

# WSC2011

## Expanding our community of *hope* by embracing:

- △ Yesterday's foundations
- △ Today's successes
- △ Tomorrow's possibilities

60 years Al-Anon Family Groups



Ampliamos nuestra comunidad de esperanza al acoger:

- △ los cimientos del pasado
- △ los éxitos del presente
- △ las posibilidades del futuro

Élargir notre communauté d'espoir en intégrant:

- △ Les bases d'hier
- △ Les succès d'aujourd'hui
- △ Les possibilités de demain

# AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

## 2011 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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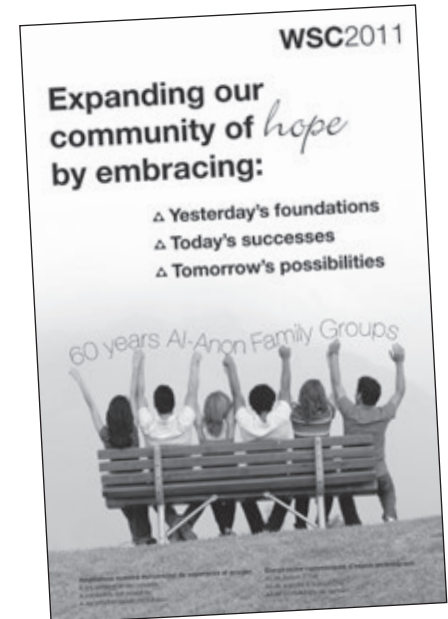
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**"Our World  
Service  
Conference (WSC)  
is the active voice  
and the effective  
group conscience  
of our society in  
world affairs."**

*2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen  
Service Manual (P-24/27),  
page 176*

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Headquarters, Inc. 2011

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

Mary Ann R.  
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The day before the 2011 Conference convened, the Chairperson of the Board reviewed the roles of the members of Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, and Task Forces with all Conference members. The intent of the session was to clarify the role of Conference members as it pertains to participation in these groups.

The Chairperson of the Board began by saying, "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 they do not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service department they are related to, they may make recommendations about any work they are doing or considering.
- A Work Group may also be an originating body from where a Thought or Task Force can 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 brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity. They use the resources available such as members of the Thought Force, other Conference members including staff with whom they have a relationship, and other Al-Anon members from their Areas. For example, a problem identified could be a lack of clarity regarding roles. Strategies could include writing job descriptions (the idea not the actual job description); components of a guideline; or adding text to a portion of the *Service Manual* to clarify. The objective is to identify the potential idea not to write the actual text itself.

If there are facts that are unknown, they can be flagged in the KBDM questions under "Things we don't know but wish we did." The Thought Force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions. A Thought Force may lay the foundation for the work of a Task Force. 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 may make recommendations to the body that created them and ultimately to the Board of Trustees.

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

- For the purpose of today's discussion, all the members of the WSC are members of these groups.





- Committees and Work Groups may also have at-large members that 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 Committee, 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 and level of knowledge.
- 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, or attempt to change it to 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 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 unable to complete a task or to 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's role:
  - 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.
  - Ask the group to 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.
  - Overall sees 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."

## 2011 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. Delegates were given the option not to be assigned to a Committee, Task Force, or Thought Force.

Assignment	Panel 49 (2009-2011)	Panel 50 (2010-2012)	Panel 51 (2011-2013)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Terry F., Chair, FL(N) Theresa D., IN Rosie M., TX(E)	Patsy A., Chair Elect, NC/BDA Cindy C., MT Jeannette M., MP Anne S., VT	Petra L., NY(S) Rhonda P., SD
Literature Committee	Micheline B., QC(W) Sandra F., OH Christine F., PA Linda M., KY	Daphne F., MS Jane S., OK	Linda B., SK Craig M., NE
Public Outreach Committee	Cindy K., TX(W) Debbie K., MI	Shirley T., BC/YK	Kathleen B., AK Rita C., ME Margaret R., ON(N)
Task Force to Develop Presentations that Will Help to Strengthen the Communications Between the AIS, Areas, and Districts	Cecilia K., AZ, Chair Cindy H., TN Linda S., FL(S)	Magdalena E., WA Phyllis M., VA	Sylvia G., LA Nancy P., NH Denise S., NV
Task Force to Develop a Presentation for Areas on How to Reach Out to Minority Groups	Ramona C., IL(N) Meagan M., MN(S) Kay R., HI	Cheryl A., WI, Chair Paul G., NJ	Kathy B., ID Shirley R., AR Norm W., NM
Thought Force on Members Involved in Service Work Who Are Unable to Effectively Fulfill the Responsibility of the Position	Charla C., KS Elaine R., NY(N)	Vicki L., GA, Chair Jocelyne L., QC(E) Bette R., OR	Sara M., PR Carol W., WY
Thought Force on How to Utilize the <i>Service Manual</i>	Connie D., DE	Jane H., AB/NWT, Chair Teri M., CO	Rita C., CT Geneva D., MO Jan R., SC
Thought Force on How Changes to the Environment Outside of Al-Anon May Affect Our Meetings and the Fellowship as a Whole	Charlie S., MD/DC	Elaine L. MN(N), Chair Vickie C., AL	Pauline M., NF/LAB Maddie P., IA Mary Y., UT

## SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

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Prior to the opening of the World Service Conference (WSC), a session was held for the Delegates to discuss successes, concerns, and special projects in the Areas. All other Conference attendees were invited to attend as guests, with no voice. This year's Chairperson, Ramona C., Panel 49, Illinois North, had asked each Area Delegate to submit one success, concern, and special project in advance of the session to the Recorder, Christine F., Panel 49, Pennsylvania.

During the session, Delegates shared their previously submitted successes, concerns, and special projects.

**Area successes included:**

- Looking into developing electronic Area World Service Committee meetings.
- Holding conference calls between Assemblies, to keep groups on track.
- Showing a public service announcement on cinema screens during the holidays to reach younger audiences.
- Increasing bilingual participation at all levels, including appointment of Spanish Coordinators and purchasing translation equipment for Area use.
- Inviting Alateens to attend and participate in the Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) training, so that they are informed and become part of the process.

**Area concerns included:**

- Finding members willing to serve as Area Alateen Process Person.
- Failing to attract more Spanish-speaking members to Assembly.
- Addressing ways to deal with members who stalk or who make other members feel unsafe.
- Looking at the long-term viability of Alateen in the Area due to lack of Alateen members.

Before the session ended, Cheryl A., Panel 50, Wisconsin, was elected the Chairperson for Sharing Area Highlights in 2012, and Vicki L., Panel 50, Georgia, was elected to serve as Recorder.



## OPENING DINNER

Prior to the official opening of the Conference, Conference members and International Representatives attended the Opening Dinner. The Co-Chairperson of the Conference opened with the theme: Expanding our community of hope by embracing:

- ▲ Yesterday's foundations
- ▲ Today's successes
- ▲ Tomorrow's possibilities

She asked all attendees to remember our pioneers as we celebrated our 51st World Service Conference.

During dinner, all attendees were asked to select a penny from a dish of coins that were on each table. Each member took a penny and noted the year on the coin. Members shared something notable or remarkable about themselves from the year printed on the coin. Each table selected one member to share a story with the entire WSC.

### Some of the stories included:

- In 1994, my oldest daughter was graduating from high school; my husband and I took in an exchange student, as well as one of our daughter's friends, whose parents had a lot of addiction problems. So, we had three girls who were 18, plus another daughter and our son living in our house. Our daughter left for college, and her friend ended up committing suicide. These were pre-Al-Anon days for me, and I wonder if I might have been able to help her if I had already found help for myself.
- I attended the Regional Service Seminar in 2006 with a very negative frame of mind. I complained about Knowledge-Based Decision-Making in the midst of the presentation. The Trustee and Delegate giving the presentation calmly thanked me for sharing my viewpoint.
- My mother was living with me in 1985, and I found out she had Alzheimer's. She had been the first Delegate from my Area.
- In 1987, I listed all my problems in my marriage and mailed the letter to the WSO for publication in *The Forum*. I felt relieved, until months later the issue arrived with my story in it, titled, "The Perfect Man."
- I was living in Sudan with my husband and five-year-old daughter in 1996. I had a bit of a breakdown over my daughter not wanting waffles. I locked myself in the bedroom and prayed for a spiritual solution. Two years later I found Al-Anon, and I realized my prayer had been answered.

Following dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to "pin" the new Panel 51 Delegates. Each first-time Conference attendee received a 2011 WSC pin.

Judith P., Chairperson of the Executive Committee, was the opening dinner spiritual speaker. (See page 71 for her talk.)

After thanking the speaker, the Conference Co-Chair noted, "Each voice we hear this week, every idea shared, is spoken by one of those chosen by their Area with the help of a Higher Power, to lead Al-Anon Family Groups into its possibilities!" before closing with the Al-Anon Declaration.

Vicki H.

*Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee*





## CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Carol V.  
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Vicki H.  
Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Suzanne M.  
Associate Director of  
Member Services—Conference

The 2011 Conference theme,  
Expanding our community of hope by embracing:

▲ Yesterday's foundations

▲ Today's successes

▲ Tomorrow's possibilities

laid the foundation for the spiritual tone of this year's World Service Conference (WSC). The ideas in this year's theme led to thoughtful discussion, creative thinking, and focused decision-making throughout the 51st WSC, held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 11-15.

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

"Sixty years ago this May, the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous gave Lois W. a list of 87 family groups and individuals in the United States, Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Ireland. Lois and Anne B. sent them each a letter and 56 groups replied expressing the desire to form a service office. The Al-Anon Clearing House was formed in the second floor study at Stepping Stones, the home of Lois and Bill W. A.A.'s Twelve Steps were adapted, and the name 'Al-Anon,' a contraction of 'Alcoholics Anonymous,' was chosen.

"The first trial Al-Anon Conference was held in New York in 1961, where the Traditions were accepted. The World Service Conference approved the concept of Conference Approved Literature in 1963. In 1970, the World Service Conference affirmed the Twelve Concepts of Service for use by Al-Anon Family Groups.

"The Legacies of Al-Anon Family Groups are yesterday's foundations.

"Today's successes show in our increased number of registered groups and electronic meetings; safe Alateen chat rooms; TEAM events; the increase in the number of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service; Steps, Traditions, and Concepts blogs; e-Communities; podcasts; PSAs; Public Outreach and Members' Web sites; and our public outreach magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.

"Blog,' 'podcast,' 'e-Community,' and even 'Web site' were words that I would not have uttered 15 years ago. Today, technology is a reality that keeps on growing daily and keeps us growing daily.

"Some of Tomorrow's possibilities could be:

- Our Al-Anon International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, July 5-7, 2013, will have over 10,000 Al-Anon participants.
- *Forum* subscriptions will equal the number of Al-Anon members.
- Al-Anon and Alateen membership will increase by three hundred percent!

"My ex-husband used to say that I lived in a fairy-tale world. Today I guess in some ways I still live in that world. I want Al-Anon and Alateen Family Groups to be the first thing family members hear about whenever they discover alcoholism in their lives. I want our beloved program to continue to grow and continue to be there for my children and my children's children. And I still want that happily-ever-after ending. A quote from *Alcoholism the Family Disease* (P-4) states: "One thing we can be sure of—if we do our best today, our tomorrows will certainly be better than our yesterdays."

The Chairperson continued her opening message with two excerpts from the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*:

"The World Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon. It is the practical means by which the group conscience can speak; it is the voice of world Al-Anon and the guarantee that our world services shall continue to carry on under all conditions.

"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 it the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen's harmony and survival." (*2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, "World Service Handbook" section, p. 131)

Then the Chairperson stated that Concept Two tells us on page 175 of the *Service Manual*, "The many Al-Anon groups scattered all over the world hold in their hands the group conscience." These groups, including your group back home as well as mine, have "delegated complete administrative and operational authority to the World Service Conference and its service arms."

"This year's 51st World Service Conference body—each and every one of us—will be taking actual and spiritual responsibility for our world services.

“Throughout this week we, as trusted servants, will work together to expand our community of hope by embracing yesterday’s foundations, today’s successes, and tomorrow’s possibilities to ensure the future of Al-Anon Family Groups.

“Some of us may feel a little nervous about this big responsibility. We are going to work together, we are going to “presume goodwill,” we are going to have fun, and we are going to celebrate Al-Anon. Are you excited about what we can accomplish this year? Let’s get this group conscience started.”

With a rap of a gavel, the Conference Chairperson announced, “I now formally open the 2011 World Service Conference!”

After the official opening of the Conference, the first order of business was approval of a motion brought by the Conference Leadership Team to seat certain people who could provide critical information to the Conference, representatives from other structures, and a consultant on cultural competency.

### The following persons were seated:

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

##### **David Zach**

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

##### **María Evangelina de León G.**

*International Representative—Mexico  
Al-Anon Member*

##### **Rose A.**

*International Representative—New Zealand  
Al-Anon Member*

#### **With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:**

##### **Linda B.**

*Chairperson, Executive Committee for  
Real Property Management  
Al-Anon Member*

#### **With voice limited to Cultural Competency, but no vote:**

##### **Dr. Vivian Jackson**

*Research Instructor, National Center for cultural Competence,  
Georgetown University Center for Child  
and Human Development  
Non-Al-Anon Member*

#### **With no voice and no vote:**

##### **Nicolette Stephens**

*Information Analyst  
Non-Al-Anon Member*

The motion carried by consensus. (See WSC Motion #1, page 82)



## 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 51st World Service Conference. Our theme this year is:

Expanding our community of hope by embracing:

△ Yesterday’s foundations

△ Today’s successes

△ Tomorrow’s possibilities

“Our World Service Conference has a rich history beginning in 1961. Yesterday’s foundations were built on the spiritual principles of the Al-Anon program; the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts. From the very beginning, the importance of an informed group conscience was stressed when Lois and Anne wrote to registered groups seeking their opinions on ways to become organized. When Lois incorporated the Clearing House in 1954, it was to provide a firm foundation of sound financial, legal, and spiritual principles on which to build Al-Anon’s future.

“Because of yesterday’s foundations, we are able to enjoy ‘Today’s successes.’ When called upon to make decisions this week, we have those principles to guide us. Our world outside of Al-Anon is ever-changing and some of those changes, while difficult at times to accept, have helped in uniting our membership and the Conference as a whole.

“Technology, for one, has improved our daily contact with one another and allows us to share our thoughts on venues such as the Conference members’ bulletin board. Our Public Outreach Web site—including the PSAs and podcasts—have reached many potential members.

“What are ‘Tomorrow’s possibilities’? What direction should we take to continue to reach all those people affected by the disease of alcoholism while maintaining our spiritual principles?

“To paraphrase a quote from *Lois Remembers*: Our survival depends upon our spiritual growth and our application and acceptance of these principles must continue to grow or we will perish. There is no standing still, for stagnation is retrogression.

“I challenge all of you this week to place the good of Al-Anon Family Groups foremost in all of your decisions, as we look to the future and discuss ‘Tomorrow’s possibilities’ while preserving our spiritual foundations.”

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

### TWELVE TRADITIONS

- 1 Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.
- 2 For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.
- 3 The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend.
- 4 Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.
- 5 Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA, ourselves, by encouraging and understanding our alcoholic relatives, and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics.
- 6 Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Although a separate entity, we should always co-operate with Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 7 Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
- 8 Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
- 9 Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
- 10 The Al-Anon Family Groups have no opinion on outside issues; hence our name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
- 11 Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members.
- 12 Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

Al-Anon Family Groups ©

# ORIENTATION

## Conference Goals

Mary Ann R.  
*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

<b>Goal #1</b> Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the structure, and be able to articulate Conference decisions.	<b>Goal #2</b> The spiritual tone of the World Service Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members.	<b>Goal #3</b> Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will presume goodwill.
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The Chairperson of the Board began the session by saying, “In 1987, as the Delegate from Connecticut, I attended my first World Service Conference held in Tarrytown, New York. At that time, we discussed the issue of adult children who wanted to have literature created that was specific to adult children issues and to register meetings with the name ‘Adult Children’ in the title. If I were to describe the conversations that followed, I would have to say that this was a very ‘hot topic.’

“I recall several of us visiting with Lois W., Al-Anon’s beloved cofounder. When asked her thoughts on the adult children issue, her response was, ‘Let them alone, and they will find where they belong.’ She was encouraging us to be welcoming instead of oppositional.

“Lois knew that over time we would experience change and perhaps disharmony, but that through our Legacies, we would find the best answers. Lois had faith in those who would follow her, yet she warned us of the need for growth—‘growth in spirit, more than numbers.’ ‘We believe the principles upon which A.A. and Al-Anon are founded are fundamental for all time and all people. And yet our individual acceptance and application of these principles must continue to grow or we as societies will perish. For stagnation is retrogression. There is no standing still.’ (*Lois Remembers*, p. 195.)

“This week we will continue that conversation on the growth of Al-Anon as we look to find the balance between the needs of our members and prospective members, and the preservation of our Legacies in an ever-changing environment.

“As we work together, let us strive to agree on what we wish to accomplish and strive to maintain clarity and flexibility in that process. Let us pray for the guidance of our Higher Power, as we seek to practice our Al-Anon principles in all our affairs.”

The Chairperson of the Board reviewed the three Conference goals.

### The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct as its members presume goodwill.

Every member of the body—Delegates, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and staff—has a role at this Conference.

The Delegates bring the viewpoint of their Area to the WSC and act as the channel through which information flows between their Area and the WSO.

The Executive Committee serves as a resource and brings the experience of the day-to-day oversight of operations to the WSC.

The Board of Trustees serves as a resource, presents financial and policy reports, and brings the perspective of worldwide Al-Anon to the Conference.

The staff serves as a resource, reports activities to the Conference, and brings a working knowledge of plans and processes for service to the groups.

The Chairperson of the Board noted that other Conference participants had also been seated. The Director of Business Services provides financial reports and responds to questions regarding financial matters. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management advises the Conference *if* the Board and the WSO are not in compliance with the spirit and intent of Motion 12 (1994 WSC). International Representatives represent their service structure and serve as a link between their Conference and the WSC.



**Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference and the relationships within the structure.**

The purpose of the Conference is to come together to take care of the business of Al-Anon. 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 principal guarantor of the harmony and survival of Al-Anon and Alateen.

**Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will be able to support and communicate the Conference decisions.**

Delegates are a vital link in reporting the work of the Conference to their Assemblies. Their enthusiasm, energy, and ability to articulate Conference decisions will help to create interest in their Areas.

The Chairperson of the Board reviewed the four essential elements for the “Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process to reach an informed group conscience” (KBDM):

- **Open Communication between leadership and membership:**

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

- **Dialogue before Deliberation:**

This element allows us to discuss the information, ask questions, and express concerns before we construct the motion. Often the discussion reveals that we really don’t need a motion; 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, members think they should have access to all information, whether they are part of the decision-making body or not. Concept Four tells us, “Participation is the key to harmony.” The 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.

Following the full discussions we have here at Conference and when a decision has been made, it is important that we all recognize and support the group conscience, whatever it is, whether we agree with it or not.

- **We exist in a Culture of Trust:**

Trust 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. 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.” We presume goodwill.

Before the session closed, a few Delegates shared their Areas success in using Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process to reach an informed group conscience.



Member to Member  
Group to Group



Member to Group  
to Trusted Servant



Trusted Servant to  
Trusted Servant



Carrying the Message Back





# APPROVALS

## 2010 Auditor's Report

Each year, the Director of Business Services explains the purpose of the audit and its details. The financial records of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., are audited by an independent certified public accounting firm. The auditors, after reviewing all the materials provided, found that the financial statements were in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit, 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. It can be found on the Members' Web site, [www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members).

Bev A.  
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach  
Director of Business Services  
(non-member)

### Conference members had the following questions:

- What is the average rate of return of the Reserve Fund?  
*AFG, Inc. has investments in CDs, bonds, and stocks. The past four years, the rate of return was 8 to 10%.*
- Why do we withdraw 4% each year?  
*We have been transferring from the Reserve Fund for several years. Before 2008, we transferred interest and dividends less management fees. This amount varied substantially from year to year. This method allows for some consistency and follows the example of other not for profit organizations, which take between 4 to 6 %. AFG, Inc. uses the lesser amount so that the Reserve Fund does increase a little bit in a normal year.*
- Has the Finance Committee looked at buying an insurance policy to insure funds above the normal FDIC insurance limits?  
*No, but the Finance Committee will look into that.*
- What is the review schedule?  
*Interim financial statements are reviewed monthly by the Finance and Executive Committees. Quarterly financial statements are reviewed by the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees during Board weeks.*
- I understood that salaries would be raised for staff, but they are lower.  
*There were no raises in 2010, but there will be in 2011. Some positions were not filled for part of 2010 resulting in lower salary costs.*
- I received a call from a member who does not feel members/groups should contribute to WSO because the Reserve Fund is so high—it appears that we don't need money.  
*The tax return is not a good place to look at that because it lumps everything together; it helps to look at the audit. It is a good business practice to have 6-12 months in reserve, in case something happens, so that services can continue. The Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee look at this annually to make sure the Reserve Fund isn't more than one year's operating expense.*
- Are there sub-accounts for some of those expenses so that AFG, Inc. knows where the percentages of some of those expenses are going?  
*Yes, we have 1,000 accounts—maybe more. These expenses are analyzed each time we look at the monthly statements with the Finance Committee and Executive Committee. We routinely compare income and expenses to the previous year.*
- The average cost to support a group is \$238.00. There is an additional specific cost for Alateen, and Spanish- and French-speaking groups. Do these groups raise the cost per group? Why is this not more transparent?  
*The WSO provides an equivalent amount of support and service to all groups. We do not believe that cost to service any one particular group of groups is significant.*

A motion to approve the 2010 Audited Financial Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #3, page 82.)

## 2011 Budget

Bev A.  
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach  
Director of Business Services  
(non-member)

The 2011 Budget was presented to Conference members by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2011 Budget shows that we expect expenses to be \$2,000 less than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,088,000 and revenues to be \$5,090,000. We made two adjustments from the preliminary Budget. After receiving and reviewing all our insurance bills, we reduced Office Services expense by \$3,000. Due to some unexpected expenses, we increased Repairs \$1,000. (See Schedule 1 on page 16.)

### PROJECTED EXPENSES

Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$305,000 from last year's actual expenses. Labor costs are expected to increase \$212,000 due to additional staff becoming eligible for the retirement plan and cost of living and merit increases effective June 1, 2011. 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 to be about \$164,000 more than last year as a result of the new book and *Forum* subscription income to be less as subscriptions are falling again. We are budgeting contributions to be \$1.5 million, which is about \$294,000 more than last year's actual contributions. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer to the General Fund up to 4% annually of the averaged fair value of the Reserve Fund over the preceding 36 months. Since the average value dropped for the 36 months ending December 31, 2010, we are budgeting investment income to be about \$40,000 less than last year.

It was also noted that:

- A consultant was hired in 2010 to look at salaries. The consultant determined that some AFG, Inc. salaries were below market. The Board of Trustees is taking steps to remedy that.
- Building occupancy costs are a little higher than last year due to air conditioner repairs.
- Repairs & Maintenance involved repairs to a scanner.
- Travel & Meetings expenses are up due to additional overseas trips including European, Ibero-American, and Central American zonal meetings.
- Direct Conference costs are higher because Panel 49 visited Stepping Stones prior to the Conference, increasing the overall cost of this Conference.

There was one question from the floor:

- Have you considered preparing a budget for the groups to reach \$1.5 million in contributions?  
*That information was presented in the Audit Report. Hopefully, Delegates will share with the groups what it costs the WSO to support a group vs. the average contribution within that Area.*

A motion to approve the 2011 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #2, page 82.)

	TOTAL GROUPS	TOTAL GROUPS CONTRIBUTING	% OF GROUPS CONTRIBUTING	AVERAGE FOR GROUPS CONTRIBUTING
<b>USA/CANADA SUMMARY</b>	15,760	9,137	57.98%	\$104.04
<b>ESTIMATED COST OF SERVICES PROVIDED</b>			\$3,754,444	
<b>AVERAGE COST OF SERVICES PER GROUP</b>			\$238.23	

## SCHEDULE 1

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

	2011 Budget	2011 Preliminary Budget	2010 Actual
<b><u>Operating Expenses</u></b>			
Salaries	2,543,000	2,543,000	2,405,880
Payroll Taxes	199,000	199,000	180,073
Employee Benefits	<u>601,000</u>	<u>601,000</u>	<u>545,098</u>
<b>Total Labor Costs</b>	<b>3,343,000</b>	<b>3,343,000</b>	<b>3,131,051</b>
Building Occupancy	255,000	255,000	234,053
Packing & Shipping (Net)	30,000	30,000	41,125
Postage	273,000	273,000	310,104
Telephone	55,000	55,000	54,650
Stationery & Office Supplies	102,000	102,000	128,678
Outreach Activities	20,000	20,000	2,498
Office Services & Expenses	158,000	161,000	129,717
Repairs & Maintenance	13,000	12,000	13,081
Travel & Meetings	263,000	263,000	175,852
Direct Conference Costs (Net) Schedule 2	82,000	82,000	57,534
Legal & Audit	45,000	45,000	43,857
Printing	183,000	183,000	182,854
Canadian Office	15,000	15,000	16,251
General Service Meeting			30,328
In-Office Volunteers	4,000	4,000	3,960
PSA Campaign	131,000	131,000	98,813
Miscellaneous	<u>26,000</u>	<u>26,000</u>	<u>33,118</u>
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>4,998,000</b>	<b>5,000,000</b>	<b>4,687,524</b>
Depreciation & Amortization (Exc. Bldg.)	<u>90,000</u>	<u>90,000</u>	<u>95,214</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$5,088,000</b>	<b>\$5,090,000</b>	<b>\$4,782,738</b>
<b><u>Estimated Revenue</u></b>			
Literature Sales less cost of printing	3,140,000	3,140,000	2,976,590
Contributions	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,206,323
Forum Subscriptions	255,000	255,000	279,521
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	<u>195,000</u>	<u>195,000</u>	<u>236,342</u>
<b>Total Estimated Revenue</b>	<b>5,090,000</b>	<b>5,090,000</b>	<b>\$4,698,776</b>

## 2010 Annual Report

Ric B.  
Executive Director

The 2010 Annual Report was sent to the Delegates prior to the Conference. The report included updates from various Board Committees, as well as WSO departments. In addition, Conference members were asked to submit questions in advance of the Conference, which were answered and distributed at the Conference.

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

- Are we following policies of organizational governance?  
*Yes, our auditor recently stated that AFG, Inc. is one of the most progressive organizations that they have audited.*
- Do we have a record retention policy? If so, what is it?  
*Yes, primarily this refers to how long e-mails and other correspondence are kept. The WSO is continuing to review the policy in order to establish clearer guidelines about what needs to go to Archives.*
- Is there a proposed date for releasing the update to the Newcomer Packet's look and content?  
*The Project Proposal has been completed, and a Task Force has been appointed. The completion date is unknown at this time.*
- Regarding Special Focus Groups, how is this maintained?  
*All Al-Anon groups are open to all members. Page 77 of the Service Manual reads, "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." We are attempting to move away from this terminology. See the explanation in the 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, "Groups at Work" section, "Naming the Group," p. 32.*

The Executive Director announced that updates, similar to the new Public Outreach site, will be made to the Members' Web site in the next year. He also announced that actress Ashley Judd had listed *How Al-Anon Works* as one of the "Books that Made a Difference to Ashley Judd" in the May 2011 issue of *O Magazine*.

The Director of Communication Services reported that *The Forum* publishes a wide range of sharings that reflect the diversity of Al-Anon's contemporary membership. These sharings, he said, will help newcomers—parents of alcoholics, for example—make a stronger initial connection with Al-Anon, when they see that the Al-Anon fellowship has members who have personal experience in situations exactly like theirs.

*The Forum* can be an important tool in sharing the program with new members. But the magazine cannot serve that function unless members are familiar enough with its content to be able to point the newcomers to a particular *Forum* story that will best meet their needs.

*The Forum* is still under-utilized by the fellowship. According to current subscription information, there is (on average) only one *Forum* subscriber for every five members, which probably means that most members do not subscribe to, or perhaps even read, *The Forum* regularly.

*The Forum* reaches all of the Al-Anon groups in the U.S. and Canada every month. It can strengthen our Al-Anon unity as more of us make it an integral part of our personal recovery program, and as we use it in a bigger part of our group meetings on a monthly basis.

The Director would like to see *The Forum* become a more pervasive tool at all of our meetings. Just as we come together into unity here at the World Service Conference, we can come together in unity every month with *The Forum*.

The Associate Director of Communications—Media gave an update on the Public Outreach Web site. He noted that there is access to the Members' Web site from the Public Outreach Web site. The question, "Are you attempting to access the Members' Web site?" will pop up, allowing the newcomer to return to the Public Outreach site before seeing a password-protected page.

The Associate Director also requested that Area Public Outreach Coordinators develop and maintain an e-mail distribution list of members within their Area who are available to help out with PO activities.

In addition, the Associate Director reported that Nielsen ratings in 2010 indicated that Al-Anon's TV public service announcements (PSAs) were in the top 2% in popularity of PSAs. Conference members were reminded that it would be helpful if members would call





the TV and radio stations and ask them to play the PSAs, or thank them for playing the PSAs.

The Director of Member Services informed Conference members of the new Web application for Group Records Coordinators. She noted that 75% of the Areas have been using the new Web application and stated that the benefit of the application is that the WSO will have the ability to communicate more information to the Areas, such as the note, “enter through the back door.” That kind of information will be on the Group Records Coordinators’ reports.

Currently, when Group Records Coordinators go into the application, they need to know the group name or the ID number. The WSO hopes to improve the search feature within the next year, to include the possibility of searching by the day of the week, city, etc. In addition, an optional feature to allow District Representatives access is being considered for the future, but is not imminent.

The Associate Director of Member Services stated that 15 Areas are currently operating an Alateen chat room, but not all have active meetings. There are seven weekly meetings, with two more starting shortly, one of which will be French-speaking. The WSO is setting up an Alateen Chat Room for the German General Service Office. Alateens can attend any of the Chat Room meetings. It is critical to enlist the assistance of the Alateens because it is not effective to have a newcomer sign on to a meeting that only has two adults. Access to the rooms has not yet been opened to the entire Alateen fellowship, but there will be a link to the rooms on the Members’ Web site so that all Alateens have access to the meetings.

The Public Outreach Web site has a lot of information for Alateen outreach to teens (video, Alateen sharings, information about the program), parents (information on safety and the basics of the program, encouraging them to attend Al-Anon as well), and professionals (video, professional articles, information about the program, request form for more information).

The fellowship is encouraged to develop cooperative efforts among district/Area Public Outreach and Alateen Coordinators to use the new video, “Al-Anon and Alateen’s Role in Family Recovery,” for Alateen outreach. The WSO will provide Area Alateen Coordinators with a document suggesting ways to utilize the video for various audiences.

The Associate Director of Member Services—International reported that there is a new green and blue icon on the Members’ Web site that identifies a new series of podcasts to provide support to groups and members involved in service. The podcasts include information regarding how a group functions as a community; the need for Group Representatives; a description of GR duties; how to become a GR; the structure of Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship. Members can share their thoughts on the comment feature, allowing for interaction. A series on sponsorship is currently being developed. The podcasts will also be available in Spanish and French later this year. Members looking for sharings on the Legacies can find sharings under the word “Blogs” on the Members’ Web site.

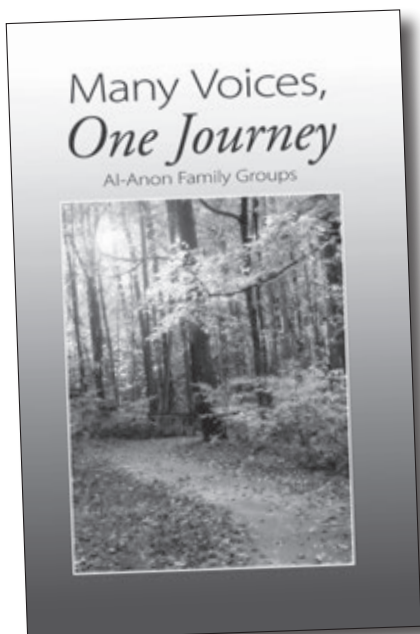
The Associate Director of Member Services—Conference reported that in addition to Conference members having access to Discussion Boards, the Alateen Coordinators and Group Records Coordinators now have this tool. Later this year, past WSC members, Area Chairs, and District Representatives will all have individual e-Communities that will include Discussion Boards. Area Chairs will have

access to all of the Coordinator communities for information only—Area Chairs are not being asked to pass on the information because the Area Coordinators already have access. Delegates will continue to have access to all of these communities. The summer issue of *Area Highlights* will have more information about e-Communities.

After the summer issue, *Area Highlights* will no longer be printed and distributed, but will be published electronically on the Members’ Web site using the same publication schedule.

The Associate Director of Communications—Literature reported that three years ago he stood in front of the Conference and opened the discussion about a Literature Committee recommendation for “a piece of literature on Al-Anon’s first 60 years.” Asked if this would be a history book or a recovery book, he said that recovery and spiritual growth are such a part of the Al-Anon program and its history that he couldn’t imagine a book covering Al-Anon’s first 60 years that didn’t have recovery tightly interwoven into it.

He announced that the book, *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), has been completed. Al-Anon has a recovery book that traces the





history and the recovery of our organization. The book includes historical facts, but it also includes personal sharings by current members, as well as archival documents. Throughout its 400-plus pages, it tells our journey of recovery.

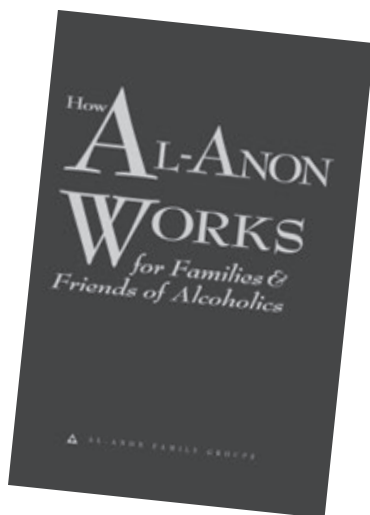
Like all of our literature, it takes an honest look at what we've done—both positive and negative, and how using Al-Anon's spiritual principles have helped us. The main difference is its scope, since it covers the growth and recovery of not just individual members, but the fellowship as a whole.

This book is an opportunity for in-depth discussions at our meetings. *Many Voices, One Journey* provides information never available to us before, so we can open our minds and gain a new perspective—not only of our program, but of ourselves.

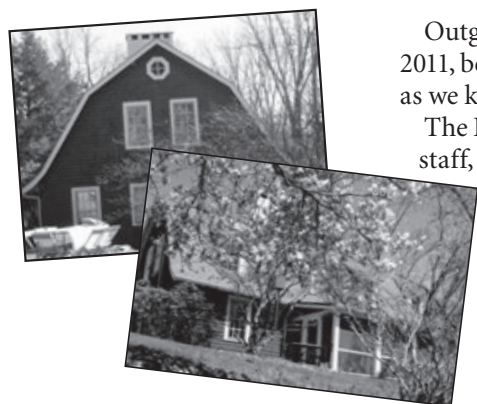
The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals reported that last year when she visited treatment centers, she asked the professionals at the facilities how Al-Anon could better be of service. She noted that the WSO has lost its foundation of referrals with the treatment centers and with therapists and alcohol counselors because treatment programs have changed drastically. There is a need for Al-Anon to modify and adapt its Public Outreach strategies. She suggested more speaker meetings and to have a greeter talk to newcomers outside of the meeting room. She closed her update by stating that Al-Anon needs to come into the 21st century and rebuild its link with the treatment centers.

Following the discussion on the Annual Report, the Finance Committee introduced a soft cover version of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32). The book is priced at \$5.00, with no case discounts. Conference members were asked to encourage groups to buy this book to give to newcomers as a way of paying our gratitude forward. This book is available only in English for the trial period, and it is only available to the groups within the World Service Conference structure at this time. The hard cover book (B-22) is still available in all three languages.

A motion to approve the 2010 Annual Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #4, page 82. The complete report can be found on pages 85-100.)



## VISIT TO STEPPING STONES—PANEL 49



Outgoing Delegates, members of Panel 49, were invited to visit Stepping Stones on Sunday, April 10, 2011, before the Conference convened. Stepping Stones is the birthplace of the Al-Anon Clearing House as we know it today and the home of Lois and Bill W., cofounders of Al-Anon and A.A respectively.

The Panel 49 Delegates were accompanied on their trip to Stepping Stones by two WSO Conference staff, one International Representative, and a few guests. Upon their arrival, they were greeted by the Executive Director of Stepping Stones who shared some of the history about the home.

As they toured Stepping Stones, it was noted that the house has been left in its original condition as much as possible, with mementos, photos, and trinkets throughout the house. Stepping Stones' Executive Director further explained that there has been some modernization done to the house to preserve it as long as possible. Visitors were permitted to take pictures at certain places on the property including behind Lois's desk.

## VISIT TO THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

Conference members arrived on a double-decker motor coach at the World Service Office (WSO). They were warmly greeted with applause by WSO Trustees and Executive Committee members.

Before the Delegates dispersed, the Executive Director noted the building's unique architecture and pointed out the architect's intent to incorporate the idea of the Al-Anon logo in the architecture. The Executive Director 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.

Delegates who had previously toured the WSO were given the option of going on a tour, viewing the new look of the Public Outreach Web site, viewing the new *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* DVD, or meeting with a specific staff or volunteer.

The remaining Delegates then assembled into tour groups where they were briefed on current programs and activities in the office and explored the WSO Archives.

During the tour, Delegates enjoyed a light snack hosted by WSO staff, Trustees, and Executive Committee members. They also had time to walk around the grounds, talk with staff and volunteers, and take photographs to share with their Areas.



## AL-ANON AND ALATEEN'S ROLE IN FAMILY RECOVERY

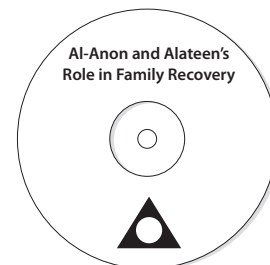
The staff member introduced the Public Outreach DVD, *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31), in which anonymous members of Al-Anon and Alateen share about what their lives were like and how Al-Anon/Alateen has helped them. Professionals appear full-faced to discuss the benefits of Al-Anon to the family.

*Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* is Al-Anon Family Groups' newest video and offers short, stand-alone presentations for outreach to three primary audiences—adults, teens, and professionals. The 75-minute DVD is great for outreach to professionals, their clients, and the public.

Following this session, all Delegates received a complimentary copy of the DVD.

An Area's PO Coordinator and Alateen Coordinator will each receive a complimentary copy of the DVD for the Area's use.

Patrick Q.  
Associate Director  
of Communications—Media



## INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON GENERAL SERVICES MEETING

As early as the 1950s, Al-Anon groups began to form in various countries of the world and from there our international fellowship began to flourish.

In 1978, an International Coordination Committee was established to maintain unity and communication worldwide.

By 1980, it was apparent that a meeting of the various structures would be beneficial. A planning meeting was held at the 1980 A.A. International Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, where the framework for the first International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) began.

The IAGSM is for countries that have national service structures. The starting point for many service structures is with the opening of an Al-Anon Information Service and obtaining permission to translate and/or reprint Conference Approved Literature (CAL).

The first IAGSM was held in 1982 in New York. The purpose of the meeting is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through the Delegates. It encourages the growth of sound service structures while maintaining worldwide unity through applications of the Al-Anon Traditions. It represents an expression of a worldwide group conscience.

In October 2010, the 15th International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) was held in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Thirty-four members attended from 14 structures. The IAGSM is held every two years, with every second meeting held in the U.S. near the World Service Office. At the 2010 meeting, a motion was passed to hold the 2012 IAGSM in Capetown, South Africa.

CAL is now published in 40 languages. There are Al-Anon groups in 133 countries. Thirty-four of these countries have their own structure, which includes a General Service Office.

The topics for workshop and general sessions for the IAGSM are suggested by the national service structures and then finalized by the International Coordination Committee. Some of the topics at the recent IAGSM included: Translation, Finance, Knowledge-Based Decision-Making, Shared Leadership, and the Concepts.

In highlighting the workshop on Translation, it was reported that while each structure has a different process, there are similarities. The translators are usually volunteers who work with a literature committee in coordination with the structure's Board of Trustees. It can take several years to produce a new piece of literature. There is a need to make sure our literature reads well, not only in English, but that it can be translated into other languages as well.

All structures rely on a combination of member contributions and literature sales. Some structures send appeal letters and have determined that how an appeal letter is worded makes a difference. In Australia, appeal letters explain that members are a key part of the funding of the office and that the responsibilities of the fellowship belong to the members. New Zealand had an information campaign to destroy myths surrounding donations.

The U.S. and Canadian Delegates made two presentations during the IAGSM. One presentation was "How to deal with conflict." This presentation illustrated that, thanks to the Al-Anon program, we already have the tools we need to deal with conflict. Members of the IAGSM participated by discussing how they could apply those principles to resolve some typical conflicts.

Judy A.  
Trustee, Chair

Marsha W.  
Associate Director of  
Member Services—International



The other presentation was a Big Question: “How can we strengthen our Al-Anon and Alateen groups so that we can meet our one purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics?” IAGSM members broke into small groups and participated in a gallery walk. During the session, the groups gathered information by answering the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions that were posted at various locations around the room. The participants enjoyed walking from location to location, working in small groups, and experiencing the KBDM process in action, rather than just talking about it.

The brainstorming session that followed produced a long list of ideas for the Delegates to take home and adapt for use in their own structures.

The Canadian Delegate noted, “In my own Area, reaching out to remote groups in the Canadian North is a challenge. During the IAGSM, I discovered that Denmark has remote groups in Greenland and faces the same problems of vast distances and language and cultural differences. Many of the issues discussed at the IAGSM sounded familiar, but it was valuable to hear the other Delegates present their own unique perspectives that could change the way we view things.”

The IAGSM Delegates came from many structures and spoke many languages, but all focused on the purpose of the IAGSM: growth and unity of our structures through our Three Legacies.

The *IAGSM Summary* is available on the Members’ Web site, [www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members).

## INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS UPDATE

Ric B.  
2013 Chairperson

Suzanne M.  
2013 Coordinator

Barbara O.  
2013 Co-Coordinator

### 2013 Al-Anon International Convention

Conference members were asked, “Can you picture yourself ‘Celebrating Worldwide Unity’ with 6,000 to 10,000 Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. members and their guests?” Then Conference members were reminded that the 2013 Al-Anon International Convention was in less than 27 months. The Coordinator noted that members who saved \$10 a week would have more than \$1,100 by the July 5-7, 2013, International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia. It was stated that an International Convention is a great way to celebrate recovery, meet old friends, and make new ones.

Plans are underway for this festive event. Staff serving on the International Convention Planning Committee will go on a site visit to Vancouver later this year to continue the planning process. Information regarding the Host Committee will be conveyed to the host Area. Registration information will be available in the fall of 2012. In addition, the WSO is planning a special separate day of service on Thursday, July 4th, before the Convention begins on Friday. The preconvention event will be a great way to kick off the weekend.

Conference members were then asked if they could picture themselves in Vancouver, as the Co-Coordinator held up a picture frame with a photo of Vancouver that had a cut-out so members could put their head in the picture. The poster was displayed throughout the week.

Members were reminded that a passport is necessary to travel from the U.S. to Canada.

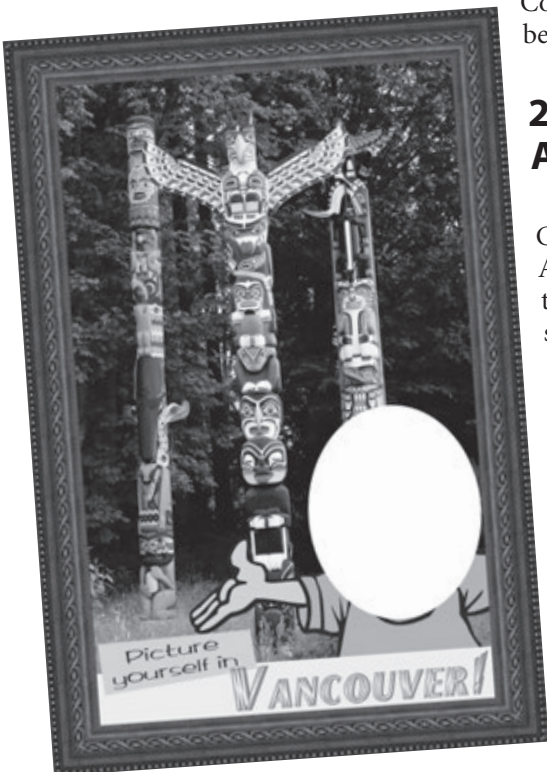
### 2015 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous with Al-Anon Participation

The World Service Office accepted A.A.’s invitation to participate in the International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, July 3-5, 2015. This will be a worldwide gathering of Al-Anon members celebrating recovery with Alcoholics Anonymous. There will be daytime Al-Anon meetings and workshops on Friday and Saturday. The evenings will be shared with our friends in A.A. at the big meetings.

### Al-Anon’s Sixth International Convention—It Sure Will Be Keen in 2018

Conference members were informed that “It sure will be keen, in 2018,” as the World Service Office began preparations for Al-Anon Family Groups’ Sixth International Convention. The WSO is asking for bids from host cities in the U.S. and Canada for July 6-8, 2018. The deadline for bid forms is December 1, 2011. The Conference members received a letter from the Executive Director and the bid form.

A Convention Site Selection Committee will be selected from among the 2012 Area Delegates who do not submit a bid from their Area, together with certain Trustees and WSO Administrative staff members. After the 2012 World Service Conference ends, Area Delegates will be asked to present their bid to the Convention Site Selection





Committee. Delegates were encouraged to ask the Convention and Visitors Bureau to send a representative, at the Bureau's expense, to this meeting to answer questions. Costs for AV equipment rental related to the presentation are the Area's responsibility. After the presentation, the Convention Site Selection Committee will decide on its top three choices.

Following the Conference, the Board of Trustees will appoint a subcommittee to make an inspection trip to the three recommended cities. Based on the findings of the Site Selection Committee, a choice will be recommended to the Board at its October 2012 meeting.



## NORTHERN EUROPE TRIP

In the summer of 2010, the Trustee and staff member went to Sweden, Lithuania, and Poland. The trip demonstrated how Al-Anon's message of hope transcends language and culture for people who are looking for some resolution to their pain. It further illustrated how face-to-face conversations can often bring clarity and insight to difficult topics that words on a page don't always offer.

**Carol V.**  
Trustee

**Marsha W.**  
Associate Director of  
Member Services—International

### Sweden

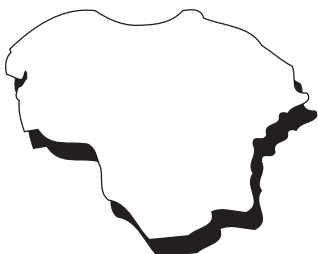


Sweden was selected because a World Service Office (WSO) trip originally planned in 2008 had to be cancelled. Another factor surrounding the decision was that the General Service Office (GSO) has not been able to financially support sending a representative to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) since 1994. In addition, the GSO has not been financially able to print any Conference Approved Literature (CAL) in recent years.

The Board of Trustees for the GSO in Sweden currently has seven members. The Board meets four times a year. The staff and Trustee were advised that the service structure has 20 Areas, not all of which have Delegates. There are 125 meetings. Two are Alateen meetings, one is an English-speaking meeting, and one is a Finnish-speaking meeting.

The WSO staff and Trustee met with the Board members for approximately five hours. In addressing specific questions, the staff and Trustee spoke about the importance of keeping the integrity of CAL by neither printing excerpts nor photocopying literature. They then shared strategies for contacting groups by explaining how the WSO Chairperson of the Board and Board of Trustee members communicate with the Delegates.

### Lithuania

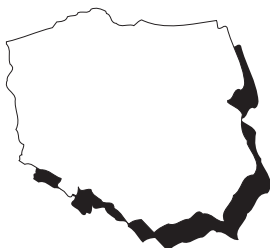


Lithuania, an evolving structure, was selected as part of the trip to establish contact where no contact had existed, and to attend a service meeting.

The focus of this visit was to clarify the reprint permission process. The WSO Trustee and staff also explained the "Criteria for Granting Reprint Permission for Conference Approved Literature" and "Request for Permission to Translate and Print" forms.

During the service meeting, the WSO Trustee and staff answered members' questions regarding group problems and public outreach. The questions included: Do Sponsors have to have all the answers? How do we attract young people and men to our meetings? How can we cooperate with A.A.?

### Poland



The Polish General Service Office invited the WSO to participate in its 30th Anniversary celebration. The staff and Trustee co-facilitated a workshop. They were also a resource during a question and answer session for a special meeting for service representatives.

Throughout the three-day convention, there was opportunity for networking with members from the following countries: Belarus, Belgium (French-speaking), Germany, Netherlands, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, and Ukraine. New contacts were established with Belarus, Slovakia, and Ukraine.

## SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

### 2011 Regional Trustee Nominating Process

J.P. M.  
Trustee

The Trustee explained the RT Nomination Process and deadlines using a visual demonstration involving the three Regional Committees on Trustees, the Executive Director, large résumé forms, scoring sheets, and Conference members dressed as Canadian letter carriers. Each Regional Committee on Trustees consists of the current Delegates serving the Areas of the Region, as well as Out-of-Region Delegates, drawn by lot.

#### The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
Canada West	Terry F., Panel 49, FL(N)	Jane S., Panel 50, OK
Canada Central	Jenn N., Panel 49, RI	Norm W., Panel 51, NM
Canada East	John P., Panel 50, MA	Kathleen B., Panel 51, AK

Following the selection of Out-of-Region Delegates for the RCTs, each RCT caucused to select a Chairperson (from the Region's Delegates) who was willing to serve and perform the duties within the designated time. Also selected was an Alternate Chairperson from the Region's Delegates, who would assume the duties of the RCT Chairperson, if he or she cannot fulfill his or her duties as required.

#### The Chairpersons and Alternate Chairpersons for this year's RCTs are:

REGION	CHAIRPERSON	ALTERNATE
Canada West	Shirley T., Panel 50, BC/Yukon	Jane H., Panel 50, AB/NWT
Canada Central	Margaret R., Panel 51,	Louise R., Panel 49, MB
Canada East	Micheline B., Panel 49, QC(W)	Jocelyne L., Panel 50, QC(E)

### Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Terry F.  
Chairperson, Panel 49, Florida North

The CCT Chair opened her report by saying, "I was excited about being part of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT). I wanted to learn more about the Trustee selection process, and to understand better the role of the Board of Trustees. Being on the CCT was my first choice.

"The CCT is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson each year. Résumés for Trustee at Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) are submitted to the World Service Office in August of each year. The CCT members review the résumés submitted, score each résumé based on skill sets, understanding of current needs of the Board, and the ability of each candidate to effectively answer the résumé questions. The CCT members also write comments related to his or her scoring decisions. When completed, the scoring sheets and accompanying comments are sent to the CCT Chairperson. The CCT Chairperson reviews the comments and rankings that were submitted by each CCT member, summarizes the material, and forwards the compilation of rankings and comments to the World Service Office in early October.

"The Nominating Committee meets during the October Board week. Using the information submitted by the CCT and knowledge it has about the current Board needs, the Nominating Committee scores each résumé for Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates the Nominating Committee has selected. CCT members have the opportunity to file an objection to a potential candidate by December. The final selection of the candidates is decided at the January Board meeting. At the World Service Conference, the Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management candidates are given Traditional approval by the Conference, and are elected by the Board at the Annual Board meeting following the World Service Conference.

"This year, the Nominating Committee did not choose a candidate to fill one of the Trustee at Large positions. Therefore, the CCT has again been asked to score résumés for a possible one-year TAL appointment. After scoring, the Nominating Committee will look at the CCT input and propose up to two candidates



for possible appointment. Those names will be sent to the CCT for possible objection prior to the Annual Meeting where the Board may select one candidate for the one-year appointment. That term will also be open for election for the following year as a two-year term, in addition to the normal three-year terms.

“Being part of the CCT is a very spiritual experience. To work with my fellow CCT members to assist in the process of choosing our Board members is amazing. I feel so deeply honored to be part of this important process and to be given the opportunity of chairing the CCT.

“One of the many things I’ve learned while serving on this Committee is how few of us as Delegates understand the need and importance of finding qualified candidates to serve on the Board of Trustees. I certainly understand my role in this process much better now. As I continue my term as Delegate and long afterwards, I plan to continue to help educate the membership about the role of Trustee and the importance of finding qualified members, and that we are all responsible to participate in this search and to encourage such members to apply. I hope you will all join in this important journey with me. Imagine what could happen! ‘Let It Begin with Me.’ And you.”

## Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

Before beginning the affirmation process, the Chairperson spent a few minutes explaining how the Board came into being. (See page 26 of the *2009 Conference Summary* for the history.)

The Nominating Committee Chairperson continued the session by thanking the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), the Nominating Committee, and the Regional Committees on Trustees 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. 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 US Northwest, US South Central, and US Southwest Regional Committees on Trustees consisted of the Regions’ Delegates and three Delegates chosen by lot.

The Regional Committees on Trustees independently reviewed résumés and an additional written question that has been added as part of the process. The comments and feedback from Delegates serving on these Regional Committees were submitted to the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee, with their own independent review of the résumés and considering the input from the Regional Committees on Trustees, selected up to two nominees per Region for presentation to the Board.

For a trial period, the Board voted to meet with Regional Trustee candidates over dinner prior to nomination, using a process identical to that used for Trustee at Large candidates. The Board then nominated one candidate for the US Northwest and US Southwest Regions. The Board decided not to propose a candidate for the US South Central Region, and may fill that slot with an appointment at the Annual Meeting on Saturday. These proposed nominees will be given traditional approval by the Conference as a whole, and 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 résumés including Trustee, ECRPM, and Committee résumés. This year, the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the CCT, has revised the résumé for use in the upcoming election cycle.

Résumés are submitted to the WSO by August 15th of that year. Résumés are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. The CCT Chair tallies scores and rankings from the 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 dinner 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. Conference members will be asked to give traditional approval to the two proposed nominees, and then they will be elected at the Board’s Annual Meeting. Again, the Board chose not to propose a third TAL candidate, and may appoint a candidate to fill the slot for a one-year term at the Annual Meeting.

The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was created by Motion Five of the 1995 WSC in a trial amendment to the By-Laws – Article XII. This Committee, consisting of

Doris W.  
Chairperson, Trustee

the Treasurer, the Director of Business Services, and three members who are not Trustees, is designed to keep management of our Headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of Al-Anon. Each elected 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.

Conference members are being asked to give traditional approval or 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. Conference members were given an opportunity to discuss all candidates; any nominee present in the room was asked to leave during discussion of his/her candidacy.

### **The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2010 WSC:**

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

Bev A., 2nd three-year term  
Vicki H., 2nd three-year term

#### **Regional Trustees:**

Penny R., US Northwest, 2nd three-year term  
Karen R., US Southwest, 2nd three-year term

#### **Board Officers:**

Karen R., Chairperson  
Carol V., Vice Chairperson  
Penny R., Treasurer

#### **Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):**

Joan V., three-year term

#### **The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2010-2011:**

Mary Ann R., 1st one-year term, Chairperson  
Liz W.S., 3rd one-year term  
Mary G., 2nd one-year term  
Barbara O., WSO staff, 2nd year of a two-year term

#### **The Board announced Debbie G., Chairperson, ECRPM**

A US South Central Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) was also formed since the Board of Trustees decided not to propose a candidate for the US South Central Region.

### **The Out-of-Region Delegates for the US South Central RCT were selected:**

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
US South Central	Charlie S., Panel 49, MD/DC Cathy B., Panel 51, IL(S) Linda S., Panel 49, FL(S)	Maddie P., Panel 51, IA

Following the selection of Out-of-Region Delegates, the RCT caucused to select a Chairperson (from the Region's Delegates) who was willing to serve and perform the duties within the designated time. Also selected was an Alternate Chairperson from the Region's Delegates, who would assume the duties of the RCT Chairperson, if he or she cannot fulfill his or her duties as required.

### **The Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson for this RCT are:**

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
US South Central	Rosie M., Panel 49, TX(E)	Shirley R., Panel 51, AR

## PUBLIC OUTREACH WEB SITE

The WSO introduced an updated version of the Public Outreach Web site. The address is the same—[www.al-anon.alateen.org](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org)—but the content and design is entirely new.

The new Public Outreach Web site is oriented toward introducing newcomers to Al-Anon, and encouraging them to go to their first meeting. It includes audio and video clips from members who tell how they found help at Al-Anon, as well as testimonials from professionals, who explain why they recommend Al-Anon to their clients and patients.

The site also has a section dedicated to the teens suffering from the effects of alcoholism, with information for the teens, for the parents of teens, and for the professionals who work with teens.

The site is designed to make it easy to navigate, so newcomers can quickly find the information they are seeking, including easy access to meeting locations throughout the U.S. and Canada. It also provides a convenient bridge to the Al-Anon Members' Web site, [www.al-anon.alateen.org/members](http://www.al-anon.alateen.org/members).

**Bob S.**

*Director of Communication Services*

**Patrick Q.**

*Associate Director of Communications—Media*



## 2012 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE

The 2012 World Service Conference will be held in Connecticut. All Conference Members will visit Stepping Stones.

In searching for a site to hold the Conference, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, meal costs, and religious dates were factors in the selection of the dates and location.

The dates selected for the 2012 World Service Conference are Sunday, April 15 through Thursday, April 19, 2012. The Conference will be held at the Stamford Marriott Hotel & Spa in Stamford, Connecticut.

**Suzanne M.**

*Associate Director of Member Services—Conference*



## AFG, INC. vs. AFG PRESENTATION

Mary Ann R.

*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

Judith P.

*Chairperson, Executive Committee*

Prior to the Nominating Committee report, the Chairperson of the Board and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee acted out a brief skit that demonstrated the difference between Al-Anon, the organization, which Lois incorporated as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. in 1954; and Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship.

### **A-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the organization**

- Exists in the eyes of the law—the Board of Trustees is legally responsible for AFG, Inc.
- Has tax exempt status.
- Is the legal arm—protects our logo, our copyrights, our trademarks (name).
- Conducts the business of Al-Anon.
- Has a governance document, the By-Laws of the corporation, which is amended by the Board of Trustees.
- Recognizes the World Service Conference as the ultimate traditional authority.

### **Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship**

- Doesn't exist in the eyes of the law.
- Doesn't have tax exempt status.
- Is the traditional arm—provides meetings and service structure.
- Provides support for individual members.
- Has a governance document, the World Service Conference Charter, which is amended by the World Service Conference.
- Recognizes the Board of Trustees as the chief service arm of the Conference.

## CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

Prior to this year's World Service Conference (WSC), the Conference Leadership Team invited Conference members to submit Chosen Agenda Item topics for discussion that are general in nature and pertain to Al-Anon worldwide.

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 60-minute discussions. The two topics receiving the most votes were placed on the agenda. A Delegate was invited to give a brief presentation of each topic, followed by open discussion.

### Chosen Agenda Item #1

#### Topic:

**Minimal (or unsuccessful) Public Outreach conducted by Al-Anon members because many do not know the latest media terminology (jargon), lack familiarity or comfort with current technological methods of communication, and have no training about evolving media unless received outside of AFG.**

#### Topic:

**Considering yesterday's foundations, today successes, and tomorrow's possibilities, how can we expand our community of hope by embracing the use of technology to enhance communication at the group, district, Area, and WSO levels?**

The Delegate opened her presentation by saying, "When I first started thinking about the issues surrounding the use of technology in conducting Public Outreach and fellowship communications, I was struck with a question. That question was, 'Where is the balance?' Following that, I wondered how this year's Conference Theme

Expanding our community of hope by embracing:

- △ Yesterday's foundations
- △ Today's successes
- △ Tomorrow's possibilities

related to the subject.

According to the latest Member Survey, we are a fellowship primarily of white women in our 50s. While I believe that we only get better with age, rapidly changing technology like the kind we've experienced in the last two decades does present challenges to a fellowship of our particular composition. It poses obstacles on

Kay R.

*Panel 49, Hawaii*



two fronts, 1) Public Outreach; and 2) internal communications between our groups, districts, Areas and with the World Service Office.”

She went on to say, “So what exactly are we building on? Sixty years ago, our foundations in the realm of Public Outreach were primarily in print media, television, radio, and face-to-face communications. Lois was on the show, *Lamp Unto My Feet* in 1953. In 1957, A.A. and Al-Anon worked together on *The Loretta Young Show*, which proved wildly successful and a turning point for the Al-Anon fellowship to do greater public outreach at the group and local levels. Articles appeared about Al-Anon in the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Time*, *Life*, and *Family Circle* among others. In the 1960s, Alateen garnered a great deal of media attention with articles in *Time* and *Life*, among others. Later, *Ann Landers* and *Dear Abby* came with multiple printings of their columns about Al-Anon that brought in thousands and thousands of letters from hurting individuals. All of whom were lovingly referred to meetings in their local area by WSO staff and local volunteers. Literature was specifically developed for and provided to professional organizations and as a result 44 percent of our members come by their referral.

“Within our fellowship, links of service were maintained via mail, telephone, and personal interactions. In our early years, Lois and Bill W. traveled extensively throughout the U.S. to bring together the respective memberships of Al-Anon and A.A. Later, Lois and Anne B. painstakingly typed out letters in communication to the first family groups. They would travel anywhere asked. Slowly but surely, the Al-Anon groups became tied together through the creation of the Clearing House and our first newsletter, later to become the World Service Office and *The Forum* magazine, respectively. The birth of intergroups, better known as Al-Anon Information Services (AIS), the development of the first *World Directory*, CAL, and the creation of the World Service Conference crystallized and solidified the fellowship.

“Today’s successes in communicating within the fellowship are many and varied. In the last decade, districts, Areas, and the WSO have created Web sites. We have a Members’ Web site that features the most current information available. E-mail is used to share information. The increasing use of technology within the fellowship has made such an impact that our latest *Service Manual* addresses anonymity as it relates to electronic communications. We have created electronic bulletin boards on e-Communities to have discussions on current subjects regardless of a member’s geographic location. In the area of Public Outreach, we have podcasts downloadable from the Members’ Web site. Each year, public service announcements are created and distributed within our structure, and made available at all levels of the fellowship for media distribution. We work more collaboratively today than ever before with federal agencies and professional organizations. The presentation for professionals about our latest Membership Survey is a robust outreach tool.

“So what are tomorrow’s possibilities? Wider use of technology could allow for more contact with more people—both inside and outside of the fellowship. Greater, more targeted information about Al-Anon and the help available to families and friends of alcoholics can be made available rapidly. This does not take the place of the relationships between our members, groups, Areas, and the world at large, however.

“Communication technology is attractive for reasons of efficiency, accessibility, convenience, and flexibility. It’s attractive to the younger generation, while giving the rest of us a new outlet to explore. It can also be pretty darn scary to the willing, but uninitiated and untrained. Staying abreast of changes in technology is challenging for even the most technologically savvy. Added to this, ours is a spiritual fellowship that is firmly established on a foundation of personal connection with one another, one that begins before the meeting and extends well beyond. And, as a fellowship, we have the principles contained in our Legacies to consider, such as inclusiveness, anonymity, and participation. We also have an obligation to those still suffering to reach out to them—to be visible rather than invisible. Clearly, new communications technology brings with it both promise and problems.

“Recently, my friend who is an active member without access to e-mail or the Internet, asked how he was supposed to stay informed and offer his input on Area and world service issues. I had no easy answer for him. Part of my disease is that I want to be all things to all people. I wonder if this is also an issue we struggle with in Al-Anon as a whole. In my personal recovery, I am asked to do things that make me uncomfortable in order to grow. I’ve had to be willing to expand into areas I never imagined. Resistance to new methods could diminish our fellowship, if it hasn’t already. It seems apparent that to some degree we must adapt to the current generation if we want to grow as an organization and be available for those still suffering who have not found us yet. We also have to find ways to encourage the ‘communication-challenged.’

“After considering everything, I’m continually struck by the idea that, as in my personal recovery, balance is the key. What that balance looks like, I have no idea. Developing a communications plan that can be easily adopted and modified by Areas comes to mind as one possibility. I’m very glad that we’re going to spend an hour talking about this today.”



**The Conference members responded:**

- We have been discussing this in our Area for some time now. We hope to hold our first AWSC electronic meeting this year. We use e-mail and conference calls well. We hope to transition to use of video meetings.
- I love technology. I would like to see all of our publications available for download to my e-reader at the current price. I would like to see all publications available in every format possible. (*The Chairperson of the Board stated that the WSO is looking into use of e-books and that the WSO wants to avoid paying a company like Amazon 60 percent of the profits. The WSO is looking at the possibility of its own production. It would currently cost \$80,000 to make an audio copy of How Al-Anon Works. A Task Force is looking for ways to safely and securely hold electronic meetings.*)
- Our Area Web site was revamped by an outside business. We are pushing for members to subscribe to the Web site so that e-mails can be sent out to the masses without members keeping all the e-mail addresses. I think the fear with the e-readers is due to the expense and the material being copied without purchase.
- I am technology-challenged. I need technology training. Can the WSO provide that?
- I began using PowerPoint this year; our Area bought a LCD projector, but we have some District Representatives who won't get an e-buddy so they can receive e-mails.
- We would like to hold electronic committee meetings. We have people on rural farm communities who rely on postal mail. The Area is going to create a Thought Force to survey what the needs are within the Area.
- This is a spiritual program and I don't believe technology will change our spiritual message; it's just a different means of delivering it. As a leader, I have to look to the future. In five years, our members will not only know technology, they will expect it. Technology is something that every culture will be using. Where's our app (application) to find meetings? Like it or not, technology is going to happen.
- I remind our members that we are using e-mail for Area business, not personal matters. Virtual meetings would be a real bonus for our Area. Some members are concerned that someone who would like to serve does not have e-mail and will be shut out of service.
- Our Area uses a well-known Internet group application to communicate. The problem is that a member can get a virus and spread it to all. The majority of our members get e-mail, but we cannot ignore the minority. It is critical to mix the technology with face-to-face meetings. It took other people to get me to this place and it will take other people to get me to the next place. (*It was noted that the Terms of Use of various social networking sites, such as Google or Yahoo groups, need to be reviewed to determine whether the group application is intended for business purposes; otherwise, an Area would need to purchase a group application in order to use it for Al-Anon business and remain self-supporting.*)
- This is a hot topic in my Area; balance is important. It appears there is a requirement that the member have access to e-mail in order to serve above the group level. This appears to embody a corporate approach. We need to make accommodations for the minority who do not have computer access.
- If we want to attract younger members, we need to reach out, dream, and look for the possibilities. We need to prepare for the next generation.
- It's not that we can't dream, we need the money to carry out the dreams. The whole issue of self-support underlines what we can do. How much are we willing to give the organization to do what we want them to do? Are we supporting what we want, what we dream about?
- I am not a great fan of technology; I find it isolating and overwhelming at times. It's not just about age, but about socio-economics. Technology is about big business: will it last awhile or will it be obsolete in no time.
- There is a need to stay flexible with multiple strategies.
- Most of the resistance seems to be fear-based. In my Area, a member is presenting a hands-on workshop to teach members how to navigate the Area Web site.
- Texting is a tool we can use, too. It is more inclusive than isolating.
- Lois had a collection of dinosaurs at Stepping Stones. In spite of our feelings about what we can or cannot do, there is no choice. If our program is going to survive, we must change our way of thinking and the ways we communicate with one another.

- Everyone knows someone who has an e-mail address. Said very lovingly, this is the way it is; you have to have someone who can help you get the information.
- I am trying to assist the members in distinguishing between AFG the corporation and AFG the fellowship. If I am serving at the corporation level, I am required to communicate in the way the corporation does.
- I read the reviews regarding the availability of another fellowship's e-book and what is available is the first edition, not the current edition. Wouldn't it be wonderful to get live Twitter tweets on what's going on in other parts of the world?
- Let's not forget unsighted members.
- In going forward, we have to be careful we don't lose what we have. One of the losses because of technology was the "Calendar of Events" section of *The Forum*.
- Spiritual principles of Al-Anon are always within our fellowship. Our program is based on sponsorship and helping one another. We need to go to these members and offer our help.

## Chosen Agenda Item #2

### Topic:

**Our Membership Survey indicates that our members are primarily well educated, 56-year-old, white women. Have we become a polite society that behaves correctly, but lacks a spiritual connection with those we see as different from our personal "normal"? Have we fallen into a political, societal vortex that exists on labels, categories, and codes, failing at the desired spiritual connection?**

### Topic:

**What plan of action does Al-Anon with its trusted servants have to address undocumented immigrants entering Al-Anon from diverse communities?**

### Topic:

**How can the World Service Conference develop an effective tool to build on "Yesterday's foundations" using "Today's successes" to make a difference in "Tomorrow's possibilities" by enhancing our relationships within the minority cultures throughout our fellowship? Using forward thinking efforts today, can we strategize to develop an increase in minority membership?**

### Topic:

**Diversity and inclusion—Twelve Step work, attraction vs. promotion, cooperation vs. affiliation, outreach to diverse communities and/or populations, participation vs. observation, non-professional while using special workers, leadership, delegation, selected committees—tying it all together.**

The Delegate opened her presentation by saying, "In the *2002 Conference Summary*, one of the Chosen Agenda Items discussed was outreach to minorities and diverse populations. The focus of the discussion was how we could communicate more effectively with people of diversity.

"Nine years later, Al-Anon still has a membership, per our Membership Survey, consisting of mostly middle-aged, well-educated, married and/or divorced, white women, even though our structure's population continues to get more diverse. There are 25 million people in Texas and the Caucasian population is no longer the majority.

"As a middle-aged, semi-educated, divorced, white woman, how do I overcome my fear and reach out to the minorities in my Area?

"Fear is a word I've lived with all my life. If it (whatever "it" was) wasn't just like me, I feared it. Growing up in an alcoholic home in a small North Texas town instilled a lot of fears in me. I did not come into contact with black Americans until I moved to a larger city and only saw Hispanics in San Antonio when we went to visit my grandmother. Those people were not like me and I was very fearful.

"Texas West has struggled for years trying to find a Spanish Coordinator. During my first year as Group Representative, a GR from my district, who spoke Spanish, volunteered to take the job. Life got in the way and she resigned. The Area was without a Spanish Coordinator for the balance of my term as GR. My first year as District Representative, the Area tried diligently to find someone to fill the Spanish Coordinator position, and I can remember asking all my white, middle-aged, well-educated, female GRs if they knew anyone who would be willing. No one did, and Texas West spent another three years without a Spanish Coordinator! My first year as Delegate brought us an Hispanic member who was willing. Not having computer skills held her back some, but she did have success in getting all the Hispanic groups in the Area registered!

Cindy K.  
Panel 49, Texas West

“During all those years, the intentions of the trusted servants were good, but we had no idea how to reach out to a community that did not appear to want to be a part of our structure. Little did we know, they were as fearful of change as we were.

“In February this year, I was asked to visit the recently formed Dallas Spanish AIS. I felt what it was like not to be able to understand the meeting procedures. Those members welcomed me, fed me, allowed me to share on service, and asked me to please come back, and they understood, since most are bi-lingual.

“The 2011 All Texas Al-Anon/Alateen Conference was hosted in Fort Worth, Texas. The chairperson of the event wanted to include everyone and a committee was set up to contact the Spanish-speaking groups and those groups responded with enthusiasm! This conference was the first ATAAC conference to be presented in both English and Spanish.

“There are four sets of questions posed in the Chosen Agenda Item for discussion. As I considered the first set, I was reminded that my primary focus is my recovery and, when anyone, anywhere comes to my meeting, it is my responsibility to be sure they are welcomed! We suffer from the effects of alcoholism. No matter whom that ‘we’ is, the suffering is almost always exactly the same!

“Regarding the second set, the Fifth Tradition states that the primary purpose of Al-Anon Family Groups is to help families of alcoholics. The issue of illegal immigrants in our meetings is an outside issue.

“In considering the third set, I believe there is no better tool than the Legacies! The Legacies are the foundation upon which we stand in order to strive for humility and willingness to reach out to all minority communities. The 2011 All Texas Al-Anon/Alateen Conference is our success story of the day. Making those contacts, opening our hearts, expanding our circle of hope, including all those who were there, is our strategy. Hispanic and Anglo Alateens who shared their stories are the brave new generation that will bridge the cultural gap and help make Al-Anon color-blind.

“The fourth topic exemplifies my plan of action. *Inclusion* is a powerful word when we talk about *one* fellowship. *Attraction* is what happens when I become humble and ask for inclusion. *Cooperation* is the end result of attracting and including. If I want to *participate*, I must learn to *cooperate*. As a non-professional fellowship, our special workers can be members *like* those in the communities we want to attract. *Leadership* encourages me to set the best example of Al-Anon I can in my community.”

#### **The Conference members responded:**

- When this topic was addressed last year, it really struck me how ignorant I was regarding diversity. Al-Anon started as wives of men who were active in A.A. I think a lot of times we still structure our meeting like that—women are comfortable holding hands to close the meeting, others might not be. There are a lot of under-represented groups in Al-Anon. I go back to the touch – not all are comfortable with that. Where are we meeting? Are we meeting in churches? Look at the Assembly calendar and be mindful of Jewish holidays. This session was an eye-opener for me.
- Thanks for continuing this conversation. I came into Al-Anon with 25 years of living abroad. The people in my meeting were welcoming, but restrained. Even though I looked the same, as soon as I opened my mouth, my differences showed. A longtimer said, “If you’re ready, we can’t do anything wrong; if you’re not ready, we can’t do anything right.” We are changing. We just need to continue to be more aware of the differences.
- Six years ago, our Assembly was dying. We had very little energy in service and outreach. We had one or two Group Representatives who were Spanish-speaking. We now have three Spanish-speaking districts. We have 25 to 30 percent Spanish Group Representatives today. I cannot imagine what it would be like to speak in another language and communicate complex ideas. Today, at Assembly, we all use translation equipment and speak our native language and it is translated.
- I live in a large metropolitan area. As a Delegate, I noticed that there are small populations of diversity around our Area. I wondered why these separations were occurring. So, I asked how it was going for them. Some feared immigration issues. They weren’t sure the members of the English-speaking groups would keep anonymity. I read the references in the *Service Manual* about anonymity and Al-Anon not being above the law. These little islands of people took this very seriously.
- I took a condensed version of the Delegate’s report to the Spanish-speaking meetings and asked other members to come with me. I felt terrified to give my report. It was a very good thing for everyone in the room to see me doing the best I could with the Spanish I had studied 20 years ago. The conversation of diversity that we had was not about “well, you should do this and do that to accommodate us,” but what we were willing to do. Build relationships one-on-one.
- I’d rather admit anything to you than that I am prejudiced or that I might have judgment against

diversity. When someone comes into the meeting room, I immediately feel judgmental. While I was always very polite, I had never really reached out. I have to look to my own judgment and fears before I can make a full connection.

- I've learned to be inclusive, not exclusive. I "Let It Begin with Me" and lead minorities to serve above the group level. I tell them I will do everything I can to help.
- When I came to my first meeting, I didn't speak the language [English]. The members in my group allowed me to be a part of the group. The group reached out to the homeless, males, younger population, and the financially challenged. I started visiting these meetings and the members didn't treat me any differently. I also pay my own way to give the Delegate's report. We're here for a common purpose.
- I'm a big white guy, but I represent a population in Al-Anon. We talk about prejudice and the basic idea I think many of us have is that somehow we are going to help another population. That's not true for me. I think they are going to help *us*. That's the attitude I need to carry when I seek others. I truly believe in abundance; they are going to bring much more to this fellowship than I can bring to them. I would like to think that we could carry that message when we visit.
- I came to this room as a minority. I looked like you, but I was different. You can understand me a lot better than anyone could 28 years ago. I came with a lot of baggage, shame, and fear. I look around and there is a lot of diversity—we come from different backgrounds and we live differently. I look at what my behavior is when people walk through the door.
- I represent an Area that is very diverse. Through some of my personal activities that I participate in, I have been able to meet people who are very diverse. There are 20 indigenous languages within my Area and we are getting a lot of Somalian immigrants.
- There is a huge Asian population in my Area, but there are no Asians or East Indians at our meetings. Part of the reason is that their culture does not believe in going to groups or sharing openly about problems. How do we meet their needs?
- Our Twelfth Step says, "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." If I'm doing what I should be doing in Al-Anon, growth may be just a little uncomfortable. I want to grow comfortably, but it just doesn't happen. Are we really culturally comfortable, or are we just culturally tolerant? I'm afraid—well what's new about that—I'm afraid about everything.
- We seem to be attracting diversity in our Area, but we are still trying to reach out to the Vietnamese and immigrants from India. We have Spanish-speaking groups and attendance at Assembly thanks to translation equipment. How do we expand the equipment so we can expand the attendance? We have 200 Group Representatives at our Assembly. How do we reach all of the different populations?
- What about the mentally challenged? I do not have the right to make anyone feel "less than." We have had people who were homeless attending our meeting. There were members who left early so they wouldn't have to worry about what the homeless member might ask for (i.e., transportation) after the meeting. One of the challenges is to get out of our comfort zone.
- One of our members would like us to consider how we define minorities. Our reading-intensive meetings do not consider those who are reading-challenged. Our Spanish PSAs can be particularly helpful in reaching out to Spanish-speaking people. I was motivated to reach out to members from diverse backgrounds who could better help me understand the challenges they face. It is the loving support of one another that will aid us.
- My Area is very diverse. I brought this topic up at Assembly and the discussion was very interesting. Group Representatives and District Representatives were engaged. I have participated in our Spanish-speaking intergroup. There are Russian meetings that aren't even on our meeting lists. There is much work to be done.
- I am the person responsible for ordering *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* for my Assembly. It never occurred to me to order some in French and Spanish so the members can take them to those groups. My location has the largest Somalia population in the U.S. How do I get a few sentences in Somali?
- At our Assembly in March, one member noticed that there were a lot of Spanish-speaking men in the A.A. meeting. We are trying to attract the Spanish-speaking women.
- Al-Anon is in 133 countries, so we are diverse in that way. I am a part of a minority. I was very



grateful that when I came in to Al-Anon there was a pamphlet that welcomed gay people. I've experienced a lot of diversity in Al-Anon. I have sponsored Muslim and Portuguese men. I suggest a Task Force to create a guideline on diversity. Maybe the Task Force members (who have experience with diversity) could tell us how to reach out and make it more comfortable for all.

- When I look at diversity, I have to be reminded that comes from prejudice. Prejudice is an unreasonable, hostile attitude expressed toward a group of people. I am part of a diverse group. Prejudice can also be an opinion formed without knowledge. There was a song in a musical that noted children are taught to hate all the people their parents hate by the time they are seven or so. I have visited our "intergrupo." With the help of an interpreter, I gave my Delegate's report in English and Spanish.
- When I was Delegate, the Delegate who sat behind me was a black woman. We talked about diversity. I said I was afraid to go to her part of town, and she asked if it ever occurred to me that they're afraid to come to my part of town. Put yourself in the position of being a minority. I challenge everyone: "if you're a straight person, go to a gay meeting."
- Five years ago, our Assembly had a conversation regarding translation equipment. Because the decision involved money, it was a long process. Some of the Hispanic people left because they got discouraged with the discussion. It did pass and we were able to get translation equipment. That was the beginning for us. For the first time ever, we have a Hispanic Area Treasurer. We also have a Spanish Coordinator. We are making strides.
- As a 55-year-old white female, I am a minority in both of my home groups. I have a challenge to the Areas. We extend so much effort to bring these love gifts to the Conference. Why can't we use that time and energy in our Public Outreach?
- Our Area has a very large Hispanic population. I have been impressed by the Spanish-speaking meetings. We have a trial period of a Spanish overlay district.
- There are two conversations going on—diversifying our structures and trying to start Al-Anon in diverse cultural groups. Everyone goes to the doctor, religious organizations, and dentists. Our outreach doesn't have to be to those individuals in specific ethnic groups, but to the professionals providing services to them.
- In Canada, we have a diverse population, but we never talk about the people in the Northwest Territory. There is so much alcoholism there and only two groups. I learned what a remote community is at Conference. I'm learning to know my province better. We are going to participate in a convention together.
- My Area does a fairly good job of reaching out. Will the Task Force consider the retention of the members coming for a visit?

## CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE: A STRATEGY TOWARDS DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Mary Ann R.  
*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

Dr. Vivian Jackson (non-member)  
*Cultural Competency Consultant  
to the 2011 WSC*

Following words of welcome and a brief biography of the Cultural Competency Consultant to the 2011 WSC, the Chairperson of the Board introduced Dr. Vivian Jackson, Research Instructor at the National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development.

Dr. Jackson opened the session by describing "values" as a collection of guiding, usually positive principles; what one deems to be correct and desirable in life, especially regarding personal conduct. She then engaged members of the Conference in an exercise. Conference members were given a few minutes to choose their top ten values—that are important personally and in Al-Anon service—from a list of more than 100.

When she continued, Dr. Jackson asked Conference members to choose their top three values from the ten they had listed. A few minutes later, members were asked to choose their top choice from the three and write it on a sheet of paper.

After everyone's top choice was posted on the wall, Dr. Jackson asked the Conference members what made the exercise difficult. The answer—too many choices.

She noted that our values come from experiences we have had in our life—from our parents, neighbors, community, schools, and media.

The second exercise had Conference members taking their top value and deciding where it came from, and why that value became so important. Conference members were then asked to think of ways in which they show that value in Al-Anon and how it plays out in their day-to-day life.

**Conference members were asked to share:**

- The value I chose was being around people who are open and honest because I grew up in a household where people refused to talk and be open with one another. The words that came to mind were integrity, respect, honesty, and I have a voice.
- Growth was my value. Growing up my dad always wanted me to look beyond. Sometimes I've acted on that in a negative way. I have a willingness to learn and, I enjoy trying new things.
- My value is self-respect: my religion, my teachers, morals that were instilled in me, my ambitions, and how honest I could be.
- Helping society is my top value. My grandfather was a doctor. My great grandfather was a minister. On the other side of my family, my grandfather was a policeman. While each had a different aspect of social implication, they were the same in many ways.

Dr. Jackson took a few moments to read some of the values that Conference members had posted on the wall: freedom, serenity, meaningful work, helping others, competence, money, excitement, wisdom, equality. She noted that many values rose to the top and yet all Conference members had the same goals in mind. She went on to point out that while there was diversity within the meeting room, there was something binding us together. She noted that there will always be things that fuel why we do what we do, something that is giving us the messages. There is a lot of diversity nevertheless.

She continued the session saying that culture is an integrated pattern of human behavior, which includes, but is not limited to: communication; thought; customs; rituals; roles; relationships; languages; courtesies; beliefs; practices; manners of interacting; expected behaviors of a racial, ethnic, religious, social, or political group; the ability to transmit the above to succeeding generations; and is dynamic in nature.

Often times, in our society when we use the word culture, we start with race. But culture is really the integrated pattern of human behavior of any type of group. It includes the ability to transmit this pattern from one generation to another. There is always some kind of change to take place.

Dr. Jackson continued by explaining an Iceberg Concept of Culture. This concept describes a person as having 10 percent of themselves "above the waterline," such as, dress, age, gender, language, race, ethnicity, and physical characteristics. The things we have "beneath the waterline" are eye behavior; facial expressions; body language; sense of self; notions of modesty; concept of cleanliness; emotional response patterns; rules for social interaction; child-rearing practices; decision-making processes; approaches to problem-solving; concept of justice; individual vs. group value; perceptions of and beliefs about mental health, health, illness, disability; patterns of superior and subordinate roles in relation to status by age, gender, class, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

Dr. Jackson asked the Conference members how many grew up with their mother as the head of the family, with their father as the head of the family, or in a family that had family meetings. Then she noted that culture is applicable to all peoples. It is active and dynamic; multi-layered; and viewed as thick, thin, or compartmentalized. Culture structures perceptions, shapes behaviors, and is a total way of life. Culture tells group members how to behave and provides their identity.

She went on to point out that Al-Anon is a cultural community in and of itself. She asked Conference members to think about the cultural factors that influence diversity among individuals and groups and to consider the internal factors that influence the way we think and behave. All these things come together to influence us and our behavior.

Dr. Jackson also noted that external factors or our legacy of history also influence our behavior, which could include biases, racism, etc. She sug-



gested that we be mindful that these are the forces that are working, as well, when we think about culture.

She spoke about multiple cultural identities in that we have to be very mindful of who we are meeting at any given time. She said, “Because I am African-American, does that pertain to the problems I am having with my brother? It may have everything to do with it, or it may have nothing to do with it. We don’t know where that person is in their multiple cultural identities.”

She noted that active listening helps us open up, listen, and observe. Society has learned over time how to sustain itself. Some countries were very much beyond the past orientation, others were in the present, and some were in the future. So much of the conflict that comes between groups is that we are in a different place—some in the past, some in the present, and some in the future.

Dr. Jackson continued, “As a culturally-competent \_\_\_\_\_ (African-American male, white woman, etc.), I am capable of interacting positively with people who do not look like, talk like, move like, think like, believe like, act like, or live like *me*.” She then drew the Conference members’ attention to the range of values on the wall and said that we have already been doing that.

**Conference members had an opportunity to ask questions or comment:**

- Al-Anon is a spiritual program, and I am trying to look at this on a spiritual level. If I look at everyone as a child of God, that can wipe out some of the layers of these things.

*If that is the perception of your stance, that is very positive. The catch is in the interaction. You also have to be open to the possibility that the other person may not be using the same lens that you use. That person may be future-oriented and you are past-oriented. They may be particularistic and you are universalistic. It’s wonderful from the 30,000-foot view, but when you get up close, it’s a different perspective.*

- When I came to Al-Anon, I didn’t see anyone who looked like or lived like me, but what I connected with was the pain that others were going through. That’s what made me curious and made me want to stay. After being in Al-Anon awhile, the people that I found in the rooms helped me move beyond the outward appearance and connect with them, realizing we were a lot more alike than I initially realized.
- No matter what Al-Anon has taught me, there is still that awareness, assessment, that moment of recognition of “what is what” before I go on to the next. There is still that moment of where I fit.

*I believe we are never ever fully there; we are always evolving, growing to have that interaction with someone who is different. It is a constant process that will never completely end. We are always growing in our ability to fulfill this type of vision.*

The session continued. Dr. Jackson asked, “Does making progress require changes in people’s values, attitudes, or habits of behaviors? A leader’s job is to give permission and guidance. If we want to move ourselves beyond our own boundaries, what are the adaptive challenges that we as an organization are dealing with?”

She noted that cultural competence requires that an organization has a clearly defined, congruent set of values and principles, and that an organization demonstrates behaviors, attitudes, policies, structures, and practices that enable the people to work effectively cross-culturally.

Dr. Jackson named the five elements of cultural competence at the organizational level:

- Value diversity.
- Conduct cultural self-assessment.
- Manage the dynamics of difference.
- Institutionalize cultural knowledge.
- Adapt to diversity: policies, structures, values, and services.

It is one thing to say we’re going to have a more diverse population, but when we do get together, we bring all sorts of differences. Then we say, “Oh, they’re different.” We never say, “Oh, I’m different.” The challenge is how we all bring that knowledge together and own it. Then we adapt what we do and how we do it.

The five elements of cultural competence at the individual level:

- Acknowledge cultural differences.
- Understand your own culture.
- Engage in self-assessment.
- Acquire cultural knowledge and skills.
- View behavior within a cultural context.

The essential elements in a culturally competent system must be manifested at every level of the organization, including policy makers, administration, service, delivery, etc.

In general, what we want to see in an organization is that there is a philosophy that we really do want to be inclusive, and that this is reflected in our mission statement. All together this makes us effective—that people are knowledgeable, that resources are identified that will help us with our work, and that we do this with full engagement of the community that we hope to attract and keep. It is a collaboration and a partnership.

We talk about the difference between outreach and “inreach.” Let me reach out to bring you to me, so that you can do things the way that I do it. In contrast, let me be a partner with you and let’s talk about your resources and the strength within your community. It’s that partnership theme that becomes really important. We want to share and continue to be advocates of those who want a partner in their own advocacy.

Dr. Jackson asked members of the Conference to state what some of the most important values in Al-Anon are, and members responded: honesty, integrity, relationships, self-respect, responsibility, and spirituality. She then asked, “What would be important values to be culturally competent?” Conference members responded: being open-minded, willing, respectful, creative, cooperative, and having courage.

As a closing exercise, Conference members broke into and groups and each group took a few minutes to think of one value that would be important to promote cultural competency. Then the members of each group took the value and discussed one of the following: what type of policies, practices, structures, behaviors, or attitudes would we need in Al-Anon.

Members shared with one another as the session came to a close.

## POLICY DISCUSSION—DO NOT REFER\*

The Policy Committee Chairperson opened the session by stating, “Several Al-Anon districts, Al-Anon Information Services, or Areas have made the decision to discontinue listing a group that has been determined not to reflect Al-Anon principles or procedures. For purposes of this discussion, the term ‘delist’ is defined as ‘remove from a printed or electronic meeting list as published by an Area.’ The delisted group would still actively participate in all links of service, with voice and vote.

“The Policy Committee discussed whether or not the World Service Office (WSO) should get involved in an Area’s dispute with a group, when the Area maintains that the group is acting in violation of Al-Anon’s Traditions. The Policy Committee has discussed the issue, including what the Al-Anon entity has done or might do to eventually relist the group.

“The WSO’s philosophy is to provide meeting information for all ‘active’ status groups in the WSO database to callers on the toll-free meeting line. In 1996, when the WSO moved to Virginia Beach, the toll-free meeting line was for members to call for meeting information when they were travelling, etc. (The meeting information was formerly published in the World Directory that was sent to groups.)

“Districts, Al-Anon Information Services, and Areas provide local meeting information in hard copy formats and on their Web sites. The WSO Public Outreach Web site provides a link to Area Web sites, most of which contain local meeting information. Persons using the WSO Web site would be referred to the meetings listed on those Area sites.

“The topic of removing a meeting from a list (and eventually reinstating it) has been referred to the Conference for discussion, in order that we can all gain a better understanding of what Areas have done and what the philosophy behind such decisions might be.”

Conference members focused on three sets of questions.

**If your Area has a delisting criteria and procedure, please share that with us. Specifically, what principles were discussed when making the decision to delist? Who makes the decision not to list or refer members to a group? How does your Area feel about this decision/process? For everyone present, please share your feelings about deciding not to refer to a group?**

**Comments:**

- District Representatives visited the groups and discussed the Traditions. Groups that changed their name and/or agreed to abide by the Traditions were reinstated.
- My Area has a couple of very strong high-pressure groups, four of which were delisted by the Intergroup. These groups control everything in your life. The groups were given a list of violations and a list of things to do to correct the violations. It is unfortunate that there is no policy in our Area. Rather than address the list of violations, the groups filed an appeal.

Karen R.  
*Chairperson, Trustee*



- A group is using adult children literature. The District Representative (DR) requested to delist the group, but instead the Area sent the DR to talk with the group and offer an option of being an adult child group outside of Al-Anon or an Al-Anon group. The group held a group conscience and decided to comply and remain an Al-Anon group. While traveling once, I called the WSO's toll-free number and went to a meeting where the only literature used was the A.A. "Big Book."
- Our Officers and Coordinators are trying to come up with a process so that the Assembly can vote on this.
- We have no official procedure, but a District Representative brought this concern to the Area World Service Committee. It was suggested that the DR go back to the group. The group did not comply; the Area decided to delist the group.
- The district is informed of the problem and the District Representative visits the group three times, attempting to educate and talk with members, and encourage the members to have a group conscience. After three visits, the group is told that if they do not comply, they will be delisted.
- Our current panel went to the high-pressure meetings and became "regulars." After three months, we began to talk and encourage them to reconsider. We have drafted criteria created by the Group Records Coordinator and we sent these to the groups. We have invited these members to the district meetings to have a direct conversation with them.
- We found that reaching out to the group and bringing the members back to the Traditions works. We need the support at the WSO to deal with the problem.
- One individual who made up the actual meeting directory on her own refused to list a particular meeting based on her own opinion. I find it very scary and do not feel we can survive governing our groups.
- We are moving toward electronic group registration and we ask District Representatives to contact groups that are inactive to see if they are still active. One member in another group took it upon herself to delist a meeting and process it through the WSO.

**If your Area has criteria and procedures for relisting a group that has been delisted, please share that. How are the principles applied? Who makes the decision? Have you worked through this process? What was the result? What are your Area's thoughts about this decision/process? Then everyone, please share your thoughts about a process to relist a group that has been delisted.**

**Comments:**

- We keep the channel of communication open with the Group Representative. The Group Records Secretary (Coordinator) is the link to that group. In order to be re-listed, the Officers and Coordinators write a letter listing the changes needed and ask the group if they are willing to change. The Group Records Secretary visits the group to observe and check to see if the group is in compliance with the Traditions. In order to get the meeting re-listed, there is a process of visiting the meeting and keeping in contact with the Group Records Secretary.
- There is a concern surrounding an Al-Anon group that has decided to rewrite the preamble and Steps. A District Representative visited and spoke to the group, but then she resigned. Several Area Officers spoke with the Group Representative, but there have been no changes. There seems to be a lot of fear involved in taking the group off the list. We need to establish guidelines at the Area and have WSO as a backup.
- The fulltime person who works in the (AIS) office probably uses her discretion in referring a member or newcomers to meetings. We do tell newcomers to try six to 12 different meetings. I have a concern about the Al-Anon police image that may be created by such a process.
- I changed home groups due to my schedule. When deciding on a new group, I looked at what group really needed help. I began to attend that group regularly. "Let It Begin with Me."
- Sometimes Past Delegates think they can "fix it," but they are really the "big thumb." I would like guidelines, so I don't go from one end of the spectrum to the other. I am looking for balance. I believe we should give the group an opportunity to vote, define what they want to be, and move forward.
- When there is a problem in an Alateen meeting, I have a clear set of guidelines to follow. I don't have this when dealing with Al-Anon meetings. I need this so my personality is taken out of it and I can refer to the *Service Manual*. I need action steps to take when groups are in violation of the Traditions. The Alateen process was hugely painful for our Area, but we

passed it unanimously. Are we not just as important? When I came into Al-Anon, I was a walking 13-year-old in a 30-something-year-old body. Do we not deserve the same respect?

- We are trying to encourage people who are using the Traditions to stand for service positions.

**What, if anything, might the World Service Office do to support Areas in regards to referring members, newcomers, and professionals to groups that an Area has determined do not follow Al-Anon's principles?**

**Comments:**

- I would like it inserted in the "Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies." The WSO sends a letter of welcome to every group. A letter could be composed by WSO stating that a group is not following Al-Anon principles, therefore, the group has been marked as "Do Not Refer."
- We need a Task Force to draw up guidelines.
- I suggest members study Warranty Four under Concept Twelve because there is great information that does empower local entities.
- The sponsorship bookmark worked really well; maybe one could be created for this topic.
- I need clarification. When someone goes on the WSO Web site looking for a meeting, they are forwarded to an Area Web site. If they phone WSO, does WSO look on-line?
- If WSO makes up guidelines, could they take this information about delisting only from one person in the Area?
- My Area does not have the resources to follow up. If we have guidelines, who is responsible for checking up on these groups within the Area? I am concerned that there needs to be clear definition of how to relist this group.
- Personalities are driving some of these decisions and deciding what is "good" Al-Anon. Some objective criteria would be valuable.
- I like the idea about guidelines, but I prefer a Thought Force appointed to provide information and maybe a PowerPoint presentation for the Delegates to use. If I have tools, then my job as Delegate is to help people understand that this is a collective group conscience, not a WSO tool.
- Sending a letter to the group seems to create more of an "us and them" atmosphere and this affects Al-Anon/Alateen as a whole, as well. The Traditions are about "obedience to the unenforceable," so we have to be careful of our motives, when we do it, how we do it. I would appreciate a tool that helps me walk through this.
- This does affect us all and Al-Anon as a whole. Delisting does not mean the group is not registered as an Al-Anon group, it just means the meeting is not referred to newcomers. I would like to see WSO support the Areas that have had to delist. If we are the Al-Anon police then so be it. It's our name and program we are protecting. I've seen too many of these people ruin people and ruin Al-Anon. This is an urgent issue and an incredibly important issue. Please support those entities that have had the courage to take a stand.
- In regards to talking about the development of a guideline, let us remember that sometimes those closest to the group can be part of the problem.
- I am hoping that the WSO will look at the broad picture that these people are doing something right, that they are attracting people for some reason. When I was a newcomer, I was grateful for the person who told me what to do because I couldn't make a decision to save my life. We didn't call them Al-Anon police, we called them "oldtimers." I don't mind reflecting back and taking my own inventory. Why is this successful? We're trying to better understand why this is working.
- We decided in our Area that the District Representative would get a buddy and visit these groups. This is everyone's responsibility, not just WSO's. If something seems wrong, it needs to be addressed.

At the end of the session, the Chairperson thanked the Conference members for an informative and self-reflective session. The WSO Policy Committee will continue to discuss this issue and seek further input.

\*Additional information regarding "do not refer" can be found in the Policy Committee report on page 89.

## PROPERTY OWNERSHIP TASK FORCE

Judith P.  
Chairperson

The Chairperson began the session by asking how many Conference members could remember when the motion to move the World Service Office was passed in 1994. She noted that the Conference had started to discuss the topic of property ownership more than 30 years ago. (See the Property Ownership Task Force discussion beginning on p. 52 in the *2010 Conference Summary*.)

Motion 12—to end the trial and keep the building—was presented at the 2010 World Service Conference (WSC). During the 2010 discussion, Conference members expressed concern that the fellowship was expecting to wait through the full trial before voting. Therefore, the 2010 Conference tabled Motion 12 so that the Board of Trustees could further study the motion and the fellowship would have more time to consider property ownership. (See Motions 12 and 13 on page 91 in the *2010 Conference Summary*.)

After further study, the Board of Trustees found that the motion was consistent with Al-Anon's spiritual intent and was financially sound. The Board composed a motion (see page 81 for the wording of the motion). Conference members were given the opportunity to post questions on chart paper posted on the walls at the onset of the 2011 WSC.

The proposed Motion was read followed by discussion and questions.

- A Conference member noted that Condition 4 of the Motion encouraged entities, such as Literature Distribution Centers (LDCs) and Al-Anon Information Services, to wait until guidelines are created before purchasing property.

*There will be a guideline for other entities (such as LDCs) regarding purchase of real property.*

- I want to be sure that the same Conditions apply to all entities. For example, what if a natural disaster were to occur?

*If in the future it is decided that it is feasible for other entities of Al-Anon to own property, those entities would comply with the same guidelines. If the Board purchased another piece of property, it would abide by the same restrictions as the other entities. Condition 10 is the guideline for the World Service Conference. Condition 4, for other entities, would use similar guidelines.*

- Should the Board of Trustees decide that a new corporation be formed, the membership would be notified at the next WSC. Why not immediately?

*Sometimes things happen quickly, and the WSC only meets annually. The Board needs to be able to act quickly and safeguard our property. The members of the WSC would be notified as soon as possible, and receive the official notice at the next WSC.*

- Is time used for the building maintenance taking away from our primary purpose?

*We have an Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) to handle building maintenance. When the WSO was in New York City, AFG, Inc. was required to have a commercial lease, which consisted of a bare shell that required a lot of time devoted to wiring, etc. AFG, Inc. became an undesirable tenant because when asked where our income originates, the answer was contributions and the sale of literature. It cost over a million dollars to renovate this space before we moved in. When anything broke, Al-Anon had to pay to repair it. The WSO was at the mercy of the landlord. At the end of the lease, we could be asked to move as happened in 1986. The WSO had to move a lot. Ownership of property will allow the office to stay in one place. Finding a new location and moving takes a lot of human resources.*

- Condition 10 says that as long as all the Conditions are abided by, the Board maintains the right to purchase property when financially feasible. Doesn't this negate all the other Conditions?

*No. The Conference is authorizing the Board of Trustees to move quickly, if necessary. Condition 10 is the same as in Motion 12 from 1994.*

- In regard to the Board of Trustees having the right to sell the property, if there is any interference with the spiritual intent, my understanding is that the Board of Trustees has that right since ECRPM is a committee of the Board of Trustees.

*Yes, the ECRPM is a committee of the Board of Trustees, but the Board would decide if owning the property interferes with the spiritual intent of the motion.*

- Is there is a person on staff who is a member of the ECRPM?

*Yes, the ECRPM comes in twice a year and does a thorough inspection of the building and insures we are following a timeline of repairs and maintenance. The Director of Business Services is a member of the ECRPM. The staff member does keep the ECRPM up-to-date as to the timelines met, repairs needed, etc.*

- It will be difficult to bring this motion to my Area. There are a lot of opinions. It helped me to remind the Assembly how difficult it is to do the day-to-day work of moving. For instance, we had to move our Assembly and it took a lot of time and effort to locate a different rental building just for an Assembly.

*I encourage Areas to request a TEAM event and ask for the property presentation.*

- Please help me to explain that the groups have no ownership of the building. The members seem to think that since the building was purchased using donation money, the groups own the building, too. What's the difference between owning clubhouses and owning the building?

*Groups ought never be organized or incorporated. Clubhouses are usually owned by a group of people who have their own board and sublease meeting space to groups. The Al-Anon fellowship has traditional rights while the rights of AFG, Inc. are legal. Donations are not earmarked.*

*Groups don't exist in the law, so they can't have legal ownership of anything.*

- An ongoing problem in my Area is that the groups think they are not informed of what is going on, which sparks fear.

*E-Communities is available to inform the Delegates of what is happening. The Delegates can forward the information to the groups via the links of service. There are also many resources on the Members' Web site. There are quicker ways of communicating with technology. It is necessary to work at keeping the communication open, as some members don't like going through the Delegate.*

- Will the ECRPM continue to report back to the WSC?

*No, the Board of Trustees actually reports every three years per Condition 3. The ECRPM Chair will continue to attend the Conference to inform the Conference in case the ECRPM believes that the Board is acting outside its scope of authority regarding the management of the building.*

- This session has really helped me to understand Tradition Six.

*The Chairperson of the Task Force noted that there's a word in Tradition Six that she never paid much attention to—that word is "outside." We are told not to lend our name to an outside entity. The WSO and AFG, Inc. are service centers of the fellowship as discussed in Tradition Eight.*

A Motion was made, seconded, and carried to authorize ownership of real property. (See Motion 6 on page 82.)





## PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

Patrick Q.  
Associate Director of  
Communications—Media



Each Delegate received a DVD with all versions of the PSAs (English, Spanish, and French) 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 in high definition TV will be mailed to the selected television stations this fall. 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. It was noted that these PSAs will also be posted on the Public Outreach Web site.

A staff member referenced page 108 of the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section, “National Publicity.” The April 28th television show “General Hospital” will close the episode with an announcement about Al-Anon/Alateen. Luke’s son, Lucky, is charged with a DUI and the death of another person as a result of his drinking.

## SKILL-BUILDING LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

Skill-Building 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 Delegate and a WSO Volunteer together presented each workshop.

### Communication—Understanding Different Learning Styles

The leaders introduced examples of different learning styles:

- Visual learners learn through seeing.
- Auditory learners learn through listening.
- Tactile/kinesthetic learners learn through moving, doing, and touching.
- Sequential learners learn through completing one task prior to the presentation of another, with each task building on the prior learning.
- Global learners need to grasp the broad concept first and then the details fall into place. They learn in big leaps and put things together in novel ways.

Members in this workshop discussed various methods of communication that address different learning styles. They identified how a culture of trust fits into understanding different learning styles. Members of the workshop shared the benefits of striking a balance between giving too much information and not enough information. Participants gave short presentations using the different learning styles.

### Communication—Active Listening

The leaders introduced active listening as a communication technique that requires the listener to understand, interpret, and evaluate what they hear. Active listening is a constructive way of listening and responding to others, putting the focus and attention on the speaker. The ability to listen actively can improve personal relationships through reducing conflicts, strengthening cooperation, and fostering understanding.

The process of active listening requires that the listener be aware that there are two parts for each spoken message. One part is the content of the message; the other part is the feeling behind the message.

Members were divided into small groups to discuss several scenarios where active listening would be necessary.

### Discussion included:

- Active listening as it relates to giving and receiving information in reaching a group conscience.
- Utilizing tools of the program that may be useful in active listening.
- Possessing active listening skills can be helpful in identifying what a member is actually asking.
- How we, as leaders, utilize active listening and program tools to handle situations.



### Communication—Presentations and Reporting Skills

The leaders introduced the idea that presentations and reporting skills can be a way that Delegates can put the Conference theme into action. A key to successful communication is the ability to present information clearly, concisely, and completely in a manner that holds the interest of the audience. Conference members identified numerous techniques by participating in a Gallery Walk.

#### Members in this workshop discussed:

- Knowing your audience.
- Knowing the subject; importance of doing your research.
- Telling members you'll find out the answer and get back to them, if you don't know the answer to a question.
- Incorporating humor into presentations.
- Giving examples of shared leadership.

## SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN OUR STRUCTURE WORK GROUP

The Work Group presented a skit as one of its members took “an Assembly” through a slide show presentation, titled “Serving as a Trustee.” During the session, the cast members, as Assembly members, asked questions as a way to further explain the qualifications and requirements.

During the presentation, it was noted that the only difference between Regional Trustees (RTs) and Trustees at Large (TALs) is the process by which the Trustee is selected.

Each year, six positions on the Board of Trustees become available—three RTs and three TALs. Regional Trustee candidates are submitted by Area.

Two of the requirements to serve as a Trustee are:

- Ten years of continuous Al-Anon membership
- Not being a member of A.A.

The time, travel, and stamina involved in the work of the Trustees was highlighted as well as the possibility of overseas travel. It was noted that although Trustees don't hold office at the district or Area level, they can hold office at the group level, if desired.

Laurie K.  
*Chairperson, Trustee*

#### Conference members asked the following questions:

- How many vacancies are there for Trustee at Large?  
*There are three per year. This year, the Board of Trustees chose to only fill two seats. One may be filled by appointment for one year at the Annual Board meeting.*
- Do the candidates need to have experience outside of their Areas?  
*Yes, a candidate's activities in the community are also important in addition to their service within Al-Anon at the Area or World Service level.*
- Does the entire Board of Trustees evaluate résumés for Trustee at Large? Do you have guidelines for how you evaluate them?  
*There are instructions for scoring the résumés. Members set their own criteria for scoring, but ultimately, it seems to work out. Résumés for Regional Trustee come to the Nominating Committee and Regional Committee for Trustees. Résumés are scored and a summary is submitted to the Nominating Committee. Then the résumés are submitted to the Board.*
- Is there a strategy to make the Board of Trustees more diverse?  
*Yes, this presentation is a part of that strategy. We welcome more diverse résumés, but we need qualified candidates, regardless.*

## TASK AND THOUGHT FORCE PRESENTATIONS

WSO Committee structures have always changed. Sometimes, there was reluctance to change, but when the benefits became apparent during three-year trial periods, there was a positive response to the change.

In 2007, a few Delegates were assigned to a Task Force on the Reserve Fund guidelines. Delegates were able to participate in a short-term, task-oriented group where results were readily apparent.

At the 2008 World Service Conference, a Trustee gave an in-depth presentation on the history of Committees (see pages 35-36 of the *2008 Conference Summary*). Following the presentation, Conference members met with their assigned Committees, Task Forces, and Thought Forces.

In the past, Delegates served on a Committee for their entire term. For the past few years, each year Delegates are given the option to serve or not to serve on a Committee, Task Force, or Thought Force.

This year, many Task and Thought Forces were created due to concerns or ideas originating from previous Conference discussions or from Chosen Agenda Items submitted. At the end of a Conference presentation, some Task and Thought Force presentations resulted in the Conference supporting a specific strategy. Other Task and Thought Force discussions will be considered further by the Board of Trustees in order to determine possible next steps.

### Task Force to Create a Process for Conference Members to Submit Items for the WSC Agenda

Kerri K./Connie D., Chair  
Panel 48/Panel 49  
Nebraska/Delaware

In 1976, the World Service Conference recognized the need for Delegates and other Conference members to have input into the Conference agenda. The titles for the Chosen Agenda Item sessions during the last 35 years have included names such as “Red Light, Green Light”; “Green Light”; “Green Light Open Discussion”; “Timely Topics”; “WSC Chosen Agenda Items”; and “Agenda Items.” The original intent and vision of having a process to submit questions or topics for possible inclusion on the Conference agenda was for the Conference as a body to have open discussions on topics that are general in nature and pertain to Al-Anon as a whole.

In an effort to reinvigorate the Chosen Agenda Item discussions by aligning them with what our pioneers originally envisioned, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT), in 2008, asked the Conference members to help identify *topics*, rather than *questions*, that would stimulate in-depth discussions. In addition, the CLT scheduled time for discussion on the topic, “The Future of Chosen Agenda Items.” A presentation was given by a Trustee and a member of the WSO staff, followed by a discussion among Conference members, meant to help the Conference Leadership Team with planning for future Conferences.

Prior to the 2009 Conference, Delegates were asked, “What is the value of the current Chosen Agenda Items process to the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide?” At the 2009 Conference, an evaluation of the Chosen Agenda Items Process, including its purpose and role in the future of Al-Anon’s World Service Conferences, was introduced by two Delegates. One Delegate presenter noted that the purpose of having a Chosen Agenda Items Process “is an opportunity for Conference members to discuss *new* ideas, concepts, and issues that affect Al-Anon worldwide.”

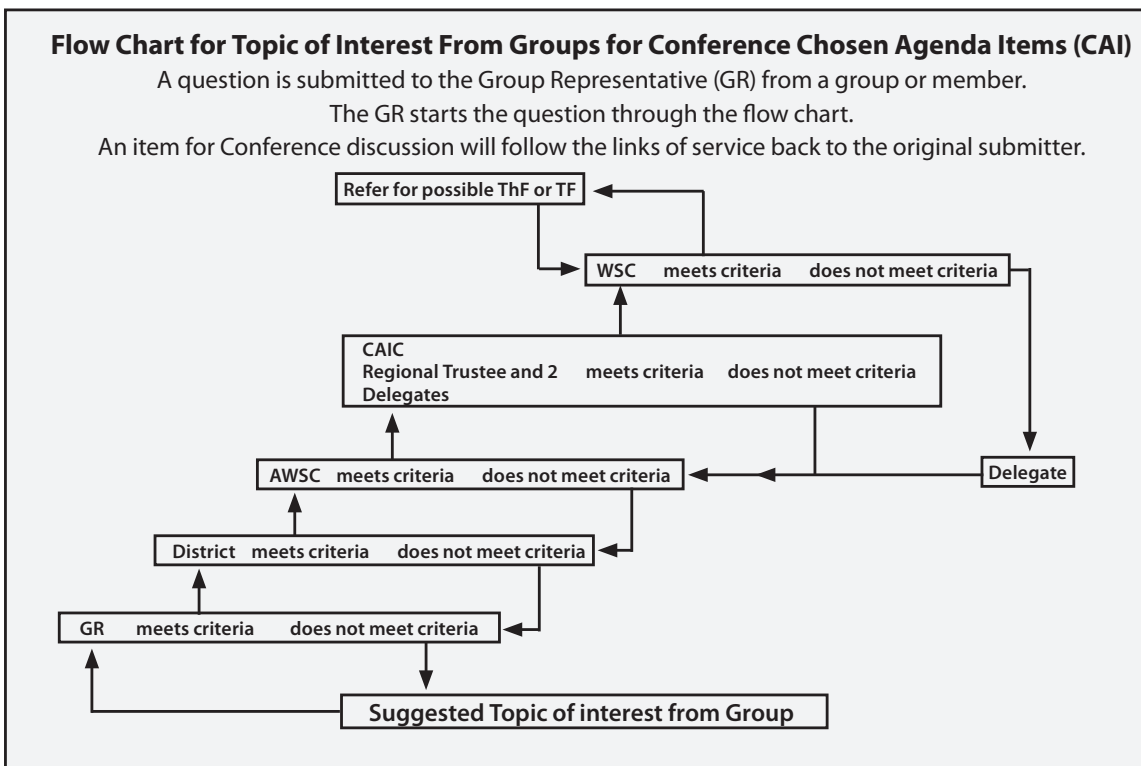
She went on to say, “Each year when I received the request from the Conference Leadership Team for submission to the Chosen Agenda Item, I felt obligated to submit ‘something,’ and so I put together ‘something’ and submitted it, truly believing that it was worthy of a great discussion. I know now that all topics and all questions from Al-Anon members are worthy of attention and respect, but are not necessarily appropriate as Chosen Agenda Items.” The Delegate summed up her comments by stating, “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.”

Following the Delegates’ presentation, the Associate Director of Member Services—Conference provided Conference members with Chosen Agenda Items voting statistics. Out of 94 voting members, 24 members submitted topics for consideration. Fifty-seven Conference members voted (60 percent of all Conference members). Of those, 44 were Delegates, five were WSO Volunteers, six were staff. There were two anonymous votes.

The floor was opened for discussion and a Delegate summarized the discussion with these main points:

- We're wondering what the value of the CAI process is if only 60 percent 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?

Following the 2009 Conference, a Task Force charge was developed to respond to the question, "How could issues from the Areas, that relate to worldwide AI-Anon, be brought to the WSC, if we no longer had Chosen Agenda Item questions for discussion?" In April 2010, the members of the Task Force began their work at the Conference; they continued to work throughout the year via conference call and e-mail. The materials the Task Force presented were the results of brainstorming, discussion, feedback from the Executive Committee, and feedback from other interested AI-Anon members.



Members of the Task Force presented a PowerPoint slide show that demonstrated an alternative way to submit items for the WSC agenda. The proposed process included establishing Chosen Agenda Item Committees comprised of Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and WSO staff, that would meet face-to-face at Conference, and several times via conference call. The proposed process was intended to offer Conference members more input in submitting Chosen Agenda Items and input in writing the framing for the agenda item.

Mid-way through the presentation, the members acted out a skit that demonstrated one of the conference calls in the proposed process. The skit illustrated that by working together, Conference members have an opportunity to talk to each other and reason things out regarding what is a worldwide issue to discuss at Conference and what is an Area issue or an idea that is against Traditions.

Following the Task Force's presentation, there was a brief period of discussion.

- I love this, because in the three years that I have been Delegate, my Area has not submitted a Chosen Agenda Item. I like the process—having a committee that would help put together the framing.
- I just came out of a workshop on active listening; I'm desperately trying to hear what you are



saying. It seems a very simple process has been complicated here. What has moved it to the point of needing change?

*This conversation, which started in 2009, has been looking at why WSC members aren't submitting topics.*

*The Executive Committee has reviewed this proposed process many times and has had numerous conversations with the Task Force. The process presented is not much different than before, the Task Force has just added more layers and Conference members would sit on a committee that helps make the decision. The process includes adding another meeting at WSC; I'm not sure when you would fit in another meeting.*

- I didn't turn in a Chosen Agenda Item because I asked districts to forward me their concerns. I was able to answer the questions because they were Area questions.
- Why create a new committee?

*During our conference calls we realized this was complicated, but the key intent of the process was to offer Conference members more input into the process prior to submitting Chosen Agenda Items and input in writing the framing for the agenda item.*

*This does go back several years because of lack of interest in the submission of Chosen Agenda Items. If we eliminate the Chosen Agenda Item, there is no way for the Delegate to bring concerns to the WSC. This is what the Task Force came up with so the Delegate body did not lose its ability to bring items of concern to the WSC.*

- If this Conference doesn't like the new procedure, can we stay with the current process?

The Conference Co-Chair asked the Conference if the members wanted to move forward with proposed process. The consensus was not to move forward. Therefore, the Conference agreed to keep the process for submitting Chosen Agenda Items as is.

## Thought Force for Areas to Show How Service Contributes to Growth and Is an Integral Part of the AI-Anon Program

Judy K./Meagan M., Chair  
Panel 48/Panel 49  
Nevada/Minnesota South

At Conferences over the years, questions about service have been raised and discussed:

- How do we demonstrate the personal benefits of service to members?
- How can we take the fear out of service work?
- How can we deal with lack of commitment of members?
- How do we motivate the longtime members to return to service, or expand service work?

To respond to such questions, a Thought Force was formed to show how service contributes to growth and is an integral part of the AI-Anon program. The charge was to develop strategies that create enthusiasm for service and demonstrate personal benefits to the members.

Members of the Thought Force answered the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions in the context of the charge and shared ideas based on their own service experiences. It was noted that members involved in service understand (as perhaps few others can) how giving of themselves strengthens them and helps them to grow. However, the rewards of service are often obscure to those who have not yet experienced them.

The Thought Force proposed six strategies to create enthusiasm for Area service and to show the personal benefits to the individual member.

The first two strategies dealt with reaching members not yet in service.

### Strategy One

**Establish and participate in a traveling "CARS" (Communicating AI-Anon Recovery in Service) team that visits groups to speak about service, highlighting personal benefits received.**

#### Pros:

- Non-threatening for newcomers.
- Doesn't require a service event.
- Provides personal contact.
- May bring new vitality to groups.

#### Cons:

- Requires people, time, and expense.
- May be a challenge to get "invited" to groups.



- Could become a “personalities” issue.
- Is another acronym to learn.

Exhibiting enthusiasm for service is a key aspect of a CARS presentation. We show by example how service has helped us grow. *How* we present, may be more important than *what* we present.

## Strategy Two

### Develop a “Take Out Tool Kit” of service items ready for groups to use.

This tool could be used for Al-Anon/Alateen members not yet in service who wish to serve at the group level. It could also be used by members serving on convention committees. These members may not always attend Area Assemblies. There is some overlap here with members already in service who could use the Kit to enhance their service skills, such as chairing meetings, writing position descriptions, and sponsoring others in service. The Tool Kit could also be used for Assembly or other service meetings.

#### Pros:

- Provides readily available tools.
- Could be used in workshops.
- Opportunity to introduce service sponsorship.
- May help new members feel more confident.

The Tool Kit gives people new to service a quick, convenient resource without having to reinvent the wheel. In the absence of more experienced group members, the Kit could suffice until the member gets a Service Sponsor.

#### Cons:

- Would take time and effort to create.
- Might be considered reading material only.
- Might not spark service interest.
- Only a few groups might use the Tool Kit.

It’s difficult to know how the Tool Kit might be used. It could be a poor response to the problem or a very effective tool.

The second two strategies address supporting members who are already in service.

## Strategy Three

### Develop a skit and/or interactive workshop on service to demonstrate how practicing the Al-Anon principles in the safe environment of Al-Anon has had a positive effect in all areas of our lives.

#### Pros:

- Injects activity, humor, fun, and enthusiasm.
- Attracts people’s attention.
- Helps everyone remember why they serve.
- Provides excellent opportunity for brainstorming.

#### Cons:

- Takes time, effort, planning, and preparation.
- People often too busy to attend.
- Attendance might be low because of “service.”
- Communication—links of service.

## Strategy Four

### Revise service material—including the *Joy of Service* (S-57) and *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78)—to create new service material.

#### Pros:

- CAL is available to all members.
- Could include benefits of service.
- Helps members identify gifts of service.
- New CAL generates enthusiasm and interest.

#### Cons:

- Some see no need to revise CAL.

- Takes considerable time and money.
- CAL may not be affordable.
- May be difficult to solicit enough service stories.

New Service CAL is a fresh way to reinforce how service is an integral part of the Al-Anon program.

Strategies Five and Six address expanding the horizons and growth of members who are currently in service.

### Strategy Five

**Hold a “Service Gallery Walk” event at Assembly. Set up stations for current service positions, displaying an informative poster and providing a brief “handout” of skills/talents needed for the positions. Rotate small groups through these stations for information and questions.**

#### **Pros:**

- Information to willing and qualified members.
- Small groups easier for sharing and questions.
- Seeing “Service Stations” is helpful.
- Some Areas report success with this strategy.

#### **Cons:**

- Hindered by lack of space or time.
- Members may prefer to sit and listen.
- Areas may already be doing this.
- Requires creating a display.

### Strategy Six

**Use the AFG Members’ Web site to host a “Service Blog” with, for example, a “Service Project of the Month” for groups, where members could share their experiences — both successes and challenges — agendas, resources, and ideas for district/Area service events and workshops.**

#### **Pros:**

- Easy to implement.
- Faster than revising literature.
- May attract “tech-savvy” members.
- Provide a resource for future literature.

#### **Cons:**

- Technical issues may discourage members.
- Some Areas still resist the Web site.
- Would require considerable training/education.
- May not generate enough service stories.

Following the presentation of strategies, Conference members were asked to discuss these questions:

**Which strategies do you like?**

**Which strategies do you dislike?**

**Are there other strategies?**

- Any time we can get people doing fun things and being active in service is great. Two districts in my Area got together for “Summer Fling” and I gave my Delegate’s report to them. Any time you can get people involved with food and fellowship, they’ll come, no matter what you call it.
- I love all the strategies. Service is synonymous with giving. If you want to know what I value as a human being, watch what I spend my time doing. I don’t remember personally volunteering for any service position, I’ve just said yes when asked. How are we asking today?
- We have an Election Assembly in November. Our acting Area Chair and I will be planning our May Assembly, and we want to educate our members about the positions. I love the Service Gallery Walk. I would suggest breaking people up in groups and rotating them to the different positions.
- We’ve done CARS. It worked for a little bit, but the distance and the cost of travel made it a challenge. We are already planning a Gallery Walk, so members can go to the Coordinator and talk about the position they are interested in. The blog on service is a great idea, too.

- We have been getting in cars and going places. I love the idea of the Tool Kit. The Gallery Walk sounds exciting.
- I can see the look on their face when I talk about service—the look that I am going to make them feel guilty. There are so many ways we serve. What do those services do for your growth? We already are doing service and getting the benefits, let's expand our service and our benefits.
- An option is to host a TEAM event. This will help people get involved in service.
- I was thinking about a page in *Courage to Change*. It is about the Seventh Tradition and how it is not only about our money, but also about our time and energy.
- Sometimes if you mask service as something else, you get great results from some, and others are perturbed. I like the idea of the blog. We take the blogs and talk about them after the meeting. They're not CAL, so we can't talk about them during the meeting.
- Some of my best memories in service work were about “getting in the car,” so that is my favorite strategy. We had a wonderful time getting to know each other on a different level.
- I love the blog idea. I can see the Area Newsletter Editor putting this idea in the newsletter. We revised and approved job descriptions. We created an “interest form.”
- When we get new Group Representatives, I get their name, address, and e-mail. I learned a long time ago not to ask for volunteers, but to call members and ask for their help.
- I wish I had a service inventory before I filled out that first résumé for Trustee.
- I like the Gallery Walk. Before our Election Assembly, all of our Officers and Coordinators gave a three-minute talk about their service position. They talked about what they were afraid of and how they grew.
- A blog on service would be a great tool and something that could be done quickly and easily. I know an Area that does a Gallery Walk and they call it “Speed Dating.” I love the *Joy of Service* pamphlet.
- This room is energized by these ideas and we don't have to wait. What I like about this is that people get together. My Sponsor integrated service into her sponsorship. I not only worked the Steps, but she took me right around that triangle.
- I could use that Gallery walk at our AWSC and Assembly. We are going to do it with the Coordinators and Officers walking around and giving a brief talk about their service position.

Following the discussion, Conference members were polled on which strategy to pursue. The consensus was Strategy #6, Web site blog on service.

## Thought Force to Identify Information for a Guideline on Memorial Contributions

In recent years, surviving family members, whose deceased relatives were members of the fellowship, have attempted to make memorial contributions. Current policy does not allow the WSO to accept contributions from anyone who is not a member.

Contributions from family members were allowed from the earliest days to 1986, according to archival information and the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies.” Initially, the donation amount was capped at \$100. That cap was gradually increased to \$400 in 1975, when the first “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” was issued. Eventually, the amount was increased to \$500.

The policy on family member contributions changed as a result of an “Ask-It-Basket” question that was discussed in a breakout workshop at the 1986 WSC. The workshop participants concluded that accepting family member contributions was a violation of Tradition Seven. The Policy Committee responded and brought revised language to the WSC the following year; the Conference voted to remove family member contributions from the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies.”

There was no record of discussion at the 1986 Conference on this topic. The motion to remove the section was presented and the Conference voted to support that motion.

The WSO receives approximately three-to-five inquiries about family member contributions a year. It is WSO policy to give potential donors the option of purchasing Conference Approved Literature and donating it to an appropriate facility or to make a contribution to the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence or the Stepping Stones Foundation.

In reviewing past *Service Manuals*, it was discovered that a number of years ago, Al-Anon did accept financial memorial contributions from family members. These contributions

Harriet T.  
Chairperson, Trustee

<b>Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies</b>	
The “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” reflects policy statements that grew out of questions and experiences from the Al-Anon fellowship worldwide. Twelve Concepts of Service.	
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Note: Vertical lines in outer margins indicate where changes were made for this edition.



were limited to a specific dollar amount and one-time only. The Thought Force also completed the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions.

Members of the Thought Force acted out a series of short vignettes to demonstrate some of the situations that come to WSO from those wishing to donate to Al-Anon Family Groups in honor of a deceased person.

### **Vignette #1**

Situation: Non-member friend of the deceased member

Suggestion: Consider buying some Al-Anon books for your local library

### **Vignette #2**

Situation: Family member (non-member) of the deceased member

Suggestion: Consider purchasing *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* and giving it to professionals

### **Vignette #3**

Situation: Al-Anon member donates to the WSO in memory of a deceased family member and a pet and asks, “Could I also give a donation to our Area, district, or AIS/LDC?”

Suggestion: Certainly. Any Al-Anon member can make a donation to any service arm of Al-Anon. Please check with the service arm for any limitations on donations. (Note: each service arm can set its own limits, the service arm does not have to follow what has been set by the Conference for the WSO.

### **Vignette #4**

Situation: Non-member speaking with member—both are friends of the deceased

Suggestion: Al-Anon will not accept money from non-members. The non-member could consider giving the donation to the member who could donate it in the deceased person’s name.

### **Vignette #5**

Situation: Non-member talking to an Al-Anon member. The non-member says, “I want to do something to help the poor families who are suffering because of it.”

Suggestion: The member says, “Al-Anon cannot accept donations from non-members, but the World Service Office can suggest other ways that you might be able to honor those who have suffered through another’s alcoholism.”

Following the vignettes, Conference members were asked, “In the spirit of our Traditions and our principle of unlimited, abundant resources, in what ways can Al-Anon Family Groups support a non-member’s request to honor a deceased member of Al-Anon?”

- Non-members’ contributions in honor of a member were made to me and I bought boxes and boxes of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* to distribute throughout the community.
- Protecting anonymity, I purchased *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* and passed them out within the community.
- By virtue of the deceased member’s status as a member, can’t the donation be made as a final donation by that member?

*Unless it is from the deceased members’ estate or from his/her checking account (if another person had power of attorney and was authorized to use the checking account), the WSO can’t receive it. Up until 1986, any family member could make that donation on behalf of the deceased member.*

- Wouldn’t it be nice to have an inexpensive bookplate that said, “This literature is given in honor of someone whose life was affected by someone else’s drinking”?
- Can the donation be accepted if the member has left a letter of intent for distribution of their belongings?

*Only if the donation is coming from the estate or there is a written bequest.*

- Isn’t it the spirit of the Traditions that is really important, rather than checking what account the donation is coming from?
- If an obituary states, “Give to the charity of your choice,” as a member, I can give to Al-Anon.
- Since Al-Anon saved my life, I would like to have a one-page guideline that states what I can do and what my family can do when I die.
- If a non-member is able to give to a member to donate, can an Area create a trust fund where people can turn in the money and the Area can make the donation?

*Outside money cannot come into Al-Anon under the current policy. The best option for family*

*members who do not belong to Al-Anon is to buy literature and distribute it. If you create a family trust that includes money from non-members, you cannot donate the non-members' money to Al-Anon.*

- In some states, if you want to give money to a person or charity, it has to be in your will. Check what the law is on the local level. Let the WSO know that you have this in your will. Make your wishes known to your family, partner, spouse, etc.

- Is there a limit on the monetary amount that any member can leave?

*The limit used to be a percentage of our general fund. People kept asking why they couldn't contribute what they wanted. Refer to page 93 of the Service Manual, under "Financial Matters," the section on "Bequests." If it is known, members can leave a one-time unlimited legacy. Annual donations can only be a certain percentage of the annual budget.*

- I keep hearing the word "will." I personally have a "trust," which spells out what I want. If the person I've named as executor is not a member of Al-Anon, will my donation still be accepted?

*There are different ways of dealing with your assets upon your death, a "trust" is one way to do it with tax advantages. When you send the WSO information about a trust, we need to know that the assets in the trust are yours. Some of you are recipients of a generational or family trust, so unless the money was originally yours, you cannot make the donation to Al-Anon. But in the case that it is the money of a member making the trust, the WSO can take the money, even though the person, trustee, or executor in charge of distributing the money is not a member. We are working with a Task Force to create guidelines explaining how to give IRAs and create reciprocal wills and trusts in order to guarantee your wishes.*

At the close of the session, it was asked whether the Board or Policy Committee could appoint a Task Force to study this idea further in terms of family non-member gifts.

## Thought Force on How to Include Dual Members in Service Work while Maintaining Our Policies

The fellowships of Al-Anon and A.A. have a unique relationship. They were closely allied in their origins; and are naturally drawn together by their family ties. The Twelve Traditions emphasize that each fellowship works more effectively when it remains separate.

Tradition Six specifically states that Al-Anon is a separate entity. Therefore, in keeping with this Tradition, there can be no combining, joining, or uniting, which would result in loss of identity for either fellowship. Separateness rules out affiliation or merging, but it does not exclude cooperation with A.A. or acting together for mutual benefit. Al-Anon acknowledges with gratitude the spiritual cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A., even though many Al-Anon members may have little to no contact with A.A. or A.A. members.

The current policy, from the 2010-2013 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section, "Dual Membership in Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A.," pgs. 78-79, states:

"Because of the unique nature of both programs, Al-Anon/Alateen members who are also A.A. members do not hold office beyond the group level, as these positions could lead to membership in the World Service Conference (WSC). The need to focus on the Al-Anon program and the possibility of a conflict of interest at Assembly and world service levels led the WSC to its decision not to seat Al-Anon/Alateen members who are also members of A.A. For these reasons A.A. members do not serve as Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives (DRs), Area Coordinators, Newsletter Editors, Delegates and/or any of their alternates, nor do they sit on the WSO selected committees, whose Chairpersons can be Conference members."

In 1966, the staff of both A.A. and Al-Anon worked together to clarify the policy that differentiates the two fellowships due to numerous requests to register A.A. Family Groups. The decision was that the word "family" does not belong in an A.A. group's name, as it is part of the Al-Anon fellowship's incorporated name.

The initial guideline, "Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A." (G-3), for group separation between A.A. and Al-Anon was approved at the 1967 Al-Anon World Service Conference and is periodically updated in consultation with the A.A. General Service Office.

Sandie D.  
Chairperson, Trustee

In part, the guideline states that the officers of each group should be members of either A.A. or Al-Anon, depending upon the group's affiliation.

The guideline emphasizes that the primary purpose of A.A. is to help fellow alcoholics recover. It was also emphasizes that the primary purpose of Al-Anon is to help families of alcoholics.

Because of those separate purposes, dual members of A.A. and Al-Anon do not serve in Al-Anon policymaking positions. This ensures there is no conflict of interest between A.A. and Al-Anon or the appearance that we are not separate entities with separate purposes.

There has been a lot of misunderstanding and confusion regarding the policy. There are dual members who have never heard of the policy. There are also members who believe that dual members cannot hold any service positions in Al-Anon.

The Thought Force concentrated on ways that dual members can serve Al-Anon. Dual members can:

- Serve on event committees in the Area, district, group, and AIS based on Area/local policies.
- Assist in Public Outreach service at the Area, district, group, and AIS.
- Support fellowship communications via service arm Web sites and newsletters.
- Attend to the technology needs of the Area, district, group, and AIS.
- Become certified as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).
- Submit sharings for WSO publications.
- Support strategic planning in the Area, district, group, and AIS by serving on Thought Forces/Task Forces.
- Serve as liaison to the local A.A. fellowship.

Members of the Thought Force introduced three strategies that they believe will help the fellowship identify ways that dual members can serve, and do so in a positive and constructive manner.

### Strategy One

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Develop a workshop for all service arms to use as a framework to begin a productive discussion about dual members in service, within the current policy. Workshop attendees would be encouraged to share with the fellowship what they learn via WSO venues like the Members' Web site blog, *Area Highlights* and/or *Forum* submissions, as well as similar Area communication tools.

### Strategy Two

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Create service tools (i.e., guidelines) to support the fellowship in identifying service positions for dual members to assist service arms to do the following:

- Clarify the criteria to use when deciding which service positions are appropriate for dual members.
- Generate a list of available service opportunities that can be filled by dual members.

**Pros:**

- Gives autonomy to the Areas to determine positions that suit the Areas.
- Encourages Areas/service arms to discuss "what dual members can do," rather than saying that "they can't serve."
- Creates a common basis on which other strategies can be built.
- Is an opportunity to explain the underlying spiritual principles for the current policy.

**Cons:**

- Each Area has unique needs and variations in positions.
- Some members may be stuck in the "they can't serve" mentality.

### Strategy Three

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Encourage members to write *Forum* articles that support constructive discussions about dual members in service.

**Pro:**

- Sets an encouraging tone for Areas to follow when discussing the issue.

**Con:**

- May not change attitudes.

Following the presentation, Conference members discussed the following questions:

**Which strategies presented do you believe can be effective?**

**Which strategies presented do you believe may not be effective?**

**Are there other possible strategies that we are missing?**

- A workshop or a guideline would be useful because I still don't have a good grasp of the policy. For example, can dual members chair a convention? I hear people say, "If you can co-chair a convention, why not co-chair the Assembly?"
- In my groups, the majority of members are dual members, so it is difficult to get people who are able to serve.
- A common question received at the WSO is: "Our group is mostly dual members and they are the only ones willing to serve." I wonder why a group is comprised mostly of dual members? Maybe there needs to be additional outreach, so A.A. members are not the only ones hearing about Al-Anon.
- This is a serious problem in our Area. I like Strategy Two because I think members are most accepting of a written piece that is readily available.
- I like all of the strategies, but Strategy Two takes me out of the decision-making process; it becomes less about my personality.
- I like Strategy Two. Every single Assembly, and sometimes in the district meetings, I am asked about this. I want to be able to refer to a written document. Letting dual members know what they can do puts a positive spin on the situation.
- I like Strategy Two. There was a dual member who had media training and wanted to work on a committee, but we thought the member couldn't.
- Strategy Two is the most positive because we state what they can do, not what they can't do. The convention chair cannot be a dual member in our Area because that member sits on the AWSC with a vote. Serving Alateen doesn't work well in our Area because 90 percent of the dual members in our Area can't pass our AMIAS requirements.
- I like Strategy Two, but I would like to include sharings from dual members who have served.
- I am married to a dual member. I believe they should choose where they want to do their service, choosing for others is not our strength.
- Having a workshop where there is a discussion and members are educated is vital. It would be helpful if the members would have the support tools to guide the conversation.
- I have a problem with dual members serving at the Area level. If they have a voice at our Area level, there is certainly the opportunity of swaying our viewpoint. I hear the story about the Al-Anon members just letting A.A. do all the work. Why is that? I prefer to the use of the word "beyond" the group level, not "above."
- I like the idea of sharing the leadership. I'm going to ask the dual members to help me lead a workshop on what they can do within our fellowship.
- I do not think a workshop should have "dual members" in the title, or the workshop might not be used. It should just be called a "service workshop."
- I need clarification about what the policy says. Doesn't serving as an A.A. liaison mean above the group level?
- If the person in the service position votes at the AWSC, then no, a dual member cannot serve. This is an Area issue for consideration because different Areas have different positions that give them a vote at AWSC.
- In the *2010-2013 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual*, "World Service Handbook," World Service Conference Structure chart on page 158 states, ". . . and liaison members (from local Information Service centers or Intergroups)."
- The intent of the chart on page 158 was not to tell the Areas what they had to have or could not have, but to show the possibilities. Each Area determines who has a vote at their Assembly. It really is up to Area autonomy.
- I went throughout Northern California doing workshops with members, not just at Assemblies. It never occurred to me that this would be an excellent opportunity to include the service arms, because that is where the argument is. Clarification and harmony are only going to be achieved through conversation between the members of the two different perspectives.
- Strategy Three is confusing because in Al-Anon meetings, we ask dual members not to reveal their A.A. membership, so how do we get them to write *Forum* articles when we're asking them not to reveal their membership in A.A.?



Liz W.S.  
Chairperson,  
Executive Committee Member

## Thought Force to Support Areas in Dealing with Groups Whose Activities Fail to Consider Al-Anon or Alateen as a Whole

One of the Chosen Agenda Items (CAI) at the 2009 World Service Conference was: How to support Areas that deal with unhealthy groups in a positive and productive way? There were similar discussions at the 2005, 2006, and 2008 World Service Conferences, as well as articles in *The Forum*. Following the 2009 presentation, there was a lengthy discussion from the Conference floor. It was noted that this issue continuously surfaces and is a source of frustration in many Areas. Several Conference members asked that a Thought Force be appointed to come up with ideas that might address this issue.

The topic was brought to the July 2009 Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting for discussion. It was felt that the word “unhealthy” is judgmental and subjective because most groups do not consider themselves unhealthy. Further conversation resulted in the question that appears in the charge.

The Thought Force was charged with identifying the issues that may lead to the practice of activities that fail to consider Al-Anon or Alateen as a whole and develop a variety of strategies that will assist the Areas in dealing with these groups in a positive and productive manner.

### The practices included:

1. High-pressure groups.
2. Unregistered groups.
3. Unfilled group (district and Area) positions.
4. Failure to follow the intent of the Group Registration Process.
5. Alcoholics Anonymous (“Big Book”) study groups.
6. Speakers from high-pressure groups.
7. Lack of trust at all levels.
8. Outside literature used in meetings.
9. Modification of the wording of the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, and General Warranties of the Conference.
10. Failure to financially support Al-Anon as a whole.

For the presentation, the Thought Force used the practice of “Outside literature used in meetings” as a model for discussion in the Areas. The Thought Force presented several strategies to deal with the practice of using outside literature in meetings.

### Outside literature used in meetings

#### Strategy A

Emphasize Conference approved changes to the “Digest of Al-Anon Alateen Policies” in the *Service Manual* regarding the use of Conference Approved Literature (CAL)—specifically “*To keep Al-Anon’s message in focus and encourage unity, only Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and Al-Anon/Alateen service tools are displayed, distributed, and used at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings, conferences, and conventions. These items reflect the informed group conscience of the Al-Anon Family Groups as expressed by its World Service Conference since 1961. . . . Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other outside materials can distort the Al-Anon approach.*”

#### Strategy B

Literature references, such as “Obedience to the Unenforceable” (*The Al-Anon Family Groups—Classic Edition*, pgs. 166-167), can be featured on the Members’ Web Site and in *The Forum* and other communications.

#### Strategy C

Publicize the availability of the pamphlet, *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (P-35)

#### Strategy D

Create workshops based on *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (P-35)

#### Strategy E

Create workshops based on the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section, “Conference Approved Literature and Service/Tools/Materials,” pgs. 99-106.

## Strategy F

Create workshops based on the CAL Corner from *The Forum*.

After the members of the Thought Force presented each strategy, Conference members discussed the topic and answered the following questions:

**Which strategy did you like?**

**Which strategy did you not like?**

**Are there other strategies?**

- I like all the strategies. They are all well and good, if you can get your foot in the door in regards to these groups. How do you get this message to other members?
- Letting them know there really has been a policy change and it's in the *Service Manual*.
- These groups are culturally antonymous. How do you bridge the gap?
- When we had a group that was committed to using outside literature, we went to that group and said, "What you are doing is lovely, but we would ask you not to call it Al-Anon."
- We have had the same kind of difficulties in getting groups to consider this topic. I referenced page 100 of the *Service Manual* that shows how to identify CAL. It helps when the message comes from other people in the fellowship and not just the Area officers.
- I like Strategy D: create workshops based on *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (P-35). I suggest we have a Task Force to create workshops, so we appeal to the people who want our help.
- I explain to newcomers about the CAL symbol and how it identifies CAL.
- I have asked for a group conscience within my group that chooses to use outside literature. Now I would like to have the district's assistance.
- I am one of those who likes the A.A. "Big Book," and I don't think it helps to hear that this is what is in the *Service Manual*. I have found that experience, strength, and hope are the best way to do this. Point out that using the "Big Book" perpetuates our focus on the alcoholic instead of ourselves.
- Anytime someone says, "You should . . .," I stop listening.
- A strategy would be to have a dialogue with the members of the group to find out why CAL is not adequate for the group and encourage dialogue with the Area.
- Sometimes it's just the member who is chairing the meeting who reads from something that is not CAL. How do you address that, without being rude and interrupting in mid-sentence?
- We used to have tapes of convention speakers; one day I brought it up that the tapes aren't CAL.
- In our Area, we have a problem with the "Big Book," mainly in meetings that have a large population of dual members. What we try to do at the Area World Service Committee is to educate the members on what they can do. When they're at A.A. meetings, we agree that they use the "Big Book." We have our own basic book, *How Al-Anon Works*, that we can use at our meetings.
- I have been known as an Al-Anon cop. Instead of interrupting while speaking, I speak one-on-one with the member to explain and educate. It's not just my responsibility, we're all responsible—not just those in service, but all members.
- The problem with this conflict is that we keep going head-on. Maybe it's time to change the conversation to "what are the benefits and what are the negatives of not using CAL?" In that conversation, I would hope that you could share that it was Lois, assisted by Bill, who edited *Al-Anon Family Groups* in 1955 and that they and our early pioneers believed that Al-Anon should have its own literature.
- I also thought about changing the conversation and having a meeting on unity. That is the point of using only CAL.
- Using the outside literature seems to be a symptom of the isolating group that has only learned one idea out of the Traditions and that is "group autonomy."
- I would like us to see us tie our cultural competence and linguistic competence into this topic.

## Thought Force II on Current Conference Structure

Paul G., Panel 50, New Jersey  
Chairperson



Members of the Thought Force II on the Current Conference Structure informed Conference members of their charge:

- Identify ways that would allow smaller Areas within the service structure to combine, and larger Areas (with 400 groups or more) to divide.
- Develop alternative strategies that would address these issues, and help each Area achieve full representation from its Delegate.
- Include the pros and cons of each strategy.

The Thought Force presentation continued, “A Thought Force at the 2010 World Service Conference suggested several strategies to help Areas achieve full representation from their Delegate. The current Thought Force developed three strategies that would enable Areas to divide or combine.”

Following the presentation of each strategy, including the pros and cons, Conference members answered a question.

### Strategy One

To develop criteria that would enable an Area to evaluate its effectiveness in providing full representation to all of its groups.

#### Pros:

- Promote greater understanding of representation within Al-Anon.
- Consistent with Concepts One and Four.

#### Cons:

- It may be difficult to reach a definition of “full representation” that would be acceptable to all.

### In a spiritual fellowship, what does “full representation” mean?

- This means every group that wants to be represented can be. Every Area has different circumstances, whether it’s huge, vast Areas, or small, condensed Areas, or Areas that are so small they don’t have the funds to be self-supporting. Our Area has many very congested cities that are geographically far apart.
- There has to be a balance with the numbers. The way we have it structured now is primarily geography-based. I would like to see us eliminate political boundaries.
- A group that wanted to speak would have time to be heard. In my home Area, we have 200 groups represented and barely the time to conduct the business.
- Where are the groups physically located? In California North there is one geographical area

that is larger than some states and then we have the Bay area where there is a great intensity of groups. How does a group geographically isolated get full representation? We've divided our Area into three segments because each of these contains 200+ groups, but all the population centers are located extremely close together. The groups on the outlying regions never get full representation.

- It means having the ability to pass the information from the groups to the WSC and back to the groups.
- We are all here representing the members that we know about and the members yet to come.
- We have a vast Area, with most of the population in the Southeast. We hold our Assemblies in the center of the state so it is inconvenient for everyone. People have to be able to physically get there to be heard and represent their groups—maybe use more technology?
- When I initially signed up for this Thought Force, I did have an agenda. I represent a very vast territory of land. Our maps appear to be politically designed, but years ago the eastern part of the Northwest Territory split off. So I was coming here to tell them we were a little behind the times. We haven't been able to engage the isolated groups—and I'm beginning to realize that they need to meet me halfway, they need to be asking for some help.
- Several years ago, Idaho welcomed back the northern part of our state. They were allotted to Washington originally. Because they are more rural, and the population base is on the western part of Washington, they didn't feel they were represented. Idaho is primarily a rural state, even in our big cities. This is a much better fit than the previous fit—like groups do better than trying to balance rural and urban.
- If the links of service anywhere are unbroken, the group has full representation.

## Strategy Two

Design an inventory to help Area Assemblies determine if and when they should divide or combine.

### Pros:

- Would help Area Assemblies to look at specific issues and clarify them.
- Would provide a basis for decisions, and would be required before any request to divide or combine.
- Would provide unbiased information for decision-making.
- Would involve groups, in accordance with Concept One.

### Cons:

- Assumes all groups affected will participate and be heard.
- Would incur some mailing expenses.

## What topics would be helpful to include in an Area's inventory?

- To what extent are the Areas committed to fund full representation? This Conference is funded on the idea of equalized expense, so we have Areas here that have 35-50 groups, as well as Areas that represent 1,500 groups. We're all currently comfortable with that. Are the groups committed to funding full representation? Many times that is the issue in the outlying groups. They have three to four members and the issue is for them to come up with the money to cover a five-hour trip.
- I feel the answer lies in whether or not your Area is able to fill all of your Area service positions. Is this an ongoing issue with your Area?
- Coming from the smallest state—combining concerns me the most. Focusing on the spirituality of the program, whenever there is dissent in our Area, one of the districts wants to leave and say they will combine with someone else. I would like to see something that helps the Areas have a reasonable and rational conversation when something comes up.
- When we talk about balance, sometimes that equals perfection. The idea of trying to please everyone becomes insanity again. I like the idea of thinking outside of the box and thinking about technology. If we vote by proxy in this country, it seems we could connect via the Internet for some of these remote Areas. What is the Area's motivation?
- When Texas split, it was split by the Red River—we were trying to balance major cities in both sections for financial support. If we further divided, I don't know how we would balance that financial support.
- Maybe the Area would consider more than one Alternate Delegate who could help the Delegate reach the groups in the vast Areas.



- We've asked if our Group Representatives have travel issues or hardships and we try to choose a central location to have our Assemblies. Because we are on a rotation schedule, this doesn't always happen.

### Strategy Three

Design a step-by-step process that could be used by Areas to help them divide or combine.

#### Pros:

- Could help Areas simplify a complex, new experience.
- Would provide a unified working process.

#### Cons:

- We don't know all the steps that might be involved.
- Each situation could be very different; the process could be different as well.

### What steps in this process would be the most helpful to the Areas?

- We have groups in our Area that would not come to our Conference if it were across the street. The groups and members have to want it. Reach out to the groups that are inactive by choice.
- In looking at our history, I thought about Lois and the way she intentionally designed the structure: she told geographical regions to organize and then tell the WSO. I would like to see the idea of more trials. A large Area could bring their Alternate to the WSC (at the Area's expense) with no vote or voice, and try different things to see what works and what doesn't work. Instead of trying to come up with one solution we could expand our ideas to abundant solutions.
- This touches back on the inventory—there is not a one-size-fits-all that fits here. There are things we need to hear from the Areas regarding their wishes and needs.
- Page 134 of the *Service Manual* reads, "A state, province, or territory may divide only once." Why was that put in?
- Staff responded, "Lois followed Bill on many things, and she followed the A.A. model on this. Within a very short period of time (about four years), California and Texas had many groups and they were complaining about not enough representation. In 1982, an Area that had already split brought a motion to the WSC to split again; and the WSC said 'no.'"
- I think groups are what is most important. Some don't want to participate and some do. Take a survey and ask the groups what they need—what the Area can do to help them be successful.
- The biggest challenge is getting district representation, and many don't want to participate.
- The representative from New Zealand noted, "Last year we had a region that petitioned our conference to separate. An interesting discussion ensued and we realized that this had never been done, so we allowed a trial to see how it would go. I would encourage keeping it real simple; having flexibility and fluidity is really important."

## TEAM—TOGETHER EMPOWERING AL-ANON MEMBERS— TASK FORCE

Mary Ann R.  
Task Force Chairperson

During 2007 and 2008, Areas were asked to determine the reasons for the fall in attendance and decline in enthusiasm for Regional Service Seminars (RSSs). Key reasons included the expense of traveling, the cost of hotels, and the repetitiveness of the program. Members also expressed that it was often difficult to leave their families for an entire weekend.

Another issue identified was the lack of clarity as to how the agenda was constructed. This often left the Host Committee planning a "convention," when the agenda was set by the Region, not one Area.

Following a lengthy discussion at the 2008 WSC, the Chairperson of the Board appointed a Thought Force. Its charge was to generate ideas on what a dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task-oriented RSS would look like. Based on those ideas, a Task Force was formed to create an innovative service event that would better meet the needs of the Areas and their members.

TEAM (Together Empowering Al-Anon Members) was introduced at the 2009 World Service Conference (See the "Regional Service Seminar Update" in the *2009 Conference Summary*; and "TEAM Task Force" in the *2010 Conference Summary*). This concept brings one or more Areas together with the WSO to form a partnership in the planning and actual participation at the event. (Click on the

TEAM logo, and then click “Host Committee Information” on the Members’ Web site for more details regarding hosting a TEAM event.)

In 2009 and 2010, as the planning partnership with the Areas began, the WSO realized that there were some glitches in the process. In order to provide more clarity, the Board Chairperson appointed a Task Force to reintroduce the process for hosting a TEAM event.

TEAM events are intended to be a partnership between the WSO and the Areas. The partnership begins the moment the WSO receives the TEAM Event Request Form. The partnership continues as the Area and the WSO Task Force work together to provide a program that is tailored to meet the Area’s needs, so that the event has the potential to provide the Area’s desired outcome.

The presentation continued with a description of what the partnership between the Area(s) and the WSO looks like in the planning process. Each partner in the partnership has specific duties and responsibilities.

Each TEAM event also has tasks and responsibilities that are shared by both partners. Both partners—the Area and the WSO—participate in the planning the program for the TEAM event. A key factor in the partnership is communication.

The TEAM Evaluation Form was presented. Following a review of the form, it was noted that TEAM events are posted on the Members’ Web site (Click on the TEAM logo on the home page, then click on “Upcoming TEAM Events.”)

Conference members then had an opportunity to hear from Delegates who have had TEAM events in their Areas.

- A Delegate noted that when she initially heard about TEAM events, they sounded like something the WSO had already done, so she was a bit skeptical. Because her Area has an annual service event, it was decided that it would be helpful to have a TEAM event in conjunction with, or in place of, the service event.

Before requesting a TEAM event, the Area attended other TEAM events to gather ideas.

The Area had requested a presentation highlighting the differences between the corporate entity, Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc., and the fellowship, Al-Anon Family Groups, which dovetailed into a discussion on property ownership. The result was a smooth transition for the Area into a group conscience.

The \$15 registration fee, which included lunch, wasn’t sufficient enough to cover all our TEAM event expenses. Therefore, the Area had to pay the expense for AV equipment rental. The Delegate noted that the Area’s biggest benefit was the personal connection with the Board of Trustees.

- Another Delegate shared that his Area held the first TEAM event when he was the Area Chairperson. The TEAM event was held in conjunction with the Area’s Spring Assembly. Because it was the first TEAM event, the Area’s vision was to plug the TEAM event into the Assembly, which was usually a three-day event. The Area’s expectations became a problem at the Area level. A TEAM event can be held *before* or *after* another event, but not integrated within an existing event.

The ultimate benefit of the event was that it personalized the WSO and allowed the attendees to see the WSO staff and volunteers as members of Al-Anon. Before the event, there had been a lot of fear-based reaction to the planning of the TEAM event. The fear was a result of expectations of what the Area wanted the event to be. The Delegate at the time of the TEAM event was instrumental in laying to rest the Area’s fears.

- A third Delegate talked about a TEAM event that was hosted by two Areas. The initial planning in her Area began at the end of the previous Delegate’s term and continued during the beginning of her term. She decided to take a backseat with the planning, which, in retrospect, was a mistake. They held a three-day, stand-alone event. During Friday evening, members of the WSO Task Force shared their stories. There was time afterwards when members had an opportunity to talk with WSO members one-on-one.

The other Area had most of the responsibility because the event was held in that Area. There were also more attendees from that Area. The TEAM event was scheduled close to the dates of other events, such as the A.A. International. Choosing the TEAM event date is an important part of the planning process because the attendance at our TEAM event was lower than expected. Both Areas chose topics.

Two weeks before the TEAM event, there was a problem. It looked like our attendees weren’t going to fill the room block we had booked at the hotel. One of the registration volunteers



**TEAM**  
**Together Empowering Al-Anon Members: Evaluation Form**  
 An opportunity for Al-Anon Areas to partner with the WSO to create a unique service event geared toward the interest of their local members!

Please fill out the following evaluation and return the form to the designated collection area.

Name of the TEAM event \_\_\_\_\_ Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Was the TEAM event tied to another Area event? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If YES, what event was the TEAM event tied to? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Did you attend both events? \_\_\_\_\_

How many consecutive years have you been attending Al-Anon Family Groups' meetings? \_\_\_\_\_

**Presentation title: Giving—Our Spiritual Link to Gratitude** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Were you able to follow and understand the presentation easily? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Did you gain valuable information from the presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the most valuable information you gained? \_\_\_\_\_

**Presentation title: Trustee Search** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Were you able to follow and understand the presentation easily? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Did you gain valuable information from the presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the most valuable information you gained? \_\_\_\_\_

**Area Chosen Presentation title:** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Were you able to follow and understand the presentation easily? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Did you gain valuable information from the presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the most valuable information you gained? \_\_\_\_\_

**Area Chosen Presentation title:** \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Were you able to follow and understand the presentation easily? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Did you gain valuable information from the presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the most valuable information you gained? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you feel that the WSO representatives were at the TEAM event to support and serve you? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you feel that the WSO representatives are Al-Anon members like you? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Do you believe that you could be a Trustee some day? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

If you could change one thing about the TEAM event you would \_\_\_\_\_

met with a hotel representative and was able to negotiate with the hotel to reduce the room block. The event ended up financially successful due to the room block reduction. The Area was even able to contribute some leftover money to the WSO.

### Conference members shared:

- If we want to have a TEAM event, with a social activity on Friday night, a speaker on Saturday night, and allow Area officers time to meet during the event, is this okay?

*It sounds like you might like to have an Area event followed by a TEAM event. You could have a social event Friday evening; a meeting for the Area Officers on Saturday morning; and then hold a TEAM event Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. The WSO participates in a TEAM event a minimum of six hours and a maximum of eight hours.*

- My Area used Knowledge-Based Decision-Making to research whether to host a TEAM event. The research included conducting a survey of what members wanted in regards to the length of the event, topics, etc., which gave the Area great clarity. We expect great participation because we asked.
- My Area found that a successful TEAM event requires communication so that needs are met and expectations realized.
- There is a sense of dignity about a TEAM event.

## WATCH HOW OUR MESSAGE FLOWS WITH GENEROSITY OF SPIRIT

Bev A.  
Treasurer, Trustee

Following the Budget Report, the Treasurer of AFG, Inc. introduced a series of vignettes by stating, "What gives hope to Al-Anon members? What gives hope to those who have yet to find us? Is it the understanding that we are powerless over alcoholism or finding a room full of people who identify with our anxieties and feelings of guilt and anger? What about the longtime member who gains acceptance by reading a sharing from another member whom they have never met?

"In our meetings, we share how we are making progress from the effects of the disease of alcoholism on our lives. We find solutions to our difficulties by applying spiritual principles, and we gain courage, self-acceptance, and begin to experience joy in our lives. As we gather together for mutual aid, the ability to calm the immediate concerns of life is often how the newcomer recognizes the presence of a Higher Power.

"Our obligation is to reach forward to welcome and help those still suffering, by making it known what Al-Anon is and how to find us. We try to reach as many of these troubled families as we can. We have a message to carry. This is our spiritual connection with Twelfth Step work beyond the group level.

"To preserve our spiritual growth, we have to give it away. We contribute by showing up early to a meeting, helping to set up chairs, and greeting newcomers. We volunteer to sit at health fairs and give our time representing our groups at various levels of service. Al-Anon service provides a wide range of opportunities to give unconditional love and leave hope. Many of us may be willing to give of our time, but may turn reluctant when it comes to giving our money to Al-Anon worldwide.

"Alcoholism cripples us. Fear of being without is often real, and money may be scarce. We hang on to everything we have because it provides a feeling of security. We secretly think, 'I may need this in

the future,' or 'What if the worst thing happens?'

"Some members are concerned with the concept of perilous wealth. They fear that with too much money, the Board of Trustees will not consult the World Service Conference. Others fear that lengthy discussions on how to spend funds will divert us from our primary purpose.

"These fears are eased when we look to our Twelve Concepts of Service and the World Service Conference Charter. Concept Two gives the active voice and effective group conscience to the World Service Conference.

"Concept Three gives the World Service Conference the ability to decide which matters it will fully dispose of on its own and which questions it will refer to the Al-Anon groups. Concept Three gives this same responsibility to the Board of Trustees to decide when it will act on its own authority and when to ask the Conference for guidance; this is further expressed in Concept Six. The World Service Conference exemplifies Concept Twelve when we, as Conference members, express principles and attitudes of prudence, unity, and harmony.

"We often think we will be free when we have more money. The truth is we will have more when we practice letting go. This often leads to an experience of connectedness with a larger truth and the vast human community; we can cherish the personal freedom gained.

"Money is a means, not an end. It allows us to accomplish Al-Anon's primary purpose. Services will be based on needs rather than whether sufficient funds are available. This is unlimited, abundant resources in action.

"Over the next several days, a series of vignettes will be presented that demonstrate how the abundant giving by Al-Anon members carries the wonderful message of hope our program offers:

#### **Vignette #1**

A potential newcomer is pacing while looking out the window and saying, "Where is he? It's 2 a.m. and the bars are closed." Then the potential newcomer sees an Al-Anon public service announcement on TV. A sign is held up that states: "Your contributions help support PSAs."

#### **Vignette #2**

An Alateen member's parents are arguing at 11 p.m. The teen says, "How do they expect me to study?" Then the teen discovers a WSO Alateen Chat Meeting. A sign is held up that states: "Your contributions help support the Alateen Chat Meeting."

#### **Vignette #3**

An older gentleman arrives in the emergency room after being in a fight with his adult son. The man says, "I tried to take away my son's car keys." Then the man discovers the Public Outreach magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. A sign is held up that states: "Your contributions help support *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*."

#### **Vignette #4**

A WSO Volunteer and staff member are traveling to another country. The Volunteer asks, "What is the purpose of this trip to the General Service Office (GSO)?" The staff member responds, "To support the GSO's desire to print its own literature." They are handed plane tickets. A sign is held up that states: "Your contributions help support these journeys and literature translation."

#### **Vignette #5**

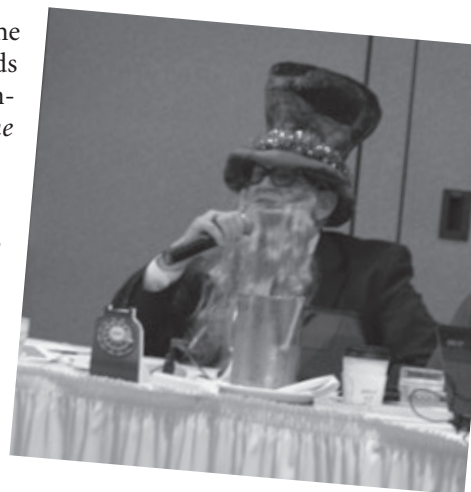
A member says, "My Sponsor has been encouraging me to write an article for *The Forum*." The member writes how Al-Anon helps her deal with her spouse's drinking. Another member finds comfort and understanding in the article and says, "This helps me understand that I can't control my child's drinking." A sign is held up that states: "Your contributions help support *The Forum*."

#### **Vignette #6**

A WSO Volunteer and staff member are visiting an Area Assembly. The staff member says, "We are so glad that you invited us to your Area." The Volunteer says, "We are here to present a workshop on leadership." A sign is held up that states: "Your contributions help support WSO visits."

#### **Vignette #7**

A potential member calls the Al-Anon toll-free meeting line. The potential member says, "I just don't know what to do." The meeting line operator gives the person the day, time, and location of an Al-Anon meeting. The newcomer arrives at the meeting where she is welcomed





and given a softcover copy of *How Al-Anon Works*. A sign is held up that states: “Your contributions help support the toll-free meeting line.”

At the end of the week, the Treasurer of AFG, Inc. closed the “Watch How Our Message Flows with Generosity of Spirit” presentation by saying, “How do these services and acts of generosity of spirit happen? We make them happen. Regular practice of prayer and meditation have helped many of us come to a deeper understanding of ourselves. In making a commitment to strengthen our relationship with a Higher Power, we soon find we are growing and changing spiritually. When we have spiritual fulfillment, *we put ourselves in a position for unlimited possibilities*.

“Nothing urges us forward more than our need to carry Al-Anon’s message to the families of alcoholics. We must continue to grow so we can fulfill our primary purpose of reaching the millions who need Al-Anon’s help, but are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship. We will fulfill this primary purpose most effectively by attraction, cooperation, and our contributions of service and financial resources.”

The Treasurer then invited Conference members to share their thoughts on the following question: **What spiritual benefits do I receive when I give of my resources?**

- I grew up in a household of scarcity—not enough money, time, love, or attention. As a child, I was a hoarder. I lived in fear. One of the biggest gifts for me is trusting my Higher Power and other people that there will be enough. It was very hard for me to be generous financially. If you grab a fistful of sand on the beach, the tighter you hold it, the more grains that fall through to the ground.
- It’s about service, participation, and trust. Back in my younger days, I wasn’t sure what I was trusting. It’s a power greater than myself that sends me messages through the spirits that have skin.
- When I first began giving of my talents to Al-Anon, it became more than somewhere I went. I became a part of Al-Anon.
- When I started in Al-Anon, I had no sense of giving. I’ve learned how to give of myself. I can keep it, if I give it away. I feel good when I’m doing the best that I can.
- I just watched the energy in this room as Conference members gave of themselves all week long.
- It’s a good feeling to know that the time I spend with someone who calls me—or the \$5.00 or \$10.00 I give—might be the moment that someone finds hope.
- For me, it is a flow. The healthier I get, the stronger I feel. I was taught as a wee one that we give all that we can. Wherever I receive my spiritual support, I need to support that financially and in every way. If I want to have more energy, I take on more responsibility.
- My husband and I just had a chance to talk about this. We talked about the benefits we have received and that our programs allow us to give of ourselves. I had the opportunity this week to see a couple of people really grow.
- When I got into service, there was a part of me that said, “I give money each week, what more do you want?” I was told, “We want all of you.” I am not a very spiritual person, but I am a highly-spirited person. It is through this program that I have learned what my gifts are.
- You told me my perspective was *my* story; the world was an abundant place, but *I* didn’t see it that way. When I give, I put myself in a better place to receive.
- I came into Al-Anon to get, not to give. When I came in, I didn’t have anything to give. I was completely bankrupt. By following a few simple suggestions, I gained self-esteem. I learned who I was, and after awhile, I began to like who I was. The spiritual benefits I have received from Al-Anon have been enormous. You have given me a life. I was told in order to keep it, I have to give it away. You have enriched my life so much.

Before closing the session, the Treasurer announced a new blog on the Members’ Web site. The Finance Committee posted the blog, “Thinking Abundantly In . . .”

## DELEGATES (PANEL 49)

### John S., California North

The foundations of my family's life were laid by an abusive, alcoholic mother. Those early experiences set me on a path of depression, low self-esteem, and isolation. I struggled to find a way to value myself and found it in supporting others in their struggles. This was the role my mother assigned me; I was very successful.

In my 20s, my aunt offered me the hope of Al-Anon, but I wasn't ready to hear the message. After finding my life partner, I reached a level of despair that forced me to seek help. Luckily, I was referred to a therapist who sent me to Al-Anon. This time I listened.

Though frightened at my first meeting, I heard my story, my confusion, and my pain. I had found a haven where I could understand the original foundation of my life. I had also found a path—the program as we call it—to “unbuild” the foundation of my past and build a new one.

Through working the Steps with a kind and gentle Sponsor, I found trust and began to build a relationship with a Higher Power. I discovered, that despite my internal belief that I was damaged and unworthy, I was a good person and deserved love. I learned to accept that my Higher Power loved me. I began to love myself. Using the Al-Anon program, I created a spiritual practice of prayer and meditation, which is now the foundation of my life. This is no longer a hope, but reality.

Today, this new foundation has led me to amazing successes: the same relationship, but healthy; a home and financial security; and, most importantly, an Al-Anon family. This new family supports me in ways my birth family could not. This new family loves and cares for me. Through service, Al-Anon allows me to practice my growth and learn new healthy ways of being in the world. With each service position in Al-Anon, I had to learn a new skill and a new way of being. Al-Anon supported me in this process and allowed me to fail and learn, then succeed and know that the success was mine through Al-Anon. These new skills gave me the life I have today.

Today, I see tomorrow's possibilities as unlimited. Through Al-Anon, I know that my life will continue to be filled with growth and success. I hope to continue to work to ensure that Al-Anon is always available for those who need us. Our mission to ensure that the message of Al-Anon reaches every community is a possibility. I hope I can help make it a reality.

### Sandie E., California South

In 1951, no one knew what would happen when Al-Anon Family Groups was born. At three years old, I had no idea it would save my life.

I married a man who suffered from the disease of alcoholism. I had no idea that our family would be affected by alcoholism.

In 1986, when I became an Al-Anon member, I had no idea my life was being saved. I was given the gift of a Higher Power which I was neither seeking nor expecting.

When we walked through the life and death of our grandson, we were held up by my Al-Anon family who never wavered in their support.

I tried to avoid feelings. I drowned myself in sponsoring and taking on more than I could handle. I failed at everything. My Higher Power was showing me that I had to let go of everything in order to heal. I asked God to show me how to do service the gracious way. Step Three showed me I needed to trust God and I started on a path that would lead me to places I could never imagine—the path led me here.

“Yesterday's foundations.” You showed me that that very foundation would lead me here as we extended our hands, and our shared experiences gave me hope. You survived the impossible, too. In 2010 I didn't expect that both of my parents would die three months apart. I was given the opportunity to work Step Nine by forgiving my parents.

“Today's successes.” Most days I am able to turn over my husband, my son and daughter, grandchildren, and myself.

“Tomorrow's possibilities.” When that all-important foundation was laid in 1951, we didn't know this road of hope for the hopeless was being repaved. Music and art would be reborn. Faith in simple program ideas would be honed. Families would find the possibility of finding strength in each other. On that road would walk courageous people who had a powerful mission to share. People who would stand up and do the right thing even though sometimes it was hard. The road would lead us to maturity, honor, courage, and having a voice and using it when its contribution was relevant.

The road whose direction was unknown in 1951 has brought all of us here today to celebrate life. I've learned to believe in what our life-saving program teaches—I never have to be alone, I am worthy, and I can survive the impossible with grace and dignity.

When I became Delegate, I had no idea the challenges and growth that I'd face, but as the end of my term draws to a close, I reflect on the gift of being with you and being trusted to be a part of Al-Anon's future.

### Connie D., Delaware

Lois, and those involved with early Al-Anon, would be very proud to see how the foundation they set 60 years ago has led the way for the successes of today's Al-Anon members. Their work has also set the stage for tomorrow's possibilities. The Three Legacies of this program help to keep Al-Anon pure. That is why Al-Anon remains Al-Anon; and for that, I am forever grateful.

About a year after starting Al-Anon, our family moved 25 miles south of where we previously lived. I began to attend a Tuesday night meeting not far from my home. It didn't take long before I started to dabble in service. I would occasionally open the meeting and help to set out literature. I even became involved with the planning committee for an upcoming Regional Service Seminar (RSS) by helping with registration.

That RSS was where I first met people from the World Service Office, including Trustees and Executive Committee members. This service opportunity was a great experience. It helped me to begin to understand the meaning of “worldwide” Al-Anon.

I’m extremely grateful to this program for bringing me closer than I had ever been to my God. There was a period in my recovery when I was struggling to find answers and make some important decisions. I was gently reminded to take a closer look at the spiritual part of my program. That was the turning point in my new relationship with God.

During my years of service, I’ve had wonderful and challenging experiences. Since service is such a critical part of recovery, it’s difficult for me to understand why more people are not willing to make the commitment to service. However, my program tells me to “Let Go and Let God.” They have their Higher Power, just like I have mine; and I’m reminded that I’m not it.

One of the best experiences I have had was attending my first World Service Conference. Hearing about the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting and hearing the International Representatives share their stories were additional ways I connected to the worldwide concept of Al-Anon. Many aspects of their stories were very similar to mine.

Working the program of Al-Anon and hearing how Al-Anon has changed the lives of our members, offer me hope. The hope for positive changes in my life is what I held onto in the early stages of my recovery.

Today, I am able to celebrate the many joys and successes in my life. This includes participating in Al-Anon’s 60th Anniversary with my husband, daughter, and son-in-law. Without this program, that would not be possible. I will also be forever grateful for the opportunity to serve as our Area’s Delegate.

## **Terry F., Florida North**

As I contemplate this year’s Conference theme, I am struck by the word “foundations.” When I came into Al-Anon, I did not have much of a foundation, or at best it was very shaky. While I came for all the wrong reasons—to please others—I stayed because I felt understood and valued. In time, I began to understand some of the foundations of our recovery program as embodied in our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and eventually even our Twelve Concepts. As I became more involved in service, I also began to glimpse the foundation of Al-Anon Family Groups as an organization. I could see more clearly how the foundations of our Legacies, the fellowship, and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., the organization, were intricately woven.

I personally, and we as a fellowship and organization, have continued to grow and to learn from the experience, strength, and hope of those who have gone before me. I personally grew, often the hard way, by resisting change, suffering the pain of my resistance and rigidity, surrendering and accepting my powerlessness, and then praying and moving forward rather than against the changes. Throughout my spiritual journey both in and out of service, the foundations of our program and the organization have remained constant and stable. It is because of

these two interwoven foundations that I have been allowed to grow and to evolve in my personal and professional life, as well as in my service work.

With the stability and structure of these foundations, Al-Anon Family Groups as an organization and fellowship has been able to grow and evolve as well. Because we have been teachable, we have gained the capacity to be “flexible and nimble.” Today we continue to have many successes in reaching our members worldwide. We are working to be more inclusive rather than exclusive, recognizing our diversity as well as our similarities. Our numbers are beginning to grow again. We are continuing to learn how to work together, how to be more visible and appealing, how to reach professionals more effectively, as well as exploring new and innovative ways to reach the public and potential members of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

While holding onto our foundations, and yet learning from the past, we truly are experiencing new successes. With our many successes, it is so exciting to envision tomorrow’s possibilities. Our community of hope truly is expanding worldwide. We embrace each other, embrace our past, smile and cherish today, and embrace our future. I feel so very blessed and honored to walk with all of you, as we continue to grow as a fellowship and organization to reach, “anyone, anywhere . . .”

## **Linda S., Florida South**

My service journey began in 1980 when I entered the doors of Al-Anon. My first meeting was in the basement of a New York church on a Tuesday evening. I sheepishly walked down the steps and was greeted by a woman who said, “You must be new—follow me.”

I entered a room where four other people sat and we were told about Al-Anon and the woman introduced herself to me by saying, “My name is Barbara, and I am your Sponsor.” She explained the gifts that awaited me if I just suited up, showed up, and shut up. I believe if anyone else would have greeted me that night, I probably would not have come back, but I felt I had no choice but to return.

That first night, I was given the job of bringing cake to the meetings for the next six weeks. You all know the feeling—I was needed and they wanted and appreciated my help. At that very moment my self-esteem started to be restored. From there it was making the coffee and all the while Barbara led me by saying, “Get in the car,” and off we would go to a variety of Al-Anon meetings and functions.

Within a year or two, I became the Group Representative. After that, I just did service within my group until I moved to Florida in January 1991. From Group Records Coordinator to Public Information Coordinator; from Alternate to Group Representative and then Al-Anon Information Service Liaison (AISL) to District Representative (DR)—I clearly was off on my journey of service.

Concurrent with my being AISL, I served as Co-Chair to our Area Convention. The Chairperson had to take a leave of absence during the last month prior to the convention and I served in her place until she returned. I learned through the

Steps, Traditions, and Concepts that life can continue smoothly. While serving as DR, I also served as the Area Secretary. At the elections when I stood for Area Chairperson, after four close ballots, it went to the hat and my Higher Power chose me to serve. I then served as Alternate Delegate and now after the hat again, Delegate.

I've learned that we are like birds flying in formation. When a bird gets injured, he is accompanied by two other birds while the rest stay in formation. When the injured bird is able to fly again, he joins a new flock and there is always room and a new formation takes shape. I've learned being a leader requires vision, enthusiasm, organization, patience, and acceptance.

## Kay R., Hawaii

In thinking about our Conference theme, I hold the image of a beautiful flower. Yesterday's foundations are the soil and seeds—the bed for growth. When I was a sprout in Al-Anon, I dove into the soil of service at my Sponsor's gentle urging. I had little self-confidence, an unwillingness to tackle things I didn't *completely* understand, and a deep fear of the unknown. Service, along with the other Al-Anon tools, cultivated and fertilized me.

Using Al-Anon principles creates today's successes in my life. They are the unique combination of sun, wind, and water that create the nurturing environment. Some elements I love. Others, like the wind, I could do without. Today, I know that it's taken the yin and the yang, the pain and the joy, to fully realize myself.

When I became Hawaii's Delegate, I was at a point where I had learned how to trust myself again through the growth I'd gotten in service. Baby step by baby step, I stumbled and strove. I progressed as I took on greater service responsibility. Learning to be merely an instrument, I started to trust God with the outcomes. While these foundations and successes served Al-Anon, they served me far more.

In April 2009, two days after returning from the Conference, I separated from my husband of nearly 12 years. It was not a sudden decision, nor something I did lightly. Those building blocks of self-confidence and trust in both God and myself prepared me for that moment. It was far from easy, however. Being Delegate provided me with a singular pocket of joy to devote my attention to; it gave me something to focus on and saved my sanity.

At the 2010 Conference, I was newly divorced. Feeling raw and with circumstances still unsettled, Al-Anon service was a lifeline. The focus on outreach to minorities resonated in me. My deepest pleasure has been to initiate and keep the conversation going about it in Hawaii. We have a tremendous melting pot with many minorities in need of what Al-Anon has given me.

Going into this Conference, I've experienced several major losses and changes signaling the beginning of a new chapter in my life, which ties in nicely to tomorrow's possibilities. Participating alongside you, I've witnessed and learned the qualities of good leadership and, I think, personhood: consistency, dedica-

tion, trust, and most importantly, vision. Service has been my recovery frontier, challenging me to live life at the edge of my comfort zone—what I like to call my “Growth Zone.” I am tremendously excited about our future. My hopes are high that all of us “flowers” will continue to expand our diverse garden worldwide. I'm so very grateful to be planted here with you.

## Ramona C., Illinois North

When I think about yesterday's foundation, I remember a reading from *Courage to Change*, page 26, that reminds me of my responsibility as an Al-Anon member and to the fellowship as a whole.

“The Steps offer me a road map for living that leads to a spiritual awakening and beyond. I can't skip ahead to the end of the journey—which can at times be a hard one—but I can put one foot in front of the other and follow the directions I've been given, knowing that others who have gone before me have received more along the way than they had ever dreamed.”

This journey of being the Delegate for Illinois North has totally surprised me. As I try to vocalize my feelings of what I have gained in recovery, I am overwhelmed and realize that this was a bigger gift than I could ever imagine. To have the trust of the members to lead them into changes within the Area while creating a bond of trust and unity has been amazing. This adventure has been wonderful and difficult at the same time. I am forever grateful to the members who have gone before me and now understand the amount of dedication and service that is shared. This has created today's successes.

I have grown from this opportunity and so has my recovery. Little did I know that from a bitter, angry, wounded person entering the doors of an unknown program that I would be so enriched. Our possibilities are endless and as members of Al-Anon we have an obligation to stay focused on our primary purpose to welcome and give comfort to families and friends of alcoholics thus expanding on tomorrow's possibilities.

## Theresa D., Indiana

A foundation built yesterday with good materials will be usable and productive today. It also has the possibility to be adaptable and useful tomorrow.

Sometimes, although my foundation is sturdy and able to withstand the years of time, it's what I build on the foundation that allows me to be flexible and strong or fearful and vulnerable.

When I came into Al-Anon, my inner structure was so shaky that I didn't feel I could withstand any more pressure. Most of the pressure, though, was coming from me. I felt I was a failure in marriage, motherhood, and my career. I thought I had disappointed my parents, siblings, friends, and even acquaintances. My family was falling apart, and I was desperate for a way out of the pain. I was caught in the alcoholic dilemma of the family disease. My Higher Power took my hand, gave me courage, and led me to my first meeting. What I felt—more than what I heard—was hope and acceptance. With hugs and an invitation to return, my inner structure became less shaky.



I did keep coming back. With each little step, my inner as well as my outer dwelling changed from a cold, dark warehouse to a bright, little bungalow. Realizing I had choices, I learned my dreams could be much more than just dreams. I had found my home now and began to dig in. In my home group, I began to listen and trust. My fear lessened, just a bit. I learned to make coffee, set up a meeting, and later, to chair a meeting. I was still accepted when fear overcame me and I didn't show up for the first meeting I was to chair. My continued "saying 'yes' to service," though, became my successes on which to build my life.

I said many times I would run for Delegate when I retired, which sounded safe. When I did retire, I knew it was the right time to enter my name for Delegate. I fought back the fear of not being good enough by reminding myself that the fear was just an illusion from the past and what I had to do first was be willing. The rest was out of my hands. My list of "This is what I believe" had changed.

Now, I'm close to the end of my term as Delegate. The possibilities I see now, with my expanded acceptance of myself and understanding of the Al-Anon program, have no boundaries. I thank my Higher Power, Al-Anon, and service work directly for the changes above my foundation. For me, I know that life is not about waiting for the rain to pass, it's about learning to dance in the rain.

## Charla C., Kansas

When I attended the Conference two years ago, I listened with envy and awe at the outgoing Delegates' messages. I thought, "I hope they do away with this before my last year," because I knew I would never be able to be as articulate or inspiring as those people. As you can see, they haven't done away with it, so here I am.

Kansas is proud and very fortunate to have many past Delegates and Trustees who have served us—and you—very well. As a new Group Representative attending Assembly, I wondered why those old folks were still around and seemed to have so much influence and so much to say on every subject. Over the years as I have become more knowledgeable and involved in service at the Area level, I have come to value these people—because they embodied the Al-Anon program. They guided us through many difficulties and Kansas is strong and healthy because of them. I treasure these people, many of whom are now deceased, but their influence lives on.

I have personally gained much from observing the behavior and listening to our Trustees and others. You have what I want as a leader. You are all so different with so many personalities, viewpoints, hair colors, and outfits, but we all work together beautifully.

My first year here at Conference made me feel "less than" when I compared myself to the Trustees. But what it did was inspire me to be more than I was, to be the Delegate Kansas Al-Anon and Alateen members deserve.

This Conference and our WSO staff and Volunteers and all of you have shown me what a great future we have. Al-Anon and Alateen can go forward with all the changes in modern tech-

nologies and still hold on to the truths of our program. These are compatible! And it takes smart-thinking, dedication, an open mind, a willingness to listen, and hard work to make it all happen. I am so proud to be a part of this program and of this Conference. I will always treasure each of you and what you have given to me. My deepest appreciation and thanks to Al-Anon and to all of you for all that you are and all that you have given me.

## Linda M., Kentucky

When I entered the rooms of Al-Anon in July 1984, I was broken. So were my dreams and lots of promises. I had no knowledge of alcoholism or how it was affecting my life. It has been a journey of restoring, rebuilding, and healing. With loving sponsorship, I was guided through the Steps and the Traditions. I was given a new set of tools to live by. My Sponsor was very active in service. I loved her serenity and how active she was in her life. She always encouraged me to get out of my comfort zone, to give back what I was given, and be active in my recovery. I always felt I was too busy for that service stuff or that someone else would do it. There was always a lot of negative chatter and opinions from those who were involved in any service in my meetings. I certainly did not need any more negativity in my life.

I had been in Al-Anon about 12 years when I was asked to fill a position because someone was moving. God's perfect timing! Since that time, I have accepted service positions at the group, district, and Area levels. I never imagined serving as Delegate, but what an honor and privilege it has been.

Arriving at my first World Service Conference, I had so many mixed emotions. There was fear and excitement happening at the same time. Then I met others feeling the same and we were told, "We want you to succeed."

My spiritual bridges expanded during the 2009 World Service Conference. I got to spend time with the representatives from other countries. Talking with them made Al-Anon worldwide very real. Meeting so many new members of my Al-Anon family has truly been a gift. At the 2010 World Service Conference, my understanding of embracing the group conscience to expand our circle of hope changed. How powerful it was to be a part of the largest informed group conscience concerning Alateen. To watch that process unfold was an experience I will always remember. The sessions on diversity brought much awareness. When I give my Delegate's report to my Area, I involve the members—shared leadership.

This year's Conference is about our past, present, and future. My yesterday's foundation was what I received when I surrendered and was willing to practice the principles of Al-Anon. Today's successes are the spirit of living happy, joyous, and free. Tomorrow's possibilities are when I reach out to help others regain their hope by sharing what I have been given.

## Louise R., Manitoba

When I arrived on Al-Anon's doorstep 37 years ago, I was arrogant, self-sufficient, and thought I just needed a little tweaking. I now remember myself as a very different person—afraid, insecure, lonely, and totally empty and hollow inside. The foundations that Al-Anon created for the members who welcomed me during my first meeting have given me the trip of a lifetime. For me, the cornerstone foundations have been acceptance, hope, patience, and humor. The members gave me these gifts, smiled, and nicknamed me “Miss Prissy.” They loved and tolerated me to wellness.

Today's successes include the fact that I am aware of my imperfections and assets. I don't have to keep recycling my resentments and fears like I used to. Al-Anon has given me the gift of welcoming newcomers and passing on the baton of healing that others had given to me. The empty chair is waiting and until it is filled, God sits in waiting for someone who needs it. Successes come in many forms, we are here sharing our sameness and giving freely of our experiences and strengths from differing countries and Areas showing that we are succeeding in reaching out to those still in need with our gift of hope.

My personal success for the last 3 years is that after many years, I finally “get” Step Eleven. For so long I wanted God to know the knowledge of *my* will—and please hurry and carry that out! This meant surrender with enough faith in God to not only say, but mean, “Okay God, I will do whatever you want.” The wisdom that I've gained from other members regarding “the knowledge of His will” is immeasurable and if I received nothing else, this gift would have been worth being Delegate. I know I have “the power to carry that out” because all of you are there for me.

Tomorrow's possibilities are endless. Worldwide Al-Anon possibilities are just ready to burst into full bloom. Members of our Conference, Board, and WSO are reaching out to give us, not only their best, but new insights into our future as to how we can grow our program for those still in need.

I am nearing my 70th birthday. When I grow up in this program, I want a little bit of each of you to be part of me. It is my privilege to belong to this fellowship and serve with you at this Conference and Al-Anon's 60th birthday. I love being an Al-Anon member and I am so grateful to you all.

## Charlie S., Maryland/DC

Yesterday's foundations. Today's successes. Tomorrow's possibilities.

For me this theme is an expression of Al-Anon's continuity, and I see continuity as my pathway to humility. When I am aware that I am part of a continuing social body, whether it is my local Al-Anon group or the human race, I can appreciate and accept that I am no more important or less important than any other person.

When I arrived at my first Al-Anon meeting, I had the impression that everyone in the room had been there a long time. Then as weeks went by, I observed the membership changing, sometimes a 50% turnover in a few months.

I began to understand that each Al-Anon group has continuity—it keeps going even as its membership changes. Or, in terms of this Conference theme:

- Yesterday's foundations: the group is based on Al-Anon principles that ensure the group's consistency through changing attendees.
- Today's successes: The group is helping families of alcoholics.
- Tomorrow's possibilities: We group members strive to keep the group healthy so that it will continue to serve us and future members.

Even though I have been with my home group for many years, I try to remember that it's not my group—I am just one of its current stewards.

As I moved into service, I learned about rotation of leadership positions. With every service position I've held, I've attempted to keep in mind that I am in a stewardship position for a finite term. While I try to do my best, I know that no matter how well or how badly I do the job, somebody else will take over in a few years.

So, what have I learned as a Delegate now at my third Conference?

First, I think my general philosophy of doing Al-Anon service has not changed but has been reinforced by my experiences as Delegate. I just have to remember that I am powerless over any Al-Anon member, Al-Anon group, Al-Anon trusted servant, or Al-Anon service arm.

I have changed my attitude about some things. For instance, I came to my first Conference with a very negative opinion of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making and Strategic Planning. I thought they exemplified “management by platitudes.” Now that I have seen how well these tools work at the World Service level to maintain continuity, I am much more favorable toward them.

I think my experience as Delegate will help me in my future Al-Anon service. I've gained a much greater understanding of Al-Anon World Service and in particular of Al-Anon policy. However, I've also learned it's not my job to lay down the law or to give lectures. I want to be a resource, not an oracle.

## Debbie K., Michigan

By the time I found Al-Anon, I'd lost my personal identity from living with active alcoholism. I felt exhausted, fearful, and worthless. But you shared your message of hope, and I responded well to your gentleness. You were patient with me and allowed me to speak, and I felt loved. You had serenity and shared how you'd found spiritual maturity. You taught me simple principles like being humble and honest and to avoid gossip. You allowed me to define my own higher purpose: to love and be loved. With your encouragement and God's grace, I've learned a new way of life.

With this foundation, I became a little willing to learn and just a little willing to serve. I wanted to be a part of something good, so I served the group by washing coffee cups. In the beginning, I was silenced in my disease but eventually found my voice through service. I began carrying the message of

hope and sharing of myself with the community by giving back gratefully. I met others who had a caring and selfless spirit. I got to take action, providing rides to meetings, greeting newcomers, financially supporting my group and the worldwide fellowship, calling people, writing for our newsletters, sponsoring others, and helping with public information. Exploring these new adventures resulted in radical personal growth. As I continued to serve, I learned more about my natural abilities of vision, enthusiasm, and initiating ideas. I became content with my stability, responsibility, and flexibility in working with others. My personal struggle of trying to “do it all,” was replaced with shared leadership. What were once thoughts of unworthiness have emerged into being poised and confident. Thank you, Al-Anon, for trusting me to serve you.

I embrace the possibility of reaching everyone, everywhere with our powerful message of hope. I have the personal experience of feeling that hope deep inside. My daughter had the benefits of Alateen. My grandchildren do not know the suffering family life with active alcoholism—the cycle has been broken for us. I’m devoted to doing all I can to share with others so they have the same opportunity to bring hope home to their family. There is much to do in our communities and the world. We will offer our message of hope as a beautiful gift to all who come for help.

## Meagan M., Minnesota South

Yesterday’s foundations. When I came into Al-Anon, I did not feel like I had a foundation. I felt hopeless and alone, although it didn’t look that way. I worked the program, received the gifts of Al-Anon’s foundations—the Steps, the Traditions, the Concepts—and the fellowship helped me realize I was not alone. I felt supported by these foundations. Al-Anon also gave me awareness of the foundations I had always had. My family, as crazy as we all were and sometimes are, has always loved me, and they taught me so much, despite myself. My family, a church community, and good education provided a foundation that I had been too mired in my own illness to recognize, until I began to heal in Al-Anon.

Today’s successes. On the foundations of our Legacies, Al-Anon has grown, and there are many successes to celebrate. As a fellowship, we strive to welcome diverse members, and in my own Area, we are welcoming Group Representatives from Spanish-speaking groups at Assemblies for the first time. The Conference has achieved greater openness, trust, and transparency, and I have seen not just my Area, but districts, and even groups, embrace these principles.

At all levels, we explore the use of technology to make our program of recovery, unity, and service more appealing and accessible. Last year, we celebrated 50 years of the World Service Conference. This year, we celebrate 60 years of Al-Anon. On the foundations of the Al-Anon program, I have moved from relief to recovery, and can recognize in myself qualities of strength, leadership, acceptance of my own humanity, and a willingness to learn. I have found my voice. If you had told me 15 years ago, or even five, that I would be here, in this fellowship of Delegates,

speaking to more than 100 people, I would have thought you were crazy. Thanks to this program, my God, and all of you, I have courage to dream of things that once seemed beyond me.

Tomorrow’s possibilities. I dream of Al-Anon and Alateen meetings accessible to everyone affected by the family disease of alcoholism, regardless of where they live, the language they speak, or the disabilities they have. I dream of going to school, visiting New Zealand, and riding my bike across the country. I dream of 100 years of Al-Anon, and then 100 years of the World Service Conference, and the power of literally hundreds of thousands of members like us discovering their possibilities. With the strength of our foundations, and the promise of today’s successes, anything is possible tomorrow. What are your dreams?

## Elaine R., New York North

As I think about this year’s Conference theme, the key word for me is hope. Hope was the first gift I received after I entered the rooms of Al-Anon, and it was the thing that kept me coming back because I wanted what you had.

For me, yesterday’s foundations are about embracing the Three Legacies given to us by Lois and Anne. Working the Twelve Steps is essential if recovery is to occur. I did the things you suggested and began to work the Twelve Steps with the help of a Sponsor. I was able to replace the character traits that needed changing with new ways of dealing with life’s issues. Most important, I was able to embrace the God of my understanding and to come to know that the most important thing I needed to do was to ask for His guidance and then follow His directions. I continue to be reminded of the need to turn my will and my life over to my Higher Power.

As I began to understand the Steps, I was then ready to embrace the second Legacy, the Traditions, for unity. First, I was able to see how the Traditions applied to the group. I came to understand the value of keeping it simple. In time, I was able to use the Traditions in my own life, learning to place principles above personalities, which gave me a more serene way of living.

Then I began to hear about service through the Twelve Concepts, the third Legacy. Service often put me right where I needed to be to work on a particular trait that needed attention. My fear to share through the written word was one of those traits. As Alternate Delegate, I was asked to share about *The Forum* in the Area newsletter. With love for *The Forum*, I was able to overcome my fear of writing. To my surprise, I found my Area sharing appearing in other places. This was a boost to my confidence.

As I reflect on the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts, I see yesterday’s foundations—celebrating the 51st World Service Conference and 60 years of the Al-Anon fellowship. I see today’s successes—I am excited to be part of the new opportunities and new ways. I see tomorrow’s possibilities that will help to make the Al-Anon program available to those who still suffer from the effects of someone else’s drinking, which will expand our community of hope.



## Sandra F., Ohio

*Yesterday's Foundations* were filled with valuable lessons, some were through service. Among them was my first service position, dusting the chairs for my home group. Each meeting, I would dust every chair in the room and then arrange the room for the meeting. It took a while, but I learned the 20 minutes before each meeting were not only for chatting, but also for asking questions, learning how to implement the principles in everyday living, and making friends. I became part of a family.

Patience was a painful lesson to learn. I learned things take time. How difficult it was coming to the realization I was not in control of anything but me—that things happen when and how they are supposed to happen. For instance, it was some time ago, I wanted to stand for a particular Area position. The night before the election, the Election Chairman told me I was not eligible to stand for that position because I had not been a District Representative in Ohio long enough. I was extremely disappointed, to say the least, however it all worked out. I was elected as an Area Coordinator, the other position I was interested in (my Plan B). The years as a Coordinator gave me the background, experience, and foundation I needed in order to be ready for more responsibilities.

Service taught me not to say, "Oh! I could never do that!" because just about as soon as I would say it, thoughts started popping into my head about how I just might be able to do that very thing I said I could never do. Possibilities started coming to mind.

With *Today's Successes*, I am fortunate to have the opportunity to witness the beginning of new service journeys. When Assembly meetings have concluded, new Group Representatives would share how excited they were about taking information back to their group or how connected they felt to Al-Anon as a whole. At that moment, I am "just a member" carrying the message of hope through conversations and actions.

As for *Tomorrow's Possibilities*, they remain a mystery. I do not know about tomorrow or what it has in store for me. I do know it definitely has unlimited possibilities, and I have the willingness to follow the path wherever it may lead me.

My *Yesterdays* have given me varied experiences, a varied background, and a solid *Foundation*. *Today's Successes* are because of all my yesterdays. *Tomorrow's Possibilities* keep me open-minded because of my foundations and successes, and I know I will help to *expand our circle of hope*.

## Claire D., Ontario South

I am honored and blessed to be part of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon, a Delegate at this Conference, and part of the celebration of Al-Anon's 60th Anniversary.

Our theme brings many things to mind. Yesterday's foundations: Today I can't imagine my life without my Higher Power and Al-Anon. Thirty-eight years ago, I knew nothing of Al-Anon. I married into an alcoholic family—my ex being a dry drunk. My father-in-law was in and out of A.A. and my mother-in-law was a strong Al-Anon supporter. She kept repeating slogans—"One Day at a Time"; "Just for Today"; and "Let Go and Let God."

Had I listened to her those many years ago regarding yesterday's foundations, I would have 38 yrs in the program instead of 15 and a half. My life would not have been so unmanageable. The Al-Anon principles, Legacies, and slogans all came to life for me when I joined this program at the urging of a counselor who saw what I couldn't see. My life was being affected by the family disease of alcoholism.

My perfectionism got in the way of my "getting" the program right away. Many a slip happened. "Hope" was a word I could hang on to. By reading Conference Approved Literature (CAL), I realized that "Yesterday's foundations" were solid and they worked. Today's successes could be built on them. I didn't have to do it alone anymore. After four years of going to meetings, reading CAL, chairing meetings, and serving as Group Secretary in Ontario North, I moved to Ontario South, got on the service train, and haven't gotten off yet.

Service, a Higher Power, and the Al-Anon Legacies saved my life—literally. I was dragged up to be the Area Secretary, stayed on as Alternate Delegate, and here I am today in my third year as Delegate. Through brain surgery, chemo, the return of the brain tumour, and 28 radiation treatments, service has kept me going. When I surrender to my Higher Power, he leads me to recovery—emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically. Service has had its joyful times and its difficult times.

Hearing how my resolve, my serenity throughout my treatments, my strength of living "One Day at a Time" has helped someone is magical. It was a painful time when Ontario South lost Alateen for a year. The controversy over Property Ownership has also been painful in my Area.

Tomorrow's possibilities: Leaving the trail of debris behind, my life is full of possibilities—in my personal life, my work life, and my Al-Anon life. There is "hope" all around—new members, new groups, new literature, and new beginnings—the journey of a lifetime, exciting, humbling, blessed, and filled with gratitude.

## Christine F., Pennsylvania

I didn't feel part of a community of hope growing up. I felt lonely, sad, and angry most of the time. I didn't know what was wrong or that life could be different. Growing up, I learned not to trust people. They would only disappoint me or hurt my feelings. In Al-Anon, people are not perfect, but I have found that I can trust them. The rewards of being part of a loving, caring group of people who understand me are priceless.

My involvement with service started early in my program. I raised my hand quickly, feeling uncomfortable with any type of silence at a group conscience meeting. I liked being busy, that was all I knew. Why would I want to be still and risk feeling my feelings?

I got involved in service, which got me out of isolation. I had learned to isolate to stay safe. If no one was around, they couldn't hurt me, no matter that it was a lonely way to live.

It seems like only yesterday I was at our election Assembly. I had thought about standing for Delegate for the previous three years while serving as a District Representative. In my Area, only outgoing District Representatives can stand for Delegate. So, I



had to decide whether to stand or not, for it would be another six years in service before I would be eligible again, if ever.

I found that I couldn't make that decision and I didn't have to. All I had to decide was whether to be willing to stand. It was up to my Higher Power to decide if I were to hold this position. So that's how I found myself standing in front of almost 300 people at our Assembly.

Being Delegate is an honor, but at times it can be overwhelming. That is when I go back to my basic Al-Anon program—"One Day at a Time"; "Keep It Simple"; and "Easy Does It." I have discovered that service furthers my personal recovery growth.

I have learned to say, thank you so much for asking me to do (fill in the blank), but I need to decline. It was so HARD for me to learn to say no. I had such low self-esteem that even now, when someone says they need me, or they want to hear what I have to say, I'm so flattered, that I just want to say yes.

My journey taught me that to become part of a community of hope all I need to do is to be willing—willing to share and willing to serve. I am so grateful that I put my hand up many years ago and got involved in service. The rewards have been truly priceless.

## Micheline B., Québec West

"Yesterday's foundations" go as far as my childhood. Coming from a large family, my parents had quite a few responsibilities towards their children. They taught me very early to take care of others, to share my belongings, to be appreciative, and to be respectful.

That was also when I started thinking that I was stupid because I believed my mother's comments. I was convinced until I found Al-Anon years later.

According to what I've shared, you won't be surprised when I tell you that I chose nursing as my profession! That is where I met my husband, who is handsome, intelligent, and well-educated—he was a real gentleman. But, what do you know, he was an alcoholic. I got into the habit of "taking care of him."

I don't have to draw a picture, you know all the consequences of not being able to let go. Unfortunately, God picked his number in 2005.

"Today's successes": Marrying an alcoholic was the best thing that ever happened to me. It is unlikely that I would have known Al-Anon. Thanks to my husband and Al-Anon, I learned how to use a computer; I can now communicate at a very low cost with my family and friends at my own pace, through the Internet; I learned the typing technique, so I would not have to look at the keyboard, which prevented neck and back pain. I can even create my own calendar and give my Delegate's report using a PowerPoint presentation. Well, I wasn't so stupid after all!

My personal and spiritual growth through the program is even more significant. Thinking I was perfect, for example, I made a few discoveries. Now, I try every day to let go of my habit of being a perfectionist.

"Tomorrow's possibilities": The human being that I am now is quite different. I don't regret what I have done in the past. My

background is what it is; I cannot change that. Having the courage to change, I now use all the experiences of my life to think before taking action. I do better today, which helps me to continue rebuilding my foundations. I must be in the middle of the construction. It is quite possible that tomorrow, I'll reach the roof with a solid building. Service has taught me, that by giving to others, without expecting anything, I feel better. There's nothing like solidarity and assurance to expand our community of hope.

## Cindy H., Tennessee

Yesterday's foundations: I was an emotional wreck when I became an Al-Anon member. The first two years were a blur. I experienced calmness during those frequent meetings. It dawned on me that I was concentrating at work, completing more jobs daily and better quality, overall. I was no longer retracing my steps or repeating tasks; I was living in the present and that incessant gerbil wheel had ceased. I was noticing the stars at night, birds singing, and most importantly quietness in my life that had long been missing. All while the alcoholics continued practicing their disease.

This new awareness led me to look around at my fellow members and actually notice what they were doing. There was more to Al-Anon than meetings. There were Al-Anon Information Service meetings, Al-Anon days, Assemblies, and conventions and the members who were talking about these events seemed to have what I wanted. Many events were about fundraising, and cash was short. Reading on the Seventh Tradition, I realized I could volunteer my time in lieu of cash, and so began my service journey. Wow, here I am!

Today's successes: the most precious gift is self-discovery. I am not that bashful person I imagined myself to be, it was just a result of growing up in an alcoholic home. What I have to say may be what someone needs to hear. My first realization of this was when I was a member of our Area's Alateen Safety Guidelines Committee; there I saw that I could impact Al-Anon in tomorrow's possibilities!

Here we are at the 2011 World Service Conference preparing to vote on property ownership, which began 15 years ago when I was not aware of Al-Anon. Yet because of yesterday's foundations, this could be today's success, which could lead to tomorrow's possibilities. I have seen four books published. Computers have become the way to communicate and conduct business. We have blogs, podcasts, on-line meetings, e-Communities, etc. Al-Anon continues to look forward. I, too, want to look forward. Where are my tomorrow's possibilities? Is it as an Alateen Coordinator? Or, perhaps an Al-Anon Information Service Liaison? Will I be the one to begin an Al-Anon meeting in my hometown? Will I consider becoming a Trustee in the future? The future is a mystery, but I now know that there are all kinds of opportunities and it all begins with being willing. I am so honored to have been one of a select few to be given the opportunity to serve all of Al-Anon in the role of World Service Delegate.

## Rosie M., Texas East

I'm grateful to our cofounders, Lois and Anne, for their dedication, vision, and fortitude to expand our community of hope by creating Al-Anon Family Groups. Their efforts built sturdy foundations yesterday for help, hope, and recovery today and afford endless possibilities for tomorrow.

Before my first Al-Anon meeting, I felt hopeless and helpless, and Al-Anon was my last resort for recovery before giving up on life. I didn't think it was possible to find solutions, peace of mind, and serenity, but you told me to "Keep Coming Back," and indeed I did. Thanks to you, I regained faith in a Higher Power and found courage to embrace life and myself. I have experienced many miracles, been blessed many times over, and my life has been enriched. I have transcended from the "Land of the Surviving" to the "Land of the Living" thanks to applying our 36 principles and Al-Anon tools. You can't put a price tag on life, but that's what you have given me and an opportunity for growth, renewal, choices, and acceptance. These are my personal successes today and I lovingly and freely give back with gratitude through service to our fellowship.

My service journey has been incredibly phenomenal. Our Higher Power bestowed his blessings through his loving grace and has given me the fortitude, will, vision, and voice to serve our fellowship. Instilling his will each day to reach out and help myself and fellow members throughout the service structure. Our experiences are shared through many members. Our embrace is felt through our circle of hope, and it affords us strength. Our vision is an extension of our cofounders' spirit and dedication to recovery in an effort to help those who seek help and hope. Our Al-Anon program was there for me when I needed it. If I "Let It Begin with Me," we can relay the service legacy to anyone reaching out and our chain of recovery will continue well into tomorrow with endless possibilities. My hope is to reach everyone, everywhere affected by the disease of alcoholism who seeks help and that everyone finds their waiting seat in the Al-Anon/Alateen rooms.

My Al-Anon family has increased ten-fold. I humbly say thank you all for sharing your gifts of service and recovery. A special thank you to my Sponsors for their guidance and support in helping me fulfill my duties as Delegate. Everyone is awesome and I'll never forget you and will cherish our World Service Conference memories from yesterday, count the blessings from today's successes, and indeed await tomorrow's possibilities and will turn it over to our Higher Power to continue to guide all who lovingly serve our fellowship.

## Cindy K., Texas West

During my first year as Delegate, I learned to *embrace* the Legacies as my spiritual bridge to an expanded future. Year two encouraged me to *celebrate* the group conscience to expand my circle of hope. Year three encourages me to *expand my circle of hope into my community by embracing all three Legacies*.

During my first visit to the rooms of Al-Anon, I was not thinking about being a trusted servant of this wonderful organization. I was broken in mind, body, and spirit; full of fear, anxiety, guilt, frustration, and blame.

Fortunately, my choice of a home group was on target for growth in two of the three Legacies of Al-Anon—the Steps and Traditions. A huge part of my foundation was laid very early on because this group studied and practiced the Steps and Traditions! The Concepts of Service weren't studied and my foundation showed a few hairline cracks. My home group had always been very active in service, so I learned and practiced the Concepts by getting into service above the group level. There is nothing like on-the-job training!

As a child growing up in an alcoholic home, I did not learn life skills, nor did I learn life skills in church or college because I did not attend either. Al-Anon's three Legacies taught me all I needed to know about living and loving myself, as well as playing and working well with others. The Steps taught me to love myself by daily correcting my unacceptable attitudes and behaviors. The Traditions taught me to co-exist with the world by teaching me about unity, purpose, and relationships within my group, home, and community. The Concepts taught me to work well with others by defining leadership roles and job responsibilities and avoiding duplication of efforts. All the Legacies bind me to the principles of Al-Anon and define my living-with-life tools!

Al-Anon's Legacies have certainly expanded my circle of friends and my family of choice, but by sharing *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* with first responders, treatment facilities, shelters, doctors, churches, and civic leaders, I bring hope of personal recovery to those in need in my community. I have become a part of my community, not apart from it.

"Year-by-year all is unclear, but day-by-day we find our way." I heard this phrase recently and it stuck with me because I only know tomorrow's possibilities by living fully *this one day only*. I know my Higher Power has a plan for me and I'm not in charge of the plan! My Higher Power has tomorrow's possibilities all planned out, all I must do is have faith and listen; listen for my Higher Power's guidance in meetings, meditation, and Al-Anon's literature.

## INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

### Rose A., New Zealand

Thank you for the opportunity to share and be here. It is a dream come true to join with you all as a fellow member of our community of hope.

Al-Anon in New Zealand started 57 years ago. It began in that familiar way where wives went along to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings with their husbands and ended up in a room of their own. Similarly, it was the wife of the Alcoholics Anonymous founder in New Zealand, Heather M., who encouraged the beginnings of Al-Anon Family Groups. In 1955, she wrote to the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Incorporated in New York and purchased the newly published *Al-Anon Family Groups*.

We have established over the years a sound service structure based on the World Service Conference model, but scaled down due to our size. Our population is around 4.4 million people and our Al-Anon Family Group number fluctuates around 90 groups, currently including two Alateen. Comparing our numbers with yours, we have 20 groups per million persons and you have 42 groups per million persons. So for us, embracing “Yesterday’s foundations” would be our Annual Conference, our General Service Office, our sustaining Board member our General Secretary, our General Service Board, our Areas, our Assemblies, and so on.

Over the years we have tried and continue to use the trial method in different ways of organizing ourselves such as the amalgamation of two Areas to become one. In the main, these changes are cosmetic like when we started calling our districts, Areas. So our foundation is firm, but we do like striving to make things work better and make the best use of our resources to carry out our primary purpose—to help friends and families of alcoholics. We are looking for what is successful and what is not.

We are helped a lot by the work of your Conference as you inventory your service structure to see what is successful and work towards greater possibilities. We have adopted the use of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making at our Conference and on the Board. Some Areas also use the process for their business. We are hoping to trial TEAM events and to adopt the AMIAS term and guidelines. But mostly, I think we have appreciated the attitudinal changes from the service structure here that have been a timely guide for us at home. Some of the attitudes we value are: recognizing our members as our most valuable resource, Conference members working in partnership with shared leadership, and committing to spiritual goals at Conference.

Therefore to attend the World Service Conference is a great support for us because we gain more understanding from the discussions and decisions made. Of course we can read the *Conference Summary*, but a face-to-face experience is better.

Our goal of having a Board member attend the World Service Conference will strengthen and support our service structure.

Recently encouraged by our literature, I am making an effort to ask myself what matters in my life, I recognized that I have a willingness to help improve the community that I live in. I noted that I belong to many communities, there is my

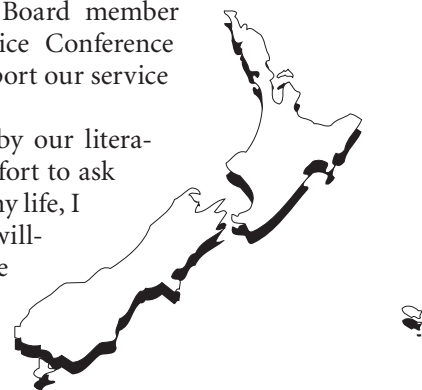
family group, my Al-Anon Family Group, my neighborhood, my city, my country, my species, and my world. It is a gift for me from working the Twelve Steps to know that I belong to all of these communities, and Concept Four informs me it is my right and it is my responsibility too.

As I was considering how could I go about fulfilling my willingness to help improve my community, I realized I was already doing it by being an active member of our fellowship and organization. It was a eureka moment as I realized yet again how suitable Al-Anon is and that my wish to expand hope and help to the communities I belong to can be achieved by my Al-Anon membership.

In a personal way, to embrace the foundations of my past would include growing up in a home affected by alcoholism. Nowadays, I am grateful to my parents for having me and through Al-Anon, I am learning to live the life that they gave me. Being an active member of Al-Anon is giving me the gift of transforming my losses from growing up in that home. It began when I attended Alateen and I learned about the family disease of alcoholism.

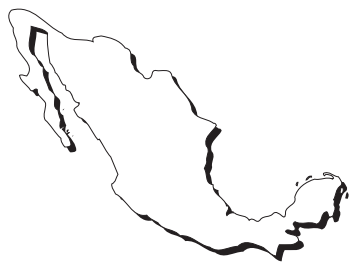
My successes today are little and great: remembering to not make others my Higher Power, letting my house be a bit messy, when I am emotionally disturbed—not taking it out on others and looking after myself by taking a nap in the afternoon, loving myself like my Higher Power loves me, if I am angry—it may be a signal to negotiate something to be changed, remembering I am in a caring partnership with my husband—where forgiveness is best, saying sorry, asking for help, and letting others get to know me.

I am nearing the end of my term on our General Service Board that meets quarterly to take care of the organization of Al-Anon Family Groups in New Zealand. We work together as a small community of around nine persons at our General Service Office that consists of two rooms. With your help, we focus on tomorrow’s possibilities for Al-Anon Family Groups in New Zealand, expanding our community of hope. Thank you and I wish you all serenity “One Day at a Time.”





## María Evangelina de León G., Mexico



It's an honor to have the opportunity to speak to such a distinguished audience. I am an Al-Anon member. I came many years ago to this fellowship with the hope that my husband would stop drinking. He soon went to A.A. and he didn't stay, but I

found what I needed—Al-Anon—and I stayed.

When I reached the group, I didn't like it because I was told that this program was for me. They asked me to talk about myself. It was so difficult, even though I had speaking experience with my job. But it was really difficult to talk about myself.

Soon I started working in my group. From opening the door to the meeting, to being a Group Representative, District Representative, Area Coordinator, Alternate Delegate, and Delegate.

When my Area Coordinator term ended, my companions motivated me to send my résumé for Regional Advisor (Trustee). I was elected; that was the moment where my recovery actually began.

Years before, my husband had died. He was a great help for

me. He helped me to work as a Delegate of my state, Nuevo Leon. He would not volunteer in A.A., but he always supported my Al-Anon service. I was very dependent on him. He left without asking permission. I was alone, but I consider him as one of the legacies this wonderful program has given me.

I have traveled a lot. I remember the first time I got on a plane alone. I was so afraid, so was my husband. He told me, "Don't go, if you don't want to go." I answered, "This is a challenge and a great responsibility that I am committed to attend."

Now, I have this great gift—attending this World Conference and celebrating 60 years of Al-Anon. I remember, with love, the cofounders of Al-Anon and A.A., Lois and Bill. I thank my Higher Power for giving me the opportunity to be here with you.

My service position is Regional Advisor (Trustee) of the Northwest part of Mexico. I visit five areas as Zacatecas, Durango, Coahuila, Chihuahua, and Nuevo Leon.

This year, we will celebrate the Regional Service Seminar from Region 2, which will take place in the city of Zacatecas in Central Mexico. We are expecting about 5,000 people. We have been preparing for it with great enthusiasm. There will be Al-Anon adult children and Alateen participation.

I'm very grateful to my Higher Power for putting me on this path of service.

## SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

### Judith P., Chairperson of the Executive Committee

I am a very grateful member of Al-Anon Family Groups, and my name is Judy. My home group is the Heart to Heart Al-Anon Family Group, and we meet every Saturday night in Honolulu.

This Opening Dinner is an exciting time for everyone. I like to think of it as a family reunion. This week is a time that seems to bookmark our history throughout the years. It is a time for talking to each other and reasoning things out as a body of principles and relationships in which Al-Anon as a whole can function. The events this week will serve as a springboard for the work that will "Expand our community of hope." There will be talk of Yesterday's Foundations, Today's Successes, and Tomorrow's Possibilities. And finally, through many continued conversations, it somehow will filter to the 25,000 plus Al-Anon and Alateen Family Groups around the world.

In a few days, we will be joined by more of our friends and families to celebrate the 60th Anniversary of Al-Anon Family Groups. The work and our discussions over the past year leading up to this week have given me reason to reflect more than usual on my personal journey, both before and after finding Al-Anon.

When I first saw our Conference theme this year, "Expanding our community of hope by embracing:

- ▲ Yesterday's foundations
- ▲ Today's successes
- ▲ Tomorrow's possibilities"

I was not exactly overjoyed, but I decided I needed to sit with it for a while. I wondered about the word "community." I recalled

my granddaughter coming home from school about a year ago and telling me the new words she had learned. They were "neighborhood" and "community." I understood why they talked about neighborhood, but why "community"? You know how it is when you hear something new, it often keeps appearing everywhere. So, when I saw the theme, I finally decided to look up the word "community," and I discovered community was simply a word that is often used to refer to a group that is organized around common values—a group that has common interest. That is us! Nothing was changing; it was just saying who we were in today's language. Always ready to say, "I embrace change," I found it a little interesting how I had put up my guard with something new. My Board Mentor told me with each new experience, I was going to learn more about myself than I ever thought possible—she was so right. So, embracing change, and being open to new possibilities, I have turned my thinking to we are a community of people that share common values and strive to live by the same principles.

I realized I was ten years old when Lois and Anne wrote those first 87 letters to the groups that were already meeting. Some of you weren't even born yet. I was in elementary school, and there was alcoholism in my home even then—in fact, it was all around me. We didn't call it that, we just quietly stayed out of Grandpa's way, didn't visit with the neighbors after dinner, and we already knew when to and not to ask Mom and Dad for anything. But most of all, we intuitively knew not to talk about much of what went on at home—anywhere. I used to start my story when I got married, but after I was in Al-Anon a few years, I realized the foundations for that marriage were being laid from the very time I was born.



When it was apparent that I had met that special someone, and after a two-year engagement, we decided it was time to get married. There were a few obstacles, the biggest one, was he was in the Marine Corps and I was in the Army and we were stationed a little over 1,000 miles apart. I also realized he might need a few little tweaks, but it was nothing a loving, dedicated, knowledgeable wife couldn't fix. So, against many unsolicited, well-intentioned warnings from friends and family on both sides, we got married and planned to live happily ever after.

We had decided that if this marriage was going to work, I needed to request a discharge and move to his duty station in North Carolina—so I did. We went about setting up house and it was so much fun until that first night that he didn't come home. That night, I found a person in myself that I never knew was there. I had experienced laying in bed and waiting for my parents to come home, waiting for a roommate who was late, and even had a boyfriend or two who seemed to lose their way to pick me up on time, but this was different. As it got dark, I found myself sitting at the kitchen window, watching the cars come across the bridge. Somehow I knew he would come home drunk, so as I sat there, I experienced every emotion that we talk about in Al-Anon. I bargained with God to bring him home and promised I would not say a word. I practiced what I was going to say and thought through the whole “morning after” talk we would have. As time went on, I planned the funeral, mentally lined up my entitlements, figured out where I was going to live, and even where he would be buried. It was then that I ran into a snag, I could not remember where his dress blue uniform was. It was at that point, all the planning turned to anger and when he did walk in the door—most of you know what happened. I can guarantee you there were few words spared, but what else happened was I became another person. I could not stop what I was doing or saying. It was as if something had taken over my whole being. The morning after was the silent dance we do and the make up was full of promises. We played this game, and even threw in a few suitcase drills, for another 18 years. It went on through the birth of two children, 11 relocations, promotions, and job changes for both of us. With each change, I thought things would get better. It was this job or this place that would take care of the pain and the anger, and of course the drinking. But each time I found myself sitting at yet another window, my obsession with his drinking was progressing into a darker and darker place.

My God had a plan, but I was not very appreciative of it then. Things had to get worse before they got better. And the very thing that I feared most was the thing that changed our lives. By the time we got stationed in Hawaii, alcoholism was starting to affect my husband's performance and decisions at work and he got into some trouble. When I discovered our new neighbor across the street was the Base Chaplain, I knew I was going to be working overtime to keep up appearances—and I thought I was doing a pretty good job. BUT, one evening the Chaplain knocked on our door. He took my husband outside for a chat that ended up in the two of us along with my son, being sent to treatment at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville, Florida. That is where I attended my first Al-Anon meeting and I have been here ever since. I now think of the first forty years of my life as building the strong foundation for being able to have the love

and gratitude for Al-Anon that I have today.

By the time I found Al-Anon, Al-Anon had been around 30 years and much of our foundation was pretty much in place. We had our Legacies, we had a couple of books, and we had an Annual World Service Conference. New groups were forming at a pretty fast pace. It was the 1980s and treatment centers were springing up everywhere. It seemed like everyone I knew was either on their way to treatment or already in treatment of some kind and they were all being referred to A.A. and Al-Anon.

There has been much water under the bridge since that time. Many groups have come and gone, and treatment and the talk of alcoholism are sometimes said to be old news. Our society has changed and through it all, Al-Anon Family Groups and Alcoholics Anonymous are still here.

I have seen much that has been written about organizations and the fact that non-profit organizations very often do not remain viable after the death of their founder. With this information, I was elated to come to the realization that our Al-Anon groups were founded and continued to be found by ordinary members, just like you and me. What Lois W. and Anne B. did found was Al-Anon Family Group, Headquarters, Inc.—the organization, the clearing house, the World Service Office. It is our members who have grown and continue to grow our Al-Anon community with the spiritual support of the WSO. Our feet are solidly planted in our foundation and those same principles on which we were founded 60 years ago! And it is because the members of our community are passionate about our spiritual principles and core values that our groups are successful today. Al-Anon will live on as long as people are affected by someone else's drinking. As long as ordinary members like you and I remain willing to show up to our home group each week and share these values and spiritual principles with others who walk through our doors, Al-Anon will continue to be a success tomorrow. And it is because of our belief and the strong sense of purpose that our members have as individuals and as a group that we will continue to support the World Service Office that was founded by Lois and Anne. Our continued success lies with each of us, as it did yesterday, as it does today, and as it will tomorrow.

I recently took a sneak peak at the new book, *Many Voices, One Journey*. I know it will be one of today's successes. As I quickly skimmed through parts of it, I kept finding myself being drawn in by the many personal stories that are wound into our past. They have made our history come alive and something that I feel a part of. I also came to a realization while I was skimming, that I think of today as the whole time I have been in Al-Anon, but in reality, some of the time and some of my experiences in Al-Anon are recorded and considered a part of our history. I just never think of myself as being a part of history—I guess because it makes me feel old.

The world has changed since 1951, and contrary to what some of us sometimes believe, I think we need to not rest on our laurels but be willing to change with it. We don't need to change our values or principles, but we do need to be willing to consider and always be in tune with the world around us today—and sometimes that means changing the way we think and the way we do our business so that we are open and can find new possibilities.

When I think about Al-Anon being a viable community and

resource for a long time to come, I know I must be willing to look beyond what I know today. And the same holds true for my own personal planning of what life has in store for me.

Often when I verbalize this thinking, many say, “But in Al-Anon, we learn to live ‘One Day at a Time.’” I love Bill W.’s [cofounder of A.A.] Leadership Essay in the descriptive text of Concept Nine. He talks about this and explains that living “One Day at a Time” refers to our mental and emotional lives. And further talks about the necessity as individuals and as a fellowship that we need to plan for tomorrow. And it was Lois W. who told us “stagnation is retrogression.”

Now they didn’t tell us using the exact words to expand our community of hope by embracing yesterday’s foundations and today’s successes, but I think their thinking certainly would support any possibilities that would sustain our long-term viability.

I have been blessed to have had the opportunity to be intimately involved with service at the World Service Office for the last nine years, and it has been an honor to serve Al-Anon Family Groups around the world. Many of my friends at home and here keep asking what is next for me, “What are you going to do now?” When I think about this, I am excited because I know that there is never a door that closes where another doesn’t open as long as I am willing. I know that my God is good and has a plan—therefore; I have not limited myself to anything.

My husband and I have managed to stay married, to each other, for 48 years. I attribute that to the principles and values that I have learned in Al-Anon. It is now a relationship that is built on wanting to be together, rather needing to be together. My family is going through some changes now, and even though they are unsettling to me, and not what I had planned for us, I know that our God has not taken us this far to not have a plan for me, for them, and for us. It is my opportunity to share my experience, strength, and hope with them, I can be an example.

This service experience has been life-changing and, I think, life-defining. I have learned much about myself, I have been able to understand Al-Anon has given me a foundation that will support anything that comes along in my life. I have been able to see success in myself today and I am open to the possibilities of tomorrow. And that person who was in the house with me that February night 48 years ago, lives somewhere else—I hope never to be found again.

A friend gave me a card that hangs over my desk. It says, “Be the change you wish to see in the world . . .” That is powerful and serves as a great reminder of where I want to be. I know that with the spiritual principles that we are given in our Legacies, I can be the one example that may be the light for someone else. And that is how it works, one person, one community at a time. I can continue to strive to be the person I want to be. If I had one wish for the world today, I would wish that everyone, everywhere could experience the hope that we give. The same hope that was in the rooms of Al-Anon Family Groups 60 years ago and continues to be there today.

## Ramona C., Panel 49, Illinois North

I am a grateful member of the Al-Anon Family Groups. I feel honored and grateful to be given this opportunity to speak with you today. I am also grateful to have this privilege to be of ser-

vice to the members of my Area. As you look at my person, I would like you to know that I am multi-ethnic. I am Mexican, Apache, and Scottish.

I am not unique to Al-Anon. I am in Al-Anon because I am powerless over alcohol and my life had become unmanageable. I would like to start my story just one week before I entered the rooms of my first Al-Anon meeting. I was miserable, angry, and hurt. I was standing at the end of yet another failed relationship and couldn’t grab hold of why I wasn’t enough to hold the relationship together.

I had struggled with my partner’s drinking for five years. Shoplifting and infidelity were part of the drama within the relationship, but I fought to stay in the relationship every day. The insanity was incredible, and I was totally lost in it. I remember saying, “I would rather be in this relationship than ever feel lonely.” I didn’t have anyone to talk to because I didn’t want anyone to know who I was in a relationship with, and I was good at keeping the pronouns straight in most conversations. I could not bear any additional rejection and guarding my lifestyle insured I wouldn’t be rejected.

I was living mostly from my car because it was too painful to enter my empty apartment. I wasn’t eating or sleeping, and I didn’t know how I would get through the day. I poured myself into work and stayed late so I didn’t have to go home. I was totally isolated.

Every day I looked for an outlet to talk, and one day while looking in the neighborhood newspaper, I saw a crisis hotline operating 24/7. As miserable as I was, I found myself calling the crisis hotline and sharing for several hours what had happened to me. I just wanted to unload the pain and have someone tell me I would be okay. Instead the first volunteer was very kind and allowed me the time to tell my whole story.

Finally, when I took a breath, she shared her insight of my story and for the first time, I heard that I might be a family member of an alcoholic. I immediately hung up on her and found the comment a bizarre, offensive judgment from someone who really didn’t know me. Her words haunted me for a week and again I contacted the crisis hotline to tell my story of hurt and pain.

I was sure the outcome from this volunteer would be different. When I finished my story, the volunteer asked me about my life and some of my other relationships. As I was speaking, I realized how comfortable I was sharing with him and that I had a lot of drama in my life. He asked me to describe my family life as well as my extended family. Little did I know my family life held many of the same characteristics of alcoholism, secrets, drama, infidelity, and abuse as the relationships I chose. At the end of our conversation, he made a referral to a program at the local hospital and it was the first time I heard the word Al-Anon.

I was shocked over how easy I said I would go to a meeting, and he shared with me that I didn’t have to go alone. He said he could arrange to have a member meet me at the meeting. Again, I surprised myself and said yes. My first meeting was in the treatment center of a local hospital. After the meeting, a member approached me and suggested a meeting closer to my home. He said I would relate to the members better and I would find a similarity to my relationship issues. This meeting was in two days and it was walking distance from my home.

When I attended my second Al-Anon meeting, four men in

their 60s greeted me. What was the person thinking when he said I would relate more to this meeting and that I may find my relationship issues are similar to the members of this group? The four members were so happy to see me, and I was a little afraid of their enthusiasm. The meeting began, the Chairperson read the format, and in the business announcements of the meeting, he stated that they were ready to close the meeting due to lack of new members. He also shared how they were tired of hearing their own stories over and over again. But because I was new, they would keep the meeting going. With God's help, the members didn't close the meeting and without knowing it, they carried out Al-Anon's primary purpose to welcome and give comfort to families members of alcoholics. I am forever grateful to these four Al-Anon members.

My recovery was not an easy journey. I am a strong-willed woman. I wanted to be taken care of and so I sat in the meeting hoping someone would take care of me. The four members were very kind. From time to time they would ask me how I was doing on Step One and had I considered having a Sponsor. All of that scared me. I couldn't ask for any more help and didn't want to experience rejection, so instead I stayed in my hurt and hopelessness. The newcomer packet I was given made a wonderful coaster under my water glass for about one year. For the entire year, I wondered where the members received all this information on Al-Anon. It was simply all contained in the newcomer packet that is now one of my favorite items in our literature.

One of my best days in recovery was when I was sick and tired of doing what I thought was working the program alone and made a decision to bring down the wall of fear and ask one of the four men to be my Sponsor. I was so nervous and sure that he would say no. My low self-esteem kept telling me no one would ever say yes. I was totally surprised when my request was met with "I thought you would never ask, and yes, I will be your Sponsor." This reply also scared me, and I don't know how to do this.

My Sponsor did what Sponsors do. He gently asked if I would like to have lunch to get to know each other and get started working the Steps. It never occurred to me that this would be the first healthy relationship I would have in Al-Anon.

Sponsorship and attending many meetings helped me break the isolation of my disease. With the help of a Sponsor, I had extra time to talk and a guide to help me understand the Steps and apply them to my life. In Step Two, I struggled for a long time with believing that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I knew I had insane moments—that was pretty clear in the beginning—but this meant trust in something else, and I was back in fear. My Sponsor knew that this was the foundation of my Step work and we stayed as long as I needed until I was able to understand the importance of Step Two and Step Three. I never felt rushed.

In the beginning of my recovery, I thought the first three Steps were easy. Today I have a different understanding of how hard it was for me as a new member to admit my powerlessness, search for a God of my understanding, and then to be fearless and turn my life over to the God of my understanding. Without the concept of a Power greater than myself and the understanding of the program, I could not have made it through two life issues later in my recovery.

Time passed, life was good, and I was attending meetings, working on my recovery and participating in service. I had a new Sponsor when, out of the blue, two life-changing situations brought me to my knees. In February of 2000, I was diagnosed with a rare and potentially life-threatening tumor. This was discovered after the doctor noticed something unusual in a routine exam. My physical condition deteriorated quickly, and I found myself in surgery having an emergency procedure to save my life. My life was turned upside down. My family was called into the city for support. I knew we were in a race against time. I didn't have time to even digest what was happening, and my fear was over the top.

Life changed for me in that instant. I felt as if I was so alone in what was happening and wondered how this could happen to me. In the whirlwind of events, life was spinning out of control. In my recovery, Al-Anon taught me to reach out for help and this was not an occasion when I could do this journey alone. This single event was the catalysis to asking for help and relying on the members of the program. The phone list, sponsorship, and close Al-Anon friends were there and available for me with each asking.

Once they were able to stabilize my condition, I made a decision after much research to have my medical care relocated to New York. I had many fears, but the one that surfaced most was leaving my home and support in Chicago. I didn't want to sever this connection.

When I arrived in New York, the first thing I checked out was whether there were any meetings near the hospital. I found a meeting a couple of blocks from the hospital. Al-Anon and my Sponsor taught me to stay close to the program and to remember that I have a Higher Power to help me. I had a lot of opportunities to do Step One and Step Three through this experience, and it was a measure of what I learned in the program.

I heard my Sponsor say more than one time, "You will know how to solve the problems in your life if you stay focused on the Steps and take God with you." As a side note, when I was in New York, my Service Sponsor asked the members of the Area World Service Committee if a member could be nominated for an Area position if they were not in attendance. The vote was yes, and I was nominated and voted in for the position of Group Records Secretary. My Service Sponsor assured me that I could do it and it was a way to keep my focus on something else during this health crisis and the long recovery ahead. She was absolutely right and has been the driving spirit in my service work today.

The second issue that was life-changing was the person who I loved and shared my life with for over 19 years and thought I would spend the rest of my life with, left me shortly after my full recovery. My partner was a dual member and left our relationship to be with the person she sponsored. I was angry that this could happen, but I came to understand this was part of her relapse.

I knew this was not about me, but it had a huge impact on me. The sadness and disappointment was hard to navigate through, and when parts of my life were destroyed in the break up, I again became closer to the program. It was a spiritual awakening for me; I was not the same person as when I first entered Al-Anon. I had the program to rely on. Instead of feeling hopeless and throwing my recovery out the window, I made a decision with my Sponsor to act like a lady and practice Step Twelve.



His suggestion was to put down all the old weapons associated with anger and put on my best business hat. The relationship could not be salvaged. We were now in the business of caring for my person and to do that I couldn't let hurt and anger take away everything. Prayer is a magnificent part of recovery and the Serenity Prayer became my very best tool in court. There were weeks upon weeks of court dates and I never went alone. Again, I asked for help and my longtime friend in the program sat with me at every court date. Weekends were the hardest for me, and he would pack a bag and stay with me. From a storm comes blue skies; time can heal most things, and I am proof of that.

I have been in Al-Anon for more than half of my life, and I can't even express my gratitude for all that I have received. Every day is truly a gift for me. I am grateful to four Sponsors who so graciously said yes when I needed help. I am also grateful to the members I sponsor for reminding me what courage it takes to ask for help and to remember recovery is a work in progress. I am also grateful to my family and loved ones because of Al-Anon I can say I love you. The member at the first Al-Anon meeting was right. My second Al-Anon meeting fit me like a glove.

## Mary Ann R., Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Hi, my name is Mary Ann, and I am a grateful member of this worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups. My home group meets on Saturday mornings in Windsor, Connecticut, and I hope that you will visit if you are ever in the area. I feel both privileged to be here and appreciate that the 2010 Conference members selected me. I was most surprised and humbled by the honor.

This year's Conference theme encompasses my life experiences in Al-Anon, and as I began preparing this talk, I saw how the salient points of the theme were woven into my story.

Expanding our community of hope by embracing:

- ▲ Yesterday's foundations
- ▲ Today's successes
- ▲ Tomorrow's possibilities

I attended my first Al-Anon meeting at the age of 29 because of my husband's drinking and the despair that it caused me. We had three small sons at that time, and his drinking and my reaction to it were destroying our family.

Two years prior to attending my first meeting, I talked with the minister at my church about my husband's drinking, and the minister suggested that I attend an Al-Anon meeting. (This is why we must have outreach to professionals.) At that time, my denial was so great that I did not think I needed help from Al-Anon.

I felt angry, fearful, and lonely. I lived in a house with four other people and felt alone. I was angry when my spouse returned home from work drunk and at times hated him. I wanted to divorce him when he was drunk, and love him when he was not drinking, and these conflicted feelings kept me in a state of mental and emotional turmoil.

I cried and raged and pleaded with him to stop drinking. Sometimes he laughed at me, and that made me angrier. I was filled with anger. He continued to do what he did best, DRINK! We had

no family life because he was not physically or emotionally available, and neither was I. My focus was on him; his drinking dictated my life, and I allowed it to happen. He acted and I reacted. I did not see what was happening to me. This was my denial.

I wanted to defy him, but was afraid. He was emotionally and physically abusive, and I lacked the strength and courage to take charge of my life. I hated my life and myself and I blamed him! I became active in many community and church organizations that often involved my children so I could keep busy and didn't have to focus on the reality my life.

One day in total despair, I stood in my kitchen crying and screaming. I was not in the habit of crying. I called out to God for help, and the name Al-Anon, implanted those years before, came to mind. I picked up the phone and made a call for help.

Before long, I was on my way to my first Al-Anon meeting. I felt welcome, safe, and left the meeting that night with a sense of hope. For many months, the meeting rooms were the only place that I felt peace.

In Al-Anon, I learned that I suffered from the effects of alcoholism and could get well if I was willing to listen, learn, and "work the program." I thirsted for knowledge and acquired information about the disease of alcoholism at the meetings. Meetings provided me the impetus to search out events both private and program-related where I could continue to learn about the disease and its effect on the alcoholic and the family.

The woman who answered my desperate call eventually became my Sponsor. Within a year's time, she persuaded me to become the Group Representative of a floundering Al-Anon group. I'm not sure who I was more afraid of saying no to, her or my husband. One day she came to me and said it was time for me to speak on self-awareness at a workshop. When I protested because I had never spoken before, she reassured me that she had taken care of that detail. So that I would feel more comfortable, she had arranged for me to speak at three regular Al-Anon meetings in various towns. I was afraid to say no, so I followed her plan.

Becoming a Group Representative helped me prioritize my life, placing the focus on my recovery and enjoying the benefits of the program. I learned that what was good for the Al-Anon group was ultimately good for me. I was able to apply that to my home and children. Service work reinforced my commitment to myself to get well.

Through the years, I learned that growth in Al-Anon is a process—beginning with awareness, moving to acceptance, and ending with the ability to take action.

Daily communication with Al-Anon members increased my awareness of my shortcomings. I came to realize that I had difficulty with acceptance. I could accept that the disease affected me, yet I had difficulty accepting the disease concept as it pertained to the alcoholic. I continuously reminded myself that alcoholism is an insidious disease; one that I did not cause, could not control, and could not cure. I tried so many times to control or cure his disease.

I began to feel better emotionally, except for the one problem that kept me on edge and in fear—the physical abuse. I knew in my heart that I should file for divorce, but was afraid that I couldn't survive on my own with three children to care for. I had a nursing license, but hadn't worked in years and had lost



confidence in my abilities to perform as a nurse. My Sponsor suggested that I pray to God to stop the violence while I developed the strength and found the courage I needed to make this critical decision. I prayed and the violence ceased for two years.

In those two years, I committed myself to getting well and improving my relationship with my family and friends. Gradually I came to accept the disease of alcoholism, separating the behavior of the alcoholic from the man. As I practiced the Steps and Traditions in my daily life, I gained the strength and courage to stand by my principles. “Yesterday’s foundations” were formed because the principles of the program were available to me when I walked through the doors of my first Al-Anon meeting and because I had a Sponsor who had a strong, working knowledge of these principles.

I was taught that the slogans were short phrases to grasp onto in needy situations, and the Steps would provide me a path to personal recovery. The study and working of the Steps helped me to accept my powerlessness; brought me hope that I would be restored to sanity; strengthened my faith in the God of my understanding; taught me honesty by focusing on my imperfections; showed me the meaning of humility; helped me to become sincere; taught me to pray for the willingness; gave me courage to make amends; showed me that vigilance would ensure continued recovery; that conscious contact with my Higher Power would bring me serenity; and that I could carry the message by example.

At the end of that two-year grace period, the violence in my marriage resurfaced. One night in a drunken rage, my husband beat me up, and when I had no strength left to defend myself, he began to strangle me. As he was strangling me and I was losing oxygen, I was praying to God to let me die, if that was His will. While I was praying, the hands left my throat. I knew that God was telling me to move on and to do it now!

While that incident accelerated the ending of my marriage, my relationship with my children grew. The boys and I developed a bond and enjoyed being together. When they were eligible for Alateen, each attended, the eldest becoming a Group Representative. The turmoil was removed and the successes cherished.

Eventually, I met and married a recovering alcoholic. John was a great father to my sons, so much so that the two younger boys asked if he would adopt them, and he did. We practiced our communication skills at family meetings, played sports, and vacationed together. To this day, my two younger sons claim John as their true father.

As I became more involved in service, I focused on the Traditions and learned to personalize them. Not only do the Traditions help bring unity to our groups, but utilizing them outside the fellowship can bring unity to our family relationships. If we have one authority in making our group decisions, why not in our family decisions? As we learn to understand the program and the purpose for our being in these rooms, we are better able to define our own existence. The Traditions protect us from ourselves and remind us that there are simple solutions to our complex issues. We learn that survival depends on keeping our focus pure and that the spiritual essence of anonymity teaches us self-restraint. And yes, they remind me to accept all of us as children of God by placing principles above personalities.

The Concepts were written based on the premise that we follow a spiritual program with a Higher Power as our ultimate authority. As such, we learn to apply the Concepts to our responsibilities and in our relationships with the members of the fellowship and to Al-Anon, the corporation.

By practicing all of these spiritual principles, I enjoyed daily successes that eventually overcame the turmoil.

Faith in others—and in myself—was renewed, and I learned to trust again. I remind myself that you were there in the despair of my early years and when my second husband John died, and that I need to be here for you and for those who have yet to arrive.

Every service position I held, whether it be District Representative, Area Chairperson, or Delegate, gave me a different perspective. As the Delegate for Connecticut, I was introduced to the concept of Al-Anon worldwide. I learned to think globally; that the decisions I made at the World Service Conference affected all of Al-Anon.

In 2005 at the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees, I was privileged to be elected to the Board as a Trustee at Large. I’m not sure that words can describe what a thrilling adventure of growth, soul-searching, education, outreach, and more, that these past six years have been. Being a Trustee is a serious responsibility and a wonderful spiritual experience. As we make decisions, we learn to leave any personal agendas that we might have outside the room because it’s not about what I want or you want, it’s about what’s best for Al-Anon as a whole.

When we visit other countries, we go beyond politics and religion to bring the members support, hope, and the love of Al-Anon members worldwide. During my time on the Board, I have seen growth in many of the countries visited and we are beginning to see European countries working together to help one another. Encouragement and guidance can be powerful motivators.

Today Al-Anon is not just a part of my life, it is my way of life. I have an ongoing, conscious contact with my Higher Power as I listen to the message He sends. Sometimes obstacles are put in my path and many times He clears the way. The obstacles seem to appear as I am challenged to experience a new insight.

Recovery is an ongoing process as I continue to gain awareness of surroundings, situations, other people’s feelings, and myself. I learn to accept the things I cannot change and for those I can change, I take action. Action may be as simple as going to a meeting or doing service work.

Everything that I have experienced and accomplished through life with the help of this program and my Higher Power has brought me to where I am today. I am both blessed and privileged to be here and pray that every decision that I may assist in making in the future is for the benefit of all Al-Anons and Alateens worldwide. For as God taught me many years ago, it’s not all about me and my will, it’s about His will for us. He has kept us on course for 60 years, ever reminding us that when we put the common welfare of the members of Al-Anon Family Groups first, we experience the healing that we came into this program to receive.

Tomorrow brings many possibilities some of which are yet to be discovered. May we preserve “Yesterday’s foundations,” cherish “Today’s successes,” and look forward to discovering “Tomorrow’s possibilities.”

For all of you and those who have yet to find us, I am grateful!

## CLOSING SESSION

In the closing session of the 51st World Service Conference, the Chairperson of the Board stated, “We shared our successes over the past three years, both in our personal lives and in the work we accomplished at the WSC. The week’s events brought us new information and new insights.

“We discussed and sought clarity on many issues. We exercised our right to voice our opinions. I sincerely hope that you felt that your opinions were respected.

“I realized that last night when the Property Motion passed, the majority of us demonstrated our joy with much exuberance. I do not believe that anyone intended to disrespect the person who voted ‘no.’ I hope that Conference member will be forgiving of our ‘spirit run wild.’

“Those of you who gave presentations in the general sessions and workshops this week can be proud of the work you accomplished. I, for one, enjoyed the balance of seriousness and humor. Thank you for introducing the conversation on such a variety of issues.

“It’s an honor and privilege to serve with you—Delegates, staff members, members of the Executive Committee, and my fellow Board of Trustee members. I find your enthusiasm and dedication to the Al-Anon fellowship very inspiring.

“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 who love us in a special way.

She concluded: “May our love of the program sustain us day-by-day, and with the help of our Higher Power, let us continue to move forward as we embrace tomorrow’s possibilities and bring hope and recovery to all in need.

“I appreciate the confidence you’ve had in me the past three years, for it has been a wonderful episode in my journey of recovery.”

The Conference Chairperson asked, “Did we embrace ‘Yesterday’s foundations, Today’s successes, and Tomorrow’s possibilities’? Did we ‘expand our community of hope’? Did the spiritual tone of the WSC prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members? Did we presume goodwill? Did we, as Conference members, understand the purpose of the Conference and the relationships within the structure? Did we fulfill our individual roles as Delegates, staff members, Trustees, and Executive Committee Members to form that effective group conscience? Do you believe that our Higher Power was present in the expression of our group conscience? We need to ask ourselves, as a Conference, if we accomplished what we set out to do and what our pioneers envisioned for us to do.”

Conference members then took a few minutes for quiet reflection to evaluate the work of the 2011 World Service Conference and to write about a particular session or activity that fulfilled the Conference Theme or one of the Conference Goals.

Several Conference members shared:

- The vote on the motion to own real property—foundation, prayerful trust, action, decision, we are home.
- The way members gathered quickly at the microphone to express their experience, strength, and hope, respectively.
- The session on giving was indeed a spiritual session.
- The session on cultural competency. If our fellowship is to survive, we need to reach out to those who are different than us.
- The Leadership Workshops broadened my skills.
- The Literature Committee discussion about a possible piece of literature that would comprise 25 longtime members’ sharing represented a conversation with different viewpoints. My opinion changed with more information.
- I’m thrilled that we have the paperback version of *How Al-Anon Works* and the new book, *Many Voices, One Journey*.
- The discussion on the [literature] piece on intimacy. Our minds and hearts opened up to an old subject that previous WSCs were not willing to talk about. There was a Higher Power’s presence in guiding the discussion. The outcome will be future recovery for our membership.

The Chairperson concluded her closing comments by asking Conference members to spend some time on their way home answering a more personal question: “What spiritual growth did I personally experience this week?” Following the Closing Dinner, scroll presentations to the Panel 49 Delegates, and the Spiritual Speakers, the Conference Chairperson rapped her gavel on the lectern to close the 51st World Service Conference.

Mary Ann R.

*Chairperson, Board of Trustees*

Carol V.

*Conference Chairperson, Trustee*

## 2011 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

### Background and Other Floor Discussions

#### Motion #5

At its June 2010 meeting, the Literature Committee began discussing a petition from several groups requesting that the WSO republish or revise the booklet *Sexual Intimacy and the Alcoholic Relationship* (P-77). The Committee reviewed background information, including the booklet and the reasons it had been discontinued.

Still undecided, the Committee requested additional information for its November conference call, including the sections of *Blueprint for Progress* (P-91) that address sex, love, and intimacy, and a list of other existing Conference Approved Literature that covers these topics. (This list included *Living with Sobriety* [P-49], *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* [B-4], *The Al-Anon Family Groups—Classic Edition* [B-5], ...*In All Our Affairs* [B-15], *From Survival to Recovery* [B-21], *How Al-Anon Works* [B-22], *Hope for Today* [B-27, B-28], and *Discovering Choices* [B-30]).

In discussion, the Committee felt that the topics of sex and intimacy are concerns of many members, but not often addressed at meetings. At each Al-Anon International Convention and A.A. International with Al-Anon participation since at least 1995, workshops titled “Sexual Intimacy and the Alcoholic Relationship” have been full to overflowing, sometimes requiring additional meeting rooms.

Although the Committee was not interested in reprinting the booklet, *Sexual Intimacy and the Alcoholic Relationship*, it did express enthusiasm for the idea of a new piece on the subject of intimacy. The Committee hopes that new sharings received on the topic would include diverse experiences, whereas the discontinued booklet was made up only of *Forum* sharings from wives of alcoholics. This new piece would include sexual intimacy, but not focus exclusively on this aspect, as some members felt that the focus on sex limited the appeal of the earlier booklet.

#### Discussion followed.

- Intimacy has become Al-Anon’s elephant in the living room.
- Intimacy is a core issue for many Al-Anon members. Our backgrounds have been damaged in some way. I’d like to see the piece include all types of intimacy, the heart-to-heart connection has been damaged.
- I was on the Literature Committee when *Sexual Intimacy and the Alcoholic Relationship* (P-77) was developed. It actually came from *The Forum* Committee and was reviewed by the Literature Committee. The piece was to be on the general subject of intimacy, but it ended up being only about the sexual aspects. If this does come to a motion, the motion should say that it includes the general topic of intimacy, and not just sexual.

- My life was changed due to the sexual intimacy workshop at the 1998 Al-Anon International Convention in Salt Lake City. I think a book along this line is very much needed. I have a story that I would share for this piece.
- When I attended conventions, I would have a meeting in my room about sex. The meeting never turned out to be about sex, but about intimacy.
- I would like to have this piece address emotional and spiritual intimacy.
- We had a workshop at a state convention that was at the same time as a general session speaker meeting. The workshop was called “Learning to love myself,” and you couldn’t get in the room, there were so many people. Not loving myself and not feeling worthy are two of the biggest ways I was affected by this disease.
- Years ago when I chaired a meeting and picked “sex” as a topic, nearly everyone left the room. When they started talking, people came back. I would like to see a piece of literature that speaks to our recovery and changes in our sexual relationships. I don’t think the subtle approach works very well.
- We always fully embrace the idea of this piece, but the fellowship doesn’t seem to support the idea with sending in their sharings. If we were going to do anything, I would like to revise the intimacy chapter in the book *Discovering Choices*. If this is what the fellowship wants, *The Forum* will support this topic and print the articles written by the membership. We do need to talk about sex and the aspects of intimacy related to an alcoholic relationship.
- We have been paralyzed by fear and shame; that is why we avoid this topic. I think it should add not only heterosexual intimacy, but also include bisexual and gay relationships. What about rapes and molestation related to alcoholic behavior? This could be a very powerful piece. We need to say “yes” to intimacy.
- The WSO receives about 1,000 sharings a year for *The Forum*, and I’ve never seen one on sexual intimacy. For the book, *Discovering Choices*, the WSO received about five sharings on sexual intimacy and few of them were actually usable.
- I see the new piece being the next step after the *Discovering Choices* book.
- Sometimes we don’t want to hear or talk about this, but after we do, it feels fulfilling. I issue a challenge that we all go back and generate interest and sharings from the membership.
- We need to be clear on what we want.
- I feel the issue is persistent; it hasn’t gone away. This is another breakthrough, like . . . *In All Our Affairs*. It’s another stage of our recovery.
- I was a Delegate when we were developing *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage*; everyone called it the “sex

book.” It is a subject not fully covered in our literature, and I think it should be.

- There are a lot of men and women in our fellowship who are in strained relationships where there is no intimacy. How do we handle self-care? There are abuses in alcoholic relationships. Part of the intimacy issue is trust. Do I feel safe enough with this person?
- I love this conversation. What I love about it is the laughter. Things that I can laugh about become less important. Any time we can introduce laughter, on any subject, that is a good thing.
- I work with women who are abused; we just started a six-week sex inventory. It brought up a lot of issues for me. I said “yes” when I meant “no.”
- It was through using the sexual intimacy booklet that I was able to begin working through some issues of abuse. I had to learn how to deal with them and get healthy around these issues. Maybe now our fellowship is ready for this. We can discuss this and make it a part of our program.
- I’ve been in Al-Anon for 41 years; I’ve been to one meeting that talked about sex. After that meeting, a lady came to the Chairperson and said, “I didn’t know we could talk about these things.”

Following this discussion, the Conference Chairperson asked for a consensus as to whether to move forward. The consensus was to proceed. A motion was made, seconded, and carried that the 2011 WSC give conceptual approval for a new piece of literature on intimacy in general, including sexual intimacy, in alcoholic relationships. (See Motion #5 on page 82.)

## Floor Discussion—Literature Committee (Book)

Developing a book on 1,000 years of family recovery, interviewing 25 members with 40 years or more in Al-Anon.

An author contacted Al-Anon about writing a book containing sharings from Al-Anon members with over 40 years of recovery. The staff spoke with the author explaining that Al-Anon could not identify longtime members for a book that wasn’t Conference Approved. It was also explained that if it were Conference Approved, the Literature Committee would decide who the members to be interviewed would be, that the format might change, that no royalties would be paid, and that no authorship would be acknowledged. As a member, he agreed to all of those conditions and felt there is a need, before too much time passes, to capture the history of those Al-Anon pioneers who are still living.

The author was also clear that if Al-Anon didn’t want to create such a book, that he would still go ahead and select the people whom he thought would be best for the book. Because of the nature of this request, the Executive Director sought guidance from the Executive Committee before referring it to the Literature Committee.

The Executive Committee felt that this was an unusual request, but one worth pursuing. Several members believed that

the benefits of doing such a book with this author or another writer outweighed the negatives that would result if he moved forward without our cooperation.

The proposal was to interview Al-Anon members with more than 40 years of family recovery, which could involve up to 25 people. The CAL process would be followed and the Literature Committee would participate in the same way as it does now. Based on the discussion, the Executive Committee unanimously moved that it found the idea of this book on family recovery was worth pursuing, and referred the idea to the Literature Committee for consideration and possibly a motion to the World Service Conference.

While at first, some Literature Committee members were apprehensive about the idea, as discussion progressed, they saw more benefits. The Committee agreed that we have lost a lot of our longtime members without recording their stories, and that such a book could help save some of this history. The Literature Committee recommended to the 2011 World Service Conference conceptual approval of a book of interviews with pioneer and longtime members having 40 or more years of family recovery in Al-Anon.

Just prior to attending the World Service Conference, staff contacted the author to make sure he was still interested in pursuing this project, should the Conference give conceptual approval. Citing other projects and second thoughts about the WSO stipulations regarding the writing, he has decided against being involved with the project at this time. The Executive Committee, informed of his decision, unanimously rescinded their support of the motion. Despite this, the Literature Committee felt that this remained a worthwhile project and recommended that Al-Anon pursue it.

### Discussion followed:

- When members of the Literature Committee discussed this suggestion, we felt there was merit in capturing the experience and recovery of our longtime members. We felt it was something we would like to move forward with, and that it is a viable project.
- I believe all our literature is compiled from the sharings of our membership. I don’t want to see any of our literature pointing to a specific group of individuals as having something that others don’t.
- Members of the Executive Committee did discuss this at length because it was a different way of doing things than in the past. We wanted some input as to the members chosen for interviews because we felt strongly that there are certain individuals who do not carry the message of Al-Anon.
- The book about longtime members sounds like personalities rather than principles to me.
- Al-Anon has a book of continuous growth and recovery, as told in *Many Voices, One Journey*.
- I agree with the statement that the book may create a book about personalities, but we may lose those people. We have a choice to just collect data.
- I have a passion for history, but as people age, they forget. I would rather see something focused on principles, not facts.



- It seems we already have this in *Many Voices, One Journey*. What is the difference between our new book and interviews with longtime members?

*This piece would be interviews of specific members.*

- Do we need a piece for everything instead of using what we have?
- Our history is in all of our books.

Following the discussion, the Conference Chairperson asked the members if there was a desire to move forward with a formal motion for the longterm recovery piece. The consensus was not to move forward with a formal motion.

## Floor Discussion—Literature Committee (Piece of CAL)

Developing a new piece for families of people who are in treatment as a result of their alcoholism.

During its March 2011 conference call, the Literature Committee discussed a member's suggestion that the WSO reprint or revise the discontinued booklet, *Homeward Bound* (P-8). The Committee reviewed the booklet, as well as the reasons why it was discontinued, and agreed with the decision (made in 2004) for discontinuance. The Committee was not interested in reprinting or revising the booklet.

However, the Committee acknowledged this is a scary and confusing time for members who are referred to our program when their loved one is in treatment. In certain Areas, there are quite a few potential members who are referred to Al-Anon when a loved one is in a treatment facility, whether inpatient or outpatient.

The Committee felt that our current literature does not address this specific experience adequately. It agreed that a new recovery piece (not a public outreach piece) to reach a broader base (rather than just for people whose loved ones are coming out of inpatient treatment facilities) would be beneficial. This piece could address the reality of all those whose loved ones are in treatment, whether for the first time, or after multiple times.

### Discussion included:

- My son was in a treatment center and released. I wasn't in Al-Anon at the time. I personally would love to get a copy of this *Homeward Bound*. I really think this would be an important piece of literature.
- How do I behave now that the alcoholic is going to A.A.? How do I act?
- There is anticipation and anxiety about the alcoholic returning home from treatment, so maybe a piece of literature that would explain what happens would be helpful.
- I see the newcomers that come into the meetings. They don't want to talk, they just want to read.
- We have the availability of developing things quickly, for example with podcasts.
- Instead of printing new literature, could we have suggested meeting topics on the Members' Web site or in *The Forum* that would refer to the literature we already have printed? I believe we have the literature, we just need to read it.
- There is a need for a treatment piece.
- I think the treatment piece is a great idea, but a lot of calls come in about help for people with drug addiction not alcoholism.
- Regarding the piece on treatment, does it have to be a piece of literature?
- The type of treatment that alcoholics see today is very different than it was years ago.
- I was on the Institutions Committee when *Homeward Bound* was created. It was very hard to get the stories. We already have *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*—one magazine, at a low cost. I would love to see stories about relapse or from parents of alcoholics in *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.
- My treatment experience was that they had no literature on hand for the family members. Maybe we can take *How Al-Anon Works* to the treatment centers.

During the discussion, it was clarified that *Living with Sobriety* (P-49) is available and could be helpful.

Following the discussion, the Conference Chairperson asked the members if there was a desire to move forward with a formal motion for the treatment piece. The consensus was not to move forward.

## Floor Discussion—Technology

A Delegate introduced a proposed motion to develop policies that would allow optional usage of computer devices for all World Service Conference members during the general sessions of the Conference by sharing:

"In 1997, a decision was made by the Board of Directors (based on Conference evaluations) that computer usage by Delegates during general sessions of the Conference would not be allowed. A former Chairperson of the Board thought she recalled that it was due to the 'clicking noise.' That cannot be verified as the 1997 Conference evaluation forms are no longer available.

"The decision at the time was based on the information at hand; however, the omnipresence of computers in our service work as Delegates and in our everyday lives may have brought us to a time and place to reconsider this 14-year-old decision—which is a lifetime in the world of technology.

"This idea to change cannot be accomplished without serious considerations that would define and comply with Conference etiquette and Al-Anon's Legacies.

"If the decision were reversed, 'optional' and 'discreet' would be the foundation of policies and procedures.

"During this 14-year period, decisions have been made to allow the Conference Recorder and selected World Service Office employees to use computers while seated in the back of the Conference general session room.

"The transition to Delegates having the privilege to use a computer device during the general session as a familiar way to organize their thoughts and prepare for their Assembly reports appears to be a natural next step in our appreciation for the many advantages of technology."

### Discussion followed:

- I would greatly appreciate the ability to use my device in a non-communicative format.

- At a Regional Delegates' Meeting, one member texted another member to say, "Quit texting," and another member was checking basketball scores.
- I think it would be distracting with the clicking and the visual of the screens.
- I am sitting in front of the Conference Reporter and I hear nothing from her computer. On another note, I cannot imagine all the wires going across every aisle.
- I would find this distracting—I'd jump on my e-mail, etc. I suggest that a Task or Thought Force investigate this.
- The time has come to consider this again, but we need to proceed slowly.
- The Chairperson of the Board noted that the process to form a Thought or Task Force would be initiated if the

majority of the Conference feels we should go forward.

- I suggest this be done on a trial basis.
- Think of the trees we can save without using paper.
- I'm thinking of the new Delegates who will be sitting behind computer screens, rather than interacting with their Mentor.
- An Executive Committee member noted that there would be additional costs for electricity and routers, etc., which would go to the Areas.

The Conference Co-Chairperson asked if the Conference would like to request a Thought or Task Force (to be determined by the Board of Trustees) to look into this. The response of the consensus was unanimously for a Thought or Task Force to consider the use of computer devices for all WSC members during general sessions.

## 2011 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

### MOTION #1 — CARRIED

#### (BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2011 World Service Conference:

#### With voice, but no vote:

##### David Zach

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

##### María Evangelina de León G.

*International Representative—Mexico, Al-Anon Member*

##### Rose A.

*International Representative—New Zealand, Al-Anon Member*

#### With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

##### Linda B.

*Chairman, Executive Committee for Real Property Management  
Al-Anon Member*

#### With voice limited to Cultural Competency, but no vote:

##### Dr. Vivian Jackson

*Research Instructor, National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown  
University Center for Child and Human Development  
Non-Al-Anon Member*

#### With no voice and no vote:

##### Nicolette Stephens

*Information Analyst, Non-Al-Anon Member*

### MOTION #2 — CARRIED

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

To approve the 2011 Finance Committee Report.

### MOTION #3 — CARRIED

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

To approve the 2010 Audited Financial Report.

### MOTION #4 — CARRIED

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

To approve the 2010 Annual Report.

### MOTION #5 — CARRIED

(86 yes, 9 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

That the 2011 WSC give conceptual approval for a new piece of literature on intimacy in general, including sexual intimacy, in alcoholic relationships.

### MOTION #6 — CARRIED

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

To authorize ownership of real property.

WHEREAS, the 1991 World Service Conference affirmed that in regard to the relocation study, the ownership of property by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is consistent with our Traditions; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees did study the purchase of property as a part of relocation; and

WHEREAS, the Traditions separate the organization of groups from the organization of service centers; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees finds that it has been and continues to be financially prudent to own real estate in connection with relocation since 1996; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees and the World Service Conference, representing the voice of the fellowship, desire to always maintain the spirit and intent of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts; and

WHEREAS, the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is the clearinghouse for Al-Anon groups in the United States and Canada as well as the link to the General Service Offices abroad; and

WHEREAS, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. has owned property in Virginia Beach, Virginia, since 1996, in accordance with the terms and conditions of Motion 12 passed by the 1994 World Service Conference; and

WHEREAS, the trial ownership of property has been successful while maintaining the spirit and intent of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts; and

WHEREAS, the Board and the World Service Conference desire to end the trial and affirm the ownership of property within the safeguards previously established;

NOW, therefore be it resolved that the 2011 World Service Conference does agree to end the 15-year trial and further empowers the Board of Trustees to continue to own the current or a subsequent property in the name of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. for its use under the following conditions:

1. The Board of Trustees continues to find that the ownership of property is financially feasible.
2. The Conference can order the sale of property if it believes that continued ownership is contrary to the wishes of the fellowship as a whole. The Board of Trustees agrees not to override the action of the Conference, if the Conference directs that the property be sold.
3. The Board of Trustees will continue to report triennially, beginning in 2012, 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 ownership of property has had on the fellowship as a whole since the previous report.
4. The Conference and the Board of Trustees request that the ownership of real property be limited to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., or the General Service Offices, until the impact of ownership by other service entities can be sufficiently studied and guidelines established which would comply with the spirit and intent of this Motion.
5. If at any time, the Conference withdraws permission to own real property, the property will be sold or disposed of by the Board of Trustees for the most financially prudent price, without regard to gain/loss.
6. If at any time the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. owns real property and that property is sold or dis-

posed of for whatever reason, any net funds realized after the payment of existing mortgages, costs associated with the sale, costs associated with the purchase of another location and relocation to a new site shall be placed in a designated fund to reduce future occupancy costs of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Said fund may not be used to sustain existing or create new services or programs. Said fund cannot be added to by the Board or the fellowship except by investment income the fund generates. Said fund is to reduce occupancy costs and avoid dissension over funds that could be viewed as perilous wealth.

7. By the 2012 Conference, the Board of Trustees will amend its By-Laws to establish a separate Executive Committee for Real Property Management, in accordance with Motion 5 of the 1995 World Service Conference. Said Executive Committee will continue to ensure 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 Al-Anon as a whole. Should legal situations change that would mandate the need for a separate corporation to own the property, this Motion shall authorize the Board to act immediately and to notify the Conference of this change at the next Conference following the establishment of said corporation.
8. Said real property shall house only the operations of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and the entity formed only to manage the property. No space will be available to outside tenants. Al-Anon groups may hold meetings in the facility, provided that they make a monthly contribution equivalent to rent in order for the group to remain self-supporting. No other Al-Anon service entities or structures may utilize the building in accordance with this Motion.
9. It shall be the guiding principle of real property ownership by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. that

the ownership of property is a means to providing service to the groups and not an investment for the organization. Because of this, the real property, at the request of the Conference or direction of the Board, can be sold at a loss or abandoned without regard to its value when it is found to be in violation of the Traditions or Concepts. It is understood that abandonment or sale of real property would not relieve Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., or its subsidiary corporation, if any, from fulfilling its financial responsibilities connected with the abandoned or sold property.

10. So long as no other condition herein is violated, the Board of Trustees retains the right to purchase real property when financially feasible. Should ownership of that property become a financial or operational liability, the Board may sell said property without further Conference action.
11. It is understood that the individual groups and service arms have no ownership interest or liability in any property owned by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., or its alternate Executive Committee for Real Property Management, except in accordance with its Articles of Incorporation.
12. The management, ownership, and operation of said real property shall conform to the existing zoning, tax, state and federal regulations in order to maintain the 501(c)(3) status of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. While representatives of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management may attend public hearings or meetings related to changes in zoning, tax treatment, etc., Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. or its Executive Committee for Real Property Management, will not affiliate, give testimony or advocate in any way, or take positions which may involve the fellowship in any outside controversy regardless of the impact on the value of the real property or the cost to the fellowship.





# **2010 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 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, and receives monthly service updates from the Directors and the Executive Director.

**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 an average of 50 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 Member Services, or the Executive Director's designee acts in his stead. An Administrative Team (the three Directors and the Controller) oversee office-wide projects, review resource allocations, and serve as a resource to the Executive Director. 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

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. It guards the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship and controls 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:

- To approve WSO at-Large committee members for all Committees.
- To approve travel costs for a Board of Trustee member and the Associate Director of Membership Outreach— International for a trip to northern Europe.
- To approve a Record Retention Policy for the WSO.
- To approve staff travel to support Public Outreach activities.
- That the 2011 World Service Conference (WSC) and the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration be held in Virginia Beach, VA.
- To approve production and shipment of 5,000 copies of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2010* magazine issue for distribution with the Hallmark Hall of Fame's Viewer's Guide for TV Movie, "When Love Is Not Enough—The Lois Wilson Story."
- Approved Austria as a trial General Service Office (GSO) as it has met the necessary criteria.
- To approve the mailing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2011* to all groups in the World Service Conference structure.
- Approved having the staff create, develop, and post a series of podcasts to highlight: 1. How the group functions as a community, 2. The need for Group Representatives (GR) and GR duties, 3. Explain the service structure, and 4. How do I become a GR?
- Approved the 2013 International Convention Theme: "Celebrating Worldwide Unity—Al-Anon Family Groups."

### The Board, in its legal and financial capacity, took the following actions:

- At the Annual Meeting:
  - To approve the Auditor's Report as presented.
  - To approve the 2010 Finance Committee Report.
  - To approve the 2010 Seating Motion at the 2010 WSC.
  - To give conceptual approval for a major revision of the pamphlet *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33).
  - To elect three Trustee at Large (TAL) nominees and four Regional Trustee (RT) nominees as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee At-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property (ECRPM) following traditional approval by the Conference where required.
  - To approve the selection of Committee Chairs, submitted by the Chairperson of the Board.
  - To dissolve Thought and Task Forces that have completed their charges.
  - To approve the Policy Motions presented to the WSC.
  - To set the equalized expenses of the 2011 World Service Conference at \$1,250 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the 2011 World Service Conference is \$1,966 U.S.
- Reviewed the tax Form 990 that is filed with the IRS.
- Voted to adopt the amended Investment Guidelines.
- Approved the selection and hiring of an outside Compensation Consultant.

### The Board, in its oversight capacity:

- Approved the 2011 World Service Conference theme “Expanding our community of hope by embracing:
  - △ Yesterday’s foundations
  - △ Today’s successes
  - △ Tomorrow’s possibilities”
- Gave a presentation at the 2010 WSC on Property Ownership, including frequently asked questions.
- Approved the agenda for the 2010 WSC.
- Reviewed and approved changes to the Strategic Plan.
- Voted to end the three-year trial period and to approve the Conference Leadership Team (CLT), which will replace the Conference Committee.
- Received and reviewed reports from all Committees, Work Groups, and Thought and Task Forces of the Board.
- Continued the discussion of suggestions made at the 2010 WSC and generated topics for the 2011 WSC Thought and Task Forces.
- Elected a Canadian member of the Board as the second Delegate to attend the 2010 International General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Since the Chairperson of the Board is from the United States, the second Delegate is required to be from Canada.
- Approved a Board Self-Evaluation plan.
- Appointed a Task Force to develop a new résumé for members applying as TALs or RTs.
- Continued research on what external changes might affect Al-Anon in the future and how the use of electronic books will affect the revenue of the WSO and Literature Distribution Centers (LDC).
- Conducted Board Development sessions during Board week to enhance skills, and gain knowledge that will assist in carrying out the responsibilities of a Trustee.
- Voted to permanently discontinue the Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee and the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee that have been in suspension for the past three years.
- Approved a day of in-service with a consultant to assist in the development of a Strategic Plan that will meet the needs of the future of AFG Headquarters, Inc.
- Reviewed the TEAM events and offered suggestions for improvement.
- Reviewed and responded to concerns that are addressed in writing to the Board.

## STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

Vicki H., Chairperson, Strategic Plan Oversight

### 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.

### Priority:

**Goal #1:** To increase Al-Anon membership worldwide.

**Objective #1:** To increase group participation of young adults between the ages of 25 and 40 within the WSC structure by 1%.

**Progress:** A project proposal to update the Newcomer Packet in look and content so that it will be more appealing to the 25 – 40 age group was submitted.

### Additional progress:

**Goal #1:** To increase Al-Anon membership worldwide.

**Objective #2:** To create plans by the end of 2010, to follow up in countries where an Al-Anon presence has begun.

**Progress:** This Objective was moved out of the Strategic Plan as it was determined to be a staff function and already being done.

**Goal #2:** The Board, Executive Committee and staff will coach/support the fellowship in building partnerships to make a difference in the lives of those affected by someone else’s drinking.

**Objective #1:** To establish a resource bank that includes two different approaches to address anonymity by the end of 2009. This is our #2 priority.

**Progress:** This Goal has been removed from the Strategic Plan. Work of Objective #1 has been completed and any further work of the Goal will be initiated by staff.

**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, will assist in improving its work and also assist in the oversight of the WSO’s work.

**Progress:** This Goal has been completed. A tool has been developed and is currently in use by the Board.

### Universal Understanding of Recovery

The meaning of recovery will be understood by everyone – both within and outside of Al-Anon Family Groups, including professionals, governmental agencies, and the general public. The definition of recovery will be clear and concise, including how membership in Al-Anon leads to recovery.

### Priority:

**Goal #3:** Everyone—both within Al-Anon and outside—will have the same universal understanding of family recovery.

**Objective #1:** By April 2011, develop a clear and concise definition of family recovery.

**Progress:** Three on-line surveys have been completed, each one refining the previous responses. The process has begun to put together a list of professionals to whom a test definition will be sent. The results of this test will provide further information for the completion of this definition.



**Additional progress:**

**Goal # 1:** To acquire research that validates the importance of family recovery.

**Objective #1:** Obtain existing research that deals with the effects of alcoholism on families by locating two resources within one year.

**Progress:** This Goal has been removed from the Strategic Plan. Many articles dealing with family recovery were found; however, it was determined that the posting of articles may be in conflict with the Traditions.

**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.

**Priority:**

**Goal #1:** Discover and use universal resources.

**Objective #1:** Create a database of membership resources by January 2010 for the purpose of moving the Strategic Plan forward.

**Progress:** This has been moved to the staff Operational Plan.

**Goal #3:** Develop a program to illustrate to the groups how their contributions for services they received from WSO make them self-supporting.

**Objective #1:** Educate our membership about what self-supporting means.

**Progress:** This Goal has been removed from the Strategic Plan.

**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 Group's foundation firm.

**Priority:**

**Goal # 1:** The Board and staff will be catalysts to strengthen the groups and to expand our mutual relationship.

**Objective #2:** Use existing forms of communication to support the Group Representatives in fulfilling their responsibilities by April 2010.

**Progress:** First podcast being developed by Member Services.

**Goal #4:** To have a Board of highly competent members.

**Objective #1:** By July 2012, develop a process to attract competent, able members to fulfill current needs of the Board.

**Progress:** A presentation has been developed and is being used by the Board at Assemblies and TEAM events.

**Additional progress:**

**Goal #2:** Prepare the staff, Board of Trustees, and Executive Committee to go out into the fellowship in order to articulate the Vision, Mission, and the Strategic Plan of the Board.

**Objective #1:** The staff, Board and Executive Committee have a viable tool to communicate the Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan of the Board by the end of 2010, although the deadline of the end of 2010 will not be met.

**Progress:** A Power Point Presentation is being created for use by the Board at Area events.

NOTE: In October of 2010, the Board of Trustees invited a consultant to assist in the review of the current Strategic Plan. This consultant expressed his approval of how much has been accomplished and noted that although many organizations create a Strategic Plan, it is rare to see an organization move forward as we have.

The consultant then engaged the Board in exercises aimed at streamlining the Plan, utilizing our resources to maximum efficiency and broadening our understanding of what might be Strategic versus Operational. It was discussed that the Board should be Strategic in thinking and work with the staff for the actual creation of a plan for implementation of these ideas. The Board will consult with the Executive Director to ensure the availability of staff resources.

A Strategic Plan is meant to be long reaching in an effort to move the organization forward and help us to remain relevant in an ever-changing social environment. The Strategic Plan is meant to be flexible and changeable as more and different priorities arise. As a result of the conversations held with the Consultant, the staff has been asked to complete some of the objectives, some items will remain with the Board for creation of a plan for implementation, and others have been removed completely as they were no longer serving the strategic momentum the Board now sees for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Judy P., Chairperson

The Executive 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, and receives monthly service updates from the Directors and the Executive Director. Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval. These activities are reported in the Board of Trustees section.

The Executive Committee approved the following actions which will be presented to the January Board for final approval:

- Résumés for a Thought Force for Spanish-language Public Outreach.
- The new tagline for *The Forum* "Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service."
- The creation of a series of Group Service Podcasts on the various aspects of sponsorship. The podcasts would initially be available in English. Spanish and French podcasts will be available later.

- Staff travel to Betty Ford Center's Family, Children, and Educational Programs, and the Betty Ford Institute in Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert, CA.

#### On-going work of the Executive Committee:

- Reviews all presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference.
- Tracks and evaluates Work Group and Task Force work for Strategic Plan Goals and objectives.
- Approves Committee Guidelines.
- 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.
- Reviews policies and procedures for the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc.

### POLICY COMMITTEE

Mary G./Karen R., Chairpersons  
Barbara O./Robert S., Secretaries

The Policy Committee's charge is to ensure that the "Policy Digest" contains a clear and concise statement of policy, not process or procedure. The Policy Committee consists of the Board of Trustees, the WSC staff members, and the At-Large members of the Executive Committee. Other than the WSC, it is the largest representative group conscience in Al-Anon. Every policy discussion is an in-depth exploration and a consideration of all aspects of each topic. Though numerous discussions occurred throughout the year, no Policy motions will be presented at the 2011 Conference.

At the 2010 Conference, the "Public Relations" section of the *2010-2013 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual* was referred back to the Policy Committee for further discussion. A Thought Force was formed to look at how to reorganize the section. Some of the issues that this Thought Force is taking into consideration are:

- Differentiate between local and national audience.
- Use philosophy of why, rather than the how or what, including whose responsibility a task is, and who speaks for Al-Anon as a whole.
- Write from principle, so that members can think through circumstances as opposed to specific rules.

After a strategy is chosen, a Task Force will be formed to present the reorganized section, and perhaps, a motion, for the "Policy Digest" to be updated.

Another topic that the Policy Committee discussed was Special Focus Groups. This was initiated by a member's letter asking the Committee to look at whether or not special focus groups were divisive within the fellowship. Because of this letter, many aspects of special focus groups were considered:

- Whether the name "special focus" is appropriate.
- Whether the groups were divisive to Al-Anon as a whole.
- Whether all members are welcome at all groups.
- What is the importance or place of special focus literature?
- Is Alateen a special focus?

After many discussions, no action will be taken at this time. In the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, under the section, "Naming the Group," wording changes were made that address parts of this issue; it is felt that those are sufficient.

Additionally, several Areas are requesting assistance from the WSO regarding referrals to meetings that have been determined to be in violation of Al-Anon philosophy or Traditions. Historically, the Policy Committee and the WSO have not become involved in Area issues. During the discussions, numerous ideas were considered:

- Should WSO code groups "do not refer" on our list to support Areas that have also coded meetings "do not refer?"
- Would this violate Traditions and/or Concepts?
- What criteria are needed to delist and relist meetings?
- Would WSO be considered the 'Big Brother'?
- WSO is here to support Areas, but would this overstep boundaries?
- How does this relate to the spiritual idea of "talk to each other and reason things out"?

After discussions, a Thought Force was formed to explore options on how the WSO could handle this situation.

Another issue that the Committee has been discussing is the WSO's presence on social networking sites, such as Facebook. The Policy Committee believes this to be an important way to reach out to potential members, but the principle of anonymity makes it a challenge. A Thought Force was appointed to research this issue and return with a recommendation on how or if this could be accomplished.

The question arose about whether or not the e-mail addresses in the WSO iMIS database can be used by the WSO to contact the membership. For these addresses to be utilized, however, the Policy Committee needs to explicitly define the parameters for their use. For instance, would it be appropriate for the WSO to send members e-mails to subscribe or renew their *Forum* subscription? Would it be appropriate for the WSO to send members e-mails on information for new books or literature? What about an "opt-out box"? After a discussion, it was decided that the WSO staff would develop a plan for the collection of e-mail addresses from members for WSO communications.

At the October 2010 meeting, the Policy Committee approved servicing Area Web Coordinators by WSO. The Committee felt this was necessary because of the need for direct and quick communication from the World Service Office to members working with and on Area web sites.

Finally, the Policy Committee receives all letters and/or e-mails that come to the World Service Office regarding questions of policy and procedure. Though not all questions are assigned to a Thought or Task Force, each inquiry receives attention and discussion by the entire Policy Committee. This year we discussed registering meetings for preteens, the special note about anonymity on page 39 of the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, anonymity in obituaries, and copyright information. Though none of these issues resulted in changes in the "Policy Digest," the discussions resulted in a better understanding of the policy.

## ADMINISTRATION

The “Using Al-Anon’s Steps in Our Personal Lives” blog was active on both the Public Outreach and Members’ Web sites in English, Spanish, and French. Each month, a podcast was posted with the featured Step. Al-Anon members, those working in the helping professions, and potential members were able to listen to conversations on each of the Twelve Steps, as well as post comments about their interpretation of the Steps. Since the blog was available on the Public Outreach Web site, those who are unfamiliar with the Al-Anon program were able to gain insight into what is often discussed during meetings. In English, a total of 376 comments were posted; 243 comments in Spanish; and 86 comments in French. Though viewers may not have participated by leaving a comment, the statistics indicate that viewers accessed the blog content and the podcasts through various methods:

	English	French	Spanish
Homepage Access	57,265	6,029	12,595
RSS/Atom feed	61,162	2,919	6,654
iTunes feed	89,623	4,509	9,316
Comments feed	24,733	2,630	2,101
Step One Podcast	8,333	355	1,997
Step Two Podcast	4,445	263	1,805
Step Three Podcast	3,534	216	930
Step Four Podcast	3,161	211	1,140
Step Five Podcast	2,422	168	787
Step Six Podcast	2,186	167	612
Step Seven Podcast	1,971	124	535
Step Eight Podcast	1,817	82	462
Step Nine Podcast	1,567	73	409
Step Ten Podcast	1,527	72	397
Step Eleven Podcast	1,316	60	291
Step Twelve Podcast	984	42	212

New cabinets for the Archives room were purchased. The older wooden bookshelves were in disrepair and potentially harmful to archived material for long-term storage.

A staff Thought Force to brainstorm a piece on Conflict Resolution was formed. Ideas were presented to the Executive Committee.

A Task Force of employees from each section was formed to review and standardize the WSO Employee Policies and Procedures Manual. The revisions were reviewed by the Administrative Team, and then presented to the Executive Committee for review and final approval.

An Estate Planning Task Force, composed of Al-Anon members experienced with estate planning and wills, was appointed. Informative pieces for members will be created, based on the information and ideas gathered during the collaborative process.

A Financial Matters Thought Force, composed of staff and

Al-Anon members, was appointed to brainstorm ideas for a contemporary, unified look for materials related to finances and contributions. The ideas were used to develop a color scheme and logo that received approval from the Executive Committee.

A project manager was appointed to oversee the update and revision of content for the “Newcomer Packet.”

The Al-Anon name and trademark logo were successfully protected with several Internet domain name dispute resolutions. The WSO continues to acquire domain names in various forms through dispute resolution.

The WSO assisted an on-line meeting to reinstate its e-Commerce account after it was restricted because it was mistakenly identified as a charitable organization with tax-exempt status. The WSO was able to file an appeal with the e-Commerce company by explaining the mission of Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc., and informing it of the relationship between the corporation and the on-line meeting.

Members who completed the Unlimited Abundant Resources Skills Inventory over a year ago were contacted to request that they update their information. The process to request that members update their skills and areas of expertise in the skills inventory will take place on an annual basis.

In cooperation with the National Institute on Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), a research project to collect data on the effects of participation in Al-Anon Family Groups on newcomers was undertaken. A letter and questionnaire was prepared to ensure content is in keeping with the Legacies, and will be sent to randomly selected Al-Anon groups.

Data from the 2009 Membership Survey was made available on the Public Outreach and Members’ Web sites. The WSO Information Analyst presented the 2009 Membership Survey data to the 2010 Research Society on Alcoholism (RSA) conference in a poster format, and to the 2010 American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) as an oral presentation.

The Information Analyst participated in a two-part series of an on-line radio broadcast called “Recovery Now.” The Information Analyst was able to share the purpose and benefits of Al-Anon membership.

The WSO is collaborating with a researcher and his graduate assistant at a major university to publish a paper or series of papers based on the 2009 Membership Survey data. These new perspectives of the data will be submitted for proposal as a presentation to the 2011 Research Society on Alcoholism (RSA) Conference.

Information about the various web conferencing software packages was collected to assist the WSO in making a decision regarding future purchase. Web conferencing capability can be used as a training tool and a supplement to face-to-face meetings at all levels of WSO service.

The Personnel Office organized a “Lunch & Learn” session for employees in February 2010 on the topic of “Managing Your Money.” Approximately 20 employees attended the seminar. Subsequent feedback on the session was positive with many employees commenting that the financial information given was helpful.



## 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 to provide leadership support to the office in the absence of the Executive Director. The Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Member Services, has full authority to act on behalf of the Executive Director in his absence due to traveling or illness.

During 2010, the Administrative Team completed a comprehensive review of the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc.. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the Manual is clear and consistent throughout, so that all Sections within the WSO will have a common understanding and interpretation of the Office's procedures and policies.

In the course of the year, some policies in the Employee Poli-

cies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc. were also reviewed and revised, based on recent experiences in the office. In some cases, the application of a policy resulted in practices that diverged from that policy's original intent. These changes were made to bring the policy's intent and its practical implementation back into alignment.

Also in 2010, the Administrative Team streamlined both the forms and the processes that govern the workflow for online and print publication requests. These changes sought to maintain the quality control enforced by the processes while minimizing the amount of documentation and number of sign-offs required.

In other business, the Administrative Team reviewed plans and progress on the project to update the Public Outreach Web site, eventually recommending that a project manager be assigned to manage this cross-departmental project. Also, the Team reviewed all the formal job descriptions of all positions in the WSO, contributing to a process to determine the appropriate grade level for each position.

## COMMUNICATION SERVICES

### PUBLIC OUTREACH

**TV PSA Campaign.** "Sketches III" has been Al-Anon's most successful public service announcement (PSA). "Sketches III" generated a total of 58,743 airplays, an all-time high for a single 12-month campaign. That total represents a nearly-50 percent increase compared to "Sketches II," which was previously Al-Anon's all-time top-performing PSA. The primary reason for this dramatic increase was the addition of cable television stations to our distribution list. Not counting cable, however, "Sketches III" would still have been our most successful campaign, with 41,279 broadcasts—6 percent increase over "Sketches II."

"Sketches III" generated an estimated 484 million viewings in the U.S., based on broadcast times and the size of stations' viewing audience. This free air time is equivalent to an estimated \$2 million-to-\$5 million in paid advertising, according to broadcast industry formulas. According to this standard, Al-Anon's return on investment (ROI) in these PSAs is between 2,500 and 6,600 percent—in other words, \$25-to-\$66 dollars in airtime for every dollar spent on making and distributing the PSAs. (We do not have estimates for audience size and paid advertising equivalence for our PSA broadcasts in Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda.)

"Sketches III" is the third consecutive 12-month campaign to exceed the results of any previous Al-Anon TV PSA campaign for which we have measurement. "Sketches III" was consistently among the top 5 percent of top-performing PSAs in the U.S. and Canada, according to Nielsen Media Service's monthly rankings in 2010. Nielsen tracks results for more than 1,300 PSAs broadcast in the U.S. and Canada.

**Lois W. docudrama on television.** On April 25, 2010, the CBS television network broadcast *When Love is Not Enough*, a

biography of Al-Anon Family Groups' cofounder Lois W. This broadcast, a Hallmark Hall of Fame production, attracted a viewing audience in excess of 7 million. In cooperation with the producers, the WSO reviewed the script for the accuracy of its representation of Al-Anon, though some fictional elements were added for dramatic effect in its account of Lois's life. The Office provided information about Al-Anon Family Groups to be included in all background materials provided to media and the general public on the Hallmark Web site, in printed publicity materials, and on the DVD version of the TV movie. In our largest organized effort to promote the broadcast of our PSAs on television, we sent copies of our PSAs to all of the more-than-200 CBS-affiliated television stations in the U.S., and encouraged Area Public Outreach Coordinators to contact the CBS television stations in their Areas to encourage them to broadcast Al-Anon's PSAs in conjunction with their publicity for the movie. Our Public Outreach Coordinators and other members participated enthusiastically in this project, but regrettably our measurement reports for the months of April and May did not show any increase in the number of PSA broadcasts.

**Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism.** In 2010, Al-Anon members distributed nearly 350,000 copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*—a record high and a 29 percent increase over calendar year 2009. Introduced in July, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2011* was the first full-color edition of our public outreach magazine. The July 2010 printing was our largest single print run ever—a total of 184,000 copies sold in English, Spanish, and French, which was a 50 percent increase over the July 2009 campaign. *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* is our largest fellowship-wide member-participation public outreach project.

**Other outreach.** In March 2010, Al-Anon introduced a new public outreach bookmark, "When you don't know where to



turn,” which replaced the popular “Crying House” bookmark. Available for public outreach projects at no charge, 300,000 copies have been printed in its first year.

We posted seven podcasts in our “First Steps to Recovery” series, which introduces people to basic information about Al-Anon. Podcasts in this series were downloaded more than 72,000 times in the course of the year, with steady increases from quarter to quarter.

In November 2010, we launched new PSA campaigns for both TV and radio. The measurable results for these campaigns will be reported next year.

By the end of 2010, our Public Outreach video project—in progress since 2009—was under review by the Policy and Public Outreach Committees, in preparation for release to the fellowship in 2011. The project includes three videos, each approximately 30 minutes in length; the first, targeted to potential newcomers to Al-Anon; the second, to newcomers to Alateen; and the third to an audience of professionals. Video clips from this body of work will be used on the updated Public Outreach Web site, as well as in future podcasts.

For 2010, the Public Outreach Web sites (English, French, and Spanish) showed a very slight gain in the number of visitors—less than a 1 percent increase. The largest Web site, English, showed an increase of slightly more than 1 percent. The third and fourth quarters showed a decline in visitors, compared with the third and fourth quarters of 2010. A 17 percent decline in the fourth quarter had the most significant effect. The reason for this decline is not immediately obvious.

Two years ago, the Public Outreach Committee noted the importance of outreach to the community of professionals who refer clients and patients, while also noting that many members do not feel qualified to reach out to this community. In 2010, staff began work on a “model” program that would simplify outreach to professionals for members. In cooperation with Area Delegates and Public Outreach Coordinators, staff visited 14 treatment centers in the U.S. and six in Canada. The visits served to build and strengthen the Areas’ relationships with these treatment centers while gaining input for the Outreach to Professionals Model. Work on this project continues in 2011.

WSO staff continued to work closely with a range of professional organizations, maintaining relationships and making presentations at the national level, while also coordinating Area participation in local and regional events.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Harriet T./Paula B., Chairpersons

Pat Q., Associate Director of Communications—Media

The Committee, consisting of eight Delegate members, four At-Large members, the WSO staff liaison, and the WSO Volunteer Chairperson, met via six conference calls throughout 2010 and also conducted business by e-mail and the Internet.

During 2010 the Committee reviewed several suggestions from the fellowship. Early in the year, the Committee agreed to

support fellowship efforts to reach families and friends of alcoholics who watched a national broadcast of the movie, “When Love Is Not Enough, the Lois Wilson Story.” The Committee also agreed to review “The Best of Public Outreach” (P-90) and recommended that the WSO prepare an electronic version for Area Public Outreach Coordinators. The Committee reviewed and approved proposed scripts for the 2011-2012 TV and radio PSAs, as well as three new videos about Al-Anon and Alateen.

In other business, the Committee created a Thought Force of Spanish-speaking members engaged in Public Outreach. The purpose of the Thought Force is to determine if there are ways in which the WSO could offer additional support to the public outreach efforts within the Latino community. That Thought Force will continue its discussions in 2011. The Public Outreach Committee also discussed strategic priority audiences among the friends and families of alcoholics. Among the target audiences are parents of alcoholics and teens.

## FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

**TRACING OUR GROWTH.** The major achievement in Fellowship Communications in 2010 was the completion of a draft of TRACING OUR GROWTH (working title), a book of history and recovery encompassing the events and issues of Al-Anon’s first 60 years. This history book has the same purpose as any other Al-Anon book—to share recovery. It more resembles a daily reader than an ordinary history book: members tell their stories—and Al-Anon’s story—in their own voices, from the point of view of their own path to recovery. It is divided into short segments that can be read aloud at a meeting. Many of these segments are followed by questions for group discussion or personal reflection. TRACING OUR GROWTH is scheduled for publication in 2011, in conjunction with celebrations honoring Al-Anon’s 60th anniversary.

**The Forum.** The number of personal subscriptions to *The Forum* stood at 22,800 at the end of 2010, approximately 1.5 personal subscriptions for every English-language group in the U.S. and Canada. This total represents a slight increase over 2009.

In 2010, each month’s “Instant Meeting” feature was devoted to the Step for that month, to encourage focus on the Steps as a meeting topic. The magazine’s table of contents was revised to highlight three features each month as suggested meeting topics. In response to interest within the fellowship, the magazine published a greater number of sharings from parents of alcoholics.

*As We Understood ...* (B-11) was featured in three issues of *The Forum*, in commemoration of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of that book’s publication. Area Literature Coordinators also conducted workshops and other programs to encourage members of the fellowship to take a fresh look at this book, which was also featured in *Area Highlights*.

## FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Blondel R./Charles Y., Chairpersons

Sharon H., Board Liaison

Robert S., Staff Liaison, Director of Communication Services

The Committee, consisting of five At-Large members, regularly evaluated more than 950 sharings contributed by members for possible publication in *The Forum*. The Committee met twice by teleconference in 2010 to critique the published issues of the magazine, plan and discuss a *Forum* Readership Survey, and to propose a new tagline to better describe the purpose of the magazine.

The Committee is satisfied that the magazine is continuing to improve and to explore fresh perspectives in Al-Anon recovery.

More than 3,000 readers responded to *The Forum* Readership Survey. The largest single group of *Forum* subscribers (31 percent) are relatively new members who have been in the program between one and five years; longtime members make up 13 percent of the readership. According to the survey:

- 90% of readers say that *The Forum* provides stories they can relate to and that are helpful to their recovery.
- 54% of readers say that *The Forum* contains “unique” information they can’t find anywhere else. They identify this unique information as the personal stories and WSO happenings.

In December, the Executive Committee approved FEAC’s recommendation to change the magazine’s tagline from “A Meeting in My Pocket” to “Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service.” The new tagline will be used beginning with the April 2011 issue. The Committee made this change to encourage more use of the magazine at meetings and to better reflect its purpose. *The Forum* is intended to share our program with

the fellowship, not to be read in isolation—kept private in our pocket. “A meeting in my pocket” could imply that the magazine could be a substitute for an actual meeting, when instead it provides topics for discussion and sharing at Al-Anon meetings. “Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service,” the Committee believes, will encourage more members to integrate *The Forum* into their group’s activities and use it as a tool to strengthen shared recovery.

## LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Sandie D./Ann C., Chairpersons

Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—Literature

The Committee, consisting of eight Delegate members, four At-Large members, the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Volunteer Chairperson, continued to meet via quarterly conference calls throughout 2010 as part of a trial period.

At the 2010 World Service Conference, the Committee recommended a major revision of the pamphlet *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33) as well as a Legacies workbook, using sharings from the Legacy blogs. After Conference approval, initial work began on both.

During the year, the Committee reviewed several suggestions from the fellowship for new literature or revisions to existing literature. As a result, the Committee agreed to recommend a minor revision to the next printing of *How Al-Anon Works for the Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22), adding a brief section on “Didn’t cause it, couldn’t control it, couldn’t cure it.” The Committee also began plans for a “Timely Reprint” for parents of alcoholics. It also agreed to bring recommendations for a piece on intimacy and a book made up of the stories of longtime members to the 2011 World Service Conference.

# MEMBER SERVICES

## GROUP SERVICES DEPARTMENT

### AL-ANON/ALATEEN SERVICE MANUAL

The 2010-2013 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) was completed and made available to the fellowship. New features include tabbed dividers between the sections of the *Manual*, tables of contents for each section, and incorporation of new text approved by the World Service Conference on Alateen, Financial Matters, Anonymity, and Use of Materials at Al-Anon Meetings. The “Groups at Work” section was updated to make it easier to use and to reflect changes in policy and procedures. As always, every group in our World Service Conference Structure received a complimentary copy of the new *Manual*, and the separate *Groups at Work* booklet (P-24), mailed to the group’s Current Mailing Address (CMA) in the WSO database. The *Manual* and the *Groups at Work* booklet have been translated into French and Spanish, sent to the printer, and will be mailed to groups in early 2011.

## AL-ANON INFORMATION SERVICES (AISs)

Al-Anon Information Services were added to e-Communities, which provides a means of conveying timely information to them. However, not all AISs have submitted an e-mail address for this purpose and are not all using this communication vehicle yet.

Several AISs and Areas in our structure dealt with making decisions to remove local groups from their meeting directories this year, which underlined the importance of Areas, AISs, and districts having criteria for listing meetings on their printed and on-line meeting schedules. It is suggested that criteria be developed and distributed, so that all have the information, and such situations can be fairly dealt with in a principle-based manner. Information about the need to develop criteria for listing meetings was also included in the newsletter posted on e-Communities for all AISs. The AISs and groups in question were reminded that they needed to continue to communicate; that the groups remain registered Al-Anon groups, and the groups

should be encouraged to participate in AIS/district/Area service meetings. The goal of all parties is unity and inclusiveness.

## ALATEEN

Six Areas have Alateen chat rooms, and at year end there were seven registered weekly meetings. Teen attendance is building slowly. Participating Areas were provided with suggestions on how to incorporate the chat meetings into an overall Alateen outreach plan. The safety of the meetings is maintained by screening of Alateen sharings by the AMIAS serving as the chat meeting Sponsors. No personal information is allowed to be shared. Germany will be the first GSO to host a chat room; they are translating the necessary text to set up a room in their language.

A new outreach service tool, the Alateen Table Card (M-80) was introduced. A sample was mailed with *Alateen Talk* to the English-speaking Alateen groups. The issue included ideas for the Alateen groups to introduce the card to neighboring Al-Anon groups. French- and Spanish-speaking Alateen groups received table cards in their languages, with the translated information from *Alateen Talk* describing the project in the spring mailings of *Le lien* and *en Acción*. A memo with sample copies was sent to the Area Alateen Coordinators to encourage their support of the project.

The WSO worked with several Areas to assist in resolving problems with unregistered Alateen groups. In most cases, by communicating with the adults involved with these meetings, the Areas were able to either register the meeting or close it. The WSO supports Area efforts to bring such groups and individuals into compliance with Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, and when the members involved refuse to comply, the WSO will officially notify the meeting facility that a group calling itself Alateen does not have the right to use the Alateen name. No unregistered group can call itself “Alateen,” nor be listed on local/Area printed and Web meeting schedules.

## LONE MEMBER/INMATE CORRESPONDENCE SERVICE

The requests from Lone Members for the Correspondence Service continues to wane, as electronic Al-Anon meetings (Internet and telephone) become more accessible to members who live in remote areas and those that are homebound.

The Inmate Correspondence Service serves inmates who do not have access to an Al-Anon meeting in their facility. Requests from such inmates for an Al-Anon member to share their experience, strength, and hope as a result of working the Al-Anon program through the Inmate Correspondence Service remain steady. Male contacts are always needed for the service.

## GROUP SERVICE PODCASTS

Four Group Services podcasts were developed by staff from the Group Services and Membership Outreach Departments. Topics for the podcasts were provided to staff by the Board's Work Group on the Strategic Plan theme, “Support and Strengthen Our Structure.” The first podcast has been posted

to the Members' Web site. The others are in the editing process and will be posted in early 2011 in a format that allows members to write comments.

## GROUP RECORDS

A read-only version of the WSO On-line Group Records Web application was launched in the summer of 2010, followed by an editable version later in the year. The original application permitted Area Group Records Coordinators to compare Area records with the WSO records, check when a new group has been registered, or a change has been processed by WSO Group Records staff. Five Areas participated in the testing of the editable version of the application, which allows Area Group Records Coordinators to process Al-Anon group changes directly into the WSO's database. The upgraded version was released in early November, and has been used by 30 Areas. Area Group Records Coordinators have been able to run group details and printouts per district on demand and sort the reports by District.

The total number of registered groups in 2010 is 25,452:

U.S. Al-Anon 13,286

U.S. Alateen 1,031

Canada Al-Anon 1,363

Canada Alateen 80

Overseas Al-Anon 8,999

Overseas Alateen 693

A Korean-speaking group was registered in New York City; it is the only Korean-speaking group in the World Service Conference structure.

The annual New Group Records Coordinator conference call was held on February 27, 2010. Seventeen new Group Records Coordinators participated in the call. The focus of the call was to reinforce the importance of maintaining accurate group information and to identify and discuss problems frequently found on Group Registration/Change Forms (GR1) submitted to the WSO. Group names that do not reflect Al-Anon principles continue to be a problem. Members are referred to the new Policy language in the “Choosing the Group's Name” section of the *Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies* in the 2010-2013 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* for information about the policy and to “Naming the Group” in the *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* section of the *Service Manual* for WSO registration information regarding group names.

The conference call for new Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) was also held on February 27, 2010. The call was designed to review in detail the Alateen forms and the certification process, and also to give the WSO staff the opportunity to respond effectively to questions and concerns. Seventeen new AAPPs participated in the call. An additional call was held in March for all AAPPs to review the Annual Area Alateen Recertification Process; Area Delegates and Alateen Coordinators were invited to listen during the conference call. 5,900 Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) were certified in 2010. It is evident that the AAPPs are continuing to educate the members in their Area about their Area process as completed forms are received at the WSO and processed on a daily basis.



## COMMITTEES, TASK AND THOUGHT FORCES

J.P. M./Anne F., Chairpersons

Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services

### Alateen Advisory Committee

In the third year of a three-year trial, Alateen Advisory Committee (AAC) meetings were held in conjunction with Area Assemblies in Washington and Texas East, representing the U.S. South Central and U.S. Northwest Regions. There were no viable bids from Canada East. The two meetings, each with different members from the host Area, followed the same agenda, discussing how Alateen groups and individual members can help Alateen to grow. Safety on the Internet continues to be a topic of interest, as well as the importance of maintaining a connection between Alateen and Al-Anon in the local districts. The Committee reviewed the pamphlet *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (P-21), and made recommendations for revision. Seven Alateens and five Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) participated.

A Thought Force of four Area Alateen Coordinators, one Area Delegate, and one staff member reviewed the Alateen Advisory Committee Guideline and recommended criteria for evaluating

the effectiveness of the AAC. Staff and volunteers began the process of evaluating the effectiveness of the three-year trial, and will present a plan for future Committee meetings and membership early in 2011.

### Group Services Thought Force

The Beginners' Meeting Guideline Thought Force was made up of members from five Areas. They discussed by e-mail all aspects of a Beginners' meeting including format, time, the average number of attendees, newcomer needs, and the current G-2 *Beginners' Meeting Guideline*.

It was noted that the connection of a Beginners' meetings to a regular Al-Anon meeting varied widely—15 minutes before the Al-Anon meeting, 60 minutes before an Al-Anon meeting, in conjunction with an Al-Anon meeting, and not at the same time or day as a regular Al-Anon meeting. The Thought Force also discussed that groups should consider the number of newcomers that will attend before having a separate Beginners' meeting and that consideration should also be given to the number of Beginners' meetings in the local area as well as the day and time.

Ideas from the Thought Force will be incorporated with information from the Group Records Coordinators and past Group Services Committee discussion in the revision of the *Beginners' Meeting Guideline* (G-2).

## MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

### INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Ric B., Chairperson, 2010 and 2013

Suzanne M., Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

Barbara O., Co-Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

#### 2010 A.A. International Convention San Antonio, Texas, July 1-4, 2010

Approximately 53,000 people attended the Convention. Of the 44,000 attendees who preregistered, 3,600 were Al-Anon members and 158 were Alateen members. Al-Anon members who registered for the Convention were sent a Volunteer Form to solicit members to speak, chair Al-Anon workshops, and serve as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service for the Alateen workshops. Al-Anon's Host Committee consisted of approximately 175 volunteers. Al-Anon held workshops (in English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Japanese) during the day on Friday and Saturday, which left attendees' evenings and their Sunday morning open to attend A.A.'s Big Meetings. Alateens had the opportunity to attend two closed Alateen meetings and two open Alateen meetings. Two workshops were held for Alateen Group Sponsors.

Twelve WSO Volunteers and staff carried out the assignments related to Al-Anon's participation. The assignments included monitoring the workshop rooms, signing in speakers, answering questions at the Information Booth, overseeing the Alateen and Alateen Group Sponsors workshops, assisting with foreign language needs, helping out with traffic control related to arriving to and departing from workshops, and being a resource for the Host Committee volunteers.

#### 2013 Al-Anon International Convention Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, July 5-7, 2013

Following the Board's approval of the 2013 International Convention theme, "Celebrating Worldwide Unity—Al-Anon Family Groups," a logo was designed for the Convention. The logo will be used for stationery (July 2012 – July 2013), flyers, registration forms, etc.

### WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE AND AREA DELEGATES

Ninety-three voting members, including 66 Delegates, attended the 50th World Service Conference (WSC) in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 11-15, 2010. Mexico and New Zealand each sent a General Service Office Representative to attend the 2010 Conference.

Mr. John Colon of the Center for the Culturally Competent Education and Training presented a workshop in the General Session on the topic of diversity. The presentation was an introduction to the subject of cultural awareness and provided the Delegates with simple tools to take back to their Areas. The topic of diversity was a common thread throughout the 2010 Conference. The *2010 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46) is available on the Members' Web site.



## CONFERENCE MEMBER DISCUSSION FORUMS

Several Discussion Forum topics were posted to the Conference community on e-Communities. The Discussion Board feature allows Conference members to participate in discussions, talk to each other, and provide mutual support in their roles. The Discussion Forums provide a place where Conference Members can share their experience Area-to-Area and ask for shared experience from other Areas.

## CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Carol V., Chairperson

Bev A./Vicki H., Co-Chairpersons

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) recommended to the Board (and the Board approved) that meetings for the Selected Committees, Task Forces, and Thought Forces be held one day before the 2010 Conference.

The trial restructuring of the Conference Committee to form the CLT ended. The Board of Trustees unanimously voted to end the CLT trial and adopt the CLT as a Conference planning body on a long-term basis.

In initial planning for the 2011 WSC, the CLT unanimously agreed on (and the Board approved) the 2011 Conference theme:

Expanding our community of hope by embracing:

- ▲ Yesterday's foundations
- ▲ Today's successes
- ▲ Tomorrow's possibilities

## TEAM – TOGETHER EMPOWERING AL-ANON MEMBERS

The first TEAM Event was held in Clovis, New Mexico in May, 2010. Subsequent TEAM Events in 2010 partnered Utah and Arizona, Kentucky, Kansas, Minnesota North, Connecticut, and California North with the World Service Office. Each event agenda item was customized to meet the specific needs expressed by the partnering Area(s).

Each TEAM Event was different. One Area provided translation for their event. Some events were one-day events; others were held over three days. One was held before an Area Convention, others held before or after an Area Assembly, and some were stand-alone events. Several events included shared leadership presentations where Area and WSO members worked together to give a presentation or workshop.

Strengths as well as weaknesses were identified in this first year of TEAM Events. One strength was the level of enthusiasm and cooperation between the partners. It was exciting for WSO volun-

teers and staff to be directly involved with Area trusted servants in planning the program for an event. Communication proved to be challenging at times as the Area Host Committees and WSO Task Forces worked together in creating innovative events and forging a new relationship between the links of service.

Six TEAM Events are already scheduled for 2011 and one in 2012. Information about TEAM Events can be found three to six months prior to the event on the calendar section of *The Forum* page on the Members' Web site.

## TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

*Discovering Choices* (SB-30 and FB-30) was published in Spanish and French.

*2010 – 2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* was updated in Spanish and French.

## INTERNATIONAL

### International Coordination Committee

Judy A., Chairperson

Penny R., Co-Chairperson

Marsha W., Associate Director of Member Services—International

The International Al-Anon General Services Meeting took place October 6-10, 2010.

There were 15 service structures which included the World Service Office. Presentations by the Delegates on topics for the general sessions included:

- Preparation for Strategic Planning
- Sharing Structure Successes or Challenges
- Technology
- How can we strengthen our Al-Anon and Alateen groups so that we can meet our one purpose of helping families and friends of alcoholics? (discussed using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process)
- The Five Warranties
- Abundant Resources in all aspects
- Concept Eleven
- How to Deal with Conflict

Workshop topics included:

- Knowledge-Based Decision-Making
- Shared leadership
- Translation
- Finance—Track 1
- Finance—Track 2
- The Concepts

The Delegates also had an opportunity to visit the WSO. The bid from South Africa was accepted to host the 2012 IAGSM.

## BUSINESS SERVICES

We are working with United Parcel Service to add tracking information to on-line shopping cart orders, so that members can track the shipment of their orders.

In October, we changed our telephone service provider from PAETEC to Cox. Cox offered a higher level of service and a lower price. Additional T-1 lines were added to increase Internet speed and service.

We began using Bill Pay from SunTrust Bank for some of our vendor payments. This reduces the cost of preparing and mailing checks as well as postage.

The ECRPM authorized replacing the 15 year old roof on the Headquarters Building during March 2011.

We began a program that will enable us to backup our data to an offsite server. This will enable us to get access to necessary programs and data by the Internet if our network is unavailable due to a disaster.

The Director of Business Services and Executive Director discussed, with the Canadian attorneys, the pending audit of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc.

## FINANCE COMMITTEE

Frank R./Bev A., 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 2011 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January.
- 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.
- Review of Investment Philosophy.
- Review of Finance Committee Goals and Objectives.
- Review of the Investments in the Reserve Fund
- Meeting with the Investment Manager twice a year.

### Other non-routine actions included:

- Identifying the need to have a unified theme and appearance for all the pamphlets that explain monetary giving to Al-Anon.
- Recommendation to hire Compensation Consultant.
- Reduce the selling price of *Courage to Change* CD-ROM (B-16 CD), in order to liquidate stock.
- Shipping and postage costs were reviewed for shipping literature and mailing subscriptions of *The Forum* (to Canada and for overseas). A decision was made to raise the shipping and postage charges. We have replaced Information Exchange with e-Communities for all participating members. Additional groups are being discussed.

# ADDENDUM TO THE 2010 ANNUAL REPORT

## Al-Anon/Alateen Internationally

### AFRICA

**South Africa:** The General Service Office (GSO) presented a bid during the 2010 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) to host the 2012 IAGSM. The bid was accepted. This will be the first time that the meeting will take place in Africa.

### EUROPE

**Austria:** The World Service Office (WSO) Board of Trustees approved Austria's request to become a General Service Office (GSO) on a trial basis.

**Belarus:** During the convention in Poland, a contact advised there are 10 groups in Belarus, five of which are registered with WSO.

**Belgium (Flemish-speaking):** Because of the lack of volunteers and in an attempt to facilitate service work on a national level, the service structure reorganized and no longer has Selected Committees. Thought and Task Forces were formed as a way to encourage more members to become involved.

**Belgium (French-speaking):** A new poster was created to inform the general public of Al-Anon Family Groups' existence in Belgium.

**Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union):** Using the World Service Conference as a model, the service structure continued discussions about the reorganization of their service meeting.

**Denmark:** The service structure began a re-evaluation, with the purpose of meeting the needs of the membership more effectively. Discussions continued concerning whether to re-open their service office. Currently the GSO is a virtual office.

**Finland:** To improve the finances needed for national services, the conference voted to send appeal letters to the membership twice a year. It was also decided that financial reports would be included regularly in publications.

**Germany:** The Board of Trustees passed a motion that allows the elected position of International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Delegate to participate on the Board with voice only.

**Greece:** The Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) submitted a Public Outreach article about Al-Anon Family Groups for a newspaper in Athens.

**Hungary:** The groups have voted to form an AIS in 2011.

**Iceland:** The GSO sent two Delegates to the 2010 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

**Italy:** During the last quarter of 2010, the GSO began plans for a national convention that will take place September 2011. The theme for the convention is: "Sharing, Living, Growing Together." An invitation was extended to the WSO to send a representative, all expenses paid.

**Lithuania:** As a part of a planned visit in August, WSO representatives attended a service meeting in Kaunas. Approximately 25 members were present.

**Norway:** The GSO continues to be open part-time. There are currently 31 active Al-Anon groups.

**Poland:** The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Al-Anon Family Groups was celebrated in Sielpia in September. There were over 1,000 Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A. members in attendance. Poland, Belarus, Germany, Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom were represented. WSO representatives attended and participated in the program.

**Portugal:** The national conference took place in April. After receiving reprint permission from the WSO, the GSO reprinted *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29).

**Serbia:** The only group registered with the WSO is located in Belgrade. The contact for this group advised that the members voted to start an additional meeting.

**Slovakia:** WSO representatives met with two Slovakian contacts at the convention in Poland. The WSO was informed there are approximately 15 groups in Slovakia. The WSO has received a registration form for one of the groups.

**Slovenia:** The first AIS for this country registered with the WSO.

**Sweden:** WSO representatives met with members of the Board of Trustees as well as members involved in service during a visit to Stockholm in August. The purpose of the meetings was to reconnect with



members in a face-to-face setting. The GSO has not been able to send a representative to the IAGSM for quite some time.

**Switzerland (French-speaking):** In September, the 20<sup>th</sup> Al-Anon/Alateen Convention was held in Crêt Bérard. The theme for the Convention was “Growing all Together.”

**Switzerland (German-speaking):** The *Service Manual* was updated and approved by their conference in June 2010.

**Turkey:** The service structure started preliminary plans to host their first Al-Anon Convention in 2011.

**UK & Eire:** The GSO installed a new phone system. After receiving positive support from conference members, the process of finding a new location for the GSO has begun.

**Ukraine:** Three contacts were made at the convention in Poland. There are approximate 30 groups. WSO has received registrations for two groups.

## ASIA

**Afghanistan:** The World Service Office (WSO) registered the first English-speaking meeting here. This is a limited access meeting, located on a United States Air Force base.

**India:** The WSO was advised that the Trial National Service Structure voted that Mumbai will be the location for their General Service Office (GSO). There are currently 28 Delegates and ten Trustees representing the Trial National Service Structure.

**Iran:** A contact from the United States, on behalf of the Al-Anon members in Iran, informed the WSO that a service meeting took place March 4-6. WSO had, with the assistance of the contact, two phone meetings to discuss various service topics with Iranian members.

**Japan:** The GSO continued performing more public outreach projects to raise awareness within the professional community that the GSO is a resource for Al-Anon Family Groups.

**Korea:** The GSO advised that they continue to work on strategies to encourage members to become more involved in service.

## AUSTRALIA/ NEW ZEALAND

**Australia:** As a part of their ongoing public outreach efforts, the General Service Office (GSO) participated in a one-day seminar with professionals and government personnel in Australia.

**New Zealand:** The GSO is planning to translate three pamphlets into Maori, the language of the “First People” of New Zealand. The pamphlets being considered for translation are: *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic*, (P-7), *So You Love an Alcoholic*, (P-14), and *Troubled by Someone’s Drinking?* (S-17).





## NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

**Cuba:** Communication with the members was re-established by the WSO. To help with their Public Outreach efforts, the WSO supplied the service structure with 30 copies of *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* in Spanish (SB-22) and 50 copies of the “Crying House” bookmark in Spanish.

**Dominican Republic:** The World Service Office (WSO) established a new contact for the service structure, which updated information on behalf of the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) located in Santo Domingo. Copies of *Groups at Work* (SP-24) in Spanish were sent with an Al-Anon volunteer.

**El Salvador:** The second Al-Anon/Alateen convention organized by the AIS took place September 25 and 26. The convention was well attended.

**Guatemala:** The service office moved due to financial reasons.

**Honduras:** A long time AIS was closed and a new one registered with the WSO in the city of Juticalpa. There are currently 50 Al-Anon and three Alateen groups.

**Mexico:** The General Service Office (GSO) hosted a Public Outreach symposium for professionals in October. There were 275 people in attendance, including the First Lady of Mexico. The symposium received local and national media coverage.

**Nicaragua:** The contact on behalf of the service structure advised that members discussed the possibility of forming and supporting an AIS.

**Panama:** The contact advised that the AIS is active and continues to serve the members.

## SOUTH AMERICA

**Argentina:** The General Service Office (GSO) hosted a Regional Service Seminar (RSS) in October. The Board of Trustees is considering using the World Service Office (WSO) TEAM Event model to replace this service meeting in the future.

**Bolivia:** A representative contacted the WSO for guidance surrounding their discussions about the role of dual members doing Al-Anon service work.

**Brazil:** The GSO translated and printed the book *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29). They advised this book has proven to be a big success.

**Chile:** The Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) moved. Twenty groups continued to support the AIS.

**Colombia:** The GSO reprinted the WSO Public Outreach magazine *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2011* and had it available for their convention in October.

**Ecuador:** A contact who works closely with the service structure requested guidance from the WSO to assist them in their discussions about adapting minimum requirements for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).

**Paraguay:** Members continued to support the work and public outreach efforts of the GSO. There are currently 19 Al-Anon and two Alateen groups.

**Peru:** The GSO will host the Ibero-American meeting in October 2011 in Lima.

**Uruguay:** Their conference voted to buy property to house their GSO. The GSO is currently in their new location.

**Venezuela:** The GSO has been active reprinting Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. Ten pieces were reprinted.



# 2011 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

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Barbara O., Staff member

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Linda B., ECRPM Chairperson\*\*

### World Service Office Staff

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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 Member Services  
Marsha W., Associate Director of Member Services—  
International  
Patrick Q., Associate Director of Communications—  
Media  
Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—  
Conference  
Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—  
Literature

### International Representatives

Rose A., New Zealand\*\*  
María Evangelina de León G., Mexico\*\*

### Cultural Competency Consultant

Dr. Vivian Jackson\*

## AREA DELEGATES

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Vickie C., Alabama  
Kathleen B., Alaska  
Jane H., Alberta/Northwest Territories  
Cecilia K., Arizona  
Shirley R., Arkansas  
Shirley T., British Columbia/Yukon  
John S., California North  
Sandie E., California South  
Teri M., Colorado  
Rita C., Connecticut  
Connie D., Delaware  
Terry F., Florida North  
Linda S., Florida South  
Vicki L., Georgia  
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Kathy B., Idaho  
Ramona C., Illinois North  
Cathy B., Illinois South  
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Maddie P., Iowa  
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Linda M., Kentucky  
Sylvia G., Louisiana  
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Louise R., Manitoba  
Jeannette M., Maritime Provinces  
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Daphne F., Mississippi  
Geneva D., Missouri  
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Craig M., Nebraska  
Denise S., Nevada  
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Nancy P., New Hampshire  
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Petra L., New York South  
Patsy A., North Carolina/Bermuda  
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Claire D., Ontario South  
Bette R., Oregon  
Christine F., Pennsylvania  
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Anne S., Vermont  
Phyllis M., Virginia  
Magdalena E., Washington  
Marti S., West Virginia  
Cheryl A., Wisconsin  
Carol W., Wyoming

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# NOTES

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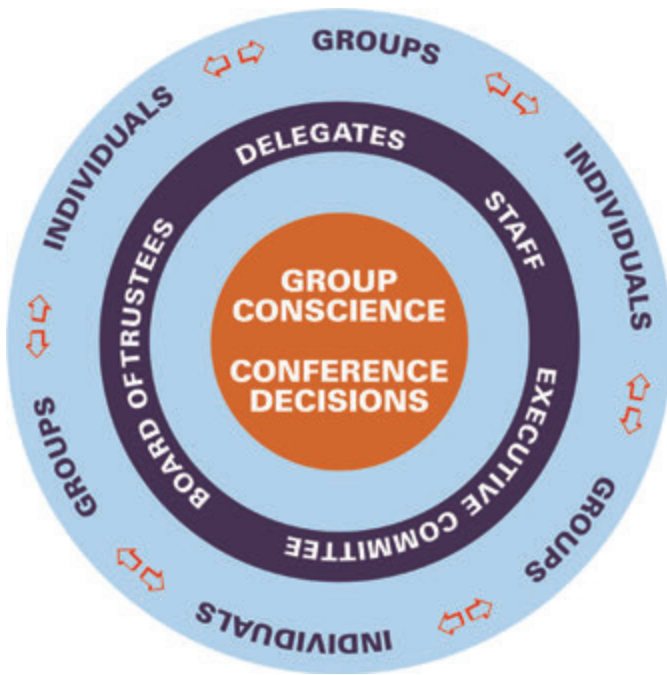


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**NOTES**

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# 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**