else of the lessons God had planned for them. My lesson that night was that when I embrace openness and participation, everyone's spiritual future is expanded!

Today, my future continues to expand as a result of two particular people I embrace—and who embrace me unconditionally. God has blessed me with a wonderful partner in my wife, Linda. My future is much expanded as a result of her life and her love. If there is any contribution I have made at any level of service over the last several years, it is only because of her unsung sacrifice and support that such was possible. Together, we have our own gift of "Grace," who has changed and expanded our world in ways we couldn't imagine and who turns 15 months old very soon.

I want to conclude this privilege of sharing with my deepest gratitude and the one message of help and hope that my story contains. I told you of the awareness I had when I initially walked through the doors of Al-Anon about why I was there. I did not have to struggle with and fight for the realization that I couldn't "fix" someone. What I did wrestle with for years was whether I truly qualified for the seat I occupied in each meeting. For I did not grow up with, date, marry, divorce, live with, nor (as of yet) father anyone who suffers from the disease of alcoholism. Alcohol wasn't even allowed in our home as a child. There was nothing tangible I could point to in my life that might qualify me for our program.

What did take me years to understand was that both of my parents grew up with fathers who suffered from problem drinking. While the alcohol was absent in our home, present were the alcoholic behaviors. I understand today that without the help, hope, and recovery that our program offers, the behaviors and patterns repeat themselves generation after generation after generation. And each subsequent generation unknowingly suffers from the direct but distant past experiences of someone else's drinking. I felt lost in the beginning because I didn't share the similar life experiences of the many members who had direct exposure to and experience with someone else's problem drinking.

The ability to transcend generations and directly affect others is a reflection of the powerful, ugly, and destructive nature of the disease of alcoholism and its effects. The ability to recover from those effects of someone else's problem drinking, regardless of generations removed, is the more powerful and spiritual nature of help and hope available in Al-Anon and Alateen. If you know anyone who feels at home in our program but doesn't believe they belong because they have yet to identify whose drinking bothers them, please embrace them, expand their future, and tell them I said, "Welcome home."



## CLOSING SESSION

Mary Ann R.

*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

Doreen D.

*Conference Chairperson, Trustee*

In closing, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members, “Have you all had a wonderful week? Would you say that you have seen the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process to an informed group conscience at work? Do you feel that you’ve made a difference?”

“I would say ‘yes’ to those three questions. I have seen a Conference that is fully engaged in the business at hand. You’ve modeled those behaviors (and many more) that we talked about last night that are consistent with our Al-Anon principles:

- Respect for one another
- Patience
- Compassion
- Listening without judging

“We’ve experienced the process to reach an informed group conscience many times this week. We’ve discussed, we’ve prayed, we’ve discussed again, and we’ve trusted the process.

“It’s such an honor to be among Al-Anon’s leaders, some of you I know will be future Trustees. Your enthusiasm and acceptance of the awesome responsibility that comes with being a Delegate truly brings honor to the name Al-Anon Family Groups.

“As we return to our Areas and personal lives let’s hold each other in our thoughts and prayers and draw on the support of our Al-Anon friends and that very special love that we find in these rooms.

“May our love for the Al-Anon program sustain us day-by-day and with the help of our Higher Power to guide us, let us ‘Embrace Our Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future.’”

The Conference Chairperson continued, “We are learning and growing together as a Conference and as leaders. One of the areas of growth that the Conference Leadership Team has been addressing is clarity. We have been purposeful in each and every session of the Conference to reflect our Conference theme. We have attempted to carry out the Conference Goals throughout our processes.

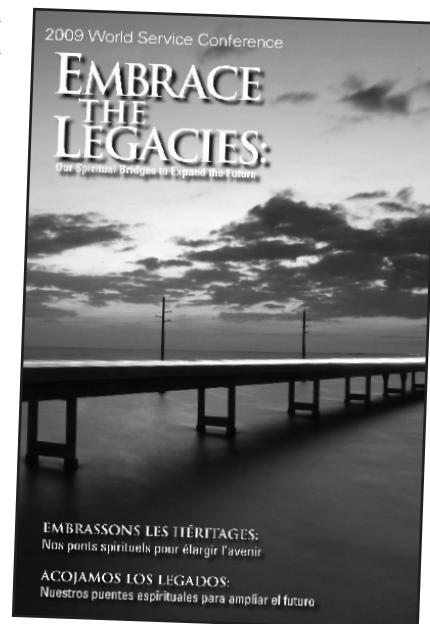
“As a Conference, we are attempting to develop our ability to frame a discussion so that it is in a context that will be meaningful to members who are not here with us and to summarize so that we are all clear on what happened during a discussion and are able to clearly articulate it in any reports about the Conference which are our responsibility. We’re getting pretty good at these things, but are still developing our ability to evaluate our work against our purpose.”

Conference members took a few minutes for quiet reflection to evaluate the work of the 2009 World Service Conference and to write about a particular session or activity that fulfilled the Conference theme or one of the Conference goals before sharing their ideas:

- The session I picked was the process of protecting the Alateen Traditions. I appreciated the amount of time and energy it took to complete research and the willingness to listen to even one person who had a question. We took as much time as needed over several days to make everyone feel comfortable with the decision.
- The Big Thinking sessions helped me. It helped to focus spiritually, rather than focusing on barriers. It has been my experience that those who view barriers do so in a negative way. The best approach is to listen, learn, and acknowledge where others are. We need to communicate, communicate, communicate.
- In my moment of silence, the sharings from all the International Representatives came to mind. Hearing that they experience the same emotions and powerlessness that I do allows me to become fully aware of the bridges that are crossing the world.

The Conference Chairperson prompted Delegates to reflect on one final question on their way home: “What spiritual growth did I experience this week?” She encouraged members to send their responses to *The Forum*.

Following dinner, scroll presentations to the Panel 47 Delegates, and the Spiritual Speakers, the Conference Chairperson closed the Conference by tapping a gavel on the podium.



## 2009 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

### Background and Floor Discussions

#### Motion #4

In 2006, via Motion #5, the World Service Conference gave conceptual approval to develop electronic literature (e-CAL) on a three-year trial basis. The 2006 Conference thought e-CAL might be a way to move into the 21st century by using technology.

Throughout the past three years, it has become evident that e-CAL has not met the needs of the fellowship. Members' support and interest have not been enough to support this form of Conference Approved Literature, which is evident by the lack of submissions to e-CAL. Prior to July 2008, the WSO initiated a contest to stimulate interest in e-CAL. When the WSO received more than 30 submissions, it appeared that the contest generated some interest in e-CAL. However, since July 2008, the WSO has received two e-CAL submissions.

To compare, when the WSO asked the members to provide sharings for *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* through a notice in *The Forum*, 250 sharings were submitted. In order to solicit e-CAL submissions, the WSO placed numerous flyers and notices in *The Forum*. The WSO received less than 75 submissions during the three-year trial. In general, members did not submit e-CAL sharings as envisioned. As the trial period for e-CAL comes to end, the e-CAL Committee has asked to be dissolved.

Some Conference members were concerned that in dissolving the Committee, the WSO would lose the concept behind it. e-CAL Committee members agreed that the concept is viable. WSO staff assured Conference members that the WSO would continue to look at ways to incorporate the use of technology.

Following this discussion, a motion was made and carried to dissolve the e-CAL Committee. (See WSC Motion #4 on page 87.)

#### Motion #7

The Admissions/Handbook Work Group is a sub-committee of the Conference Leadership Team. This Work Group reviews and recommends requests for seating of non-voting participants at the World Service Conference (WSC); determines if an Area meets the criteria for seating at the WSC; reviews requests for an Area name change; and makes recommendations for changes in the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

During the last few years, a transition has been taking place. Several Committees have disbanded on a three-year trial basis. As Committees are being restructured, the ability to participate has improved.

As Conference members saw with Motion #1, the Conference Leadership Team brought the motion to seat non-voting participants. Other than seating of non-voting participants at Conference, the consensus of the Work Group is that Thought and Task Forces could perform its duties as needs arise.

Members of the Work Group agree that the Admissions/Handbook Work Group is no longer effective for Al-Anon Family Groups, as this group has created work in order to keep busy.

Discussions on the floor included Conference members' comments and questions, which were answered by Work Group members, Trustees, and staff.

A member asked if there was a plan for another body that would take over the responsibility of fielding and handling changes to the "World Service Handbook."

**A.** *What the Work Group discovered is that many times Admissions/Handbook was looking at the "World Service Handbook" because the members didn't have any other work. A Task or Thought Force could be formed to perform a comprehensive review of the "World Service Handbook" every five to ten years. Currently, when changes are suggested in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies," a Task Force is formed to recommend changes to the Policy Committee before the changes are proposed to the Conference. This could be done with the "World Service Handbook" as well.*

Another Conference member asked, "What happened with the petition from the California South Area to divide?"

**A.** *The Admissions/Handbook Work Group received the petition and responded to the California South Area by stating that Admissions/Handbook referred the petition to the Conference Leadership Team, which in turn referred the petition to the Board. In 2008, the Conference began a discussion on the impact of Area splitting or consolidating. That discussion continued at the 2009 WSC.*

A member commented, "I understand that with the exception of the seating of non-voting members at the WSC, everything else the Work Group does could be performed by Task Forces, and I agree that it could probably be accomplished more effectively and efficiently."

One member asked, "Where would the responsibility be, as changes occur, so that when pieces and parts of the "World Service Handbook" are changed, other sections are also changed?"

**A.** *The overall process of revising the Service Manual is a Task Force of WSO staff: the Executive Director, the Director of Member Services, the Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Services, and the Group Services Assistant. The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International helps with the "Groups at Work" section of the Manual. The staff member who works with Policy oversees the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" changes. The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference oversees the "World Service Handbook" section, and the Board of Trustees oversees the Concepts section. As the Chairperson of the Board said during the session on Committees, "Committees make recommendations and then those recommendations*

*come to the Board.” For the “World Service Handbook,” if someone finds a variance, that person would write to the WSO. The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference would then write a memo to the Board of Trustees and the Chairperson of the Board would appoint a Task Force to study the concern and suggest a variety of responses. If a decision to change the “World Service Handbook” is warranted, a motion would be brought to the WSC for approval.*

Following this discussion, a motion was made and carried to disband the Admissions/Handbook Work Group on a three-year trial basis. (See WSC Motion #7 on page 88.)

### **Motion #9**

The Group Services Committee was created in 1996 to respond to the needs expressed by our fellowship as a whole. The Delegate Committee members brought the shared experience of their Areas so that the Committee could offer recommendations to the World Service Office on how to best serve the fellowship.

As Committees are being restructured, members’ ability to participate has been broadened. The Group Services Committee met the day before the Conference convened. At that meeting, the consensus of the Committee was that it was no longer serving Al-Anon well. The Committee agreed that Thought Forces and Task Forces could focus on any needs expressed by the Group Services Department in a more timely and efficient manner. Each year, the WSC meets to build on the work of the past.

The following are questions, answers, and comments from the Conference floor:

**Q.:** Could you give us a brief description of what the Group Services Committee did do or is not doing?

**A.:** *The Group Services Committee discussed Al-Anon Information Service Offices (AISs), guidelines, and Alateen. In the past, the Committee brought problems from the groups to the Conference. Now members are contacting the World Service Office directly and receive a quicker response, so there’s not a lot for the Committee to discuss. The Committee did work on bookmarks, such as the Sponsorship—Working Together to Recover bookmark (M-78). All of these duties could have been done with a Task Force.*

**Q.:** When the WSO receives information that needs to be addressed, where does all the original information go? Does it go to the Board? Does it go to staff?

**A.:** *Everything comes to the WSO Group Services Department before going to the Committee.*

**A.:** *Since I’ve been working at the WSO, all questions to the Group Services Committee have come from the Board or the World Service Conference. Delegates haven’t been bringing problems because the fellowship sends e-mails directly to the WSO. Previously, the Delegates would bring these problems to Conference, but that hasn’t happened in the past seven or eight years.*

**Q.:** Page 61 in the “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” section of the 2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual states, “With the group as the basic entity in

Al-Anon, the Group Services Committee brings attention to what the groups’ needs are and how to improve service to them.” The charge of the Group Services Committee is not only identifying problems, it’s also how to help the groups. How can we look to make improvements if we don’t identify the problems? If we’re not providing services to groups, what are we doing?

**A.:** *We’re responding to those needs and working to improve services to groups all the time.*

The Executive Director commented, “Before 1996, there was no Group Services Committee, so from 1951-1996, staff identified problems of the groups and brought about solutions and reported them either to the Conference, to the Board, or to the Executive Committee. It was in the reorganization of Committees in 1996 that the Group Services Committee was added. The vision was that Delegates would bring the group issues, problems, concerns, and ideas to the Group Services Committee, which would be the connection to the World Service Office. They would help to review what we were doing and say, ‘Yes, this is working’ or ‘No, this isn’t working.’ The reality is that this didn’t happen.

“The Conference is an originating body. The WSC can pass a motion; if something is brought to the Board or the Executive Committee and nothing is done, any Delegate can get up and ask to create a Task Force to solve, investigate, or consider a problem. That’s why we’re trying to move away from rigid Committees, so we can be more nimble and flexible. We can get more things done. Staff used to give a report and the Committee said, ‘You’re doing a good job.’ You’re intelligent people, and we need to use you effectively as the talented people you are. We talk about abundant, unlimited resources, and we’ve got this whole group of people we’re not using. People aren’t doing things and they want to do things. The WSC is supposed to hear reports and if we’re not doing what we need to do, the WSC needs to say we need more information. If the WSC wants to continue having a Group Services Committee, we’ll work with the Committee to make it as effective as possible.”

**Q.:** Since the Alateen Advisory Committee is a subcommittee of Group Services Committee, how would that change?

**A.:** *The Alateen Advisory Committee is not a subcommittee, it’s an Advisory Committee. It has been an advisory to the Group Services Committee, the Group Services Department, and the Board.*

**Q.:** Some of the discussion I heard led me to think that the way the Task Forces will be put together will be tailored toward what the task is. I’m assuming these Task Forces will be comprised of the appropriate people. Will there be enough choices for Delegates? I also heard something about Group Services getting tasked to do something and then not having access to information. My concern is how will the Task Force be able to access that information?

**A.:** *This is one of the beauties of a Task Force. A Task Force could include Delegates, Past Delegates, and other members who have the skills and information to get the best possible thinking.*



The Chairperson of the Board responded, “We have the five Thought and Task Forces that were appointed for this Conference. I have at least six more potential ideas for Thought and Task Forces, based on the work we’ve done this week during the Conference. So, I think for this year, we’re all set.”

### Comments:

The past Chairperson of the Group Services Committee commented, “When I was on the Committee, we thought about disbanding because we found it difficult to find things to do. We had a conference call and met during Conference, but we didn’t really accomplish anything. Task Forces would be a better use of our resources.”

Another former Chairperson offered, “A few years back we were discussing Al-Anon Information Services (AISs). Of the 12 Delegates on the Committee, only three were having AIS problems. We’d spend 45 minutes explaining the problem, rather than working on a solution.”

### Conference members also commented:

- I’m finally realizing that there would have to be an originating body to say we need to form a Task Force for a particular task. If this Committee disbands, I imagine that would be the Board of Trustees. My concern is that if we continue to eliminate the Selected Committees and the only body that can generate Thought and Task Forces is the Board, that’s a relatively small group to be generating Task Forces.
- What I heard is that the ideas would go from the Group Services staff to the Group Services Committee. Then the Executive Director would take the ideas to the Board and a Thought or Task Force would be appointed. That means that more Thought and Task Forces would be appointed—it doesn’t mean that the Board would be taking on all the extra responsibility for the work of the Thought or Task Forces.
- As a newcomer, what I’m hearing is that we’re reorganizing world services again. Some of us just got used to all the Committees in the first place and now we’re destroying them. We haven’t empowered Committees to do the brainstorming they need to do. They still think of themselves as in terms of “give us the problems and we’ll solve them.” Perhaps we need to look at the structure to determine if we can empower Committees to be idea-generators.
- We’re using old guidelines to solve new problems. I like the idea of new methods—we can be more nimble and flexible.
- I was on the Group Services Committee for two years. It was difficult because we had nothing to do. It was a frustrating experience. When I was on a Task Force, there was so much enthusiasm because we had a charge.
- I want to remind everyone that in April 2008 every Committee had a discussion about what the Committee is doing and if there is a better way to do it. We’re not eliminating participation or the work that these Committees are doing. The original goal hasn’t been met, and now the Committee is asking to try something else for three years. If after three years the Conference wants

a Group Services Committee, we can go back.

- We have discussed all these issues and more in the Group Services Committee, and there hasn’t been any resolution to them. That’s why we need Task Forces. We have several other issues that we’ve discussed with the Group Services Committee, and we will be requesting Task Forces to resolve issues. Right now, not everyone represents every Region, and we need to have that type of representation.
- In last year’s *Conference Summary* (P-46), there’s a fantastic discussion on Committees. If you’re still in need of more information, be sure to look at page 35. Last year, at Committee meetings, we sent out a survey and asked each one of you seven questions. One was: “What can be done in a better way?” Many said tasks could be done by Thought and Task Forces. This has been well thought out and documented.
- Our Area Action Committees are very active; they do 90 percent of the work for our Coordinators. The one exception is Group Services. We’ve been struggling with what it is we want our Area Group Services Committee to do. This might be the impetus we need to disband our Group Services Committee on an Area level.

Following this discussion, a motion was made and carried to disband the Group Services Committee on a three-year trial basis. (See WSC Motion#9 on page 88.)



## 2009 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

### MOTION #1 – CARRIED

(BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2009 World Service Conference:

#### With voice, but no vote:

##### David Zach

*Director of Business Services, Non-Al-Anon member*

##### Hartmut G.

*International Representative—Germany, Al-Anon member*

##### María Del Carmen T.

*International Representative—Mexico, Al-Anon Member*

##### Nadia M.

*International Representative—Italy, Al-Anon Member*

##### Nuala C.

*International Representative—UK & Eire, 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 no voice and no vote:

##### Nicolette Stephens

*Information Analyst, Non-Al-Anon Member*

That the following WSO staff be seated as part of their ongoing training at the 2009 World Service Conference for up to two days each, **with no voice and no vote**:

##### Sharon B.

*Group Services Assistant—Special Needs, Al-Anon Member*

##### Ami D.

*Group Services Assistant—Alateen, Al-Anon Member*

##### Raquel K.

*Translation Services Manager, Al-Anon Member*

##### Julie M.

*Communications Manager, Al-Anon Member*

##### Colette N.

*Language Services Coordinator, Al-Anon Member*

### MOTION #2 – CARRIED

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

To approve the 2008 Audited Financial Report.

### MOTION #3 – CARRIED

(91 yes, 2 no, 1 abstention, 0 void)

To approve the 2008 Annual Operational Report and 2008 Strategic Plan Update.

### MOTION #4 – CARRIED

(88 yes, 4 no, 1 abstention, 1 void)

To end the three-year trial period for the e-CAL Committee, and dissolve the e-CAL Committee.

(See discussion on page 84.)

### MOTION #5 – CARRIED

(90 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 3 void)

To approve the 2009 Finance Committee Report.

### MOTION #6 – CARRIED

(89 yes, 1 no, 2 abstentions, 1 void)

To adopt the Procedure for Managing Excess Bequest Funds. Each excess bequest, as defined in Motion 9 of the 2008 World Service Conference, is to be spent within 5 years of receipt. Further, should the excess bequest funds exceed the cost of the projects submitted, the Conference has the ultimate authority to extend the timeline or to modify the procedure. This procedure will be used:

#### WSC

Conference members will be reminded to encourage their Areas to identify projects in the event that the excess bequest funds become available.

#### September 30

Conference members will be notified of the amount of money in the excess bequest funds to date and will be asked to submit ideas for projects that support the Strategic Plan, using the amount of funds available as a guideline.

#### November 30

The deadline for projects to be submitted.

#### Prior to January Board

The Finance Committee will research the costs associated with the proposed projects.

#### January

The Finance Committee's findings will be presented at the Finance Committee and Board meetings respectively for prioritization.

#### February

The findings and priorities will be sent to all Conference members.

#### April

The Conference members will accept or adjust the prioritized projects at the WSC. Once accepted the projects will follow the normal process of staff implementation and volunteer oversight.

## MOTION #7 – CARRIED

(90 yes, 3 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

That the Admissions/Handbook Work Group be disbanded on a three-year trial basis.

(See discussion on page 84)

## MOTION #8 – CARRIED

(87 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 4 void)

The 2009 World Service Conference:

- 1.) amends the **World Service Conference Charter** (as it appears in the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*), section 3, as follows, and
- 2.) re-adopts and re-affirms the **World Service Conference Charter** in its entirety.

**AMENDED WORDING:** Bold and underline is new text; strikethrough indicates deletion

### 3. Relation to Al-Anon

- a. The Conference acts for Al-Anon in the perpetuation and guidance of its WSO services.
- b. The Conference is a vehicle by which Al-Anon can express its views on policy and note deviations from Traditions.
- c. Delegates are free to vote as their conscience dictates and not necessarily as instructed by their Areas.
- d. ~~But~~ **No** changes are to be made in the **Al-Anon or Alateen** Traditions, **the Steps, the Concepts of Service (except the descriptive text), or the General Warranties** of the Conference Charter (Item 12) without written consent of three-quarters of the Al-Anon **Family Groups**.
- e. ~~That the Concepts themselves (not including the descriptive text) be accorded the same stature as the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.~~
- e – f. **Wording in F** the Charter may be changed ~~(with the exception of items 3-d, 3-e, and 12)~~ by the vote of three-quarters of the Conference members; **however, the protections afforded the Al-Anon and Alateen Traditions, the Steps, the Concepts of Service, and the General Warranties in item 3-d may not be taken away or lessened by Conference vote.**

## MOTION #9 – CARRIED

(87 yes, 4 no, 1 abstentions, 0 void)

To disband the Group Services Committee on a three-year trial basis.

(See discussion on page 86.)

# **2008 ANNUAL OPERATIONAL REPORT**

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

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## 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 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 (U.S.) 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, currently the Director of Communication Services, 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

Zelda R./Mary Ann R., Chairperson

The Trustees, along with members of the Executive Committee, direct business operations of the World Service Office, observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board acts as the chief service arm of the World Service Conference. They guard the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship and control the finances. The Board serves as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Conference Charter.

#### The Board approved interim actions of the Executive Committee:

- Approval of WSO At-Large committee members for all committees.

- Approval of conference calls with Coordinators of WSO committees.
- Restructuring the Alateen Advisory Committee for 2008-2010, holding meetings (three per year, one per region) concurrent with Area Assemblies.
- Created a Media Thought Force.
- Created a Thought Force for Area Outreach Projects using *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) magazines.
- Producing podcasts as a series for non-members by recording topic-focused conference calls.
- Mailing up to 10,000 copies of *AFA 2008* to individuals who respond to newspaper publicity.
- A visit by the Executive Director, Information Analyst, and a Board of Trustee member to India.
- A visit by the Director of Member Services, Translation Services Manager, and a Board of Trustee member to Costa Rica, Uruguay, Colombia, and Peru.
- To allow the Finance Committee, acting as a Thought Force, to study the possibility of forming an Audit Committee and a Compensation Committee.
- Set the equalized expense amount at \$1600 for the 2008 Fourteenth International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). The 2008 IAGSM was held in Helsinki, Finland with the theme: "Al-Anon Family Groups Worldwide: Creating a Culture of Trust." The 2010 IAGSM will be held in Virginia Beach, Virginia.
- To change the requirements for At-Large Literature Committee members to include eligible members throughout the U.S. and Canada who are adept at using e-mail and the Internet.
- Approved the 2008 revised budget.
- Print
  - To print *Discovering Choices* (B-30) in soft cover to be sold at a price of \$15.00 each.
  - Permission was granted to the Al-Anon Information Service in Malta; to Grupos de Familia Al-Anon de Guatemala, S.A.; and to Drustvo Al-Anon Za Samopomoc Druzin Alkoholikov of Slovenia to translate and print Conference Approved Literature.
- Guidelines
  - Approved the final wording of the Reserve Fund Guideline (G-41) and delegated the design/printing to the staff.
- Staff Travel
  - Meetings with the Family Program Directors of the Talbott Recovery Campus in Atlanta, GA and Hanley Center in West Palm Beach, FL
  - The 2008 National Catholic Conference on Alcoholism and Related Drug Problems
  - To attend the 2008 American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) conference in Toronto, Canada
  - To attend the Annual National Conference—Research Society on Alcoholism.

- To attend the 2008 Association of Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse Meeting in Washington, DC
- Participation by two staff members at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland for non-government organizations and health professionals to give voice to the effects of alcoholism on the family.

**The Board, in its legal capacity, took the following actions:**

- At the Annual Meeting, elected a Trustee at Large (TAL) nominee as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee At-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), following traditional approval by the Conference where required. The Chairperson of the Board announced her selection for Committee Chairs, which the Board approved. The Board ratified the motions of the 2008 WSC, including conceptual approval to develop a piece of literature on Al-Anon's first 60 years.
- Approved a slate of one-year special appointments for the following vacancies: three Trustees at Large (TAL) and the Southwest Regional Trustee (RT).
- Voted to accept the resignation of Claudette D.—Canada East RT, Jo-Anne L.—Canada Central RT, Vicki L.—Southeast RT, and Mirta S.—Trustee at Large.
- Approved the “Attributes of Board Leadership” document referred to in the By-Laws that affirms what is expected of a Board member.
- Approved a “Conflict of Interest” statement intended to eliminate the possibility that Board members’ personal and professional activities could affect their ability to vote or act impartially on the Board.
- Set the equalized expense for the 2009 WSC at \$1,250 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the WSC is \$1,890 U.S.
- Held a weekend training seminar with the WSO Administrative Team, facilitated by Nancy Cole, to review and update the Strategic Plan while orienting the new Board members to the Plan.
- Assigned the Conference Leadership Team the task of carrying out the admissions process for a three-year trial period.
- Approved the formation of an Audit Committee and a Compensation Committee, and authorized the Chairperson of the Board to appoint the members for both Committees.
- Approved two PowerPoint presentations for release to Conference members for Area use: “Responsibility” presentation and “Members’ Web site” presentation.

**The Board, in its oversight capacity, approved the following:**

- The Policy Motion to amend the text on pages 83-84 of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies*, “Anonymity.” Changes

are posted on the Members’ Web site.

- The Policy Motion to move the paragraph titled “Introductory Meetings” from the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies*, “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions, Membership and Groups, Registration of Groups” on page 78 to “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions, Meetings” on page 80 between “Open/Closed Meetings and Electronic Meetings.”
- The Policy Motion to amend the text on page 78 of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies*, “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions, Membership and Groups, Registration of Groups,” and move the amended paragraph to follow the first paragraph under “Registration of Groups.” Changes are posted on the Members’ Web site.
- The Policy Motion to amend the text on page 85 of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies*, “Finances, Contributions to WSO—Individual Bequests.” Changes are posted on the Members’ Web site.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mary C./Judy P., Chairperson

The Committee meets monthly and is the administrator of the World Service Office, with legal authority granted by the Board of Trustees to conduct its daily affairs. It approves actions of the Finance Committee and special projects of the Board and staff that involve day-to-day operations. Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval. These activities are reported in the Board of Trustees section. Because the Chairperson of the Executive Committee passed away in February, the Chairperson of the Board, Zelda R. served as the Chair until May.

The Executive Committee approved the following actions, which will be presented to the January Board for final approval:

- Travel by two staff members to Rockville, MD for a meeting with the U.S. government’s Substance Abuse Mental Health Services and to attend a reception for new legislation on mental health parity regarding health insurance benefits.
- Translation and printing of *A Guide for the Family of Alcoholic* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32), and *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24) in Slovene and Turkish.
- Staff and volunteer travel to Gaziantep, Turkey, for the purpose of introducing Al-Anon as a resource for friends and families at a new recovery center being built there.
- Mailing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2009* to District Representatives for the purpose of encouraging group orders.

The Executive Committee approved the following appointments to two newly formed Committees:

<b>Audit Committee</b>	<b>Compensation Committee</b>
Vicki H., Chair	Carol V., Chair
Roger C.	Judy A.
Laurie K.	Beverly A.
Judy Z.	Penny R.
Jennie McC.	Frank R.
David Zach, staff support	Ric B., staff support

#### Other work of the Executive Committee:

- Reviews all presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference.
- Evaluates work group and task force work for Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.
- Receives monthly reports from the Executive Director for Administration, and the Directors of Business Services, Communication Services, and Member Services.
- Reviews and updates policies and procedures regarding the WSO Archives.

## ADMINISTRATION

The “Using the Concepts in Our Personal Lives” Blog on the Members’ Web site concluded in 2008. It was a Web-based adaptation of a workshop that the Executive Director facilitates when traveling to the Areas. One Concept was featured each month with an introduction by the Executive Director. Members were able to comment on the featured Concept sharing in English, Spanish, and French. In total, 192 comments were posted for the English blog, 56 in Spanish, and 56 in French. The blog site also potentially exposed visitors to CAL resources such as *The Concepts—Al-Anon’s Best-Kept Secret* (P-57) and to *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24) in all three languages. 296 visitors viewed P-57 and an average of 83 visitors a month viewed the featured chapter of B-24 in all three languages. Links to other CAL resources such as the *Conference Summary* and the Public Outreach podcast yielded minimal visitors. The Concepts Blog has been archived so visitors are still able to view the posts and sharings, but it has been closed for comments.

For 2009, a blog “Using the Traditions in Our Personal Lives” will begin. A different WSO staff member or volunteer will post the introductory sharing each month.

An on-line survey of attendees at the 2008 International Convention gave the World Service Office input regarding future conventions. Other surveys will be posted on the Members’ Web site in the coming year to gain members’ insights and opinion.

## ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The Administrative Team is composed of the Director of Business Services, the Director of Communication Services, the Director of Member Services, and the WSO Controller. The Administrative Team was created to have oversight of certain office-wide projects assigned by the Executive Director as well as provide leadership support to the office in the absence of the Executive Director. The Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Communication Services, has full authority to act on behalf of the Executive Director in his absence.

During 2008, the Disaster Recovery Team discussed how they would conduct business if a major disaster struck the WSO and the building with all office equipment was lost. The Team identified the necessary processes that would need to be continued and reviewed options to reestablish operations at a temporary location. The estimated cost for having access to space in case of an emergency was approximately \$20,000 per year. The Administrative Team discussed their progress, estimated annual costs with the Executive Committee, and received a consensus to continue to research ways to obtain off-site facilities for temporary operations as part of disaster recovery.

A Record Retention Task Force was charged with identifying and categorizing record types and developing a guideline for retention, insuring that the legal and archival requirements are met. In 2008, the Task Force developed guidelines for e-mail retention. Guidelines are being developed for paper and computer files in Business Services, Administration, the Communication Services Section, and the Member Services Section.

The Administrative Team initiated two surveys: one to determine how Al-Anon groups welcome newcomers, the other to determine if the newcomers felt that the Al-Anon Family Groups were welcoming. This work completed steps one and two under Objective #1 of the Strategic Plan’s Goal #6, under the theme “Strengthen Our Structure.” The survey results indicated that the remaining two steps under this Objective were moot. With 98 percent of the groups and newcomers in agreement that Al-Anon groups are welcoming to newcomers, there wasn’t enough upside potential to make any substantial improvements to support the groups. Consequently, the Administrative Team requested that Strategic Plan Oversight delete Goal #6 from the Strategic Plan. Further improvements in how Al-Anon Family Groups welcome newcomers can be implemented at the operational level, on a section-by-section basis, rather than as an office-wide goal.

#### Survey results:

The survey showed near-unanimous agreement that Al-Anon meetings are welcoming to newcomers. Ninety-eight percent of the groups said they considered themselves to be welcoming to newcomers. This belief was mirrored in the survey response from newcomers: 98 percent of the newcomers said they considered the meeting they attended to be overall welcoming.

Newcomers had positive things to say about their first meetings. Eighty-six percent said their first meeting met the immediate need that brought them to the meeting. The newcomers also said that the members welcomed them by giving them a Newcomer’s Packet (91 percent), took some time to explain the



Newcomer's Packet to them (74 percent), and that the Newcomer's Packet itself was helpful (88 percent). Ninety-five percent of the newcomers who responded to the survey said they would continue to attend the meeting they first attended, while others said they were willing to try six to eight meetings before deciding whether or not Al-Anon was right for them.

While not all meetings had a newcomer every week, on average, the survey showed that Al-Anon meetings attract four new people every four weeks. Of these four, two of them return to that meeting for at least a second time.

The Administrative Team revised and expanded the documentation that supports staff members who are assigned the

task of answering our toll-free meeting lines. This material is used for training and reference, to ensure office-wide consistency in the implementation of our policies and procedures. One training session was held to sharpen everyone's focus on how to best respond to a wide range of inquiries asking for help.

The Literature Shelf Life Task Force composed of staff members from all WSO sections has proposed a set of guidelines and procedures to identify and discard out-of-date, damaged, or surplus literature currently stored in our warehouse. These guidelines and procedures have not yet received final approval.

## COMMUNICATION SERVICES

Staff completed our new book, *Discovering Choices* (B-30), on schedule and in time for release in July at the International Convention. The book was initiated by the 2001 World Service Conference, requesting a comprehensive overview of our recovery in relationships. The work proceeded rapidly beginning in January 2007, after a new outline was devised. In 2008, staff made final edits based on comments from the Literature Committee, copy editor, Policy reviewers, and the Executive Director. Our production team designed the book; staff completed the index, and the book was sent to the printer.

Staff prepared an internal communications campaign to inform the fellowship about *Discovering Choices*. This campaign included skits, workshops, a B-30 Web page, as well as an order form, informational flyers, and articles and ads in *The Forum* and *Area Highlights*. By the end of the year, the fellowship purchased nearly 54,000 copies of the book.

In July, we published a new edition of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22), including an expanded index and new material on how Al-Anon members apply the principles of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service to their personal lives. We announced this change to the Literature Coordinators and Literature Distribution Centers.

In 2008, we conducted two conference calls with Literature Coordinators, which focused on how Coordinators could best carry out their role to encourage members to use a wide range of CAL, including e-CAL (electronic Conference Approved Literature). To date, the fellowship has not demonstrated a strong interest in sharing recovery in the electronic formats available in e-CAL. In 2008, the e-CAL web page posted a total of 28 e-CAL sharings, 26 of which were submitted prior to May 31 in time for consideration in our e-CAL contest. By comparison, members submitted about 1,000 sharings to *The Forum*; a single notice published in *The Forum* elicited nearly 200 sharings for *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. Yet the Literature Coordinators, along with repeated notices in *The Forum* and *Area Highlights*,

a widely-distributed four-color flyer, and an incentive contest generated a total of only 28 e-CAL sharings. That total does not provide enough fresh content to attract a continuous flow of regular readers to the e-CAL web page. The e-CAL web page attracted a total 3,462 visits in 2008: 834 in the 1st Quarter; 875 in the 2nd Quarter; 1,139 in the 3rd Quarter (when the contest winners were posted); and 614 in the 4th Quarter.

Paid subscriptions to *The Forum* continued to decline. Complimentary copies are mailed to about 15,000 English-speaking groups in the U.S. and Canada, but paid subscriptions dipped to 19,935 in December 2008, a 14 percent decline from December 2007. A survey asked readers why they dropped their subscriptions; about 30 percent said they never read the magazine, which may be a reflection of the decline in readership of print publications generally. Fewer than five percent said they had a problem with the content or the format. Ten percent said they did not find *The Forum's* content interesting. About 18 percent said they were no longer Al-Anon members, and 11 percent received the magazine as a gift and did not wish to pick up the subscription. About 22 percent said they read the group's complimentary copy.

Despite the decline in paid subscriptions, *The Forum* continued to demonstrate editorial vitality. The magazine introduced several news sections this year: "One 'Quote' at a Time"—one-liners extracted from member submissions; "Build Bridges—Energizing our Spiritual Quest"—sharings from trusted servants on the year's World Service Conference theme; "CAL Corner"—book reviews and discussion topics to encourage members to utilize a wider range of CAL; and "My Sponsor, My Recovery"—positive stories about the valuable support a Sponsor can provide. Though it is a personal judgment, the more than 1,000 sharings submitted by members in 2008 seem to be, on balance, increasingly well-written and thoughtful. While overall readership is lower, the sharings and letters that we receive indicate that many members are highly engaged with the *The Forum* as part of their Al-Anon program.



## LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Roger C./Penny R., Chairperson

Tom C., Staff Liaison,

Associate Director of Communications—Literature

Several suggestions from the fellowship for new literature were reviewed throughout the year. One idea, for an historical piece about Al-Anon's first 60 years, was greeted by the Committee with such enthusiasm that they unanimously agreed to present a motion to the 2008 Conference seeking conceptual approval. The motion was carried.

The Committee also agreed with the following recommendations for changes or revisions to existing Conference Approved Literature, which will follow the process for revisions:

- To add brief material to *The Al-Anon Focus* (P-15) to further emphasize anonymity and encourage members to refrain from discussing membership in other Twelve Step programs at Al-Anon meetings.
- To edit text in the first paragraph of page 40 of *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) to more accurately reflect the Al-Anon program.
- To add several words for clarity and to emphasize inclusiveness in the "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon," which is included in *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4) and *The Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17).

## e-CAL COMMITTEE

Doreen D./Vicki L./Margot M., Chairperson

Julie M., Staff Liaison, Communications Manager

In January 2008, the Executive Committee agreed with a recommendation by the e-CAL Committee to exclude text-only sharings. Though submitted electronically, text-only sharings do not fulfill the Conference's vision for electronic Conference Approved Literature, which was intended to take advantage of image, audio, video, and other multimedia technology.

## FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FEAC)

Winnie S./Blondel R., Chairperson

Karen R., Board of Trustees Liaison

Robert S., Staff Liaison, Director of Communication Services

The Committee met twice by telephone conference call, in March with a Trustee Chairperson and in November with a longtime FEAC member serving as Chair—the first time FEAC has been chaired by a member who is not a Trustee. A liaison to the Board was appointed to ensure that the Board is well-informed about matters affecting *The Forum*.

At the March meeting, FEAC noted that the photos selected for publication in *The Forum* did not show enough ethnic and racial diversity. Staff has adjusted the photo selection to demonstrate that Al-Anon welcomes diversity in its membership.

In November, the Committee discussed potential revisions to the magazine's Statement of Purpose to ensure that it adequately summarizes the magazine's mission.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

***Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism.*** In 2008, the membership distributed 262,125 copies of our public outreach magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*—a 12 percent increase above calendar year 2007, which was the first year that there were two printings of the magazine. This growth is the result of a significant, long-term effort to help the fellowship understand how the magazine can be used to attract new members to their meetings.

Sales of the English-language version of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* increased 12 percent to 230,950. Spanish-language sales were up 38 percent to 21,300. French-language sales were down 15 percent to 9,875.

### TV PSA Campaign.

The "Sketches" Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign generated more airplays than any other Al-Anon PSA since the WSO began tracking them in 1996-1997. It was 12 percent ahead of our 2000 campaign, which was previously our most successful.

In 12 months, Sketches generated 38,455 airplays. Based on time and market size of the broadcasts, this airtime would oth-

erwise have cost the WSO \$24.9 million in paid advertising, according to the estimate of the vendor contracted to measure our PSA results.

This year, 92 percent of Al-Anon's PSA airplays were in the U.S and 8 percent in Canada. Approximately, 73 percent of the airplays were in English, 25 percent in Spanish, and one percent in French. About 60 percent of airplays were between midnight and 6:00 a.m. About 30 percent of the airplays were in the top fifty markets.

After a two-month ramp up, "Sketches" generated an average of more than 3,200 airplays a month for the next 12 months—a 37 percent increase over the previous year's campaign, which never reached 3,000 airplays even in its best month, averaging only 2,100 airplays plays per month.

In November and December, we began phasing in the "Sketches II" campaign. Combined airplays of "Sketches" and "Sketches II" kept our total monthly airplays above the 3,000 mark.

### Radio PSA campaign.

Radio is the largest market for public service announce-

ments. In 2008, we produced our first radio-only PSAs in English, Spanish, and French. (In previous years, we distributed an audio version of our TV PSAs.) [We launched the English-language version in the U.S. in October; about two months later in Canada, in Spanish, and in French.]

As of January 2009, the English-language PSAs had been aired more than 7,900 times, reaching an audience of an estimated 23.4 million listeners.

### **“Dear Abby.”**

The widely-read advice column, “Dear Abby,” agreed to publicize our address, e-mail address, and Web site, along with our offer to send a free copy of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* to any reader who contacted us to request one. The column gave us the “lead” letter in two columns, one published in February and another in October. Abby’s response to the reader’s letter recommended Al-Anon Family Groups and included our *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* offer.

In February, the column generated more than 1,600 responses, including 1,400 visitors to our Public Outreach Web site, where they could read an on-line version of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. The “Dear Abby” promotion in October was far more successful. It generated more than 8,700 responses, including more than 8,000 visitors to our Web site.

In February, ten Areas agreed to participate in this program by sending AFAs and a meeting schedule to respondents; in October, 23 Areas agreed to participate.

In total, nearly 11,000 people either downloaded *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* on-line or requested that we send them a copy.

### **Podcasts.**

In May, we introduced a series of podcasts called “First Steps to Al-Anon Recovery”—an audio program designed to attract people to their first Al-Anon meeting. More than 99,000 visitors came to our podcasts via an RSS feed, with more than half of these coming by way of Apple’s iTunes store. More than 36,000 visitors came to our podcast Web page on our Public Outreach Web site, some of them via the RSS feed, some by other means.

In all, we’ve posted eight podcasts, which generated a total of nearly 22,000 downloads. Listener comments posted on the podcast Web page indicate that some people have found the courage to attend their first Al-Anon meeting after having listened to a podcast.

### **Press releases.**

We distributed 12 news and feature press releases to Area Public Outreach Coordinators, who encouraged members in their Areas to offer them to their home-town newspapers.

### **Public Outreach Web site.**

In the fourth quarter, the Public Outreach Web site (English) attracted 176,027 visits; this is a 7.6 percent increase from the 163,461 visits in the same quarter last year—an increase of 12,566 visits. Most growth came from “Dear Abby,” which generated about 8,000 Web site visits. The Spanish site grew about 25 percent to 8,682 visits; French, 22 percent, to 4,372 visits.

Web site visits for 2008: 732,184, English; 36,402 Spanish; 17,189, French; we do not have comparable data for 2007.

### **e-News.**

In December, we distributed by e-mail the first issue of an electronic newsletter targeted to professionals. The newsletter pointed the professionals to the podcast series on our Public Outreach Web site. In the first 30 days after that e-newsletter distribution, visits to the Podcast page increased 26 percent to 5,848, compared with 4,648 in the previous 30-day period.

### **Strategic relationships.**

Al-Anon’s participation in work groups continues to increase awareness of the need for family recovery from the effects of alcoholism.

### **National Alcohol and Drug Recovery Month.**

The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals continued to serve as a resource to the U.S. government’s National Alcohol and Drug Addiction Month Planning Committee and its Webcast Committee. The WSO’s Information Analyst (non-member) appeared in a one-hour Webcast on family recovery. The Recovery Month press kit included an eight-page brochure, “Families: The Unsung Heroes of Recovery.”

### **Canadian National Treatment Strategy Workgroup.**

The WSO sent Signe L., past Manitoba Delegate, as a resource. It was the first time that we were asked to participate in the development of a nationwide plan in Canada. As a result, Al-Anon’s suggestions were included in the Work Group’s National Treatment Strategy, which was published in November 2008.

### **World Health Organization (WHO) Round Table Meeting.**

The Associate Director of Communications Professionals and Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International attended the second World Health Organization (WHO) Work Group meeting, comprised of 23 international organizations. Based upon input from the meeting, the WHO will develop a strategy that will engage its 191 member countries.

### **Recovery Rally.**

The WSO initiated volunteer participation in the first “Recovery Rally” sponsored by the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD) and the A&E Network. Chesley M., past Colorado Delegate, was selected to represent her state.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE**

Mirta S./Vicki H., Trustee Chairperson

Patrick Q., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Media

The Public Outreach Committee approved scripts for “Sketches II” and our radio PSA campaigns.

The Committee met twice. It explored the public outreach strategy for the fellowship for the next three-to-five years, agreeing that we need to increase our focus on the professional community. Using recent membership survey data, the Committee noted the need to attract to the program women between 25 and 40 years of age, grandparents, men, and minorities.

## MEMBER SERVICES

### ADMISSIONS/HANDBOOK WORK GROUP

Carol V./Bev A., Chairperson

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference

In response to California South petitioning the Admissions/Handbook Work Group and the Board of Trustees to “allow a division of a geographic Area within the World Service structure when the number of meetings in an Area of AFG, Inc. exceeds 700 registered meetings,” the WSO sent an e-mail to the California South Delegate acknowledging receipt of the petition. The Work Group then passed the petition on to the Conference Leadership Team, which forwarded the petition to the Board of Trustees.

The Big Question the Task Force submitted for the 2008 World Service Conference was as follows: What might be the impact of further division or consolidation of the Areas:

On the WSC? Finances? Innovative approaches to the links of service? Growth of the fellowship? Diversity of the fellowship?

The Admissions/Handbook Work Group, including the Delegate members, discussed the specific work of the Work Group, keeping in mind whether each activity was strategic, administrative, or old thinking. The members then brainstormed new ways to accomplish the work. Members agreed that the various duties of Admissions/Handbook could be performed by short-term task forces and by its parent Committee, the Conference Leadership Team. The Delegate members of the Admissions/Handbook Work Group unanimously approved recommending to the Board of Trustees that the Admissions Process be moved to the Conference Leadership Team for a three-year trial period.

The Work Group is in the process of developing a follow-up Big Question for discussion at the 2009 WSC regarding further division or consolidation of Areas.

### CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Mary G./Doreen D., Chairperson

Doreen D./Carol V., Co-Chairperson

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) submitted the 2008 World Service Conference (WSC) Tentative Agenda Topics to the Board of Trustees for approval. One new topic, which was two sets of three leadership workshops, paired WSO volunteers with Delegates as facilitators. The CLT finalized all the Conference details prior to the 2008 WSC.

A year after the Conference Committee was restructured to form the Conference Leadership Team, members of the Team agreed that the new structure was efficient and working well. In initial planning for the 2009 WSC, the Conference Leader-

ship Team unanimously agreed on the 2009 Conference theme: “Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future.” The Conference Leadership Team then focused on preparing an agenda that would incorporate the theme into the business of the Conference.

The CLT recommended to the Board that meetings for the Selected Committees, Task Forces, and Thought Forces be held one day before the 2009 Conference opens as a way to transition into holding these meetings completely outside of the Conference in 2010.

### MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH—CONFERENCE

Staff finalized the details of the 2008 World Service Conference, including the revision of the Conference Notebook format to reflect the day-by-day Conference agenda.

### INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Zelda R., Chairperson

Doris W., Co-Chairperson

Marsha W., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International

### INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON GENERAL SERVICES MEETING

The 2008 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) was coordinated by the International Coordination Committee. The meeting was hosted in Espoo, Finland by the General Service Office located in Riihimäki. Thirty-one representatives from 14 service structures, including five International Coordination Committee members, discussed topics presented during nine Delegate-led general sessions and six workshops. A copy of the *2008 IAGSM Summary* was sent to all Conference members, General Service Offices, and IAGSM Delegates. In addition, the *IAGSM Summary* is available on the Members' Web site.

### ZONAL MEETINGS

Zonal Meetings provide an opportunity for established and evolving service structures, within close proximity and with similar service needs, to meet and discuss service ideas. In 2007, service structures in Europe met for their first trial service meeting coordinated by the Al-Anon General Service Office in Essen, Germany. This meeting was subsequently called “European Talk.”

This year, a planning meeting for the 2010 European Talk was held in Finland prior to the start of the 2008 IAGSM. All

European countries with an Al-Anon presence were invited to attend and share in this planning. Participants included representation from Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland (German-speaking), UK and Eire, and the World Service Office.

In October 2009, countries in South America will hold a Zonal Meeting. This meeting is called Ibero-American and was started in 1997. The World Service Office has been invited and will send representation to this meeting. The 2009 meeting will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and is being coordinated by the Al-Anon General Service Office.

## TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Materials translated into Spanish and French include: *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (SB-29, FB-29), released at the 2008 Convention in Pittsburgh; *Alcoholics, Their Families, and the Judicial System* (S-65ES); and the Concepts Blog.

# GROUP SERVICES DEPARTMENT

## GROUP RECORDS

The Al-Anon and Alateen information provided to newly registered groups has been reformatted. New groups now receive three mailings. Upon registration, a new group packet is sent containing basic group materials and the *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* booklet (P-24). Six months after the initial registration, the group receives a second packet, including the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), an *Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form* (GR-1), and other information growing groups need. Finally, when the group approaches its first anniversary, the WSO sends a third mailing including information about group inventories and public outreach.

In 2008, about one percent of the original *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manuals* (P-24/27) sent to groups in the U.S. and Canada was returned to the WSO. The *Manual* was resent to the group when an updated address for the Current Mailing Address (CMA) was provided.

The total number of groups in 2008 is:

U.S. Al-Anon: 12,969

U.S. Alateen: 963

Canada Al-Anon: 1,386

Canada Alateen: 75

Overseas Al-Anon: 8,332

Overseas Alateen: 714

There are 42 on-line electronic meetings and 17 telephone electronic meetings registered with WSO; 41 are English, seven Spanish, four French, four German, and one each Portuguese, Italian, and Estonian.

## ALATEEN

Two new Alateen “Training the Trainer” presentations were previewed in workshops at the “Connecting with Our WSO Day” prior to the 2008 Al-Anon International Convention. The modules were then released to the Area Alateen Coordinators. The flexible format includes a slide show with customizable slides to insert Area information. Slides can be printed to create a handout. The facilitator’s notes include resources and suggested discussion questions. Response from the Coordinators was positive and many have begun using them in their Areas.

In 2008, all Areas met the WSO deadline to return their completed annual Area Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service Recertification to the Group Records Department.

## GROUP SERVICES COMMITTEE

Margot M./Laurie K., Chairpersons, Trustees

Doris W., Chairperson, Alateen Advisory Committee, Trustee

Barbara O., Director of Member Services/Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Services

At its annual meeting at the World Service Conference, the Committee focused on questions presented by the Board regarding the work of the Committee and how it can best be accomplished. The discussion was illuminating, and brought to light the enthusiasm that Delegates have for their selected committee, with the realization that they miss the discussion generated in other committees and that the other Delegates don’t hear the Group Services discussions. All felt that having service experience at various levels (group/district/Area) was important to the work of the Committee, but that Past Delegates and other experienced trusted servants could bring a wealth of experience to group service matters.

Topics in a conference call meeting included the selection of group names. The WSO Group Services Department reviewed some of the inappropriate names that are submitted, and asked



the Committee if additional wording might be needed to help the groups to select names. Members felt that the wording was clear and that Delegates and Group Records Coordinators might address this in their Areas. In discussion of the topic of beginner meetings, it was clear that there is a great variety of ways that these are conducted. Some Delegates felt the beginner meetings were best attached to an Al-Anon group and did not need to be registered as a separate group. The Committee felt this was a topic that could be studied by a Task Force. The Committee members responded to an assignment on the topic of “What do our groups need to conduct a group inventory?” The discussion indicated that our current guideline needed a major revision. All shared that they had participated in a group inventory; four had conducted one. The ideas are being incorporated into a new service tool for this purpose.

In the first year of a three-year trial, **Alateen Advisory Committee (AAC)** meetings were held in three Regions: U.S. Southwest, U.S. Northeast, and Canada West. Seven Areas submitted bids to host the AAC meetings in conjunction with their Assemblies, and the meetings were held in the California North, New Jersey, and Alberta/NT Areas. The three meetings, each with different members from the host Area, followed the same agenda. They discussed means of staying connected with the district and Area, Alateen and the Internet, and helping Alateen to grow with public outreach projects. Ten Alateens and nine Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service participated in the meetings. Under the previous AAC format, six to eight members total could participate on the Committee each year. Members were enthusiastic about increasing local outreach efforts, and working to improve communication with Al-Anon groups. Each meeting was energizing for all involved. The participants were enthusiastic about the Committee meeting, and the Assemblies had a new type of exposure to Alateen service. Meetings will be held in 2009 in the U.S. Southeast, U.S. North Central, and Canada Central Regions.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRIPS**

### **TRIP TO CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA**

The Director of Member Services and Translation Services Manager visited South and Central America along with a member of the World Service Office Board of Trustees in March. This visit, initiated by the World Service Office, included a visit for the first time to Colombia, Peru, and Uruguay and a second visit to Costa Rica. As a part of the invitation to the national service structures, members involved in service from neighboring countries were invited to attend scheduled service meetings. Members from Honduras and Guatemala attended in Costa Rica, members from Bolivia and Ecuador were in Peru, and members from the Argentina GSO attended the meeting in Uruguay.

The questions were varied, depending on the needs of the structure or evolving structure. Most questions were answered on the spot; a list of questions and previous WSO communications that needed further assistance was brought back for follow up by the Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International. Meetings were held in Spanish with the Translation Services Manager doing most of the translation and the Board member and the Director of Member Services partnering to respond to Trustee and WSO policy questions. A minimum of two full days of meetings were held in each of the four countries. All of the GSOs and evolving structures expressed gratitude for the visit, and two GSOs sent contributions to WSO.

### **TRIP TO INDIA**

The Executive Director of the World Service Office, Information Analyst, and a Board of Trustee member traveled to India in March. The visit started in Kolkata, where they were invited to attend the third Trial National Service Structure Meeting.

The Executive Director reported that several meetings were held throughout the trip and lots of media personnel attended the meetings. In addition to the visit to Kolkata, the trip included visits to Guwahati, Chennai, Goa, Delhi, and Mumbai.

Highlights of the various types of meetings, during visits to each city, included public awareness, workshops on The Twelve Traditions (facilitated by the World Service Office Trustee), and workshops on the Twelve Concepts of Service (facilitated by the Executive Director). The Executive Director was also asked to chair the opening of a new Al-Anon meeting in Goa. It was estimated that among all meetings held, there were approximately 2,000 members in attendance. In Mumbai, a meeting with Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon members culminated with A.A. members sharing their gratitude and support of Al-Anon Family Groups.

### **TRIP TO SWITZERLAND**

In November, the World Service Office was one of 23 international non-government organizations and health care professionals invited to a two-day World Health Organization meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International along with the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals attended this meeting and used this opportunity to schedule a meeting with Al-Anon members at the General Service Office, also located in Geneva, since the office was unable to send representation to the 2008 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting.

The General Service Office, which serves French and Italian-speaking members, currently has a volunteer General Secretary and a core group of seven volunteer members that function as the Service Board. There are currently 30 Al-Anon and two Alateen groups. A scheduled service meeting lasted approximately three-and-one-half hours and various topics were discussed with 14 members in attendance at the General Service Office. Feedback from the General Service Office indicated that the meeting was a major highlight for the Office.

## **INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS**

Ric B., Chairperson

Marsha W., Coordinator, 2008

Suzanne M., Co-Coordinator, 2008; Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

Barbara O., Co-Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

### **INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA, JULY 4-6, 2008**

A special "Connecting with Our WSO Day" was held on Thursday, July 3. The event was planned to include new innovative workshops on topics typically available at Regional Service Seminars (RSS) as well as new topics. RSSs are not held during International Convention years. Attendees were able to select from topics such as General Finance, Detailed Finance, Understanding Our Connection to Al-Anon Family Groups, Anonymity at Public Level, Anonymity as a Member Inside Al-Anon, Conflict Resolution (at three levels), the Strategic Plan, Alateen Sponsor Training, and Public Outreach. After the workshop sessions, members were invited to mingle with WSO volunteers and staff. Attendance was 479, with over 140 members registering onsite.

Convention attendance totaled 3,953 including 83 Alateen, 348 A.A. members, and 189 dual members. Included in these numbers were 140 Spanish-speaking, 23 French-speaking, 30 Japanese-speaking, and 18 German-speaking members. Countries outside the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico represented were Australia, Belgium, Colombia, Finland, Germany, India, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Romania, Scotland, South Africa, United Kingdom, and Uruguay. Fifty-eight percent were attending an International Convention for the first time. One hundred forty-six members registered on-site and 73% of attendees registered on-line.

**Program:** The program was printed in English, Spanish, and French. Workshops took place in English, Spanish, French, German, and Japanese. Over 300 members took part in the program as speakers or leaders. A sign language interpreter was available, but members requesting the service never came to the designated seating to utilize it; a closed captioning system was also added. The winning entries for the e-CAL contest were shown prior to each meeting. Approximately 500 members marched in the parade. Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) held all their daytime meetings at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

A gratitude luncheon was hosted by World Service Office (WSO) on Sunday, July 6, in honor of Host Committee members. Over 80 members attended, and a thank-you gift was given to each as a small token of WSO's gratitude. The local members were delighted with their own efforts and believe that holding the International Convention in their city was beneficial in strengthening service opportunities on behalf of the local membership.

**Luncheons:** 1,441 participants attended the Pioneer Luncheon, where an oral presentation of our history was shared by present and retired staff as well as longtime members in the audience.

**Evaluations:** An electronic survey was sent to attendees by

the WSO Information Analyst. Preliminary returns indicate the Convention was an overall success, and the workshops on humor and the Pioneer Luncheon were indicated as the highlight for many. A third of the attendees indicated they were limited by time and unable to attend the Spiritual Meeting on Sunday.

### **2010 A.A. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, JULY 1-4, 2010**

The Al-Anon Coordinator made initial contact with the A.A. Coordinator in preparation for Al-Anon's participation in this event.

### **2013 AL-ANON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, JULY 5-7, 2013**

The International Convention Planning Committee met several times to plan the tentative meeting space and events. The Committee also finalized the License Agreement with the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre, which includes holding Big Meetings at the Convention Centre, rather than at a separate location. A representative for the Greater Vancouver Convention and Visitors Bureau attended the 2008 International Convention in Pittsburgh to staff an information booth for the 2013 International Convention in Vancouver.

Following the International Convention in Pittsburgh, the Planning Committee received e-mail correspondence that included suggestions for the 2013 International. The Committee also gleaned suggestions from the 2008 International Convention Wrap Up meeting and the on-line blog that attendees had access to on the Members' Web site.

## BUSINESS SERVICES

In 2008, we continued improving our business processing system to include on-line credit card payments and verification.

We are currently using the iMIS inventory system to monitor English literature levels and re-order points. For 2009, we are planning to expand the system for French and Spanish literature.

We are in the final stages of testing and modifying the iMIS shopping cart module and plan to do live testing early in 2009. This shopping cart will interface with our order entry system and will not require the manual updating as needed with the current cart.

During the last quarter of 2008, we installed and tested e-Communities which will replace Information Exchange. Unlike Information Exchange, e-Communities will use our member database and not require us to maintain a separate one. The new system was used for the Finance and Executive Committees for November and December 2008 and will replace Information Exchange beginning January 2009.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Mary Ann R./Frank R., Chairperson

David Zach, Director of Business Services

The Finance Committee meets monthly and reports to the Executive Committee immediately following the Finance meeting. During the Conference, the Finance Committee reports directly to the Board.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee include monitoring expenses, cash flow, aligning the budget of estimated income and expenses, and recommending that the Board of Trustees set aside funds in reserve when appropriate. The Committee's oversight ensures that we remain solvent.

The Committee reviews the financial feasibility of proposed projects not already included in the budget, taking into consideration the goals and desired outcomes, cost-effectiveness, timing, and the relationship to the Strategic Plan. Additionally, it sets prices for new or existing literature. The Committee reports those actions to the Executive Committee. Other routine functions included:

- Approval of the quarterly Appeal letters.
- Review of handouts on previous year's contributions received from the U.S. and Canada for distribution at the World Service Conference.
- Recommendation of the equalized expense amount to send a Delegate to the World Service Conference to the Board of Trustees.
- Review and submission of recommendations for the Investment Strategy Goals to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- Review of each department's budget with the Director of that service in preparing the Preliminary 2009 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January.

Other non-routine actions included:

- Recommendation to the Board of Trustees that the Preliminary Budget be sent to World Service Conference members after the auditors have completed their field work.
- After the motion to amend the policy on "Bequests" was approved by the 2008 WSC, the Finance Committee was asked to revisit the "Procedure for Managing Excess Bequests." After soliciting comments from the Areas, the "Procedure" was revised and will be presented to the 2009 WSC for approval.
- Developed the guidelines for the Audit and Compensation Committees that were approved by the Board of Trustees.

## ADDENDUM TO THE 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

### Al-Anon/Alateen Internationally

#### AFRICA

**Kenya:** Contact during the 2008 International Convention resulted in registration materials and information being sent on how to start a meeting. There are currently six active meetings in the WSO database. All are located in Nairobi.

**South Africa:** The Chairperson of the General Service Office attended the 2008 World Service Conference. This is the first time a South African service member has attended. The General Service Office sent the World Service Office three public service announcements (PSAs) produced in that country. All three were entered into a competition for non-profit organizations and one was selected as the winner and aired nationally on TV. This is the first time South Africa has produced a PSA.

#### EUROPE

**Belgium** (Flemish-speaking): The General Service Office has been busy updating and revising Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. The decision to move at the end of 2007 has led to a positive financial impact for the office.

**Commonwealth of Independent States** (formerly the Soviet Union): The Russian Al-Anon General Service Board notified the World Service Office that they are preparing the *Al-Anon's Cofounders* pamphlet (P-87) for print. The Service Board also held a well-attended workshop in October 2008 on the Twelve Concepts of Service.

**Estonia:** Two representatives were sponsored by Finland to attend the European Talk planning meeting held in Espoo, Finland. This contact has opened communication between the World Service Office and Estonian members involved in service.

**Finland:** The General Service Office hosted the 2008 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting and a planning meeting for European Talk, which is a zonal meeting for the European community.

**France:** The General Service Office moved to a new location in Paris. The National Meeting was successfully held in March and a new Board of Trustees was elected.

**Germany:** The General Service Office sent their Chairperson of the Board to the 2008 World Service Conference. The World Service Office received notification that the General Secretary will attend as their representative at the 49th World Service Conference in April 2009. At European Talk, the General Service Office representatives advised the attendees that they are preparing to host the 2009 meeting in Essen, Germany.

**Iceland:** *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22) has been translated, and the review was completed in 2008 by the Literature Committee. Publishing will take place in 2009. A new Web site was finalized in 2008. The site is divided into three main areas: Alateen, Al-Anon, and *Hlekkurinn* (an Icelandic magazine published by the GSO that is the equivalent of *The Forum*).

**Greece:** The Al-Anon Parthenon Group reported that they are working on Greek translations of *Alateen—a day at a time* (B-10) and *Blueprint for Progress: Al-Anon's Fourth Step Inventory* (P-91). They expect to publish in 2009.

**Italy:** The General Service Office reported that their Al-Anon/Alateen Convention held in Rimini on October 3-5 was a success and well attended. There was also A.A. participation during this event.

**Poland:** In June, the 11th National Service Conference was held at Puck, close to Gdansk. The topic of the Conference was: "Service is Gratitude towards the Community." The participants of the Conference included 12 members of the Board of Trustees, 12 Delegates, 12 Area Representatives, seven Chairpersons of Committees, and five staff members from the General Service Office. The



main topics addressed during the Conference were the new amendments in the Polish Conference Charter and setting up seven permanent committees on a trial basis for three years.

**Romania:** A member from Cluj Napoca met with the Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International during the 2008 International Convention. This member attended a meeting with World Service Office representatives during a visit to Romania in 2007. The discussion at the Convention was a follow-up to the discussion in Romania concerning the procedure for translation and reprinting Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. The member was advised that at this time Romania still does not have permission from the World Service Office to print Conference Approved Literature. It was also explained that three pieces of literature [*Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32), and *A Guide for the Family* (P-7)], produced by the World Service Office in Romanian, were given to the group located in Bucharest during a visit by the WSO in 2007 with the request that members do editing changes for future reprinting.

**Slovenia:** In August, a member from Slovenia (a part of the former Yugoslavia) visited the WSO and spoke to the Executive Director. The WSO was not aware until her visit that there are 22 groups in Slovenia. The member initially requested permission to translate books, but the Executive Director recommended starting with pamphlets and referred them to the process to request reprint permission. Based on the Criteria for Granting Reprint Permission questionnaire, the International Coordination Committee recommended, and the Board of Trustees approved, granting reprint permission to Drustvo Al-Anon Za Samopomoc Druzin Alkoholikov of Slovenia, as all questions were answered satisfactorily.

**Spain:** The XXI Conference passed a guide to certify Alateen Group Sponsors and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service. According to the guide, an Alateen group must have a Sponsor certified by the General Service Office.

**Sweden:** The General Service Office reported that they participated in the National A.A. Conference and coordinated the Al-Anon program. In addition, the Second Al-Anon Convention with A.A. participation took place in Stockholm. *Living with Sobriety* (P-49) was reprinted, and *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78) was translated into Swedish and is now waiting to be printed. It was also reported that the Budget Committee sent a letter of thanks to all groups in Sweden as member contributions resulted in financial stability for the General Service Office in 2008.

**Switzerland** (French-speaking): The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International and the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals met with the Al-Anon General Service Office in Geneva, Switzerland in November. The meeting lasted approximately three-and-one-half hours, and various topics were discussed. Since the meeting, a General Service Office representative reported that the 14 members who attended indicated they now feel more empowered to initiate new ways of working differently and to be more responsible and active.

**Switzerland** (German-speaking): The General Service Office reported that they now have a Webmaster who is responsible for updates of all activities on the Web site for the General Service Office. They also reported that the annual weekend convention with A.A. took place at a facility high above the Lake of Zurich; it was a successful event.

**UK & Eire:** As part of the “Public Information for UK 2009 Campaign,” the Area Delegates of the Ireland regions asked the General Service Office to replace the General Service Office contact details with information for Ireland. This is to encourage people looking for help to phone a contact in Ireland, thus avoiding an international telephone call to London, which is not affordable for many people. The WSO was also informed that the General Service Office is in the process of redesigning their Web site.

The General Service Office informed the WSO that the General Secretary will attend the 49th Annual World Service Conference in Virginia Beach.



## ASIA

**China:** Members in Beijing reported that they are busy working on a number of translations for local use and will send all manuscripts to the WSO when complete. A new English-speaking meeting was registered by the WSO in Ningbo.

**India:** A Trial National Service Structure translated and printed the pamphlet *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32) in the Malayalam language. In addition, the Trial National Service Structure published translations in Maranthii of the following Conference Approved Literature pieces:

*One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6), *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (P-48), *Detachment* (S-19), *Information for the Newcomer* (S-4), *Are You Troubled by Someone's Drinking?* (S-17), and *What Do You Do about the Alcoholic's Drinking?* (P-19).

For the first time ever, three Al-Anon members and one A.A. member participated in a radio interview in June 2008. This public service opportunity was deemed a success.

The Executive Director, a WSO Board of Trustee member, and the Information Analyst traveled to India in March, and, as a part of their travel schedule, attended their third Trial National Service Structure Meeting.

**Japan:** The General Service Office reported that they organized a gathering celebrating the 25th anniversary of Japan's Al-Anon adult children groups. At present, there are 58 Al-Anon adult children groups within the service structure.

**Korea:** In April 2008, the General Service Office reported that they revised and reprinted the Korean version of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6), and published *Courage to Change* (B-16), *Twelve Steps and Traditions* (P-17), *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32), and *Alateen—a day at a time* (B-10) in soft cover.

In May, the 12th Al-Anon/Alateen Convention was held, and the theme was "The Twelve Steps." Many came to learn the impor-

tance of working the Twelve Steps and showed interest in learning how to apply the Twelve Steps in their lives.

It was also reported that due to outside literature being used during the adult children meetings, there is confusion regarding their identity as an Al-Anon adult children group. As a result, the General Service Office is trying to provide adequate CAL to support the Al-Anon focus in the meetings.



## AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

**Australia:** The General Service Office advised that the 2008 Conference approved on a three-year trial to appoint one General Service Board member from anywhere in Australia. The General Service Office also prepared radio spots on CD for radio stations and Community Service Announcements (CSA) for TV. They arranged electronic transmission of the TV announcements to networks and copies in tape format to smaller regional stations. These announcements were aired nationally during peak viewing times on several occasions.

The General Service Office produced a colorful Alateen poster in addition to the wallet card previously developed for public information work with teenagers. In addition, they produced an Al-Anon wallet card that gave local contact details.

**New Zealand:** The General Service Office moved to a new location. The GSO is once again open five days a week. The theme of the Regional Service Seminar was "Discover the Magic in Service." The newest member in attendance had been in Al-Anon for six weeks; the longest had been a member for 45 years.

After a call asking for additional help at the previous Conference, the General Service Office reported that the response was very positive. Automatic monthly donations increased, and, as a result, there are plans to start depositing an amount into the Reserve Account.

## NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

**Costa Rica:** World Service Office representatives visited the General Service Office for the second time. Members from Guatemala and Honduras attended this meeting as well. This was an opportunity to meet with the Board of Trustees and other members involved in service. All meetings were service-focused. The 2008 Conference decided to delay the decision and continue their discussions surrounding the purchase of a permanent location for the General Service Office.

**Guatemala:** For the first time, reprint permission was requested by the General Service Office. The World Service Office Board of Trustees granted permission, based on a recommendation from the International Coordination Committee.

**Honduras:** Members involved in the service structure increased their correspondence with the World Service Office as a result of the World Service Office's visit to Central America.

**Mexico:** A new Executive Director was hired effective March 1, 2008. The General Service Office coordinated their Sixth Convention that took place in Querétaro, México. Attendance totaled 4,676 people.

The World Service Office Executive Director was asked to speak at the 30th National Al-Anon Adult Children of Alcoholics Convention in December.



## SOUTH AMERICA

**Argentina:** At the invitation of Uruguay, the General Service Office sent two representatives to meet with World Service Office representatives during a scheduled visit in March.

The General Service Office has the responsibility of coordinating the Ibero-American meeting, which will take place in October 2009. Many participating countries in the past, with established national structures, have sponsored evolving service structures to this event. The World Service Office is sending representatives to this meeting.

After the General Service Office asked which service tools are appropriate to excerpt for public outreach, the World Service Office responded that excerpts from service tools such as "Inside Al-Anon" and the *Conference Summary* (P-46) can be used and may be produced in the form of a bookmark, a small leaflet, or similar limited-size formats. For further information, they were referred to pages 91-93 of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

The General Service Office produced a Public Outreach newsletter with articles similar to the WSO publication *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.

**Bolivia:** During the World Service Office visit to South America, members representing the service structure reported that a national service structure had been operating on a trial basis within Bolivia for some time. However, the World Service Office was not aware of this. After the World Service Office wrote requesting clarity, members reported that at their national meeting they decided not to register at this time as a General Service Office, but possibly as an Al-Anon Information Service.

**Brazil:** The 30th General Service Conference decided that there would be four regions. The Board of Trustees is now made up of four Trustees at Large and four Regional Trustees. A new Public Outreach poster was created. The Southeast Region's 18th Regional Service Seminar was a success. This region has the most groups, and 180 Al-Anon/Alateen members attended the Seminar.

**Chile:** Contact with the World Service Office has been re-established during visits made by Al-Anon members from the United States. Registration forms were updated, and new forms were completed and submitted to the World Service Office on behalf of the groups.

**Colombia:** At the request of the World Service Office, the General Service Office organized a service meeting inviting countries to meet with World Service Office representatives during a visit to Colombia. World Service Office representatives met with the Board of Trustees and members involved in service for two days and responded to questions. This was the first time the World Service Office visited Colombia.

**Ecuador:** Representatives from the service structure in Quito told the World Service Office that the service structure has been productive in 2008. They are taking the necessary steps to become a national service structure. Highlights of events included a National Service Convention in Quito, three regional service events, their second National Alateen Convention, and their third National Conference.

**Paraguay:** Representatives reported on behalf of the service structure that the program has been working for 32 years in Paraguay thanks to the message brought in by a friend of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon, who was a member of a religious order.

Presently, ten groups are operating in the capital city of Asunción and meet on the second Sunday of each month in order to study the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, and slogans. They are now taking steps to form an Intergroup.

**Peru:** A service meeting hosted by the General Service Office was held with participation from Ecuador, Bolivia, and World Service Office representatives. For Peru, this was the first time the World Service Office visited the country. Indications from the General Service Office were that all meetings were very productive and timely for all in attendance.

**Uruguay:** During a scheduled visit, World Service Office representatives met with members involved in service (including mostly Trustees) for two days in Uruguay and responded to questions from those present. There were also representatives present from Argentina. This was the first time the World Service Office visited Uruguay. Topics included attending the IAGSM, Zonal Meetings, encouraging members to become trusted servants, literature, reprint permission, Alateen, and general group questions.

**Venezuela:** The General Service office was unable to attend the service meeting coordinated by Colombia's General Service Office during the World Service Office visit. The World Service Office was advised that they had a successful 2008 Service Conference. As a highlight it was indicated that a safety and behavior guideline for Alateen and for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service was passed at the Conference.



## 2008 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Strategic Planning is a new way for the Board to do its work and at this time our reporting process is a work in progress. Currently, monthly task and thought force progress is evaluated by the Executive Committee and quarterly updates of the entire Plan are submitted to the Board.

The Strategic Plan is a flexible document and is altered according to our current needs. During the past year there have been many changes. As you read through the Strategic Plan Update, you will find that some goals and objectives have been revised and do not resemble the goals and objectives as reported here.

Some of the work of the Plan has become operational and other parts have been archived as the work is completed. Systems for maintaining the Archives and Operational Plan are currently being developed. There will always be a record of past work.

### Theme Groups:

In July 2008, theme group chairs were appointed, and all members of the Board and Executive Committee were assigned to a Work Group. These Work Groups collaborate between Board meetings and meet quarterly during Board week to keep their work under their theme moving. As projects progress, the Plan is kept up-to-date, new goals and objectives are developed, and the Work Group suggests Board priorities from their theme. Recommendations from their meetings to add, delete, or alter any part of the Plan are given to Strategic Plan Oversight for review before Strategic Plan Oversight submits it to the Board for approval. The theme group chairs compile monthly updates and quarterly reports to submit to the Executive Committee for evaluation.

### Theme Definitions:

In June, the Strategic Plan Oversight held a conference call with the Strategic Plan Theme Work Group Chairs to formulate definitions of the four themes. Strategic Plan Oversight refined the definitions, and they were passed by the Board of Trustees at the July meeting.

## Priorities for 2008

Strategic Plan Oversight recommended three priorities for 2008. At the July Board meeting, the following priorities were approved by the Board of Trustees:

### 1. Support and Strengthen Our Structure

**Goal #5:** Evaluate and recreate the structure of the WSO selected committees and other program delivery processes in innovative ways rendering them dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task-oriented to fulfill the current needs of the organization.

**Objective #2:** Create an innovative Regional Service Seminar by 2008.

## Everyone, Everywhere

All people, all over the globe will recognize the Al-Anon Family Groups name; what we do, how to contact us, where and when to find a meeting. In this way, the Al-Anon program of recovery will be available to all who have been affected by someone else's drinking.

## Universal Understanding of Recovery

The meaning of recovery will be understood by everyone—both within and outside of Al-Anon Family Groups—including professionals, government agencies, and the general public. The definition of recovery will be clear and concise, including how membership in Al-Anon leads to recovery.

## Unlimited, Abundant Resources

Tapping into the vast resources within and outside the fellowship we have the ability to reach everyone in need of Al-Anon Family Groups, regardless of cost, experience, situation, location, etc.

## Support and Strengthen Our Structure

Improving communication among all service structures and educating members regarding the principles and the Legacies of the program will make Al-Anon Family Groups' foundation firm.

### Progress:

#### RSS Task Force

**Charge:** Develop an action plan to create an innovative RSS by the year 2009 that is dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task-oriented, using the ideas generated by the RSS Thought Force of 2008. The plan should include:

- The intended date of the event(s)
- The length of the event: For example: 1 day; 2 days, 1 night; 2 1/2 days and 2 nights
- Bid process that can be sent to the region
- Cost of a meal/housing package, if applicable
- Space for meetings—who will provide; pay
- A team of presenters

- A list of resources to be provided by the Host Committee of the Area or Region where the event is to be held.
- Definitions of the roles of the WSO and the Host Committee

The RSS task force was appointed in July 2008. A presentation for the 2009 World Service Conference has been prepared for approval by the January 2009 Board Meeting.

*The work of this group is in progress.*

## 2. Support and Strengthen Our Structure

**Goal #5:** Evaluate and recreate the structure of the WSO selected committees and other program delivery processes in innovative ways rendering them dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task-oriented to fulfill the current needs of the organization.

**Objective #1:** By July 2008, using specific criteria, evaluate the selected committees and redefine their current definition and operation to ensure that they meet the on-going needs of the organization.

### Selected Committees Task Force

**Charge:** The Task Force on Selected Committees will strategize how to ensure the participation of the Conference in the Committees.

Background material on the 14 selected committees was researched by the WSO archivist. The history of the selected committees was then written and presented to the WSC in 2008.

#### Progress:

##### Public Outreach

In 2007, the Committee was restructured on a three-year trial basis. The requirements for At-Large members now include eligible members throughout the U.S. and Canada who are adept at using e-mail and the Internet (2007). The number of At-Large members is five.

##### *Year two of a three-year trial*

##### Canadian Public Outreach

Beginning January 2007, the Committee was suspended for a three-year trial. During the trial period, a Canadian presence on the Public Outreach Committee was requested.

##### *Year two of three-year trial suspension*

##### Public Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee

In January 2007, the Committee was suspended as currently structured for a three-year trial period.

##### *Year two of three-year trial suspension*

##### Conference Committee

In 2007, the Conference Committee was restructured to plan the 2008 WSC as the Conference Leadership Team which includes the Executive Director, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Director of Member Services, Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference, and two Trustees who serve as Conference Chair and Co-Chair. After the 2008 WSC, it was determined that the trial was proceeding successfully so it will continue planning the 2009 WSC.

##### *Year two of three-year trial*

### Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC)

The FEAC Chair is now a volunteer At-Large member and the Trustee is the liaison between the At-Large members and the Board of Trustees. This was approved at the 2008 Annual Board Meeting.

### *Year two of three-year trial*

### Admissions/Handbook

In 2007, there were discussions about reorganizing the Admissions/Handbook Committee as a Work Group. At the 2008 WSC Work Group meeting, there were discussions about suspending the Work Group and using task forces to deal with specific issues that may arise. No decisions were made.

## Using Technology in Areas Thought Force

**Charge:** Brainstorm what presentations for the Areas' and Districts' use would encompass and look like.

- List all the ways technology can be used in the Areas/Districts.
- What are the cost ramifications?
- How would it connect to the Traditions?
- List the pros and cons of each technology
- What tools would be needed?
- What training and techniques would be needed?
- What maintenance to keep the presentations current would be needed?

A Thought Force met at the 2008 WSC and discussed ways of making the fellowship aware of ways in which technology can be used to reach younger members without disenfranchising the older members.

*This Thought Force has been disbanded.*

## 3. Everyone, Everywhere

**Goal #3:** During all planning and business meetings, the Board of Trustees will have a priority focus of spending 80% of time in forward-thinking strategic work and 20% of time in evaluation. Evaluations will include a quarterly review of the WSO's activities and the Board's self review.

**Objective #1:** By October 2007, the Board will have adopted and successfully used a tool which will be an accurate evaluation of its work and also assist in the oversight of WSO's work.

#### Progress:

##### Board Self-Evaluation Thought Force

**Charge:** To come up with suggestions on how the Board can accurately evaluate itself; improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its work; identify early successes to maximize potential problems; focus on outcomes; assist in oversight of the WSO; and monitor and synthesize the information. To recommend tools that may be used to accomplish this, this Thought Force will not be developing an evaluation tool. A task force will complete this task at a later time.

The Board Self-Evaluation Thought Force met in October. Initial research and potential resources have been shared with the group. At this time, members are working individually.

*The work of this Thought Force is in progress.*

## Progress on Goals and Objectives

### Unlimited Abundant Resources

**Goal #1:** Discover and use universal resources.

**Objective #2:** Within the next 3 years, raise the allowable limit of bequests.

**Progress:** Motion approved at the 2008 WSC

“The WSO may accept a *one-time* bequest from an Al-Anon member in any amount, provided its use is not restricted by the donor. Bequest amounts, up to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year’s audit, will be placed in the General Fund.

Members may give more than the ten percent; however, the portion of the bequest above ten percent will be reported separately on the financial statements. The World Service Conference will authorize the use of these excess amounts and the authorized expenditures will be administered by the Board of Trustees. These excess amounts are not available for general purposes, unless further authorized by the Conference.”

*The work of this Task Force is completed.*

**Goal #2:** The Finance Committee will ensure that the budget reflects the priorities of the Strategic Plan as set by the Board of Trustees.

**Objective #1:** Increase the contributions 30% by the year 2012.

### Member Contribution Thought Force

**Charge:** To develop a big question concerning member contributions to bring forward for discussion at the 2009 World Service Conference.

The Thought Force developed the big question for the 2009 World Service Conference and is working on framing and background to present to the Conference.

*The work of this group is in progress.*

### Family Member Contribution Task Force

**Charge:** To explore the idea of allowing contributions from the non-member family of an Al-Anon member in memory of a deceased Al-Anon Member and formulate a big question for the 2009 World Service Conference.

This Task Force was appointed early in 2008. Using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process, they are continuing to work on refining a proposed big question.

*The work of this group is in progress.*

### Support and Strengthen Our Structure

#### Professional Partners of the Board Task Force Report

**Charge:** To implement the Objective and develop a range of strategies sufficient to allow the Board the opportunity to weigh the pros and cons of each partnership.

The Professional Partners of the Board Task Force recommended to the Board that its objective be changed from consideration of non-member Board members to identifying professionals who could become partners and work with Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to make our program available to more people. The Rev. Dr. James White, president of the Johnson Institute, was selected from a number of African-American leaders and he met with the Task Force in October.

The purpose behind the meeting was to build a relationship, generate ideas to reach the African-American community, and to be a credible organization within that community. James White is an ordained minister and a veteran addictions recovery counselor.

James White commended the Board for being aware of the problem and for taking measures to address it. He spoke at length with the Task Force.

He reminded us to ask the right questions. Instead of asking ourselves, “How do we get more African-Americans to attend Al-Anon meetings as they exist now?” We could ask, “How can we deliver the program to meet the needs of African-Americans?” Going into a community with the assumption that you offer the solution can be offensive and invasive.

In dealing with African-American clergy, he suggested: ‘Work with the willing. Effort and time should be maximized with people who are willing and open to Al-Anon’s approach to recovery. Do not waste time or effort on those who are staunchly resistant.’

During his time in Virginia Beach, James White was able to attend an Al-Anon meeting for the first time. He stated he could identify with many of the members in the meeting and sees the value of family recovery. The Task Force would like to follow up with Reverend White about his impressions of the Task Force meeting and the program.

Task Force members shared additional personal insights: Reaching out to African-Americans is Twelfth Step work. Current Al-Anon members need to examine their behavior in meetings and how it can alienate and offend newcomers or potential members. One example of the tendency to alienate is the Newcomer’s Welcome that presumes to tell newcomers what they need and why they are there.

The Faith Partners program has a lot of potential for Al-Anon, but the Board needs to understand the ramifications of partnering with another program within the Traditions and Concepts. It was commented that the Board may not want to take the approach that James White offered, but the meeting was valuable because he was a fresh voice and offered new perspective, and brought many issues to light.

More than one strategy is needed in outreach efforts. There is a tendency to have a “one-size-fits-all” approach to attracting members. Common core values between Al-Anon and potential communities need to be identified and outreach efforts tailored to highlight them.

*The work of this group is in progress.*

**Goal #4:** Fill Board vacancies with competent, able members who fulfill the current needs of the Board.

**Objective #1:** The Board will annually review its composition to determine what skills it will look for in upcoming Trustee vacancies (RTs and TALs)

### Board Profile Task Force

**Charge:** To develop a Board Profile Chart that lists the skills and qualifications necessary to meet the needs of both the Board and the organization and that will assist the CCT, RCTs, and Nominating Committee in the Trustee selection process.

The Task Force is developing a chart to annually identify the skills and qualifications of present Board members to assist in determining the skills and abilities needed from the potential candidates.

The Task Force will develop and present a process that keeps the information updated to reflect the current Board and organization needs and presents the information to Conference members prior to their recommending and evaluating candidates.

*The work of this group is in progress.*

### New and Revised Goals and Objectives

The Professional Partners of the Board Task Force recommended a change to the wording of Goal #1, Objective #1. Strategic Plan Oversight supported the recommendation, and it was approved by the Board of Trustees.

## Everyone, Everywhere

**Goal #1:** The Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee and the World Service Office Staff will be catalysts to bring together potential partners who can make a difference in the lives of those affected by someone else's drinking.

**Objective #1 originally stated:** To invite one non-member professional partner annually to attend and observe a Board of Trustees meeting.

The recommendation was to change the objective to read:

**Objective #1:** To invite one non-member professional partner annually to meet with the Board of Trustees.

The intent behind the objective is not to have a professional evaluate our Board meetings, but to have an open dialogue with a professional on how to inform other professionals in the field about Al-Anon and how to convince their clients to attend meetings. This would not require the professional to attend an entire Board meeting.

***This goal and objective will be moved from Everyone, Everywhere to Universal Understanding of Recovery.***

As a result of a number of discussions at the Training Weekend, many of the Theme Work Groups had suggestions to add, delete, move, or rework various Goals and Objectives within the Plan. The Board gave conceptual approval to some of these changes but recognized that Strategic Plan Oversight needed to review them and bring them back to the Board in January for final approval.

The Board also approved Strategic Plan Oversight archiving Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives, or Task Force work that has been completed, evaluated, and approved by the Board of Trustees. This action will occur annually after the final Strategic Plan evaluation.

There was also recognition that the Board needed to separate its strategic activity as outlined in the Plan, which is long-term from its operational or on-going work. As a result, the Board voted conceptually to create a list of operational activities separate from the Strategic Plan in 2009. Several of the current Goals, Objectives, and Activities would then be moved from the Strategic Plan to the Operational Plan.



## 2009 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

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### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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#### Trustees at Large

Judy A.  
Beverly A.  
Roger C.  
Doreen D.  
Mary G.  
Vicki H.  
Laurie K.  
Margot M.  
Mary Ann R.

#### Regional Trustees

Lorraine F., Canada West  
Frank R., US Northeast  
Penny R., US Northwest  
Karen R., US Southwest  
Carol V., US North Central  
Doris W., US South Central

#### Executive Committee

Judith P., Chairperson  
Ric B., Executive Director  
Mary Ann R., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)  
Frank R., Treasurer  
Mary G., Policy Chairperson  
Julie F., Member at Large  
Zelda R., Member at Large  
Robert S., Staff member

#### Non-Trustee Committee Chairpersons

Annette T., ECRPM Chairperson\*\*

#### World Service Office Staff

Ric B., Executive Director  
David Zach, Director of Business Services\*  
Barbara O., Director of Member Services  
Robert S., Director of Communication Services  
Claire R., Associate Director of Communications—Professionals  
Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Needs  
Marsha W., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International  
Pat Q., Associate Director of Communications—Media  
Suzanne M., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference  
Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—Literature

#### International Representatives

Hartmut G., Germany\*\*  
María Del Carmen T., Mexico\*\*  
Nadia M., Italy\*\*  
Nuala C., UK & Eire\*\*

\*Nonmember, non-voting    \*\*Non-voting

## AREA DELEGATES

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Rodney B., Alabama  
 Sharon B., Alaska  
 Rose Anna J., Alberta/Northwest Territories  
 Virginia S., Arizona  
 Cindy H., Arkansas  
 Dennis G., British Columbia/Yukon  
 John S., California North  
 Sandie E., California South  
 Tom B., Colorado  
 Gina R., Connecticut  
 Connie D., Delaware  
 Terry F., Florida North  
 Linda S., Florida South  
 Jeff G., Georgia  
 Kay R., Hawaii  
 Berta R., Idaho  
 Ramona C., Illinois North  
 Marcy M., Illinois South  
 Theresa D., Indiana  
 Lorraine R., Iowa  
 Charla C., Kansas  
 Linda M., Kentucky  
 Clif B., Louisiana  
 Melissa F., Maine  
 Louise R., Manitoba  
 Judy C., Maritime Provinces  
 Charlie S., Maryland/District of Columbia  
 Patricia N., Massachusetts  
 Debbie K., Michigan  
 Mary M., Minnesota North  
 Meagan M., Minnesota South  
 Skip G., Mississippi  
 Richard B., Missouri  
 Pennie K., Montana  
 Kerri K., Nebraska

Judy K., Nevada  
 Marilee P., Newfoundland/  
 Labrador  
 Dotty B., New Hampshire  
 Fran M., New Jersey  
 Chris M., New Mexico  
 Elaine R., New York North  
 Marcia B., New York South  
 Paula M., North Carolina/  
 Bermuda  
 Darcy A., North Dakota  
 Sandra F., Ohio  
 Jacki S., Oklahoma  
 Leona W., Ontario North  
 Claire D., Ontario South  
 Roland C., Oregon  
 Christine F., Pennsylvania  
 Esther M., Puerto Rico  
 Trudy C., Quebec East  
 Micheline B., Quebec West  
 Marcia W., Rhode Island  
 Barbara L., Saskatchewan  
 Linda R., South Carolina  
 Judy S., South Dakota  
 Cindy H., Tennessee  
 Rosie M., Texas East  
 Cindy K., Texas West  
 Norma D., Utah  
 Christa A., Vermont  
 Donald F., Virginia  
 Leslie N., Washington  
 Linda R., West Virginia  
 Renee H., Wisconsin  
 Judy G., Wyoming

# The Paths to Group Conscience



**Member to Member  
Group to Group**



**Member to Group to  
Trusted Servant**



**Trusted Servant to  
Trusted Servant**



**Carrying the Message Back**