

2013 World Service Conference Summary



**Me
yo
moi**



**We
nosotros
nous**

Our Legacies
**The Spiritual
Journey
of Changing
“Me” to
“We”**

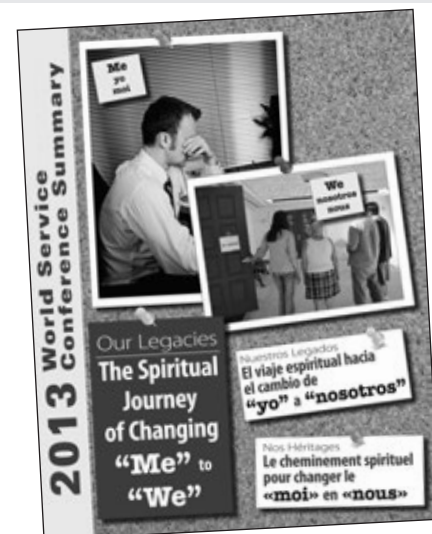
Nuestros Legados
**El viaje espiritual hacia
el cambio de
“yo” a “nosotros”**

Nos Héritages
**Le cheminement spirituel
pour changer le
«moi» en «nous»**

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

2013 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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

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

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Headquarters, Inc. 2013

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

The day before the 2013 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.

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Chairperson of the Board noted the definitions of these four units:

- A Committee is formed by the Board of Trustees and responds to an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups. While it does not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service department it is related to (such as Public Outreach, Literature, etc.), it may make recommendations about any work it is doing or considering. It is often thought to be a permanent part of an organization. It can be an originating body and a Thought Force or Task Force may evolve from a Committee.
- A Work Group is a unit of people established to meet an ongoing need of the originating body. It can be considered a permanent part of the organization which formed it. It can be an originating body and a Thought Force or Task Force may evolve from a Work Group. The objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body to move forward.
- 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 and knowledge from the staff. For example, a problem identified could be a lack of clarity regarding roles. Strategies that are suggested might include writing job descriptions (the idea not the actual job description); identifying 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. The Thought Force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions. If there are facts that are unknown, they can be flagged in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM) questions under “Things we don’t know but wish we did.”
A Thought Force may lay the foundation for the work of a Task Force. Sometimes they offer recommendations resulting from their findings. A Thought Force presents its information to the originating body to move forward. “They are thinkers not doers.”
- A Task Force is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity. They use the resources available such as members of the Task Force and knowledge from the staff. For example, a task could be to choose one of the suggested strategies from the Thought Force. If they chose writing job descriptions, then the Task Force writes the job descriptions. The objective is to complete the job description and present it to the originating body to move forward. A Task Force may fulfill the recommendations made by a Thought Force.
Task Forces are the “doers.”

Again, none of these groups is a decision-making body, but they may make recommendations. Each body’s objective is to complete its activity and present it to the originating body to move forward.



The Chairperson of the Board then described the roles:

- All are participating members of the Committee with staff and Trustees each bringing a different perspective.
- Everyone's role is the same with the exception of the Chairperson and Recorder who have additional responsibilities.
 - ⇒ Chairperson:
 - ✓ Builds the agenda—a plan of action.
 - ✓ Reviews the agenda with the group and asks them to agree to follow it.
 - ✓ Sets ground rules for discussion.
 - ✓ Has the group agree on the outcome.
 - ✓ Sets up meeting times, dates, methods of communication, and the tentative purpose of each meeting.
 - ✓ Helps the group maintain a sense of unity.
 - Gives everyone a voice.
 - Allows a few minutes for venting if needed.
 - ✓ Overall sees that the job is done correctly.
 - ⇒ Recorder (member selected within the group):
 - ✓ Writes down key ideas and other information.
 - ✓ Asks for clarity, when needed.

The Chairperson of the Board continued by noting the responsibilities:

- 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 brainstorming.
- At any time if you don't understand something, ask for clarity.
- Stay on course and do not put your own interpretation on the charge, in other words, "what you think it should be."
- If the conversation gets off track, simply say; "I think we're off track."
- Be prepared to work on your charge from the moment it is assigned.
- 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.

The Chairperson of the Board closed the session by saying, "I want to talk to you for a moment about confidentiality. Any discussions that take place or ideas that are put forward during your meetings, conference calls, e-mails, or any other communications are confidential. Though all of us in Al-Anon have the same spiritual potential, you are the members who have been given the responsibility and authority to participate in and make decisions regarding these groups. The Board of Trustees oversees these Committees, Task Forces, and Thought Forces, so it is the responsibility of the Chairperson of the Board to decide when and how the information from these groups is disseminated.

"It is important to remember that each of you is an equal member of the group; that everyone's ideas and input is valued and needed; that the information and presentations are created for Al-Anon Family Groups, not for individual acclaim; and that the example of a positive attitude while encouraging others will make this an enjoyable learning experience that can be built upon and used in your future. These groups are a perfect opportunity to work our Al-Anon program in service and see our principles in action."

2013 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.

Assignment	Panel 51 (2011-2013)	Panel 52 (2012-2014)	Panel 53 (2013-2015)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Rhonda P., SD, Chair Denise S., NV	Jayne C., CA(S) Kerry L., MB/NWO Nancy M., TX(E) Ruth S., NY(N) Vicky A., MN(S), Chair Elect	Christine S., WV Darcy N., AL/NWF Rosemarie K., MP
Literature Committee	Craig M., NE Geneva D., MO Kathleen B., AK Linda B., SK	Jane H., ON(S) Jennifer D., FL(S) Rex M., OH	Bud S., VT Doris K., MN(N) Marilyn B., CO
Public Outreach Committee	Margaret R., ON(N) Mary Y., UT Norm W., NM/EP Rita C., ME	Debbe P., TX(W) Gene W., IL(N)	Donna J., ND Hedy H., MS Rich M., NJ
Thought Force: Create Strategies on the Importance of a Home Group	Rita C., CT, Chair Pauline M., NF/LAB	David G., RI	Cathy O., GA Linda W., MA Sue C., WA
Thought Force: Technology as more Inclusive rather than Exclusive	Carol W., WY Maddie P., IA	Terry K., FL(N), Chair Jack S., MD/DC	Solange R., QC(E) Vali F., AZ
Task Force: Compilation of Area Guidelines for Trusted Servants Not Fulfilling Responsibilities	Cathy B., IL(S) Nancy P., NH Sara M., PR	Judith S., DE, Chair Hélène D., QC(W) Judy W., KS	Connie W., MT
Task Force: Create Games Using the Information in the <i>Service Manual</i>	Sylvia G., LA, Chair Shirley R., AR	Grace M., TN Jo Etta M., KY Patrick B., CA(N)	Colleen G., OR Lois K., BC/YT
Task Force: Develop a Script or Workshop to Encourage Discussion about the Difference between Principles and Procedures in AI-Anon	Jan R., SC, Chair Petra L., NY(S)	Liz P., MI Tom N., HI	Cathy T., WI/UPMI Lisa B.-C., OK

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to the opening of the World Service Conference (WSC), a session was held for the Delegates to discuss successes and challenges in their Areas. All other Conference members were invited to attend as guests, with no voice. During this session, the Chairperson, Linda B., Panel 51, Saskatchewan, asked each Delegate to share for one minute on their Area's successes and challenges. The Delegates had submitted their written summary to the recorder, Denise S., Panel 51, Nevada, in advance. Copies of each Area's full summary were available for all attendees.

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

Area successes included:

- Increase in the number of Alateen groups, Alateen chat-rooms, and members willing to serve as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).
- Use of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM) in all Area affairs.
- Increase of Public Outreach efforts to carry the Al-Anon message through various means of local media including playing PSAs at movie theaters, placing ads on buses, making contact with professionals, and participating at local health fairs, all of which resulted in an influx of newcomers at meetings.
- Outreach to remote communities where a different language is spoken and introduced Al-Anon to the community by sharing Conference Approved Literature in their language.
- Generate enthusiasm in the Areas by holding TEAM events that resulted in encouraging members to participate in service at various Area levels.
- Purchase or rental of translation equipment, as well as the use of translators to engage members who speak a different language at Area events.
- Obtain 501(c)(3) Corporation (nonprofit) status for the Area with the IRS.
- Submit requests to the 2013 WSC for Area name changes to better serve groups.
- Develop plans to reach out and support districts with no representation.
- Implement Tele-Health meetings in Canada.
- Improve Area Web site and have Area Web site Coordinator position filled.



Area concerns included:

- Increase in districts with no representation.
- Decrease in filling and fulfilling service positions at the Area level.
- Isolation of Spanish-speaking groups within the Area.
- Change within districts creating controversy.
- Increase in difficulty of implementing current state laws within Alateen and maintaining the spiritual nature the Alateen program.
- Decline of Al-Anon and Alateen membership.
- Challenge of understanding and implementing KBDM at the Area level.
- Lack of Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Disregard of Traditions by groups.

Before the session ended, Liz P., Panel 52, Michigan, was elected to serve as Chairperson for Sharing Area Highlights in 2014, and Jayme C., Panel 52, California South, was elected to serve as the Recorder for the 2014 session.

OPENING DINNER

Prior to the official opening of the Conference, the Conference members, an International Representative, and staff necessary to support the Conference attended the Opening Dinner. The Co-Chairperson of the 2013 World Service Conference welcomed all dinner attendees and opened with the theme:

Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing “Me” to “We”

The Co-Chairperson continued: “The three Legacies bind us together as we learn to change our lives from chaos to calmness, from living in our own painful domains to awareness of others and a world of serenity and love. What a great theme to utilize this week as we begin the process of discussing issues of worldwide Al-Anon.

“We start this week with tonight’s dinner as a time to start thinking about what the week ahead will hold. It will be a time for us to use the Steps personally to review our motives; use the Traditions to grow as a group; and use the Concepts of Service to learn how we all can work together for the unity of Al-Anon as a whole.

“On pages 384-385 of *Many Voices, One Journey*, one member shares: ‘...Al-Anon is not the same as it used to be. However, nothing is the same as it used to be. Life is all about change. It is about our willingness to be open to this change, to use these opportunities for growth and to fall back on the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service to keep the program in check.’

“This week we will be celebrating 53 years of the World Service Conference. Tonight, and throughout the week, as we socialize with one another, renew old friendships, and make new ones, let us use our spiritual Legacies as tools to assist us as we move forward discussing new possibilities for the future of Al-Anon Family Groups.”

During dinner, all attendees were asked to select an index card from the center of the table and to write what would they do with their lives if there were no restrictions as far as health, wealth, or time. After dinner, each table was asked to select a volunteer to share with the rest of the dinner attendees what the people at their table had written.

Following dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 53 Delegates and new Conference members. Each first-time Conference attendee received a 2013 WSC pin.

Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services, was the opening dinner speaker. Mary Lou shared her memories of her journey in Al-Anon and Alateen service at all Area levels. (See page 83 for her talk.)

Before leaving the dining room, all attendees held hands and closed with the Al-Anon Declaration.

Connie H.

Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee



What would you do with your life??

CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Bev A.
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Connie H.
Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Suzanne M.
*Associate Director of
Member Services—Conference*

The 2013 Conference theme, “Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing ‘Me’ to ‘We,’” 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 53rd WSC, held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 14-18, 2013.

This year’s Conference was opened by the Conference Chairperson, with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. She continued her greeting: “The first session of the first World Service Conference in 1961 opened with a short but powerful remark, ‘As we adhere to the Steps and Traditions, great harmony and unity will result.’

“Our pioneers established that the consistent application of spiritual principles, no matter what the circumstances, would bring a guarantee of growth and betterment to world services, even if the results were not immediately obvious. This year’s theme builds on that fundamental awareness.

“This week, we will act with confidence and boldness as we know that with the security of the magnificent body of ideas the Legacies encompass—such as accountability, reliance, trust, integrity, fairness, and the ever presence of God—great harmony and unity will result.

“We will discover a deeper understanding of our relationship to each other through collective thinking and shared thoughts, which in turn will provide enrichment and sustainability to world services.

“To do this, I ask you to be present—physically, mentally, and spiritually—and bring your best self every morning. Let us strive to agree on what we wish to accomplish, putting into practice those qualities of democracy we find in Warranty Five, such as keeping an open mind, dignity for others’ ideas, and equality.

“Together we will create change.

“In this world of ‘we,’ there is no room for ‘us and them.’ Such an approach creates division. It insinuates right and wrong and one having proper information and the other not. It leads to opposition, and hope is unable to exist.

“Al-Anon world services deserve the highest attributes of leadership from us in carrying out our responsibility. So let us accept this challenge of growth, pray for guidance from our Higher Power, and ‘Let It Begin with Me.’

“I look forward to sharing your joy, enthusiasm, knowledge, and wisdom as we continue this journey.”

With a rap of the gavel, the Conference Chairperson announced, “I now formally open the 2013 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 a representative from another structure and certain people who could provide critical information to the Conference.

The following persons were seated:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach
*Director of Business Services
Non-Al-Anon Member*

Laura Castro F.
*International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon Member*

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

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

With no voice and no vote:

Pamela Walters
*Marketing Information Analyst
Non-Al-Anon Member*

The motion carried by consensus. (See WSC Motion #1, page 90)



WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., it is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the 53rd World Service Conference. “Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing ‘Me’ to ‘We’” is our theme this year, which gives me pause as I think about how this statement affects the work we do here at the Conference.

The first experience of changing “me” to “we” was in a home group. At those first group conscience meetings, members came together to make the best decision for the group, not for any one person. The next time “me” became “we” was at the district meeting, where it was now the best decision for the district as opposed to the best decision for one or two groups. Then, on to Area Assembly, where decisions have to be made on what is best for the Area, not just one city, urban or rural community. So, now here we are at the World Service Conference. The “we” is Al-Anon worldwide, and our discussions and decisions must be looked at from not only our structure’s perspective, but from how those decisions might affect structures worldwide.

The journey through all of these changes is made possible by our three Legacies—the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts of Service. The spiritual principles embodied in the Steps—including honesty, faith, and humility—help us move from the personal to the group. Then the Traditions, which contain the spiritual ideas of unity, autonomy, and anonymity, among others, assist us in acknowledging that the more members and service arms involved, the better for the fellowship as a whole. Finally, the spiritual values of the Concepts—some of which are responsibility, trust and leadership—enable us to realize that each of us has an obligation to be a part of using and mentoring these spiritual principles in all of our behaviors and activities, as this will make the fellowship stronger and more unified.

As we participate in each discussion and workshop at this 2013 World Service Conference, let us remember the spiritual principles that bring us together to do the work of Al-Anon Family Groups. With everyone’s participation and support along with the guidance of a Higher Power, the program will continue to be here for the friends and families of problem drinkers. Enjoy your week!

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

Karen R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees



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

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Chairperson of the Board began the session by noting that the Conference Leadership Team had revised the Conference Procedures Booklet to clarify the way items were brought to the Conference floor.

Conference members were asked to discuss each goal with the person(s) next to them and write down three examples based on different questions proposed. The Chairperson of the Board randomly picked two Conference members' names out of the hat, and two Trustees went around the room with roving microphones to the selected Conference members, so they could share what they had written.

Goal #1

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

Conference members were asked to write down three examples of behaviors that will show the mutual respect and acceptable conduct.

Members shared:

- We must refrain from distractions and side conversations.
- We should also listen to others attentively, in a cheerful and friendly manner.
- We should be open-minded to a Conference member's sharing or opinion on a particular topic.

Goal #2

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

Then, Conference members were asked to again share with their neighbors and answer the following questions regarding Goal #2:

What is the purpose of the Conference?

What are the relationships within the structure?

Members shared:

- The purpose of the Conference is to be the largest group conscience of Al-Anon.
- Help the communication between the groups and the WSO.
- The Delegates share information with the Areas as well as with the WSO. The Board listens to the Delegates and discusses the Board decisions. The WSO staff implements the Board's and the Conference's decisions.

Goal #3

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

Finally, Conference members were asked to again share with their neighbors and answer the following question regarding Goal #3:

Why is it important that each of us support and communicate the decisions of the Conference?

Members shared:

- We use a thorough process to come to decisions, and we want to promote the common welfare and worldwide unity of Al-Anon.
- Supporting the decisions of the Conference helps to keep Al-Anon unified, alive, and growing as an organization and a fellowship.

Following the Conference Goals, the Chairperson of the Board talked about the path to group conscience through delegated authority.

The first step to a group conscience is the member participating in the group. Group members share their thoughts and opinions in the business meeting, or as some groups call it, a group conscience meeting. The meeting discusses each issue put before it and reaches a group conscience decision. The Group Representative (GR), as the delegated authority, takes that discussion and decision and carries it forward.

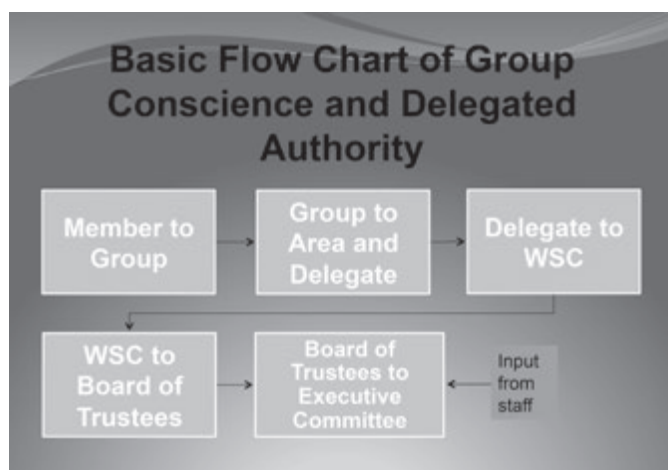
It is carried then from the group to the Area and ultimately to the Delegate. Each GR goes to Area Assembly with the group's information, listens to opinions, and makes decisions for Area Al-Anon as

a whole. The GRs return to their groups and report back the discussions while supporting the Area decision. The Delegate is then the delegated authority who gathers concerns, questions, and experience from all of the GRs in that Area.

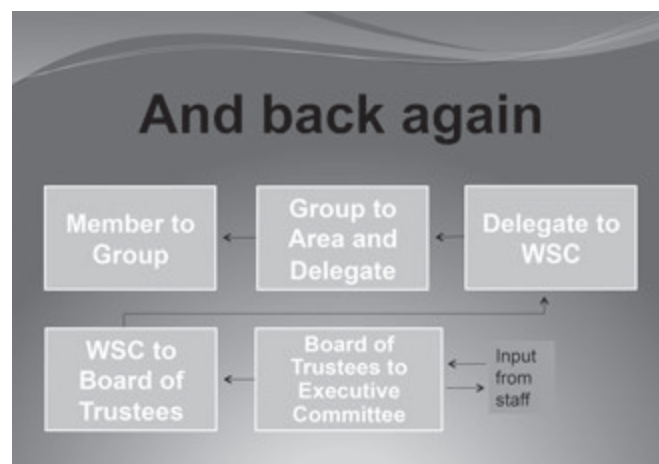
The Delegates come to Conference from the Areas with all of the Areas' concerns, questions, and experience. As this information is shared at the Conference, the Delegates also listen to the ideas and opinions of other Delegates and Conference members and an informed group conscience decision is made that can be supported by all.

Once the Conference has done its work, the Board of Trustees has other responsibilities that must be addressed. Those responsibilities include financial, legal, and worldwide public relations, as well as being the legal guardians of the Traditions.

Delegated authority continues, as it states in Concept Eight, "The Board of Trustees delegates full authority for routine management of Al-Anon Headquarters to its executive committees." The Trustees delegate the administrative functions to the Executive Committee, so that the Board can focus on strategic and forward-thinking ideas. This does not mean that the Executive Committee is working alone. It reports all of its actions to the Board; the Board can ask questions and voice concerns. Then the actions of the Executive Committee are approved by the Board of Trustees.



This flowchart illustrates the steps mentioned above. Note that the Executive Committee often receives input from the World Service Office staff as it works with projects.



This chart shows how both delegated authority and group conscience goes back through the same channels. Communication is what makes the process work.

Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM)

The Chairperson of the Board continued to explain that there are five elements to the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM). Conference members were asked to come up with a phrase that is synonymous with each element.

- Open communication between leadership and membership
 - ✓ Be open to sharing our thoughts.
- Dialogue before deliberation
 - ✓ Talk to each other, reason things out
- Common access to full information for all decision makers
 - ✓ Ensure that the information is available to all parties involved in the decision.
- Existence in a culture of trust
 - ✓ Presume goodwill.
- Confidence in the competency of our partners
 - ✓ Ensure that the information is available to all parties involved in the decision.

Following the Orientation, the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board presented a brief skit about the fellowship and the organization.

AFG, Inc. vs. AFG the Fellowship

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees
Connie H.
Vice Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board 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. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board shared some of the history of organization and the fellowship to provide further distinction between the two.

Al-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 both in the U.S. and Canada.
- 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.

APPROVALS

2012 Auditor's Report

Penny R.
Treasurer, Trustee
David Zach
Director of Business Services
(non-member)

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

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit, 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.

Conference members had the following questions:

- Why was there a loss last year?
The Finance Committee budgeted a loss for the previous year after a review of the expenses versus the likely sales and contributions for the year. In addition, both the Finance Committee and the Board agreed to present the budget with a loss. There was also a substantial decline in literature sales for the months of November and December, so the loss was greater than previously estimated.
- Under which category are contributions from appeals allocated?
When the WSO receives contributions in an appeal envelope, they are allocated under appeal, unless otherwise stated by the person or entity sending the contribution.

A motion to approve the 2012 Audited Financial Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #3, page 90.)

2013 Budget

The Treasurer shared with Conference members the following, “Putting together the Annual Budget is an amazing process that involves many people and many meetings. The process begins with the Board deciding what the strategic goals of the corporation are for the following year. Staff members prepare their departmental budgets which are presented to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee scrutinizes each line item. We first look at expenses, then revenue, and finally the net result.

“As you read in the Chairperson of the Board letter in February, we initially projected a very large deficit for 2013. As we continued to meet and to revise the figures we were able to bring the deficit to less than half of what it had been when we started. We still were not happy with the Budget.

“In 2012, we had a loss of \$305,000. Could we really present a budget for 2013 projecting another loss of \$300,000? We continued to look at ways to reduce costs. We discussed discontinuing sending a complimentary copy of *The Forum* to each group. We decided that it was important for each group to receive *The Forum* because other than the Appeal Letter, *The Forum* is the WSO’s only printed correspondence with the groups. We discussed discontinuing sending a free English *Service Manual* to groups and various service arms. The Finance Committee decided that we did not want to reduce services to the groups and Areas.

“We looked at other ways to reduce the deficit. We considered increasing our annual draw from the Reserve Fund. After consulting with our investment advisor, we determined that increasing our annual draw would not be in Al-Anon’s best long-term interest.

“We made several decisions to reduce our costs, including a delay in printing and mailing the next *Service Manual*, limiting the amount of pay increases for our staff to cost of living increases only, reducing travel costs for Board members and staff, and reducing the number of PSAs from three to two.

“We also took into account where our revenue comes from—contributions and literature sales. Over 60 percent of our groups contributed to the WSO in 2012, which was the highest percentage ever. Contributions increased to \$1,346,000 last year. However, literature sales decreased. Historically, we have relied on a combination of contributions and literature sales to meet our revenue needs. We have not increased literature prices since 2006. The price of pamphlets has not increased since the 1990s. The Finance Committee recommended increasing literature prices.

“We need to become self-supporting through our own voluntary contributions and rely less on literature sales. The last time contributions exceeded literature sales was in 1954. In 2012, contributions were 29 percent of our income. Forty percent of our groups currently do not contribute to the WSO. Yet those 6,251 groups receive the same services as groups that do contribute.

“If each of those groups that did not contribute to WSO in 2012 would contribute \$12.00 in 2013—that’s only \$1.00 per month—we would have \$75,000 more in revenue. That’s close to the amount we are saving by postponing the printing of the next *Service Manual*. If the groups that did contribute to WSO in 2012 increased their contribution by \$12.00 for 2013, we would generate an additional \$113,000 in revenue. With that additional money, we could give merit raises to the staff who have worked so hard in providing services to our members and to our groups. It’s not the amount of the contribution that is most important. What is most important, is that each group feels a connection to the WSO. The groups can express that connection by contributing money to support the work of our World Service Office.”

The 2013 Budget was presented to Conference members by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2013 Budget shows that we expect expenses to be \$3,000 more than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,053,000 and revenues to be \$5,050,000.

Projected Expenses

Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$117,000 from last year’s actual expenses. Labor costs are expected to increase \$124,000 due to additional staff becoming eligible for the retirement plan and the cost of living increase effective June 1, 2013.

Penny R.

Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach

Director of Business Services
(non-member)

SCHEDULE 1

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc.

	2013 Budget	2012 Actual
<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Salaries	2,642,000	2,584,707
Payroll Taxes	200,000	190,340
Employee Benefits	<u>645,000</u>	<u>567,779</u>
Total Labor Costs	3,487,000	3,342,826
Building Occupancy	278,000	266,565
Packing & Shipping (Net)	20,000	2,625
Postage	248,000	215,943
Telephone	58,000	56,095
Stationery & Office Supplies	89,000	75,940
Outreach Activities	4,000	62
Office Services & Expenses	234,000	266,419
Repairs & Maintenance	4,000	10,163
Travel & Meetings	153,000	150,513
Direct Conference Costs (Net) Schedule 2	72,000	103,885
Legal & Audit	40,000	36,107
Printing	155,000	131,367
Canadian Office	2,000	1,392
General Service Meeting		47,749
In-Office Volunteers	3,000	1,955
PSA Campaign	130,000	140,313
Miscellaneous	36,000	33,818
Total Operating Expense	5,013,000	4,883,737
Membership Survey		5,091
Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)	40,000	47,146
Total Expense	\$5,053,000	\$4,935,974
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>		
Literature Sales less cost of printing	3,100,000	2,818,429
Contributions	1,500,000	1,346,282
Forum Subscriptions	250,000	264,664
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	<u>200,000</u>	<u>200,729</u>
Total Estimated Revenue	5,050,000	\$4,630,104

Estimated Income

We are estimating income from literature sales to be about \$282,000 more than last year and *Forum* subscription income to be less. We are budgeting contributions to be \$1.5 million, which is about \$154,000 more than last year's actual contributions. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer to the General Fund up to 4 percent annually of the averaged fair value of the Reserve Fund over the preceding 36 months. We are budgeting investment income to be about the same as last year.

The following were questions and comments from the Conference floor:

- What is the level of risk in the Finance Committee's investment strategy?

The Finance Committee has an Investment Policy which is one of growth and income with a moderate risk tolerance. The Board seeks to balance potential risks with higher potential returns in exchange for lower risk. We believe equities should be a significant portion of the Reserve Fund. The Finance Committee will meet with the advisor at least semi-annually in June and December to determine the appropriate mix of investments. A formal review of the investment manager will occur at least every five years beginning in 2009.

- Can you expand on the packing and shipping?

In 2012, the WSO almost broke even in shipping costs. This year, the Finance Committee discussed increasing shipping costs on literature orders, but the Committee has opted not to do that. In addition, the Finance Committee reviews shipping costs twice a year to determine whether shipping costs are accurate and sufficient as postage costs increase.

- Do you have the number of Areas that pay the Equalized Expense and those that contribute more? Perhaps it would be more feasible for Areas to pay the Full Amount.

Sixteen Areas paid the Equalized Expense of \$1,280; 38 Areas paid the Full Amount of \$1,968; seven Areas paid between the Equalized Expense and the Full Amount; and six Areas paid more than the Full Amount.

One of the issues regarding the Equalized Expense is that the fellowship does not understand the spiritual principle behind it. Lois W. believed that not only should the cost of the World Service Conference be paid by the Areas, but it was to be paid by all of the membership because the Conference benefits all members. The idea was that the Areas would pay the Equalized Expense and the fellowship would pay the remainder through the contributions to the WSO. It is important to remember that smaller Areas are also paying the same amount as the larger Areas with more groups. The intent is not for Areas to feel that they are paying less than their share regarding the Equalized Expense.

- How is the Equalized Expense calculated?

The overall Conference Budget is broken into categories, such as travel to the Conference, hotel rooms, meals, the Conference Notebook, etc. The Delegates' portion of the expenses are calculated and divided by the 67 Areas. The result is the Full Amount. The Equalized Expense is calculated at approximately 66 percent of the Full Amount.

- What has been the revenue for the new e-book?

We have sold about 500 units, but we haven't received any distributions yet.

- Can you explain what steps were taken to reduce employee benefits?

Some of the staff have started using their Medicare benefits since they are eligible. Others have dropped their spouses from the health insurance provided by the WSO, or have been added to their spouses health insurance and dropped from the WSO's insurance.

- Can you provide us with this information you gave at the beginning to convey the deficit to the membership? This way, the Areas can grasp how the Finance Committee had to make cuts.

Yes, it will be in the Conference Summary.

- When the Treasurer and the Director of Business services presented the Budget to the Board in January, I expressed that I would have liked for the Finance Committee to show a bigger deficit than reflected. I believe the fellowship is not being self-supporting as the Budget had to be adjusted by increasing literature prices and not giving the staff raises. I would like the Conference not to look at the budget as "almost balanced," but rather as a budget with a deficit that is more dependent on literature sales than contributions.

- If you take into consideration the changes made to try to balance the budget, it was accomplished at the expense of the WSO's employees by not giving the staff raises and at the expense of newcomers by increasing the cost of literature.
- Can the WSO create a graph that I can use to show my Area where the WSO is lacking funds?

The Finance Committee will take this suggestion into consideration.

- My Area asked the following question, "How do we, as the AWSC, help the membership understand the need to increase contributions?" We responded that groups and members need to make the connection that their contributions support Al-Anon as a whole.
- We need to be bold in our presentations and convey the message of the meaning behind our contributions and the effect that would have on the fellowship as a whole if less services were available from the WSO. We need to think abundantly and focus on giving abundantly to preserve the services given to us.
- Everything is about education, we need to share this information with the fellowship and show how everyone's contribution helps Al-Anon as a whole. We can also ask Areas to contribute the Full Amount of the Conference expense, if feasible.
- If we want to attract more people, we should not cut back on our public service announcements and outreach budget.
- We need to inform the membership how a deficit budget affects not just the membership, but the future of Al-Anon and people finding hope.
- Our Area Treasurer informed the groups that they needed to send an additional \$8 a month to the Area to meet their obligations. As a result of this request, the Area's revenue increased and we are actually ahead. Perhaps the WSO could take a similar approach and explain to the groups how much more they need to contribute to overcome the deficit.
- The spiritual principle of giving is based on gratitude. The Quarterly Appeal is the opportunity for every member to express that gratitude. The message that needs to be conveyed to the groups is that the WSO is more interested in 100 percent participation in giving than in a specific amount. The WSO only needs the amount budgeted; if it obtains more revenue, then the WSO will do more to support the members. It is the spiritual connection that each member has when they contribute whatever they can in that envelope. The Executive Director previously offered to send a thank you letter from the WSO to those groups who had 100 percent participation, but no group contacted the WSO in 2012. The WSO is not talking about a specific amount, as the Conference needs to be careful in conveying the right message and not lose the principle—"We celebrate our gratitude. That is the reason we are giving." The WSO receives letters from the fellowship stating that they are mad or upset at something the WSO did or did not do and they state that they are withholding contributions. This reaction is a reflection of control, which is not a spiritual principle.
- As Delegates, we need to explain what the figures represent. The WSO wants to communicate in a spiritual manner to the fellowship. The WSO does not want to shame or scare members, but rather encourage members to express their gratitude in the same way that others before us gave. If the fellowship would internalize this concept, it could change the way members fund the fellowship.
- It is the membership's responsibility to help the WSO. I appreciate the work the WSO staff and volunteers have put into the budget.
- If groups that did not contribute last year would just contribute \$12, the WSO would have an additional \$113,000 in revenue.

A motion to approve the 2013 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #4, page 90.)

2012 Annual Report

The 2012 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 the following brief opening remarks before opening the floor for additional questions, “The fellowship needs to understand that Concept One is not a standalone Concept and discard the idea that a group can oversee the operations of the WSO. Concept Two says the groups give that authority to the World Service Conference and part of the idea behind Concept Two is that mutual trust is built by accountability.”

Ric B.
Executive Director

The following questions were asked:

- When will *The Forum* be available electronically? Will other pieces of Conference Approved Literature be available in electronic format as well?

Initially, it was believed that the use of third-party vendors would be simpler than the WSO developing its own technology, which would be time-consuming and would require constant updates and additional manpower. During the process, the WSO learned that some of the vendors are not prepared to handle the workload as the WSO had anticipated. Currently, The Forum is on queue with the vendors for electronic media. The Web Consultant is currently working on making The Forum available. In addition, the e-book and any future magazine subscription can be viewed on any electronic device, like a cell phone or computer, by downloading certain programs and applications.

- Why do Areas only pay the Equalized Expense instead of the Full Amount to attend the World Service Conference?

Areas can pay the Equalized Expense, the Full Amount, or somewhere in the middle. The Equalized Expense was established with the belief that the WSO would pay the difference between the Equalized Expense and the Full Amount of the cost of the WSC. The difference would be the fellowship's contribution, as the WSC benefits the fellowship as a whole.

- What is the purpose of the Board Profile?

The purpose of the Board Profile is that it is to be used as a tiebreaker. If members of the Regional Committee on Trustees, the Conference Committee on Trustees, and Nominating Committee have two or more Trustee candidates with equivalent scores, the scoring body can use this sheet to determine who would be a better fit based on the needs of the Board.

- Can you explain the purpose of the Board's Strategic Plan Goal #3?

Everyone within and outside of the Al-Anon fellowship will have the same understanding of family recovery from the disease of alcoholism. The objective is to create a definition of “family recovery” in order to clearly explain how Al-Anon leads to recovery.

- Regarding bulletin boards on the various e-Communities, are we allowed to share our personal e-mail addresses on the bulletin boards and ask that information is sent directly to us?

That is contrary to the purpose of the bulletin boards on e-Communities since the idea was for all members participating to obtain the same information and share their experiences. In addition, if someone is providing incorrect information, the WSO staff is not able to clarify the information. If people want to post a document on the bulletin board, they can send the document to the WSO staff to be posted.

- Could the WSO consider creating an e-Community for Area Treasurers?

Currently, the WSO does not support Area Treasurers, which is the reason they do not have an e-Community. However, the Board can consider this suggestion.

- Regarding the goal noted under the Strategic Plan “to increase the visibility of Al-Anon...,” are there specifics in mind?

The Board asked the staff to come up with specific plans to carry out this goal. The steps are being implemented in 2013, which is the reason they are not noted in the Annual Report.

The Executive Director noted that there have been housekeeping changes to the 2012 *Conference Summary*. The revised By-Laws that included the revision to Article XII for the Executive Committee for Realty Property Management (ECRPM) were not included in the printed version of the 2012 *Summary*. However, the revised By-Laws are included in the online version of the *Summary*. The 2013 *Summary* will include an appendix with the By-Laws as they were amended in order for the fellowship to have copies of the revision.

Two years ago, the Finance Committee approved printing a softcover version of *How Al-Anon Works for Family & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32) with the intent that the membership pay its gratitude forward for the program by giving the softcover version of the book, free of charge, to newcomers. However, it appears that some members of the fellowship have a misconception of the intent of the softcover version of *How Al-Anon Works*, as groups are charging newcomers for the book. The Finance Committee, in an effort to revive the intent of the project, has agreed to extend the trial of the softcover version of the book in English for an additional three years, to be sold only within the World Service Conference Structure. The price of the softcover version will increase from \$5 to \$6 per copy. The WSO plans on doing a comprehensive marketing campaign so members can understand the idea behind the softcover version, which is paying our gratitude for the program forward. In addition, the WSO will survey the fellowship to document the fellowship's response regarding its use of the book and have statistics to determine whether the softcover is being used as intended.

The Finance Committee approved, and the Board agreed, to offer *How Al-Anon Works for Family & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) as an e-book, in English, French, and Spanish. The e-book will be available sometime during this summer, probably prior to the 2013 Al-Anon International Convention. Since 2012, the WSO has gathered substantial data that electronic literature does not impact the sale of hardcopy books. Nonetheless, the WSO will continue to monitor the sales of the electronic and hardcopy version of this book to determine whether there is negative impact on the fellowship. The WSO hopes that on the contrary, the electronic version of *How Al-Anon Works* will bring more awareness of the program to the public and those in need.

The Finance Committee approved, and the Board agreed, to offer a digital audio version of *How Al-Anon Works for Family & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22), in English, for \$24.99. It will also be available soon. The WSO feels that making this important basic book in various formats will help to further carry the message for the fellowship and the newcomer.

- When does the price increase of the softcover *How Al-Anon Works* take effect?

May 1, 2013.

- Is there a major cost-difference between the softcover and the hardcover version of a book?

It is not our goal to go in the direction of softcover books. Hope for Today (B-16) is available in softcover so it could be used in prisons, as the majority of the audience in prisons are adult children of alcoholics. Many older books are available in softcover version, but the WSO is not planning on printing all books in softcover.

- How is the marketing campaign to clarify the purpose of the softcover of *How Al-Anon Works* envisioned?

We will include articles in various issues of The Forum. The Communication Services staff will start working on a more specific plan, which includes placing articles in the Group e-News and the Marketing Information Analyst creating a survey to ask members how they are using the softcover version.

- How will people obtain the audio version of *How Al-Anon Works for Family and Friends of Alcoholics*?

The audio version, which can be downloaded, will be available through amazon.com, iTunes, and audible.com.

- Are there any plans to translate the Concepts posters into Spanish?

Not at this time. The WSO is no longer printing the Legacy posters because they do not sell. However, each Area has the autonomy to create a version of those posters as long as they do not make a profit from the sale of the posters; the WSO is the sole publishing agent of the Legacies but has given the Areas permission to create posters for the groups provided the approved wording of the Legacies is used and a "Permission to reprint" is submitted to the WSO for approval of the wording.

- Is \$11.99 a reasonable price for the e-book?

(Note: In May 2013, the Finance Committee, based on information from the Board of Trustees and the Conference, increased the price to \$14.99 U.S.; \$15.99 Canadian.)

- Is there more background on the WSO's decision not to print all of our books in softcover? Our Area really appreciates the softcover version of our literature to do outreach to prisons.

The WSO printed 10,000 copies of Courage to Change in softcover and it took about five years to sell those copies. The Finance Committee decided, based on the fellowship's response to the softcover version of Courage to Change, that it wasn't a desirable product. Therefore, it was discontinued. There is also an issue in terms of storage at the WSO's warehouse. In addition, the WSO surveyed the fellowship and there was an overwhelming response from the fellowship indicating that they did not want the daily readers in softcover.

- Is the WSO considering making other books available in electronic format?

The WSO is studying the impact of the e-book on literature sales for the WSO and Areas. Until the WSO determines the results of this next e-book and whether it had a positive or negative impact on the fellowship, we will not be considering other e-books. If it does affect LDC sales, then the WSO will reconsider publishing e-books or look at other options.

- Is the price of the softcover *How Al-Anon Works* hurting the sales of our other hardcover books?

The Finance Committee would have to further study this issue.

- When will we know the Full Amount of the Area's cost for the 2014 World Service Conference?

The 2014 Conference Budget will be prepared and submitted to the Finance Committee in June. The Board will approve the Conference Budget in July. The Areas will receive the letter with the Equalized Expense and the Full Amount in August.

- How frequently is the data on the public service announcements' performance made available so we can follow up with the Area Public Outreach Coordinator?

Public Outreach Coordinators can ask the WSO for the monthly report. The WSO staff shares this information with Public Outreach Coordinators two months into the campaign and at the end of the campaign.

- Are there any TEAM events in 2013?

Due to the 2013 Al-Anon International Convention, there will be no TEAM events through the summer and early fall 2013. However, the WSO is already accepting event request forms for 2014 and several events are already scheduled.

- Would the Conference consider the use of translation equipment at the Conference? Puerto Rico doesn't have many members in service at the moment who speak English. We are concerned that we will not have a Panel 54 Delegate to represent us. I think translation equipment would also be beneficial for the French-speaking Delegates.

The Conference would need to decide and vote on whether to have translation equipment. The associated costs would be included as part of the Equalized Expense. During the 2013 International Convention, only the Big Meetings will be translated.

- We've discussed throughout the Conference the importance of our spiritual principles in our deliberation, which has been reassuring. However, there seems a void when we use business terminology, as we continue to use such terms as "Task Force," "Thought Force," and "SWOT." To me, these terms do not express what Al-Anon is about. Although we do conduct business, it is a different type of business, as Al-Anon is a fellowship that is guided by spiritual principles. I suggest we review the language that we use to do Al-Anon business.

- Do General Service Office Structures have Alateen requirements?

It varies from structure to structure. The degree of requirements has a lot to do with the federal law in those countries. The UK & Eire actually has three different sets of requirements. Some structures have had to revise their requirement to be in-line with local laws. However, the minimum safety requirements do need to be in place for structures with Alateen groups.

The Director of Business Services updated the Conference on the following topics.

Interactive Voice Response System: This system will allow the WSO to provide automated meeting information in three languages 24-hours a day, seven days a week, on its toll-free meeting information line. This system will prompt the caller for:

1. A zip code within the U.S., or a city and province within Canada
2. Preference of meetings on a weekday, weekend, or no preference
3. Preference for meetings during the daytime, night time, or no preference

By providing this information, the system will conduct a 25-mile radius search and read back one meeting location, time, and day of the week.

The staff has already selected text for the scripts in all three languages. The staff is waiting for the vendor to complete the recordings and afterwards, the staff will begin setting up test data. Our phone maintenance company will complete application development on the WSO's PBX in the upcoming week. If everything goes as planned, the preliminary testing is scheduled to begin on or about April 22, 2013. The next step will be determined by the scope of any issues encountered along the way. The WSO will notify Conference members in advance when the system is due to go live.

e-Communities: The WSO is in the process of replacing e-Communities with a new program called "Communities." Testing of the program is in the final stages. This new program will enable the staff to do some customizations, which will make the system more user-friendly. In addition to this upgrade, the WSO is moving to a new shopping cart which will make purchasing literature, subscribing to *The Forum*, and making contributions simpler.

The Director of Communication Services updated the Conference on the following topics.

"Readiness for Step Twelve" survey: The Director announced that the WSO is asking members to participate in a survey to assess Al-Anon members' attitudes toward and participation in Al-Anon service. The survey also seeks to identify the motivations and concerns of members in deciding to take part in Al-Anon service.

The "Readiness for Step Twelve" survey is scheduled to be available on-line, in English, Spanish, and French, from May 13 – July 21, 2013.

Delegates were encouraged to invite all Al-Anon members, including both new and longtime members, to take part in the survey. With the information gained from this survey, the WSO hopes to improve upon its communication with the fellowship about the benefits that come with service work in Al-Anon Family Groups.

Public Service Announcement program: The Director of Communication Services assured Conference members that the fellowship's public service announcement program was managed so as to generate maximum impact at the minimum cost; therefore, they should not worry that an \$8,000 cut in the TV PSA production budget would mean that the TV PSA program would be less effective than in past years.

As a point of comparison, he noted that Al-Anon will produce two TV PSAs in three languages for less cost than another Twelve Step program has produced one PSA in only one language.

Further, through the competitive bidding process, the WSO has cut the costs of distributing radio PSAs from more than \$37,000 to \$31,500. But with that lower price, Al-Anon will send its PSAs to 52 percent more radio stations in three languages—an increase from almost 3,000 stations to almost 5,000 stations. In addition, Al-Anon will send messages to 6,000 radio media gate keepers who control access to more than 10,000 radio stations.

In sum, the Director of Communication Services noted that the WSO expects further growth in its future PSA campaign.

The Director of Member Services updated the Conference on the following topic.

New Members' Web site: The Director of Member Services previewed the new Members' Web site, which included viewing the homepage design and identifying the six category tabs—Individuals, Groups, Service Structure, WSO, Public Outreach, and Alateen. The Web site will be user-friendly with content that is specifically intended for each category. For example, the guideline, "Members Interested in Speaking" (G-1) and sponsorship podcasts will be posted as resources under the "Individual" tab.

Conference members were shown the initial home page that highlighted three current news items—the 2013 International Convention, the *Best of Public Outreach*, and *Group e-News*. Additional details

for each news item were available by clicking on the appropriate graphic or text box. The contents on the homepage will change quarterly, highlighting current topics.

In addition to a new look, the contents on the Web site will be reviewed for relevancy on a regular basis. The Project Manager for the Web site will work with the WSO's Administrative Team to develop a process for adding new material as well as removing obsolete items from the new site. All content on the current Members' Web site is being reviewed prior to reposting it on the new Web site.

The introduction of the English version of the new Members' Web site is scheduled for July 1, 2013. The Spanish and French Web sites are expected to be completed by the end of the year.

The Associate Director of Communications—Media reported on the following topics.

“Public Outreach is all about changing ‘me’ into ‘we’”: To paraphrase one of our founders—it takes many people to carry out Al-Anon's Public Outreach, including:

- The Public Outreach Committee.
- All of the departments at the World Service Office.
- All of the members of the World Service Conference.
- All of the Public Outreach Coordinators and local volunteers throughout the U.S. and Canada.”

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2013: The fellowship ordered and received 136,700 copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2013* magazine in time for April 2013 Alcohol Awareness Month. Although the total number of copies of *AFA 2013* ordered was 12 percent less than *AFA 2012*, the recent Area Public Outreach Coordinator conference call reported very energized local campaigns to distribute the magazine. Professionals have been saying “thank-you” for the magazines that are going to their clients, and they are asking if someone will put more copies of *AFA* in their lobbies and waiting rooms.

Public Service Announcements (PSAs): Since the beginning of 2013, Area Public Outreach Coordinators have received individual lists of all the TV stations in their Area that received a “Portraits II” PSA package from the WSO vendor. Coordinators also received airplay reports for the first two months of the year. This information makes it possible for local volunteers to know which stations to thank for playing the PSA. They also know which stations haven't played the PSA yet, so they know which station managers to approach and educate about Al-Anon, possibly leaving a copy of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine, and asking them to play the PSAs. Delegates also received copies of the distribution and airplay reports for their Area.

The Communication Services staff has received a few questions from members who see the PSAs on stations that are outside their immediate Area. Members in New Jersey, for example, want to know if it's okay to thank a Pennsylvania TV station for playing the Al-Anon PSAs. The answer is yes; stations are interested in hearing from anyone in their audience.

Radio PSA distribution and airplay reports for 2013 can be found in the Area Public Outreach Coordinator folder on e-Communities.

The estimated total audience for both TV and radio PSAs is up significantly, compared to this same time last year. In fact, the first quarter audience is already 40 percent of last year's annual total. The WSO would like to extend a sincere thank you to all of the Coordinators and volunteers who have helped make this possible.

Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery (AV-31): The Al-Anon DVD, *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31), is now available in Spanish and French sub-titled versions. The Spanish version is SAV-31 and the French version is FAV-31.

The Best of Public Outreach: *The Best of Public Outreach* how-to-do-it service tool on the Members' Web site is now available in Spanish and is almost ready in French. Links and downloads are being added and improved to keep *The Best of Public Outreach* meaningful and effective for all the Coordinators and members who would like to conduct local Public Outreach projects.

New media outreach messages are beginning to find their way into our Public Outreach efforts:

- There have been six feature releases to media outlets on the Internet since January 1, 2013, reaching an estimated audience of 290,000.
- There have been 68 inspirational postings on www.Facebook.com, producing an average of 25,000 exposures per week.
- The WSO has placed 64 recovery messages on www.Twitter.com for 1,804 followers, resulting in 204 “re-tweets” and favorites.

There are six new podcasts posted on the Public Outreach Web site in two series:

- First Steps to Al-Anon Recovery.
- Using Al-Anon's Twelve Steps in Our Personal Lives.

The Associate Director of Communications—Media finished his staff update by asking Delegates to extend the following WSO message to all of the Public Outreach Coordinators and volunteers in their Area: “Thank you for helping us change ‘me’ into ‘we!’”

The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals updated Conference members on the following topics.

“Outreach to Treatment Facilities Project Presenter and User Guide”: The Associate Director started her staff update by sharing that a first draft of the “Outreach to Treatment Facilities Project Presenter and User Guide” was being developed. It will accompany the four PowerPoint presentation modules for planning and organizing Al-Anon activities at treatment facilities, which were approved by the Executive Committee last fall. The guide consists of “how to” information to assist members with:

- Planning and organizing a local Treatment Facilities Outreach Workshop Committee.
- Forming a Treatment Facilities Committee.
- Developing strategies and implementing outreach activities.

The guide is being readied for submission to the Executive Committee for approval.

A personal sharing, “Why reach out to treatment facilities,” introduces the project to the fellowship and trusted servants in the June *Forum* issue. The availability of these materials will coincide with the U.S. Affordable Care Act, which mandates health insurance coverage for organizations with more than 50 employees to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment in 2014.

Treatment Facilities Outreach Project: Development of a schedule for implementation of the Treatment Facilities Outreach Project over a two to three year period within the fellowship is also being finalized for Executive Committee approval. Electronic activities are also being added to the marketing plan.

U.S. Navy Fleet Alcohol & Drug Control Officer/Fleet Suicide Prevention Program: The Associate Director communicated with a U.S. Navy Fleet Alcohol & Drug Control Officer/Fleet Suicide Prevention Program Manager for the U.S. Fleet Forces. The WSO and the Public Outreach Web site addresses are cited as a resource in a memo encouraging all U.S. Navy fleets and commands to conduct substance abuse prevention activities during April 2013 Alcohol Awareness Month. A noticeable increase in the number of requests for information from several Navy facilities along with inquiries from Veterans Administration hospitals are being received and referred to Area Public Outreach Coordinators.

The Associate Director of Communications—Literature updated the Conference members on the following topics:

Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies (P-92) is a 176-page, spiral-bound workbook focuses on applying each of Al-Anon's Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service to our personal lives. It includes insightful text, personal examples, and, most of all, thought-provoking questions with room to write. It is at the printer now and on schedule for simultaneous release in English, French, and Spanish at the International Convention in Vancouver in July. The price will be \$15 U.S. (and \$15 CAD at the Convention).

2014 Calendar Quotations: For many years, some Areas, Al-Anon Information Services, and districts have developed fundraising calendars to help support their services. Usually these calendars included quotations for each month from Conference Approved Literature (CAL), which required written reprint permission. Last year, rather than processing numerous requests, the WSO provided 20 CAL quotations that could be used for 2013 calendars without seeking written permission. The quotations were provided in English, French, and Spanish. As a result, the WSO did not receive any reprint requests for calendars, saving our fellowship and the WSO staff valuable time.

The WSO plans to continue the project this year with 20 new quotations for use in 2014 calendars. Because Area Chairpersons are usually the contact for Area Coordinators, Information Services, and District Representatives, the quotations will be posted on the Area Chairperson e-Community, to which Conference members also have access. If service arms submit reprint permission requests for use in calendars, they will be asked to select from the 20 quotations instead.

INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title): At this point, the WSO has received more than 770 sharings. Of those, 76 were from men. For this piece to express the diversity of the fellowship and its experiences, the WSO continues to request sharings.

The Associate Director of Member Services updated the Conference on the following topic.

WSO Online Group Records Application: The Associate Director of Member Services noted how Area Group Records Coordinators have been using WSO Online Group Records for three years, and this collaboration has been very successful.

The WSO Online Group Records extension to Alateen is the latest service tool available to designated trusted servants to view Alateen records directly from the WSO database. The site is password-protected; the login and password are the same ones used to access e-Communities. Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) can now see their Alateen group and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) records on-line and run Alateen group and AMIAS reports “on demand.”

The current version is in a “read only” format. Area Alateen Coordinators and Area Delegates can also view the AMIAS and Alateen Group Records, and DRs can view the records for their own district. Area Group Records Coordinators can view the Alateen group information.

The WSO will be launching the “editable” version later this year, so AAPPs will be able to edit Alateen records online. To date, 58 Areas (86 percent) are using the application, and the feedback is very positive.

The Online AMIAS Recertification is the latest upgrade that allows AAPPs to complete their Annual AMIAS Recertification electronically. This will save time and significantly decrease the amount of paperwork required by the WSO. As always, the deadline to complete the AMIAS Recertification is July 1, 2013. The WSO asks that recertifications be submitted by June 15th to give the WSO staff adequate time to verify it is complete by the July 1st deadline.

The Alateen Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-3) and instructions have been revised for compatibility with the WSO Online Group Records application. The new form is available in PDF writable format, so it can be completed, saved, and e-mailed. The GR-3 form and instructions are posted on the AAPP e-Community, and a link to the form is also available on the WSO Online Group Records.

The Associate Director of Member Services reminded Delegates that the WSO does not post Alateen forms on its Web sites or distribute them to members. To support the Area process, all Alateen forms are distributed through the Area, with the Area instructions for return through the Area process. The WSO asked the AAPPs to encourage members in their Areas to use the revised GR-3 Form.

The Associate Director of Member Services noted that the AAPP job has been very “paperwork heavy.” With the addition of Alateen to the Online Group Records, the WSO staff is taking steps to streamline the paperwork without sacrificing the commitment to Alateen safety. The WSO staff hopes that Delegates will encourage their AAPP to utilize this tool. If they are not comfortable with computers, they can get an “e-buddy” to help them.

The Associate Director of Member Services—International updated Conference members on the following topics.

Translations of Conference Approved Literature (S-13) Catalog: The Associate Director of Member Services—International reported that the *Translations of Conference Approved Literature* (S-13) will be available in May.

The new catalog will include the three pamphlets recommended by the International Coordination Committee (ICC) to structures that are translating and printing for the first time. They are: *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7); *So You Love an Alcoholic* (P-14); and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32). In addition, it will also include the book *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6), if it is available in the specific language.

To insure there is a variety of literature available, there are other pieces featured in the catalog for countries that have not yet had the opportunity to translate the literature previously mentioned. The WSO’s purpose for carrying a limited supply is to insure that it has items on hand when someone places an order.

Conflict Resolution using our Twelve Traditions (S-72): The Associate Director of Member Services—International announced that a new service tool is available entitled *Conflict Resolution using*

our *Twelve Traditions* (S-72). This new service tool expands on the *Conflict Resolution Card* (S-71). The new service tool is user-friendly and consists of a series of cards that give helpful assistance for a group, district, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS), Area Assembly, or other service committee that is experiencing conflict. These cards will be very helpful to those seeking a guide to review the Traditions and how they apply in resolving conflict.

The cards may also be distributed to be read as a focus for a discussion. Depending on the time available, several or all of the cards may be used; some or all of the suggested questions may be used. The goal is to help the group resolve its disputes, and have more productive discussions by bringing the focus back to our basic Al-Anon/Alateen principles as found in the Twelve Traditions.

The Associate Director of Member Services—Spanish updated Conference members on the following topic.

New Blog on group processes to welcome newcomers and others new to the meeting: The Associate Director of Member Services—Spanish reported that at the October 2012 Board of Trustees Meeting, the Board of Trustees created a Strategic Plan Goal: To empower the Al-Anon fellowship to be vibrant, inclusive, and flexible. The Member Services Section's goal for the Strategic Plan is: To support Al-Anon groups in welcoming and retaining new members.

The first step to achieve this goal is to collect information from groups on how they are welcoming new members. The Member Services Section has launched a new blog on the Members' Web site where members can share this information. The blog invites members to share about their group processes to welcome newcomers and others new to the meeting.

The blog will be announced in *Group e-News*, *The Forum*, and *Area Highlights*. The WSO will also post reminders to trusted servants on e-Communities.

A computer with Internet access will be available in the Hospitality Area at the 2013 International Convention in Vancouver for members to comment on the blog.

The blog will be open for comments through the end of July 2013. Afterwards, the information will be compiled and evaluated. The Group Services Department will update the packet sent to new groups and prepare a series of service articles for *Inside Al-Anon*, *Group e-News*, and *Area Highlights* to convey tips and information collected from the blog.

The Associate Director of Member Services—Spanish finished her staff update by asking Delegates to inform their groups about the blog and encourage them to share with the WSO.

The Associate Director of Member Services—Conference updated Conference members on the following topic.

E-mail addresses: The Associate Director of Member Services—Conference reported that the WSO's database allows for one e-mail address per record. Delegates were asked to encourage members who have more than one e-mail address to use the e-mail address that is listed in the WSO database when corresponding with staff. Doing so will help the WSO staff respond to e-mail correspondence in a timely manner.

She also reported that members who want to change their e-mail address with the WSO may do so in e-Communities. Delegates who change their e-mail address in this manner were asked to contact the Associate Director so that she can update the Roster on e-Communities.

The Associate Director noted that the number of valid Current Mailing Address (CMA) e-mail addresses on record at the WSO are:

- 7,791 English-speaking groups out of 14,667 groups (53 percent).
- 266 Spanish-speaking groups out of 745 groups (36 percent).
- 104 French-speaking groups out of 253 groups (41 percent).

The Associate Director of Member Services—Conference asked for the Delegates' help to encourage groups to provide an e-mail address with their CMA mailing address so that all groups receive an electronic copy of *Group e-News*.

A motion to approve the 2012 Annual Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #5, page 90. The complete report can be found on pages 96-112.)

COLOMBIA AND MEXICO TRIPS

Colombia Trip

Ric B.

Executive Director

The Colombian General Service Office (GSO) invited the Executive Director to attend its National Convention. This was the first time the GSO had invited a representative from the WSO at the GSO's expense since the 1980s. During the Executive Director's visit, the GSO provided a translator so he could better communicate with the members, as the Executive Director had been asked to speak on a variety of topics.

Colombia has not attended the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in a number of years. The Executive Director explained how the GSO's lack of participation at the IAGSM is depriving the GSO of experiencing Al-Anon worldwide.

The Executive Director met with some of the Colombian Area Delegates in Bogota. Afterwards, he flew to Medellin to meet with the District Information Service, as well as with the Board of Trustees of the Colombian GSO. When the Executive Director met with the Officers of the District Information Service, which is similar to an Al-Anon Information Service in the World Service Conference Structure, he answered their questions, heard their concerns, and provided guidance. Some of their questions included, "How do we help groups act appropriately?" "What should we do when groups do not make contributions?" They also asked about service sponsorship. The Executive Director also shared that each structure has the power and strength to make decisions and can use the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* as a tool for guidance.

When the Executive Director met with members of the Area Committee, they also had questions and concerns, which he addressed. Some of their questions and concerns included, "How do we get more groups involved?" "How do we encourage groups to make contributions?" and "How do we address conflict and do conflict resolution?" The Executive Director's role was to coach the members in applying the principles of the program to address these issues, as well as remind them that there is no authority and members are obedient to the unenforceable. The authority comes from the groups; structures must be careful that they do not portray the appearance of a governing institution.

The Board of the GSO also had a similar set of questions, as well as questions regarding how the WSO's Board operates and how the Regional Trustee selection process works. Some of their Board's Regional Trustees have been operating under the "Super Delegate/Trustee" model (being the representative of the Area as opposed to making decision for Colombia as a whole). That model caused problems.

During the National Convention, a Public Information meeting was held where members of the professional community spoke of the benefits of Al-Anon. The Executive Director found the attendance of the professionals useful for the World Service Conference Structure to follow, as Lois W. had invited professionals to the WSC in the early years to help the membership understand how to inform professionals.

The Executive Director explained to the National Convention attendees the difference between how the WSO and a GSO operate. He also clarified the WSO's decision that there will only be one Spanish version of Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and the WSO would be sole translating structure. All Spanish-speaking structures have the same CAL that the WSO has available in Spanish. It was also clarified that not all CAL is translated, as some of the literature in English does not sell.

The Executive Director made two presentations. One was on service and recovery, where he shared his personal recovery journey, as well as the relationship between recovery and service. The other presentation was on gratitude. During that presentation, the Executive Director talked about abundance and the idea that the fellowship needs to focus on what it has, rather than what it doesn't. He noted that, "It is in giving that we receive."

Despite the language difference, the Executive Director was able to make a spiritual connection with the members who attended the National Convention in Colombia. He also was able to send the message, "We are never alone. It does not matter what language we speak or country we are in, Al-Anon works for all of us, if we work it."



Mexico Trip

Roger C.
Chairperson,
International Coordination
Committee, Trustee

Ric B.
Executive Director



The Mexican General Service Office invited the WSO's Executive Director and a member of the Board of Trustees to attend Mexico's 40th National Service Conference. The Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee (ICC) was the Trustee selected to attend. He presented the Conference with a report and a PowerPoint presentation regarding his and the Executive Director's attendance at Mexico's 40th National Service Conference.

The Conference took place in Mexico City, March 17-22, 2013. Since the WSO representatives arrived prior to the Conference, they had time to meet with the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees of the Mexican GSO before the Conference.

The ICC Chairperson presented some background information on the Mexican GSO. The first group opened in 1965 in Mexico City. There are now 3,662 groups, including 460 Alateen groups. These numbers continue to grow. Mexico is the second largest Al-Anon structure in the world and has the largest number of Spanish-speaking groups. The World Service Conference (WSC) Structure has the second largest number of Spanish-speaking groups. Mexico's recent Regional Service Seminar had 4,000 attendees and the last year's National Convention had over 5,000 attendees. Mexico's structure is similar to the WSC's. Mexico has five Regions and 36 Areas. Mexico's Conference had about 70 attendees. Mexico prints its own literature, but the translation of recovery material is done at the WSO to serve Spanish groups worldwide. In Mexico, however, the legal entity is their Conference. When the legal part of the Mexican Conference was completed, the record was read aloud and all voting members had to sign it.

The WSO representatives had a translator who helped them to better communicate with members in that structure. During the Conference, the WSO representatives gave an update to the Mexican GSO regarding the upcoming Legacies Workbook in all three languages, the International Convention, the WSC, the IAGSM, and the European Zonal meeting. The WSO representatives also spoke to the Mexican Conference regarding how service has been part of their recovery. They also gave their service talks in Spanish, as a way to connect with the Spanish-speaking members!

The WSO representatives were impressed with the structure's enthusiasm, especially that of the Alateen Committee. Another highlight was a plan called "Al-Anon Spoken Here" with the accompanying booklet, "Seven Basic Points," that were designed to strengthen groups and districts. The WSO brought back this material and will evaluate how it might be used to benefit the WSC Structure.

INTERNATIONAL AL-ANON GENERAL SERVICES MEETING

Roger C.
Chairperson,
International Coordination
Committee, Trustee

Marsha W.
Associate Director
of Member Services
—International

The International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) took place in Cape Town, South Africa, October 3-6, 2012. The theme for the 16th service meeting was "No Structure is ever Alone." This was the first time the IAGSM was held on the continent of Africa and only the second time it had been held in the Southern Hemisphere. Three of the members of the International Coordination Committee (ICC) and one of the two World Service Office Board of Trustees members representing the U.S. and Canada shared highlights with Conference members.

The IAGSM is a service meeting for structures outside of the World Service Conference Service Structure that have a General Service Office or a national service structure that has registered with the World Service Office. The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through its Delegates.

The IAGSM is an English-speaking meeting. The ICC has the responsibility of coordinating the meeting agenda. The theme, topic names, and workshop content are selected with input from the ICC, General Service Offices, and IAGSM Delegates. Once the topics are assigned, the presenters are asked to submit their presentations in advance, so that the Delegates have the opportunity to translate and discuss the topics with their service structures before attending the meeting.

Through planning discussions for the IAGSM, the ICC noted that although the number of eligible GSOs that could attend the IAGSM had increased from 16 to 36, actual attendance at the meeting had decreased. It was decided that a 12-question inventory to discover why this was happening would be a start in initiating any changes necessary to ensure the IAGSM continues to meet the GSOs' needs. The inventory was sent to all GSOs prior to the IAGSM. The inventory took place in two of the nine sessions during the meeting.

The inventory questions included:

- What was the GSO's prior participation in IAGSMs?
- What was the GSO's understanding of the purpose of the IAGSM?
- Did the GSO benefit from attending?
- Did the IAGSM meet the needs of the GSO?
- What should change?
- How did the GSO's Delegate(s) report back and to whom?
- Was the *IAGSM Summary* helpful?

The initial responses provided in advance were very positive. However, as a way to get as broad an input as possible from attendance at the 2012 IAGSM, the WSO's Board of Trustees agreed to provide a grant towards the Equalized Expense costs for GSOs that had not recently (or ever) attended the meeting. Four structures took advantage of this grant.

The keynote speaker's talk was very interesting and reflective of the theme "No Structure is ever Alone." The speaker was able to relate her life experience of growing up in a non-alcoholic, loving family that provided support to her. However, she married an alcoholic. Soon embarrassment and shame prevented her from reaching out to her family for help. Luckily, she found Al-Anon and the love and support that she needed within her group. She then related that when her group needed support, the group found it through the district, Area, and the General Service Office.

In one of the discussions, an ICC member related that she became aware of differences in things we take for granted—such as when a Delegate shared that she could not count on the postal system to fill literature orders from her country. As a result, the GSO had to ship literature by personal courier to make sure the recipient received the shipment.

The evaluations received from the Delegates who attended the IAGSM were positive. The inventory discussions are continuing on e-Communities. Unfortunately, the ICC has heard little from the structures that did not attend, but the ICC will continue to reach out to them.

For detailed highlights of the meeting, Conference members were encouraged to read the *2012 IAGSM Summary* that is posted on the Members' Web site.

The 17th IAGSM will take place in Virginia Beach, Virginia, in October 2014.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATE

2013 Al-Anon International Convention

Al-Anon's Fifth International Convention will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, July 5-7, 2013. Plans are being finalized for this festive event in which 66 percent of the more than 3,100 registered attendees noted that this will be their first Al-Anon International Convention.

Badges will be mailed to registered attendees in May. In the mailing, those attendees will also receive information regarding the Language of Love Parade that will take place on Friday, July 5th before the Big Meeting.

The World Service Office will hold a special, separate Day of Connecting on Thursday, July 4th, before the Convention begins on Friday. To date, 1,400 attendees have registered for this event. It will be a wonderful way to kick off the weekend!

More than 1,400 attendees have purchased tickets to attend the Pioneer Luncheon on Saturday, July 6th. The luncheon is a celebration of our history.

Currently, 100 Spanish-speaking and 30 French-speakers members have registered for the International. In addition to 30 Alateen and more than 350 A.A. members, 50 guests have also registered. More than 20 countries will be represented.

Following the International Convention update, a PowerPoint Presentation was shown, which will be displayed at the International Convention. The presentation is about the Seventh Tradition and how individual Al-Anon members can contribute.

In addition, the Conference was presented with a new Individual Contribution envelope and a donation box that will also be revealed at the International. The WSO would like to convey the message to the International Convention attendees that "with sufficient membership contributions, Al-Anon will always be there for families and friends of alcoholics."

Ric B.

2013 Chairperson

Suzanne M.

2013 Coordinator

Barbara O.

2013 Co-Coordinator

Teresa A.

2013 Co-Coordinator (in training)



LITERATURE COMMITTEE REPORT

Tina B.
Trustee, Chairperson

Tom C.
Associate Director of
Communications—Literature

The Chairperson of the Literature Committee updated the Conference on the literature piece on abuse. She noted, “Last year, the Literature Committee recommended a piece to the 2012 World Service Conference focused specifically on abuse in alcoholic relationships, including verbal abuse. As discussion at the 2012 Conference continued, there seemed to be little unanimity. Therefore, the Committee Chairperson announced that the Committee would continue to discuss the topic using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM) questions by conference calls and discussion forums before possibly bringing forth a presentation at the 2013 Conference.

The Committee is still not in consensus on whether or not to bring this topic back to the Conference, but it has agreed to continue the discussion during the next conference call.

The Literature Committee did have a consensus to present a recommendation for a pamphlet to address parents and grandparents whose children (teenagers and young adults) are problem drinkers.

The Chairperson framed the discussion, “In February 2011, the Executive Committee requested that the Literature Committee review the existing pamphlets for parents of alcoholics and to consider the creation of a new pamphlet that would address parents whose children (teenagers and young adults) are problem drinkers.

“At its March 2011 conference call, the Literature Committee discussed the Executive Committee’s requests, and as a result recommended a title change of *To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic* (P-16) to the Policy Committee and a major revision of *How Can I Help My Children?* (P-9). After discussing the Executive Committee’s recommendation to develop a new pamphlet for parents, the Committee agreed to table the discussion until *How Can I Help My Children?* was revised and the Timely Reprint for parents of alcoholics (that was already in development) was completed and released.

“In March 2013, the Literature Committee returned to the Executive Committee’s request, and discussed it in light of the fellowship’s reaction (over the previous year) to the title change of the P-16 pamphlet, the revision of the P-9 pamphlet, and the introduction of the *Parents of Alcoholics* (R-18) Timely Reprint. As a result of this discussion, the Committee agreed to bring a recommendation for a new pamphlet to the 2013 Conference to address parents and grandparents whose children (teenagers and young adults) are problem drinkers.

“The Committee suggests modeling the pamphlet after *Al-Anon Sharings from Adult Children* (P-47), which presents an introduction, personal stories from members, and a section of text on each of the Twelve Steps as related to that particular relationship. This Step study, as well as more diverse, contemporary sharings, would differentiate the new pamphlet from the existing pamphlet, *To Parents of Alcoholics* (P-16).

The floor was opened for discussion and the following comments were made:

- Will this be expanded beyond a pamphlet?

The Committee discussed whether it wanted the piece to be more than a pamphlet. The Committee is open to the desire of the Conference; however, the proposal is for a pamphlet equivalent to the Adult Children of Alcoholics pamphlet. The Committee also felt that the pamphlet would address the current needs, as families are different today. There are all kinds of different parents. The first pamphlet for parents was created in 1959 by a member in New Zealand. It was later replaced with To Parents of Alcoholics (P-16). The Literature Committee’s idea was to present a pamphlet as previously the WSC has not supported the idea of a book.

- I asked my Area what they thought of the idea of the pamphlet and the feedback I got back was, “It’s about time!” There are many newcomers coming to our meetings who are parents of teenagers, young adults, and even older children who are alcoholics. I think having a pamphlet for these newcomers would be great; especially if it included points on:
 - ✓ Letting go, while still being a parent.
 - ✓ Mourning the losses of dreams.
 - ✓ Resenting/blaming one’s spouse.
 - ✓ Being abused by one’s child.
 - ✓ Sharings related to: Where did I go wrong? How did our child become an alcoholic? Did we miss the signs? How do we prevent the effects on our other children?
 - ✓ Being unable to function.
 - ✓ Accepting the fact that alcoholism is a disease.

- Your perspective completely changes when you become the grandparent of an alcoholic, even if you have a child who is an alcoholic. I would consider submitting a sharing for this pamphlet. I know how difficult it is to be a grandparent of an alcoholic. I've always felt our literature has been missing something for the grandparents.
- If we no longer use group focus for our groups, how do we know that there are 14 registered parents' groups?

That became a challenge in obtaining this information. The WSO's Group Records Coordinator was able to obtain this figure since some of the group names contain the word parent in them. However, it is entirely possible that there are more groups whose members are mostly parents of alcoholics.

- Perhaps the pamphlet could include where to find sharings from parents and grandparents in our other literature.
- My meeting has changed to accommodate more parents and grandparents. I believe this is the fastest growing group of people in our fellowship. Maybe we can develop additional literature down the road, but I do agree that a pamphlet will have the fastest turn around.
- My Sponsor showed me how to apply the Steps directly to the problem with my child. I favor focusing on the Steps.
- We are all aware that social dynamics are changing. It is difficult to detach from a child. As a parent, it is extremely painful. Clearly there is a need for our fellowship.
- Many members in my Area are delighted with the idea of this pamphlet. The members also expressed that they feel the WSO is listening to the fellowship and its needs.
- I didn't believe that we needed another pamphlet. However, after hearing everyone share, I believe we truly need it. Would there be information in the pamphlet that addresses a child in recovery?

The pamphlet will be based on the sharings we receive from our fellowship. The Committee is aware that having a child in recovery presents its own dilemmas.

- There is a rather large meeting of parents and grandparents in my Area. Some of our meetings have over 150 members. I have seen parents going to our Area's meetings focused on parents.
- As time passes, we are seeing not only diverse populations come into Al-Anon, but we are also experiencing a change in the type of family member who walks through our doors. I like the idea of the pamphlet because it will help parents and grandparents not feel isolated.
- I will be happy to send a sharing for this pamphlet. I originally became a member because I was the spouse of an alcoholic, but now I am the parent of an alcoholic. My perspective and feelings are different than when I first joined.
- Though I cannot relate to the parents and grandparents, I would like to be able to give people I know within the fellowship this pamphlet, as I know they would appreciate it.
- I've always believed there wasn't a need for specialized literature, as I felt all of our literature could work for anyone. However, the beauty of the program has allowed me to be open-minded. After hearing all of you share, I support this project.
- In several parts of our literature, there are sharings from parents and grandparents. The WSO tries to address the needs of the fellowship. I believe this pamphlet will address this current need. We also ask you to continue to encourage the members to submit sharings to *The Forum*. The WSO tries to publish at least one sharing from parents in each edition.
- Some parents have difficulty distinguishing between alcoholism and teenage behavior. I like the idea of the pamphlet because although I am not a parent and cannot share my experience, I can share information. I think that is very helpful.
- I think this pamphlet will have a profound effect in my Area. Unfortunately, my Area has one of the highest numbers in suicide in young adults, abuse, and children removed from homes, all of which are issues linked to alcoholism. So, I believe that if I have one more tool to share with various communities, the benefits will be beyond what we imagine.
- Some members who previously attended Al-Anon because of a spouse or ex-spouse have returned to Al-Anon because they are facing a new set of problems dealing with their child's alcoholism. The age of the child does not matter.

Following the discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to give conceptual approval to develop a new pamphlet to address parents and grandparents whose children (teenagers and young adults) are problem drinkers. (See Motion #6, page 90)

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

2014 RCT Out-of-Region Delegate Selection

Marilyn M.
Trustee

The Trustee explained the Regional Trustee Selection Process and deadlines. Each Regional Committee on Trustees consists of the current Delegate 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
US Northeast	Grace M., Panel 52, Tennessee Cathy O., Panel 53, Georgia Doris K., Panel 53, Minnesota North	Roberta H., Panel 52, Indiana Vicky A., Panel 52, Minnesota South
US Northwest	Beverly W., Panel 53, Virginia Terry K., Panel 52, Florida North Hélène D., Panel 52, Québec West	Jane H., Panel 52, Ontario South Maryon K., Panel 53, Alberta/Northwest Territories
US South Central	Solange R., Panel 53, Québec East Jennifer D., Panel 52, Florida South Rosemarie K., Panel 53, Maritime Provinces	Sara M., Panel 51, Puerto Rico Maddie P., Panel 51, Iowa
US Southwest	Kerry L., Panel 52, Manitoba/Northwest Ontario Rex M., Panel 52, Ohio Jo Etta M., Panel 52, Kentucky	Cathy T., Panel 53, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan Gene W., Panel 52, Illinois North

RT Training/ RT Caucus

Following the selection of the 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
US Northeast	David G., Panel 52, Rhode Island	Jack S., Panel 52, Maryland/DC
US Northwest	Connie W., Panel 53, Montana	Rhonda P., Panel 51, South Dakota
US South Central	Debbie P., Panel 52, Texas West	Lisa B.-C., Panel 53, Oklahoma
US Southwest	Vali F., Panel 53, Arizona	Tom N., Panel 52, Hawaii

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

The CCT Chair opened her report by saying, “I am truly honored to have had the privilege to serve on the Conference Committee of Trustees (CCT). I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as the Chair of this Committee for the past year. The entire Committee worked tirelessly to ensure that each candidate was given the same opportunity as others to utilize their talents as a Trustee or ECPRM. The selection process was difficult and the Committee is confident that the correct decisions were made on the individuals nominated to serve in their respective positions.

“The Conference Committee on Trustees 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 (ECPRM), 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 meeting. 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.

“The theme of this year’s World Service Conference of changing ‘Me to We’ really was experienced during this process. We were each individually given a challenge to rank the individuals and as the results were summarized, the ‘We’ became evident that the right individuals were selected as nominees.

“I want to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to serve our fellowship in this unique way. Today I have a much greater appreciation for the selection process and also for those who are willing to put their names and talents forward for the open positions. ‘We’ make it happen and ‘We’ come to a mutual agreement as a whole to have confidence in our Trusted Servants and carry out the mission of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.”

Rhonda P.

Chairperson, Panel 51, South Dakota

“We” make it happen and
“We” come to a mutual agreement as a whole
to have confidence in our Trusted Servants
and carry out the mission **of the**
worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.”

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

Anne F.
Chairperson, Trustee

Before beginning the affirmation process, the Chairperson spent a few minutes explaining the purpose of the session.

“In 1961, the first trial Conference was formed, and Lois and the Directors tried to find a way to link the groups through the Conference with the Board and the organization, as you heard earlier this week. Ultimately, as the Concepts of Service developed, the process of the Conference affirming the nominees to fill the vacancies arose. In the mid ‘60s, a plan to add regional participation on the Board was developed, and the first Regional Trustee selection process began. In 1986, the Conference Committee on Trustees was created to provide input from Conference members to the Nominating Committee as it nominated the at Large Trustees. In 2010, the Conference gave approval to revise the Regional Trustee Plan, ending the three-year trial. Since then, the Regional Committees on Trustees have provided input to the Nominating Committee for nominating Regional Trustees. Today, we will continue that tradition of affirmation, which gives the traditional concurrence of the whole Conference to the various nominees and officers. Friday, the Board may elect those nominees who have received the traditional affirmation. As a result of this process, the voice of the fellowship through the Conference is heard, as the Board elects these Trustees to serve the organization, AFG Inc., and Al-Anon the fellowship, as a whole.”

The Nominating Committee Chairperson then thanked the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), the Regional Committees on Trustees (RCTs), and the Nominating Committee for their hard work over the last year. “Using the résumés and additional question responses, they worked conscientiously to rate 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. The Nominating Committee has also proposed an excellent slate of Board Officers.

“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. Trustee and ECRPM résumés are submitted to the WSO by August 15th of the year prior to possible election. Résumés and an additional written question 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 after dinner. Using this information, the Board nominates up to three candidates at its Quarterly Meeting. Today, you will be asked to give traditional approval to the three proposed nominees for a three year term. All of the nominees receiving traditional approval may be elected Friday morning at the Board’s Annual Meeting.

“Candidates for Regional Trustee (RT) are selected by their Areas which then forward their résumés to the WSO via the Delegate. This year, the US Northeast, US Southeast, and US North Central Regional Committees on Trustees each consisted of the Regions’ Delegates and three Delegates and the alternates 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. The Board met 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 each for the US Southeast and US North Central Regions. These proposed nominees will be given traditional approval by the Conference as a whole, and then may be elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting on Friday morning, as previously explained.

“The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was created by Motion 5 of the 1995 WSC in a trial amendment to the By-Laws—Article XII which was finalized as an amendment to the By-Laws—Article XII by the Board in 2012. This Committee, consisting of the Treasurer, the Director of Business Services, and three at-large members, is designed to keep management of our headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of Al-Anon. Each at-large member serves a three-year term, and the Chairperson is seated at the WSC with voice only in matters related to real property management. The nominating process is the same as that for Trustee at Large except

for the additional written question. 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. A candidate must receive a two-thirds majority in order to be affirmed. 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 voting process was explained. Conference members were given the 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 2013 WSC:

Trustees at Large:

Connie H., 2nd three-year term

Judy K., 1st three-year term

Elizabeth (Jennie) M., 1st three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Paula B., US Southeast, 2nd three-year term

Debbie G., US North Central, 1st three-year term

Board Officers:

Karen R., Chairperson

Connie H., Vice Chairperson

Penny R., Treasurer

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

Carrie K., three-year term

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2013-2014:

Mary Ann R., 3rd one-year term, Chairperson

Roger C., 1st one-year term

Judith P., 1st one-year term

Bob S., WSO staff, 2nd year of a two-year term

The Board announced the appointment of Carrie K. as the ECRPM Chairperson for 2013-2014.

2014 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE

The dates selected for the 2014 World Service Conference are Friday, April 25 through Tuesday, April 29, 2014. The Conference will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia. In searching for a site to hold the Conference, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, meal costs, and dates of religious holidays were factors in the selection of the dates and location.

Suzanne M.
*Associate Director
of Member Services—Conference*



CHANGING AREA NAMES

Suzanne M.
Associate Director of
Member Services—Conference

When the World Service Conference (WSC) was formed, it was agreed that Area names and Area boundaries for the WSC Structure would follow the geographic boundaries of states and provinces.

Over the years, as Area structures grew and developed, state and provincial boundaries did not always allow for the best service possible, due to geographic conditions. There are Areas that have voted to accept groups and/or districts of an adjoining Area into their Assembly because of convenience or ease, but they did not request a name change at the Conference.

When an Area requests to formally change its name, this is an act of the World Service Conference. Prior to getting on the WSC agenda, a name change request would be sent to the World Service Office, with documentation that both Areas have agreed to release groups and accept groups. The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) would review the request, and if the CLT agreed, it would make a recommendation, in the form of a motion, at the next WSC.

The Conference Leadership Team understood that this process is not clear in the “World Service Handbook” section of the *Service Manual*, so at the January 2013 Board of Trustees Meeting, a Task Force was created to revise the references to the name changing process, as well as review the entire “Handbook” section for possible updates.

The Delegates from the four Areas requesting a name change—Alabama, New Mexico, Manitoba, and Wisconsin—shared with the Conference the reasoning behind their request. These Areas felt that the groups and/or districts of adjoining Areas that have been accepted into their Assembly would feel recognized as part of the Area that they serve. The name changes would recognize the current structure of each Area.

In response to the requests from the four Areas, the Conference Leadership Team presented a motion to the Conference: To approve the CLT’s recommendation that the request of the Alabama Area, the New Mexico Area, the Manitoba Area, and the Wisconsin Area to officially change their Area names be to the designation of Alabama/Northwest Florida, New Mexico/El Paso, Manitoba/Northwest Ontario, and Wisconsin/Upper Peninsula of Michigan, respectively be accepted.

During discussion, one Delegate noted that there are groups in the eastern part of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan that are part of the Michigan Area. The Delegate was concerned how the members of those groups would feel about the name change. The motion was tabled to later in the Conference, in order to give the Michigan Delegate, the Wisconsin Delegate, and the Conference Leadership Team time to gather more information.

The following day, the Michigan Delegate shared that she had spoken to her Area and consulted with her Higher Power, and that the Michigan Area has no opposition to the name change, as the Michigan Area agrees this decision would benefit the groups in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan that are part of the Wisconsin Area.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #2, page 90)

Alabama/Northwest Florida

New Mexico/El Paso

Manitoba/Northwest Ontario

Wisconsin/Upper Peninsula of Michigan

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

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

Before the Conference, the submitted topics were combined into a single document. 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 Conference member was invited to give a brief presentation of each topic, followed by open discussion.

Chosen Agenda Item

Topic: Improving the retention of newcomers and experienced Al-Anon members

Sylvia G.
Panel 51, Louisiana

The Delegate opened her presentation by saying, "I remember my first meeting. God, in His infinite wisdom, knew right where I needed to be and with whom. Six women, each who had been a member of Al-Anon for at least ten years or more, surrounded me. I did not understand it then, but I see it so clearly now—they were my 'newcomer packet.' They provided me with a safe place to be, the assurance that my attendance was anonymous, and a gentle human touch. They suggested readings that would not be overwhelming. They assured me that they understood and were just a phone call away if I needed to talk. As a newcomer, I desperately needed what those older members were so willing to offer me—their experience, strength, and hope.

"In our first piece of literature, compiled by Lois and Anne in the summer of 1951, *Purposes and Suggestions for Al-Anon Family Groups* (P-13), Al-Anon members were introduced to the following idea, "An important principle:" To insure the success of the Family Groups there should be no gossip, nor complaints about the alcoholic's faults at meetings. Newcomers can quickly make friends with older members with whom they will invariably feel free to discuss their personal difficulties privately." [Page 43, *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31)]

"Also on page 38 of the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, it states, "The newcomer to Al-Anon/Alateen is often nervous, lonely, and usually desperate. In addition to the help, guidance, and literature provided by the group, individual attention and the friendship of an established member can be of great help."

"I am grateful that early in my attendance, I was encouraged to get a Sponsor and a Service Sponsor. Looking back, I was strengthened by their vulnerability. It gave me the freedom to be human and fragile. In the book, *Many Voices, One Journey*, page 263, a member shared, "... I've heard the wisdom of Lois, Margaret, and other members for close to 40 years. When I share this knowledge with others, there are sometimes newcomers who comment, "I wish I had the program like you do." I silently pray that they stay around long enough to realize no matter how long one is in the program, there are times we all feel like a newcomer. We are strong people; we are fragile people."

"In the October 1968 issue of *Al-Anon Family Groups Forum*, Lois addressed the topic of 'letting go' in Al-Anon service. She wrote a letter to the longtime members in Al-Anon regarding the important role they play in their groups. 'By our attitudes and general bearing, we can prove to the new member that Al-Anon really works. What we are affects the group for good or bad much more than what we say. Whether we like it or not, newcomers judge Al-Anon by what it has done for us.' Lois ends the letter by writing, 'We have now become the backlog [sic] of Al-Anon and can be the real "proof of the pudding."' (Pages 146-147, *Many Voices, One Journey*).

"I would like to suggest that we pause and remember our first meeting." The floor was opened for discussion on the following questions:

Did you receive a newcomer packet?

If so, what piece or pieces of literature encouraged you?

What encourages you now?

Were there older members in attendance?

When you left that meeting, what did you take with you from the members' sharing their experience, strength, and hope?

Are you, as an older member, the real, “proof of the pudding”?

- We discussed this recently in our Area; Group Representatives shared that newcomers seem to enjoy receiving a copy of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), as well as the *Groups at Work* (P-24) booklet.
- When I attended my first meeting, I was given the phone number of a couple of members, and one of the members asked if it was okay for someone to call me. This gesture made me feel that someone cared. They also gave me a past issue of *The Forum* and asked me to bring it back when I was done reading it. Since the copy of the magazine did not belong to me, I made sure to bring it back the following week, and they kept giving me issues of the magazine to read and bring back.
- My group tries to find jobs for newcomers. We ask them to help put out the literature and set up the chairs. When I look back at my first meeting, I was asked to do similar tasks, and this made me feel important and already part of the group. My group also looks for creative ways to involve the newcomers with the meeting.
- Does the WSO have statistics on the effects of the softcover version of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics*? Have we obtained any feedback from the groups or newcomers?

Currently, the WSO only has the sale figures. However, the WSO is going to start monitoring whether the softcover version of the book is being used as a way of our members paying their gratitude forward as it was originally intended.

- At my first meeting, the members handed me a copy of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) and gave me the contact information for all members. They also drew straws to see who would take me under their wing. I was not aware I was being sponsored.
- We had the *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8) available. When members ask me to sponsor them, I give them a folder that contains information on the Steps and thought-provoking questions. Our group grew because we were all working the Steps.
- During our Assembly, we reviewed the content of the Newcomer Packet (K-10) and the relevance of the information in it. We also discussed the retention of experienced Al-Anon members, and it was suggested to ask our longtime members to share their experience with the newcomers and encourage them to be of service.
- Gossip can deter newcomers from returning to meetings. A couple of days after I attended my first meeting, I was at a grocery store when an acquaintance came up to me and told me someone had told her I was at an Al-Anon meetings a few days prior. I didn't return to that meeting, and it took me many years to return to Al-Anon.
- I heard that a Delegate purchased a case of the softcover edition of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* and keeps it in her trunk to hand out to newcomers.
- In my Area, we have newcomer meetings in districts, and the district offers a six-week course. This approach has been very successful with newcomers. In addition, my home group has a lot of newcomers so we raffle a softcover copy of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* if we have more than one newcomer. If we only have one newcomer, we give them a copy of the book.
- We have taken Alateen meetings to the local juvenile hall, and we have given each teenager a copy of the softcover of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* for them to keep.
- Members have expressed concern about newcomer retention, and we are planning on having a group conscience to discuss how to attract and retain newcomers.
- My home group is focused on attracting diverse and youthful members; we have determined that how we greet a newcomer is important. We also ask the person chairing the meeting to share what Al-Anon was like when they first started attending. I've heard newcomers share that this has truly made a difference, as they can relate and identify themselves with the person chairing the meeting.
- I think groups need to understand that the misuse of the term “crosstalk” can drive away newcomers and members need to be reminded that “crosstalk” is actually a loving interchange.
- We found it helpful to explain the Twelve Steps to newcomers in our own words.

- About two years ago, we had a newcomer come to our meeting and we wrote down his name so we could address him on a more personal level. The newcomer felt more welcomed. We also established a meeting on sponsorship, where we clarify how sponsorship works and how to get a Sponsor.
- At my first meeting, a longtime member told me that I would never graduate from the program. She is right, and I love that I can keep coming back.
- If people feel they are part of a community, they are more likely to stay at that community. Newcomers feel like they are part of the group when they are given tasks. We also need to be mindful how our words can impact a newcomer. Although well-intended, telling newcomers that they cannot contribute to the basket until their third meeting could be perceived as unwelcoming. They might feel you are telling them that they are not members for three meetings. Also, members don't need to give all the information at once to newcomers; pique their interest so they keep coming back.
- My home group has a sign-up sheet, and members make sure to stay after the meeting to talk to the newcomer. We also suggest that they attend at least three meetings before they make up their minds, and we give them a softcover copy of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics*.
- At my first meeting, a member took me aside and talked to me about the program and made me feel welcomed, despite my efforts to keep my distance.
- Our group has a greeter who waits for everyone by the door. This has worked for us, as newcomers feel very welcomed. We also share a six-tape series for newcomers, and older members share their experience with them, to help everyone have a solid foundation about the program.
- In order for newcomers to return, we need to offer healthy groups. Al-Anon is like relationships; people need attention and they also need to feel appreciated. We all like to feel affection by word or deed; as a group and as members, we need to make newcomers feel that they are loved, cared for, and respected. We need to be cognizant that we are here to offer support.
- We make sure to invite them to join us at outside meeting activities, as well as service events.
- We have two issues in our Area. One is that older members have difficulty attending meetings, as they are not able to transport themselves to the meeting location. The other is Alateen members transitioning into Al-Anon; younger adults feel a disconnect from the program. Members also need to acknowledge that newcomer retention starts with each group.
- Newcomers can find chanting at the meeting a turn off. We should explain that our program is a spiritual program, not a religious one.
- Our group ensures that there are members at the meeting location prior to the start of the meeting to make sure someone is there if a newcomer arrives. It is also related to our general attitude toward newcomers; a smile can be very welcoming. "Let It Begin with Me" is one of our slogans, so we need to take on the responsibility to be welcoming and value the newcomers and make them feel welcomed.
- At my first meeting, someone handed me a Newcomer Packet (K-10). Someone else asked if I wanted a hug. That act of kindness and affection was probably the best part of my month. That hug was one of the reasons I returned to my second meeting. I was also asked to be the "group hugger" and stand at the door to greet people and offer hugs. I am also part of a parents meeting. We have mentioned that unlike other organizations, you don't need to know a lot about a topic to lead a meeting; you can lead a meeting by posing an issue that's currently challenging you.
- I felt alone and scared at my first meeting. My group provides information, as well as Conference Approved Literature that is relevant. For example, we give them the pamphlet *Alcoholism, a Merry-Go-Round Named Denial* (P-3) and have meetings on the pamphlet. We also try to make the newcomers feel important.
- I think the "greeter" service position is important. Our greeter not only greets the newcomer, but stays after the meeting to answer any questions newcomers might have. Our Area is trying to resuscitate our connection with longtime members. I've personally contacted past Delegates to ask them to be speakers at our Assembly or simply to attend and lead a workshop.

- We encourage fellowship outside our meeting by going out for coffee, dinner, and engage in other types of activities. To avoid these activities from being perceived as “click-ish,” we made announcements about them part of the meeting format.
- In our meeting, members write their numbers on the Newcomer Packet and let the newcomer know whose number it is so they can associate the number with a face. We keep our experienced members busy and let them know that we value their experience.
- When I was a newcomer, the group I attended invited me out to dinner, and I learned how to laugh again. During our meal we had fun and told jokes and I realized that it is okay to laugh.

A Delegate summarized:

- Give newcomers Conference Approved Literature, including the softcover edition of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32) and *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6).
- Help newcomers feel welcomed by making eye-contact and starting conversations with them; also, try to remember their names.
- Give newcomers a job in the group to make them feel like they are part of the group.
- Assign a greeter or “group hugger.”
- Invite newcomers to activities after the meeting.
- Create healthy groups so newcomers keep coming back.
- Remind longtime members that they are valuable and their experience is important.

Chosen Agenda Item

Kerry L.,
Panel 51, Manitoba

Topic: How can we get districts without District Representatives and few Group Representatives to become re-involved in participating in Assemblies and Area World Service Committee meetings? How do we reach out to registered groups who do not attend Area events?

The Delegate began the framing of this Chosen Agenda item by stating, “How is your Area doing in regards to these questions? How can we get districts without District Representatives (DRs) and few Group Representatives (GRs) to become re-involved in participating in Assemblies and Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings? How do we reach out to registered groups that do not attend Area events? We do have these problems in our Area, and I have had discussions with DRs and other Delegates, so I know your Areas have the same problems. The first thing that jumps to mind is ‘Participation is the key to harmony’ (Concept Four) and ‘Let It Begin with Me.’

“As Delegate, one of my functions is to be a communications link between the groups, the DRs, the Coordinators, and the WSO. In our discussion period today, I want to keep focused on solutions to re-involving DRs and GRs in participating in Assemblies and AWSC and how do we reach out to registered groups that don’t attend Area events.”

The Delegate read the following historical background from page 131 in the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

“From 1951, when Al-Anon began, until 1961, when the Conference was born, the world services for Al-Anon were conducted from the Clearing House office in New York. All the work was done by a group of volunteers and a few paid workers, all of them living in the New York area. In 1954, our services were incorporated as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., solely for business purposes. There was a Board of Directors that took care of the business and policy matters with the help of an Advisory Board.

“When our fellowship was still small, the service arrangement worked well and did much to unify Al-Anon and spread its message around the world.

This meant, however, that Al-Anon services were not linked to our growing groups. There was no way for the services to share with and account to those they served. It was only by means of mail polls and correspondence that the World Service Office was able to receive the guidance and direction of the whole Al-Anon membership.

“This degree of isolation from the fellowship as a whole could have proved hazardous for our future. If an unauthorized decision proved to be a serious error, confidence in the World Service Office could be weakened; this would affect the whole vital service effort.”

The Delegate continued, “Concept One declares, ‘The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.’ Tradition Two declares, ‘For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.’ This clearly implies that the groups are to be the final authority and our leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only. If groups or districts do not exercise their right to participate in Al-Anon at all service levels, they weaken the whole structure from a spiritual and financial standpoint.

“I would like to share a very brief version of a couple of stories from my Area. In our meeting brochure, we have a rural group listed as an open, German-speaking meeting but that they wish no contact. As Delegate, I felt I wanted to know more about their group and why the ‘no contact.’ I phoned a member who belonged to the group and asked her if she could tell me about their group. She told me they were a group of 12 to 16 German Mennonite people who came from South America and speak High German. She was quick to assure me they followed all the rules, had a chairperson, used German Conference Approved Literature, and paid rent. I did not want to offend her, so I did not ask any more questions. I understand the Mennonite culture and know going outside their community is frowned upon. My plan is to have a German-speaking Al-Anon member take me to their meeting, slowly build trust with them, and perhaps encourage them to attend Assembly or a convention.

“My second story is again a rural meeting in a northern community. It is a ten-hour drive north for me to visit them. They were a small core group of three. I brought them some literature and they didn’t want to have their regular meeting, they just wanted me to talk about what is going on in the Area. They do not have the finances to attend Assembly or AWSC meetings. We are looking to see if we can find a location for them to attend our Tele-health meeting and become a part of our district again, as they are struggling to keep their group open.

“I think my two stories illustrate that there are reasons—such as cultural differences and living in remote communities—that hinder participation in worldwide Al-Anon. I often hear people say they are too busy to do service work, or they go away for the winter, or they aren’t ready to do anything outside their group yet. I am looking forward to a lively discussion on this Chosen Agenda Item topic. I would like to remind you again to focus on the solution and not the problem. I encourage you to think outside the box and to be forward-thinking so that our fellowship may grow spiritually and financially and we can reach out to groups who are not participating fully and re-involve them again.”

Conference members responded to the following questions:

How can we get districts without DRs and few GRs to become re-involved in participating in Assemblies and AWSC?

How do we reach out to registered groups who do not attend Area events?

- Eight of our 14 districts do not have a DR. Our Area has tried a “scholarship” to help these districts cover expenses for isolated groups. We also have a “road show” and have gone on the road around our Area to reach out to isolated groups.
- In our Area, we merged some of the districts, so there could be more representation at our Assemblies. In one district, the leadership evaporated. During a district meeting, a member volunteered to reorganize the district. I believe leaders are necessary, as well as the need to encourage and support all districts and groups.
- Our Area created a project to “adopt” a district, which is when a stronger districts adopts another district and shares its experience and helps the other district set itself up. We also encouraged a district that had no DR or GRs, and we managed to support and encourage the district. They are now one of our most active and cooperating districts.
- I know that we are a fellowship that practices “attraction and not promotion,” but we need to help members and groups understand the importance of participation. The encouragement to these groups and districts needs to come from the structure. As a Delegate, I went to every meeting and explained why it was important for the group to reach out to the district and Area. I was able to obtain feedback. I also realized that the real effort has to come from within each member, but the Area has to serve as a role model to motivate those in service and those who want to be in service.
- When I was ready to serve at the group level, a member encouraged me to start helping with the literature, and without me even realizing it, I was on the Board of the local Intergroup.

I've encountered members who are not aware that there needs to be a GR, a DR, or that there is a service structure. Service Sponsors are very important and full of wisdom that can help members move forward and see beyond their group. Service Sponsors can spark interest and let members know the importance of the group's voice within the Area and the fellowship. It is important that we all grow together. Our Area also developed a guideline for each service position that has been very helpful.

- When I wanted to be of service, I was told to begin where I was in my program. My Area has a pamphlet that is a guide for GRs and DRs new to their positions. I also get DRs and GRs involved by asking them to do brainstorming sessions and share their thoughts on what should be discussed at the AWSC. Participation is ownership, and ownership will carry the message.
- Our Area has an e-Newsletter. I have contacted the GRs to ask them to sign up, so groups can be aware of what is going on in the Area. In addition, the GRs can share their thoughts with the Area regarding the newsletter, as well as information that they would like to include. I've also reached out to members in remote locations who are not able to attend a meeting so they can at least be a part of the Lone Member service and not feel isolated.
- We have issues in our Area with a remote district that feels isolated. We've created an Area workshop that Area officers take on the road and present to remote districts as a way to help those districts move forward. We've also worked with districts to address issues with specific groups. In one instance, working with both the district and the group gave the opportunity for both parties to reason things out.
- The Group Services Coordinator contacted all groups that were not represented by a district and invited them to attend the Assembly, which seemed to get the groups to attend. We also contacted districts with no DRs and asked members if they would be willing to attend the Assembly, just to be the contact for the district to obtain the information shared at the Assembly. It also helps members understand what several service positions entail and encourages them to volunteer to serve.
- In our Area, one of the things I do as a Delegate is to share my history and share how being in service has helped me in the program. People who have heard my story have thanked me for sharing and it has actually motivated some to step up. We're planning to redistrict and having a meeting to discuss the issue and hear what groups have to share, especially those groups that currently do not have a DR.
- Our Area had a very lively discussion on this topic. We shared the idea of reaching out to groups. We just called it *service* instead of *service work* to make it more inviting.
- I made a commitment to my AWSC that they will hear from me every six weeks. That way, we are constantly in touch. I can hear their concerns and still hold them accountable to meet deadlines.
- In our AWSC, we try to sit with members new to service to share our experience with one another. I do this with new GRs and DRs.
- We rotate the location of the AWSC so everyone travels equally. We also review the members' evaluations so we can make AWSC a more attractive service event and improve our communication with all districts. We have also created a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM), and have asked all districts to reply in an attempt to get an understanding of what is keeping districts from participating.
- Sometimes the issues are personalities within a district or group. At times, the situation improves by removing the "personality" in the situation and then talking things out.
- We have a lot of empty service positions in our Area, especially GRs. We are considering redistricting and creating ways for members to step up to serve above the group level.
- I think technology is a great tool, but I also believe in the power of a personal connection. That is why I pick up the phone and call members of my AWSC. I think this bridges the gap too.
- We use conference calls to integrate members in remote areas or those who are out of town.
- Our Assembly has taken the WSC goals and used them as goals for our Assembly to set the tone of the discussions. It helps the members want to attend, just as we, as Conference members, like attending the WSC. I like to talk about how isolation wasn't good for me and share how it isn't of benefit to the group to be isolated. Isolation does not help us grow or recover.

A Delegate summarized:

- “Participation is the key to harmony.”
- Participation fosters ownership.
- Integration of those who can’t attend by use of conference calls.
- Participation was obtained by merging districts.
- Encouragement helps to create leaders.
- Isolation hinders growth and recovery.

FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

On June 22, 1951, a man from Massachusetts made the first financial contribution to Al-Anon. This was before the first request for funds. The next contributions came from New York, Alabama, and South Dakota. Anne B. recalled that “this gave us the courage to send out a letter asking the groups if they were ready to contribute toward the operation of the Clearing House” (now known as the WSO).

With the approval of the Advisory Committee, the Clearing House made its first appeal for contributions in a March 1952 newsletter mailed to 250 registered Al-Anon Family Groups. Lois and Anne asked each member to contribute \$1 per person, two times each year. With inflation, that \$2 per year, per member would be a little over \$17, per member in 2013.

With the contributions received, the Clearing House was able to purchase a typewriter and a table. Previously, volunteers were carrying their own typewriters back and forth from their homes to the office. The Clearing House was also able to begin national publicity.

Here we are in 2013. We continue to ask groups and members for contributions to support the WSO. Concept One talks about the responsibility of the groups for Al-Anon’s world services. That responsibility includes financially supporting the services that our WSO provides to the groups. When the Director of Business Services gave the financial report, he stated that the WSO spends \$253 per group on direct services. Last year, 60 percent of our groups supported the WSO financially and they sent an average of \$111 per contributing group.

The 2013 Quarterly Appeal letters talk about the services provided by each WSO Department to the groups and to the fellowship as a whole. In February 2013, the Appeal Letter discussed the Group Services Department. The Finance Committee believes that if the members know what they get for their money, that all of members would want to contribute to the WSO.

The members of the Finance Committee presented some of the services the fellowship receives as a result of their contributions.

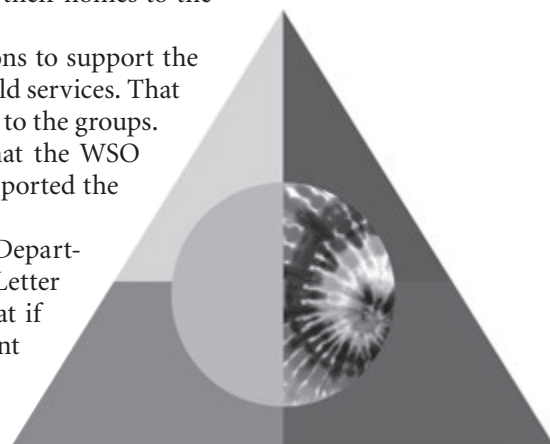
Penny R.

Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach

Director of Business Services

Non-member



Group Services Department

The Group Services Department is the first contact point a new group has to the World Service Office. Group Records, Alateen, general group services, Electronic Meetings, Inmate Services, and Al-Anon Information Services make up the Group Services Department.

In early December, Group Services received a call from a member wanting to know how to start a new group. A proposal packet went out and about a week later the new group registration was received by the WSO. An introductory packet was set to the group. Right after the New Year, a call was received from the member asking some questions about starting a bank account for the group. She thanked the Group Records Department for all the assistance in helping her start the new group. She stated that the pamphlets were valuable resources to receive and pass on to newcomers until the group was established enough to order more literature. She loved the table cards. The guidelines and *Groups at Work* booklet (P-24) were very useful in helping her to get the group going. The member stated that she had been in Al-Anon a little over 10 years and felt that starting a new meeting was her way of giving back to the program.

Penny R., Treasurer, Trustee

Group Services piece presenter

Group Services:

- Registers new Al-Anon/Alateen groups and electronic meetings.

- Sends a complimentary *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) to each registered group.
- Sends a complimentary *Groups at Work* to each registered group.
- Keeps group records information current.
- Sends a complimentary *Forum* to each registered group.
- Oversees and records certification of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS).
- Manages the toll-free meeting line to ensure adequate staff are available to provide meeting information in English, Spanish, and French to potential members, professionals, and others.
- Publishes *Alateen Talk* for Alateen groups and Alateen Group Sponsors.
- Holds conference calls with Area Group Records Coordinators and Alateen Coordinators.
- Supports Al-Anon Information Services.
- Supports Lone Members, inmates, electronic meetings, members with special needs.
- Provides guidelines and other service tools.
- Provides information for groups on the Members' Web site—podcasts, blogs, updated Policy information between reprints.
- Assists Areas with Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements and processes.

After groups are established, they continue to seek the help and guidance of the Group Services Department.

One group wrote in with questions on how to handle newcomers at a Step meeting. “We do our Step meeting the first Monday of each month. The last two months, we have had newcomers attend our meeting on those Step nights. Is it appropriate to delay our Step study to accommodate people coming to their first meeting? We’re not ever getting to study the other Steps.” The group was given several suggestions:

- Start a weekly beginners’ meeting, held 30 minutes before the regular meeting.
- Ask for volunteers to take the newcomer in another room and speak with them.
- Ask for volunteers to share a little bit about Al-Anon, then proceed with the regular meeting.
- Hold a newcomer meeting for 15 minutes, then continue with the regular meeting.

They replied back, “Great ideas! I’m excited to present these options to my group tonight.”

Sometimes, bad things happen to a group or a district. A District Treasurer had stolen about \$1,500 in district funds. The district was not sure what to do, so they contacted the Group Services Department. “What recourse do we have as a district to recoup our funds? Do we have grounds for legal action? There is some concern this may cause a public controversy, which is clearly in conflict with our Traditions and the Al-Anon principles. Any guidance you could provide to help us move forward in a healthy way would be appreciated.”

Group Services replied in part:

“Al-Anon service is not above the law, and while it doesn’t happen often, there have been occasions where service arms have had to take legal action against members. It is always better when it doesn’t have to be done this way, but theft is theft, and individuals have to be held accountable.

So, we hope that the reparations will happen. It is up to the district as to whether to ask the person to put something in writing; obtaining a written agreement might be advisable, as that gives you some documentation should the individual default on payments.”

Ric B., Executive Director
Membership Outreach piece
presenter

Membership Outreach Department

Understanding how Membership Outreach supports the average member and group is somewhat tricky, until you realize that Membership Outreach’s function is to support the structures from the district and Area, to the world service levels as members and groups seek to find the group conscience individually or through their elected representatives in ways that support the groups in all of their activities.

I have been in several countries where Al-Anon was beginning to develop and one of the hardest parts is learning how to build a structure that supports the groups without governing them and do that with the only reference tool being in English, Spanish, or French.

In 2004, I made a trip around the world on behalf of Al-Anon. It didn’t start that way, but God had different plans. I went to Hawaii as a part of the Special Project which was to empower Areas and

bring messages of ways to carry the message. I went from there to attend an Asian-Pacific Conference where Al-Anon was part of a series of lectures and workshops to educate professionals about the benefits of recovery from alcoholism. We, of course, explained the need for families to have their own program of recovery whether the alcoholic got sober or not. I went on to India to meet with groups there who, after 40 years, still had no national structure. In a school gymnasium, drawing with chalk on a blackboard set on an easel, I drew circles and squares to show the role of the various service arms and how they could come together to form a national structure. This last year, India formed a General Service Office and they are on the way to their first national service conference. I flew on to South Africa to visit an older structure that had stopped participating in the International Al-Anon General Services Meetings (IAGSM) because of misinformation. I was able to clarify misunderstandings and help them begin a project to reach out to other evolving groups and members in Africa. I spoke about the dream of a zonal meetings similar to what A.A. holds within Africa. At that time, only the Spanish-speaking structures in Al-Anon had tried something like a zonal meeting. This past October, the IAGSM was actually hosted by South Africa. While these stories are personal to me, they describe the work of all of the Membership Outreach staff and individual Trustees who have participated in similar trips and outreach activities funded by our groups and members.

This year the Membership Outreach Department will be facilitating the 2013 International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia. There, members from around the world will gather to greet each other, share recovery on a wide array of topics, attend workshops on recovery and service activities, and listen to speakers share how the Al-Anon and Alateen program has changed their lives.

Of course, the annual work of the Membership Outreach Department is visibly enjoyed by each of you at this World Service Conference as we work together to share the voices and issues of concern of our members and groups through our participation, dialogue, active listening, and sometimes even motions, as we seek to fulfill the Legacies in our spiritual journey of changing “me” to “we.”

We will continue to carry the messages to our Area structures in TEAM events in 2014 and beyond, striving to bring the tools that each Area desires to move its members and structure forward.

Some other activities that aren’t necessarily understood as support for individual members and groups include:

- Manages e-Communities for District Representatives, Area officers, IAGSM Delegates, General Service Offices, and our World Service Delegates, including reoccurring questions for those issues that continue to surface.
- Compiles and posts *Area Highlights* with sharings from Areas and structures about their successes and challenges in three languages on the Members’ Web site.
- Assembles and translates *Le Lien* and *en accion* to bring excerpts from *The Forum* to our French- and Spanish-speaking members.
- Translates Conference Approved Literature, Public Outreach materials, and the Public Outreach and Member Web sites for the Spanish- and French-speaking members worldwide.
- Assists financially with the translation and printing of key beginning literature in other structures.
- Licenses and maintains the copyrights of Al-Anon literature in over 40 languages.
- Hosts Anniversary Parties and a World Service Office Open House every five years celebrating our founding.
- Compiles and publishes the *World Service Conference Summary* which shares the annual discussions and activities of the senior structure with all groups worldwide; it is also available on the Members’ Web site.
- Selects and plans the next International Convention site location. Negotiates and signs the necessary contracts and hotel commitments to get our members the best possible prices. Where is that International in 2018 again? Somewhere in Maryland? Oh that’s right—Baltimore. See you there!

Fellowship Communications Department

Each week the Fellowship Communications Department receives numerous phone calls, e-mails, faxes, and letters from members with questions and concerns about our literature and *The Forum*. The correspondence ranges greatly, including questions about where to find certain topics or quotations in our books, whether something is Conference Approved Literature (CAL), suggestions for new

Mary Ann R., Chairperson,
Executive Committee
*Fellowship Communication piece
presenter*

literature, and copyright issues. Questions may include permission for the use of excerpts from CAL and what defines an excerpt. Questions also arise about the use of our logo and CAL on Area and other Web sites. The department does its best to answer thoroughly in a way that explains not only what our literature policies are, but also, why. Surprisingly, these days when everyone is so busy, we often hear back—usually with a variation of the following excerpted from actual letters:

“This is exactly what I needed to find out—I appreciate the thoughtful and thorough answer. This will help my group (and me personally) stay on track with the Al-Anon message and literature.”

Many of our members find tremendous value and growth from reading CAL. But, not everyone realizes that our literature originates with our members’ sharings. Here’s one Literature Coordinator’s comment on how the conference calls and discussion boards provided by the Fellowship Communications Department guided him. “Based on the information I received, I put together packets for the Assembly meeting so that members at the Assembly become aware that they can create a writing workshop to contribute to future books.”

Based on a suggestion resulting from a Literature Coordinator’s conference call, one member put together a workshop to discuss the book, *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31). The following are comments from some of the members who shared:

- Inspirational.
- Emotional.
- Take time to make choices.
- Keep a perspective.
- Be mindful of all new members coming through the door.
- Faith, persistence, and the power of members.

In addition to these helpful suggestions, the Fellowship Communications Department conducts activities that benefit members in the following ways:

- Processes requests to reprint CAL in Area newsletters, books, and articles written by members, and by professionals who are publishing research. This process protects our copyright and ensures that Al-Anon’s printed material is presented accurately.
- Plans, schedules, and conducts Literature Committee meetings by conference call.
- Manages the e-Community folder for Literature Coordinators and manages their conference calls held twice a year.
- Coordinates the production of all new literature, including selecting a writer, preparing the contract for the writer, making edits, and preparing the drafts for review by the Literature Committee, Policy Committee, and Executive Director. Sometimes the staff makes minor housekeeping changes to correct errors to books or pamphlets.
- Produces *The Forum* and processes approximately 1,000 submissions annually through the review procedures of the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee. Staff plans the content of each magazine, edits for style, and coordinates the production of the magazine with the Publications Department.
- Manages the e-Community folder and conference calls for the *Forum* Coordinators.
- Manages the e-Community folder for Area Newsletter Coordinators.
- Reviews for style and grammar the most significant communications from the WSO to the fellowship including presentations shared with Delegates.

Paula B., Policy Committee
Chairperson, Trustee
Public Outreach piece presenter

Public Outreach Department

The Public Outreach Department at WSO:

- Produces *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*—Al-Anon’s largest, member-participation public outreach project.
- Develops radio and TV PSAs that reach English-, Spanish-, and French-speaking audiences in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Bermuda, and Canada.
- Conducts outreach via traditional electronic and social media through two press releases each month, published electronically as well as distributed through traditional print media.

- Provides support and encouragement to Area Cooperating with the Professional Community Coordinators, Area Public Outreach Coordinators, Area Web Coordinators, Newsletter Editors, and individual Al-Anon members.
- Provides outreach tools, such as *The Best of Public Outreach*, a how-to-do-it guidebook for a range of possible public outreach projects, the DVD, that is also available with French and Spanish subtitles, *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31), and a Treatment Center Model.
- Participates on the Public Outreach Committee.
- Provides content to the Web site, Podcasts, Blogs, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter.
- Provides outreach to professionals at the national level for greater visibility for Al-Anon in nationwide cross-organizational recovery outreach activities and solicits professional content for inclusion in *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.
- Collaborates with researchers who measure and validate the benefits of Al-Anon to members.

Administration/Business Services

Though there is no flash or excitement attached to Administration or Business Services—wasn't it Lois who said that there is no romance in paying the rent?—but, it is a vital and necessary part of the organization. Of course, approving and paying bills is an important function of these two departments, but in addition to that, they are a support beam for all of the other departments, as well as providing other services that support the fellowship.

Karen R., Chairperson, Board
of Trustees
Administration/Business Services
piece presenter

Administration

At a TEAM event that I participated in, a woman came up to me after she saw the “Giving Presentation,” wanting to know how to set up a bequest to Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. I knew that the Administration Department had helped other people write their will which included a bequest to Al-Anon, so I suggested that she call the World Service Office for help. She was delighted to hear that she could contribute in that way to the organization that had changed her life.

Business Services

I was one of the members of the WSO team at another TEAM Event—aren't TEAM Events fantastic? If your Area has not been able to have one yet, think about it for 2014—where an LCD projector was needed. Prior to the event, we checked with the hotel where the event was to be held and with members in the Area, there was no projector to be found. The staff member brought an LCD projector that is maintained just for this purpose. Our presentations went off very well thanks to the support from Business Services!

Other services provided by the Administration and Business Services Departments:

- Maintain the Archives which serves as a resource for members regarding Al-Anon's co-founders and heritage.
- Receives and processes all literature orders, contributions, and *Forum* subscriptions from the fellowship.
- Designs and maintains the Web sites—Public Outreach, Membership, and Shopping Cart—for use by the fellowship.
- Coordinates the process of selecting our trusted servants and facilitates their work through the Nominating Committee.
- Maintains inventory in a safe and easily-accessible fashion to ensure adequate stock of material, as well as processes, packages, and ships as many orders as possible on a daily basis.
- Grants service arms permission to post the Legacies on their Web sites.
- Provides a comfortable and safe working environment for the staff in order that they can support the fellowship, as well as provides meeting space for the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, when necessary.
- Coordinates participation of WSO staff and Trustees in Area Assemblies and events to share their experience, strength, and hope with the fellowship.
- Designs *The Forum*, our monthly magazine, executes the work orders for production, and posts excerpts on-line.

- Grants permission to use CAL to on-line Al-Anon meetings, in an effort to guard our copyright, as well as promote the unity of the Al-Anon program.
- Handles daily correspondence from the fellowship and distributes it, so that individual departments respond and provide support to the members.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee ended the presentation with the following, “I encourage you to take this presentation back to your Areas. The more the members and groups understand their connection to the WSO, the more generous they will be with their contributions. There is a direct connection between the services the groups receive and the financial contributions the groups make to the WSO. We hope the information we have provided you today will help you discuss this issue in your Areas.”

Conference members were asked to respond to the following question.

What do we need to communicate to members so they realize that their giving is as much a part of their gratitude and spiritual connection to the program as any other service opportunity?

The floor was opened for discussion and Conference members shared:

- This presentation will help connect the members to the WSO and show how giving to the WSO contributes to their recovery.
- This presentation reminds me of Concept One—The ultimate authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the groups. The groups created the WSO. We, as individuals, need to stay connected to the WSO so there is no “us” versus “them.”
- This presentation is exactly what we need to take back to the Areas to make the connection with the WSO. The WSO supports, but does not govern. I will be using this material because the membership believes that the WSO is this big corporation and has infinite funds. The groups and the membership as a whole need to understand that our contributions fund all the services we receive and all the support provided by the WSO that are instrumental to the survival of our fellowship.
- With this presentation members will be able to understand what the WSO is and how much of our recovery is affected by the services the WSO provides. I’ve learned that members will only give if they understand how the money is used. This presentation will help personify the WSO.
- This presentation communicates the spirituality of giving. This will also show that not every group is participating, the reasons for contributing, and that we all receive benefits from the WSO.
- I think this appeal should be directed to individuals, not just groups. I hope the WSC will consider this presentation and we, as individual members, will also consider revising our own personal support.
- We need to make the WSO seem more accessible and not some foreign entity. I think if we focus on the spiritual aspect of giving, members will be more willing to contribute. It is also about educating.
- As I am reading the question, I believe we need to set the example and share with members how we all contribute to the WSO and how giving has made us grow spiritually. I shared with members in my Area how I contribute to the WSO through direct deposit; I set it up as a small amount to determine if it would fit my budget. After a few months, I was able to determine whether I could give more. This is very convenient for me because I often forget to write the check and mail it. I also know that some members feel more of a connection by writing a check and mailing it. We need to share what giving has done for us, how we are all connected to the WSO, and that our contributions are spiritual gifts.
- We need to think about of the member who cannot afford to put a dollar in the basket and that those who are able to contribute for those who can’t, do so out of gratitude. A previous project where groups adopted a Russian Al-Anon group generated a lot of enthusiasm within the fellowship because groups wanted to help those who could not help themselves. I think that

we should emphasize that our contributions are what keeps the program available. It would be a sad world if people who needed Al-Anon had to afford it.

- I think we need to take the fear out of giving and share with members that giving is a way of sharing our gratitude for the program.
- One of my sponsees contributed to the WSO for every year I had been in the program. I was very grateful for that gesture.
- This presentation gave my goose bumps. My understanding of the fellowship and the WSO has evolved through being educated with all aspects of our program. Members perceive contributing to the WSO as a “second pass” of the basket. A way to improve the members’ understanding is through sharing information from the WSO, especially the Appeal Letter.
- We can relate Tradition Seven and Concept One to the Twelfth Step—a way to carry the message is through our contributions.
- During my time as a Trustee, I visited an Area and a group of members took me to dinner prior to the Assembly. During our dinner, a member new to service asked me who paid my way to attend the Assembly. I responded that she did. I continued to explain that when a member puts money in the basket to be sent to the WSO, they help pay for Trustees’ expenses to go to the Areas to share their experience. My explanation meant so much to the member and gave her a better understanding of what her contributions can do.
- We need to make the WSO an “us,” and not a “them,” so members can feel that connection.
- After the Conference, I go back to the Areas and share with the members what stood out to me the most at the Conference. After my first Conference, what stood out to me the most was learning that the *Service Manual* is a spiritual book. That had a profound effect on me. After this Conference, I will share that I learned how *spiritual* finances are. I also learned that we are balancing our budget on the back of our employees and newcomers. Perhaps we can all have a discussion on how we can contribute to the WSO.
- Will these presentations be translated into French and Spanish?

Currently, the WSO does not have the resources to translate all presentations into French and Spanish. However, perhaps you can form a small committee in your Area to translate the presentations that are of interest. This could be a service position within the Areas. If your Area does translate the presentations, you do not need to send them to the WSO to be proofed. The WSO does not have sufficient funds to hire more translators. This is one of the services the WSO would like to expand, but currently cannot do so.

- Our spiritual connection to the program is critical to our success. I believe we need to express the importance of the WSO to our members.
- Our contributions allow “the hand of Al-Anon to always be there,” and the WSO can reach out to other countries.
- Perhaps the WSO can do direct mailings of the Appeal Letter to Delegates and DRs, as the Letter does not seem to be read at groups.

Until three years ago, we did mail the Appeal Letter to the Delegates and DRs and they complained that they are members of groups and they were giving their contributions to the groups. They felt singled out as a result of the WSO mailing to them directly. The WSO decided to discontinue the mailing of the Appeal Letter to the Delegate and DRs. However, the WSO posts the Appeal Letter on the DR e-Communities.

- I ordered a box of memorial and birthday envelopes to distribute at our Assembly for members to send their contributions to the WSO. In addition, our Treasurer created a form with the information of where to send a contribution, if members want to contribute to their district, Intergroup, Area, or the WSO.
- I think the Finance Committee presentation had a lot of value to our Conference and we will be able to share the information with our Areas and convey the importance of our contributions.

POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Paula B.
Chairperson, Trustee

Harriet T.
Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Barbara O.
Secretary, Director of
Member Services

Memorial Contributions

The Policy Chairperson introduced the topic by stating, “At the 2011 World Service Conference, there was a presentation from a Thought Force whose task was “to identify information for a guideline on Memorial Contributions.” During the discussion, members asked whether the Board or Policy Committee could appoint a Task Force to study the possibility of allowing family, non-member memorial gifts on behalf of their deceased Al-Anon family member.

“The Policy Committee discussed this topic in July 2011 and agreed to explore it in light of Tradition Five and “giving comfort to families of alcoholics.” Once this Tradition was fully explored, the Thought Force’s charge expanded to include a review of all Legacies. The Thought Force utilized extensive archival research and thorough discussion of the Legacies. During the Policy Committee discussions, it became apparent that only the Twelve Traditions were relevant to this topic.

“Today, we will discuss the archival information and the Twelve Traditions that were provided on e-Communities in light of this topic. We will open for discussion your thoughts on this topic.”

The floor was opened for discussion.

- Though Tradition Seven is a safeguard to protect the fellowship from the influence of non-members, a memorial contribution in honor of a deceased Al-Anon member would not affect the fellowship, as this is just a gift from the family out of gratitude for the program and the effect it had on their family member.
- It is necessary for the Conference and the fellowship to differentiate between a memorial contribution, a bequest, and a living trust.
- If an Al-Anon member, through service and the practice of the Al-Anon program in all his/her affairs, has inspired the family to make a donation to Al-Anon, it should be accepted. This would be a time when the family would need comfort due to the passing of the Al-Anon member.
- Would the contribution be from only family members, or could friends make a contribution as well? In the information submitted by the Thought Force, it is noted “friends” as well.

The word “friend” was included in this discussion, since due to current state law, some people are not legally recognized to have a family relationship. The fellowship would not involve itself in such issues, as this would be an outside issue about which Al-Anon has no opinion. However, the fellowship would still recognize the person involved as family.

- How do we determine that someone is an Al-Anon member who leaves a bequest?

When the WSO receives a notice of an upcoming bequest, the WSO researches its database to determine whether this person is part of the database and if there is existing data noting the person’s membership. If no information is found, the WSO would contact the Area from which the contribution was sent to inquire if the Area has knowledge of the person being an Al-Anon member, and if not, would request that the Delegate ask the groups. In the past, the WSO has asked the family member or the executor of the will if they found Al-Anon literature as part of the deceased’s possessions. The WSO also requests that members who plan to include a donation to Al-Anon in their will, inform the WSO of the bequest so the staff can keep on file the member’s statement which verifies the member’s intent to leave a bequest to Al-Anon, as well as his/her membership.

The Policy Chairperson clarified that the discussion is regarding a contribution from the family or close friend of a deceased Al-Anon member and not bequests/trusts.

- Recently, I’ve had family members pass away and it was comforting to receive acknowledgements of other Al-Anon members making a contribution to the WSO in honor of my family members. Over the years, many of my family members and friends have commended the changes the program has made in my life. I know that my family would find comfort in my passing if they would be able to contribute to the organization that made such a positive change in my life.
- Family members could be grateful for the changes the program made in their family member and would like to make a contribution to honor the love the member had for the program. In addition, there are times when the member does not have sufficient time to leave a will

or bequest, but asks the family to ensure that they make a donation to Al-Anon. If it is the member's wish, how can you say no?

- Tradition Five states, "Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics...., and by welcoming and giving comfort to families of alcoholics." The participation of a family member in the Al-Anon program has probably benefited the entire family. Despite their grief, the family members would like to offer a contribution to the WSO as a token of their gratitude for the effects the program had on their family member, as well as the entire family, and should not be turned down. This action could be perceived as a violation of Tradition Five. The Conference should approve family members being able to make memorial contributions in order for the fellowship to give comfort and also provide a warm welcome to the family to join the Al-Anon family.
- My Area believes that the WSO, as well as all other service entities including groups, do not accept outside contributions, as this would be considered or perceived as not upholding the Traditions in favor of obtaining contributions.
- Tradition Three states that the only requirement of membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. Regardless of whether the family members are currently in Al-Anon, they have been affected by alcoholism. Therefore, I feel that the family would be offended if they were not allowed to make a memorial contribution in honor of their family member, as the program has been instrumental for the entire family.
- The WSO does not accept outside contributions or funds that would carry an obligation; this is also part of the safeguard in Tradition Seven.
- Members and non-members can purchase Al-Anon literature. The revenue of the sale supports the organization.
- A non-member could give money to a member and ask to donate it in memory of a deceased Al-Anon member.
- Who are the non-members that are being considered to potentially donate memorial contributions? Just immediate family members?

The Thought Force members discussed this and decided that it would need to be further reviewed to determine who would be included. Perhaps the definition of "family" needs to be defined, taking into consideration who constitutes a family, since that has changed.

- The focus of this discussion has to be on all the Traditions, as opposed to just Tradition Seven. Tradition Five reminds us to be comforting.
- My concern is whether memorial contributions from non-members would carry an obligation or have an influence on the fellowship. Perhaps a balance could be achieved by allowing memorial contributions but having safeguards in place as well as cap the contribution amount.
- A.A. doesn't allow contributions from non-members. Tradition Four needs to be considered since this could be a matter that would affect A.A. and Al-Anon as a whole.
- Allowing contributions from non-members takes the responsibility away from the fellowship to be self-supporting. Members are responsible for the financial welfare of the fellowship and the organization.
- Regarding placing a cap on the amount allowed to be contributed, there isn't a need as long as no obligations are attached to the donation.
- When the Thought Force was researching the background information, was the term "outside" stated in Tradition Seven researched and defined? Are family members of an Al-Anon member outside the disease of alcoholism?

The term "outside" was not defined. The WSO was accepting memorial contributions at the time the Traditions were being written and this type of contribution was not considered "outside."

- Are Areas or AISs accepting contributions from non-members?

The Montana Area has declined outside contributions, whether they are memorial or not. There was an instance where a friend of an Al-Anon member wanted to contribute \$75 in honor of her friend and the positive effect the program has had on her friend, but the Area had to decline the contribution.

The New Jersey Area received notice of a bequest from a friend of an Al-Anon member; however, the Area did not accept the bequest since under the current policy, this would be considered an outside contribution.

- Perhaps creative alternatives could be considered and explored by the Thought Force as a memorial contribution instead of a monetary contribution.
- Would the motion for this policy include “family” and “friends”?

The Thought Force has not come up with a motion to change the policy. The Thought Force was just trying to obtain the Conference’s opinion on the topic.

- What is A.A.’s policy regarding memorial contribution from family members since Al-Anon follows A.A.’s lead?

The Al-Anon fellowship operates differently than A.A. It is not necessary to consult with the A.A. GSO, as this would be an outside issue for them.

- When does an Al-Anon member become a member? Newcomers put money in the basket prior to considering themselves an Al-Anon member, so in a way, the group accepted a contribution from a non-member.
- Areas might question the fellowship’s change in policy regarding memorial contributions since A.A. does not allow contributions from family members. Each member needs to have personal accountability in preserving the Legacies.
- I have friends and family members who would like to donate to our organization, including the company that I work for. If the Thought Force could establish safeguards and a clear policy on accepting this type of contributions, then it would be up to the individual making the contribution to accept our policy.
- We need to think about how the fellowship and organization might be perceived when a family member is trying to make a contribution in his/her time of grief and we decline it. Being able to accept contributions from friends and family members during a difficult time is a consideration to the family and a way of comforting them. If this is their first contact with Al-Anon, it wouldn’t be very welcoming.
- What would be any additional caveats to this discussion? What is the next step in this discussion?

This is a Conference decision on how to move forward, or whether to move forward at all. The Thought Force does not have a preconceived sense of what the next step is.

Currently, the WSO has a policy in place where funds are not earmarked. If the WSO receives a contribution that has been earmarked, the staff contacts the member to explain the current policy.

- Is the purchase of literature considered a contribution?

The WSO is a 501(c)(3) charity. Therefore, it needs to offer services to everyone, and in this instance, that would be the sale of literature. The WSO does not consider the purchase of literature by non-members a contribution.

- Can members make a contribution on behalf of anyone?

Members can make contributions on behalf of anyone, whether that person is a member or not. In the past, members have even made contributions on behalf of pets.

- Who wrote the Traditions and background? Are there any notes in the WSO Archives from the members who wrote the Traditions? When were the Traditions adopted and by whom?

The staff researched those questions several years ago and found people had changed the wording of the Traditions after the World Service Conference Charter was adopted in 1967. The wording of the Concepts was also changed after they were incorporated into the Charter in 1974. Lois W. was not as focused on documenting all of her work as Bill W. was for A.A. There are small pieces of paper in the WSO’s Archives that contain the changes to the wording in the Legacies, as the pioneers continued to make small adjustments. Once the Charter was adopted, the wording of the Legacies was maintained. When we discovered later changes, we changed the Legacies back to the working of that time.

- All the Traditions need to be embodied in any changes made to our Policies.
- We need to be careful that our spiritual principle of being self-supporting is not compromised and that we do not earmark contributions. The key is to find a balance as our founders did not see family members as outside contributors.
- This issue needs to be further researched in order to ensure that A.A. would not be affected if the policy would be changed.

The Chairperson of the Policy Committee asked Conference members how they would like to move forward with the topic.

- Continue the discussion at future WSCs.
- End the discussion and leave the policy “as-is.”
- Consider a change in the current policy.

Conference members shared:

- Perhaps a Task Force could be created to work on crafting language to discuss with the Policy Committee and discuss with the Conference in 2014.
- The terms “friend,” “family,” and “outside” need to be defined.
- Caveats need to be in place if the policy were to be changed.
- Is there a guarantee that this topic would be discussed at next year’s Conference?

As Chairperson of the Policy Committee, I would request that the Conference Leadership Team add this discussion to the 2014 Conference agenda.

After further discussion, the Conference agreed that a Task Force be formed to craft language to possibly change the Policy. It was asked that the Task Force define the terms “friend” and “family,” as well as establish safeguards for contributions from family members.

Anonymity

The Policy Chairperson introduced the topic by stating, “In October 2011, the Policy Committee began discussion about e-mail correspondence in response to member communication with the World Service Office. Some members were confused or concerned about the use of the name ‘Al-Anon’ in both the e-mail address and subject line of the July Current Mailing Address (CMA) newsletter. The Policy Committee began looking at proposed wording for page 91 of the ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.’

“The initial discussion came to agreement that:

- Personal e-mail addresses are assumed to be private.
- A corporate e-mail address is not a personal e-mail address, as it belongs to the employer.
- E-mails may contain the name ‘Al-Anon’ in the subject line, as long as the communication is within the fellowship.
- The WSO’s email address, wso@al-anon.org, has been used for more than 17 years and receiving an e-mail from the WSO does not imply Al-Anon membership.
- The WSO is allowed to send e-mail from (wso@al-anon.org) and use ‘Al-Anon’ and/or ‘Alateen’ in the subject line of an e-mail sent to a CMA or any link of service.

“As the discussion of the proposed wording progressed, the Policy Committee expanded the conversation and discussed anonymity as related to confidential e-mail lists and anonymity related to information that is posted on Area Web sites by the links of service and therefore available to the public. Subsequently, pages 88 and 89 were brought into the discussion. The goal of the expanded discussion on anonymity was to develop Policy that reflected preferred or best practice of Tradition Eleven, yet did not outline the procedure as that is within Area autonomy.

“At its meeting before the Conference, the Policy Committee discussed the comments submitted and made some changes. Many were style and edit corrections and other wording suggestions were incorporated, if they were part of the policy under discussion. The Policy Committee acknowledges that password-protected Web sites are not 100 percent secure, as sites can be hacked. This is important for members to discuss when making a decision on items to post to Area Web sites.

“Today, the Conference will review the amended text that came out of this one-and-a-half-year conversation. The Conference Chairperson will ask for agreement after each paragraph.”

Discussions included the following:

- Areas need to have a discussion on password-protected Web sites and the information in these. However, the discussions need to take place at the Area level as the Policy Committee does not have control over Area Web sites.
- Some of the wording is designed to be broad and encompass numerous aspects so there isn't a list of items that could be perceived as a specific list of what can or cannot be done.
- How can I post contact information for an open Al-Anon event on a Web site?
As long as there is no information indicating that you are a member, Areas could discuss ways to provide generic contact information for Al-Anon events, for example, a non-identifying e-mail address.
- Is it necessary to define "Al-Anon member"?
We are not defining members; however, an Al-Anon member is anyone who says he or she is a member.
- Areas continue to struggle with the concept of anonymity at the level of the Internet and print media.
- Information on the WSO's Public Outreach Web site and any other public Web site will show up on search engines. However, search engines do not display information on password-protected Web sites.
- When an Al-Anon member is being recorded, the taper usually asks the member to sign a release form and the member could note that they do not give permission to post the recording on a Web site or any other public domain. If this is not acceptable to the taper, you do not have to give your permission to be recorded.
- The problem with keynote speakers is that they could be promoted which could create personalities within Al-Anon.

Following the discussion, the Conference Chairperson asked that Conference members consider the following in reviewing the changes to this Policy.

- Is it accurate?
- Does it provide clarity?
- Can you live with it?

The Conference reviewed the changes made to the "Anonymity" section of the *Service Manual*. There were some additional changes made to the wording of the policy to further clarify its intent.

A Motion to approve the new Anonymity Policy Section was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #7, page 90)

Public Relations

The Chairperson of the Policy Committee introduced the discussion by stating, "In 2009, the WSO became aware that some Area and local service arms were producing their own public service announcements (PSAs) and placing them on YouTube or elsewhere on the Internet. The Policy Committee looked at this issue and proposed some revisions to the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" at the 2010 World Service Conference. However, during the discussion it became apparent that the proposed wording was unclear and insufficient. It was withdrawn for reevaluation by the Policy Committee.

"In July 2010, the Policy Committee began by discussing public service announcements (PSAs). Subsequently, a Thought Force was appointed to review the entire "Public Relations" section of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" and to consider whether the section needed to be re-organized in light of the continuing emergence of new communication technologies and how Al-Anon principles shape our communications policies.

"In January 2010, the Policy Committee agreed that the entire "Public Relations" section needed to be reorganized based on the following ideas and principles:

- Broadening ways to carry the message.
- All members and groups can carry the message.
- Personal anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, films, TV, and the Internet and other emerging public technologies.
- To attract, rather than promote.

“There was also a desire that this section would clarify and maintain the distinction between two different audiences—local and national.

“The goal of the Policy Committee was to provide a clear spiritual basis for Al-Anon’s public outreach activities while leaving intact the 1966 World Service Conference’s statement on ‘Attraction, not promotion.’ It is important to note that the WSO has been given the responsibility for national publicity for the creation of a uniform message throughout the fellowship. In June 1952, Lois and Anne wrote to the groups directly, and asked them for the authority to handle publicity at the national level. The groups granted this authority in letters and cards sent directly to the World Service Office, which was then known as the Clearing House. Today this is an even greater consideration in light of technology that expands public outreach from the local level to potential international level.

“To maintain consistency of the Al-Anon message, the Policy revision also considered:

- The creation and use of posters and flyers within the fellowship for communication of local events and for public outreach purposes.
- Allowing districts or Al-Anon Information Services to create posters for special local needs following a review by the Area.
- Anonymity during public outreach with the media and on the Internet.
- That any member may write an article about Al-Anon as an individual, but not as a spokesperson for the fellowship.
- Each member is responsible for maintaining his/her anonymity at the level of press, radio, film, TV, and the Internet.

“During the Policy Committee meeting before the Conference, the Committee discussed the suggestions to the text submitted. Ultimately, there were 26 drafts of this policy text. For the sake of clarity, some information was repeated in the various sections, since members tend to read only the information under the heading that they are interested in, rather than the entire section.”

The Conference was asked to review each change to the Policy and share their questions, suggestions, and concerns. The floor was opened for discussion and the following comments were made:

- What is the reasoning behind using the term “philosophy”?

Philosophy is a set of principles that the members of the Task Force used to help them work on the topic.

- The term “Internet” is a term that was created to be used solely with computers. Perhaps we can add “electronic media”.

Internet is the broadest term, as social media exists within the Internet. The Internet is the channel of communication through which other terms exist.

Perhaps we could add “the Internet as well as all forms of evolving public media.”

- The fellowship is confusing the medium with the message. The policy allows us to fill in the gap.
- There is confusion among the fellowship regarding the concept of anonymity at the public level. Letting someone know whether we are Al-Anon members is up to us; when it comes to the media, there are a set of rules. This is what the fellowship needs to understand: Al-Anon is not an anonymous fellowship, there are a set of rules when it comes to the media. We can still carry the message at the personal level and share our membership with others.
- Policy is a guiding principle to have the discussion; it is not necessarily a directive, but a guide.
- The WSO asks to review public outreach material at the local level, as it is the intent of the WSO to ensure that the material has a specific purpose and that it is consistent with Al-Anon.
- Can you expand on the use of the Al-Anon logo?

The logo can be used by the fellowship and used for identification within the fellowship. What the WSO wants to avoid is an individual using the logo improperly, for example, a member using the Al-Anon name or logo on his/her social media Web site or as a part of his/her name or page.

- The purpose of the policy is to provide clarity and unity within the fellowship.

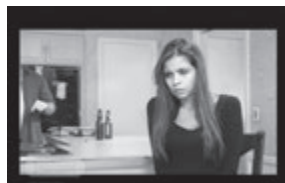
Conference members made further suggestions and corrections to the text of the policy. After all paragraphs were reviewed and approved, a motion was made to amend the text on pages 107-109 of the 2010-2013 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section on Public Outreach.

A motion was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #8, page 92)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAS)

Patrick Q.

Associate Director of
Communications—Media



Each Delegate received a DVD with all the versions of the PSAs (English, Spanish, and French) to take home to share with their Area's Public Outreach Coordinators. 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 video will be mailed to selected television stations this fall. Individual copies for Area distribution to other TV and cable stations will also be available. The Associate Director of Communications—Media noted that all faces and voices in the PSA are professional actors and are not Al-Anon members. The PSAs will be available in 15-second, 30-second, and 60-second segments in English—30- and 60-second segments in Spanish. The Conference members then previewed the two 60-second PSAs in all three languages. It was noted that these PSAs will also be posted on the Public Outreach Web site.

SKILL-BUILDING, SHARED LEADERSHIP SESSIONS

Skill-Building, Shared Leadership Sessions 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 skill-building session.

Shared Leadership

The session leaders started by defining shared leadership as: moving forward with confidence, collaboration, and clarity. "Shared leadership means working together, hand-in-hand, trusting each other. With a clear purpose, we all work toward the same goal and not against one another."

The goals of this workshop were:

- Define shared leadership.
- Share examples of how shared leadership can improve unity in the Area.
- Help attendees learn how to practice shared leadership.

The session leaders shared examples of shared leadership. They divided the workshop attendees into groups to discuss shared leadership scenarios and thought-provoking questions that related to each scenario. Afterwards, each group shared its comments with the other attendees.

The attendees summarized the session:

Shared leadership is asking for guidance from our Higher Power. We put these spiritual principles into action by:

- Working together.
- Asking for help.
- Trusting each other.
- Considering all views.
- Seeing the big picture.
- Working towards common goals.
- Understanding our roles and responsibilities.
- Supporting each other.
- Practicing rotation of leadership.
- Collaborating and utilizing the wealth of information from our trusted servants.

Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees introduced the concept of using the Knowledge-Based-Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM) at the 2006 World Service Conference. She remarked, “Everything old is new again, because I believe that making decisions in this way is not something new. It was always around . . .” It’s about knowing what you need to know to make a decision in the spirit of an informed group conscience.

Workshop attendees answered the following questions:

1. Why is the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience a tool for facilitating a broader discussion of a topic?

- It encourages thorough examination of big issues without an end in mind.
- It allows those who make the decision to become far less important than the fact that a good decision is made.
- It is a process for ongoing strategic thinking and strategy development that allows for the minority opinion to be heard during the discussion.
- It allows us to develop a reputation for value and nimbleness in carrying the message.
- It allows us to build a culture on trust and open communication.
- It allows us to make decisions using “Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing ‘Me’ to ‘We.’”

2. How is KBDM consistent with the program in forming an informed group conscience?

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

“Talk to each other, and reason things out.” In Al-Anon we emphasize the flow of two-way communication between our membership and leadership. KBDM is a process that stimulates communication.

- **Dialogue before Deliberation:**

This element allows us to discuss the information, ask questions, and express concerns before we construct the motion. The discussion is held with background information being introduced to frame the topic. All points of view are considered at each stage of the decision-making process. Concept Five is included in KBDM because all points of view are considered. Often the discussion reveals that we really don’t need a motion; all we needed was 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.

- **We have confidence in the competency of our partners – “presume goodwill”**

We have to remember everyone in service is a member of Al-Anon, and none of us would ever do anything to hurt Al-Anon. We have learned to presume goodwill.

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

Before coming to Al-Anon, we often didn’t trust others. We didn’t talk about things that were not comfortable for fear of retaliation. We couldn’t depend on other people—what they said or what they did. The Culture of Trust is a principle and value we learn in recovery. It is important to remember to take our principles and values along with us in service.

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.

3. Demonstrate the process by using the five KBDM questions to solve a problem.

After reviewing the KBDM process, each group became a Thought Force and reviewed a different scenario, and each group had 20 minutes to complete the entire KBDM process. Afterwards, each Thought Force reported back to the entire group.

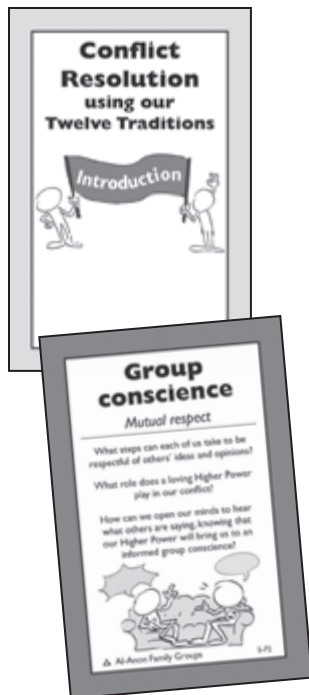
Conflict Resolution

Session attendees discussed Conflict Resolution and were given the opportunity to use the new Conflict Resolution cards (S-72) as part of the session. The attendees discussed the following:

- **Conflict:** A disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests, or concerns.
- **Resolution:** A solution to a problem or disagreement.

Conflict is a part of every relationship—even in recovery

1. **Presume goodwill.** Can we separate the personalities from the situation? We may be coming from different directions, but the goal of supporting Al-Anon is where we are heading. (Traditions One and Twelve)
2. **Pay attention to warning signs.** It's not about who is right, or who is wrong. Our Higher Power is the one authority. (Tradition Two)
3. **Find positive solutions to make conflict a constructive experience.** We can grow from difficult situations. We learn about ourselves. Working together, we learn we can accomplish more. (Concept Twelve, Warranty Five)



Conflict Resolution Tools

1. Self Examination

- Do I understand the true nature of the problem that we are trying to resolve?
- Do I know how I am feeling?

2. Honest Communication

- Am I truly listening?
- Am I letting others talk/vent? Did everyone have a chance to share?
- Do I understand other people's points of view?
- Am I using "I" messages, leaving out demands and ultimatums?

3. Find a solution:

- Are there key points that most can agree on?
- Have we thoroughly discussed all possible ideas that could lead to solutions?
- Take a prayer break for guidance.
- Agree to take a break, but come back again to work together. Is there a Step/Tradition/Concept that provides guidance?
- Can we agree to disagree?

4. Plan of Action:

- Make a list of the points agreed upon.
- Celebrate successfully working together.

The workshop was broken into three groups and each was given a scenario. Each group divided in half with half creating a skit to show how not to deal with conflict. The other group created a skit showing how to use the tools to deal with conflict.

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 may be considered further by the Board of Trustees in order to determine possible next steps.

Meet the Board Event Task Force

For several years, the Board has been studying the possibility of changing the venue of its July Board meeting. The initial idea was to reduce hotel costs for Trustees in Virginia Beach during peak tourist season.

In 2010, a Board Thought Force was formed and subsequently a Board Task Force reported to the Board in January 2011. At that time, the idea had morphed into less of a cost-saving project and more of an opportunity for the entire Board to interact with the fellowship in a “Meet the Board Event.” This event would take place after the Board meeting.

It was understood that, while there might be some savings to be had by moving out of Virginia Beach in July, that should not be the main factor in deciding where to move the meeting. The Board decided to give the Areas the opportunity to request the event in their part of the World Service Conference Structure.

A second Task Force was formed in 2012 to create a plan for an Area to request that the Board of Trustees July Event be held in its Area. This was to be introduced at the 2013 World Service Conference and implemented in July 2014.

The final vote on the plan was taken at the January 2013 Board meeting. At that time, it was decided to include the Executive Committee members in the activity, since they would also be present, and to put this plan into action on a three-year trial basis.

The Board of Trustees July Event is an opportunity for local Al-Anon members to interact with the Trustees and the Executive Committee members, also known as World Service Office (WSO) volunteers. It is a continuation of the need for the WSO volunteers to stay connected to the Al-Anon fellowship. At the Board of Trustees July Event, the WSO volunteers will welcome local Al-Anon members to an event the volunteers are hosting in your Area.

The 19 Board members and three Executive Committee members at large will come to your Area in July 2014. WSO volunteers will meet with Area Al-Anon members and have the opportunity to share meals. The WSO volunteers will hold activities with these local members. During these activities, all the participants will be able to interact on selected topics.

The participants will realize that we are all Al-Anon members, working in different capacities, for the good of the fellowship.

Following the presentation, Conference members shared:

- How many days and nights would the Board members stay at the chosen hotel?

That would be decided after the WSO negotiates with the hotel and determines the logistics of the event. The WSO will provide the Area with the information.

- What will members have access to? Would they attend Board meetings and hear Board deliberation?

Members wouldn't be able to attend Board meetings. However, the Board is still discussing

Ann C.
Chairperson, Trustee

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO A "MEET THE BOARD" EVENT

Where: A Saturday in July 2014
Where: Your Area
Who: Al-Anon Members, Trustees & Executive Committee members
What: WSO Program
Why: This is an opportunity for Trustees and the Executive Committee to interact with members, as well as for members to interact with Trustees and the Executive Committee.
Cost: Registration Fee: None
How: Areas apply to the World Service Office using the Request Form.
Area Participation: Publicize the event. Provide an Area contact person.
*Your date, program, and time are confirmed at a later date.

"Meet the Board" Event Request Form
 For a digital version of this document, please visit a computerized Conference meeting, Board of Trustees folder. Meet the Board Event sub-folder.

Please fill in all information
 The form must be received at the World Service Office (WSO) by September 15, 2013.

Area's Name _____
Suggested Date for Board Event _____
Suggested City for Board Event _____
 (Must be a city with an international airport)
Expected Area Attendance _____
Suggested Alternate City (Optional): See Address on A _____

Send your event request form to:
 World Service Office — Attn: Meet the Board Event

Mail: World Service Office
 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway
 Virginia Beach, VA 23464-5817
 USA

Email: WSO@al-anon.org

Fax: 757-563-1855

how the event would take place. The Board presented this idea in order to obtain the Conference's feedback regarding whether the Areas would be interested in hosting the event.

- For our Area, the timeline for the event would be short-notice since our AWSC is in August and in the fall. Will this be an annual event?

The trial is for a three-year period. If it is too short of a notice for 2014, your Area could apply for the 2015 event.

- Could an Area Assembly be incorporated to the event?

No, this would be a stand-alone event.

- Our Area's TEAM event had a great turnout. I am unclear if we would do the same type of marketing that we did for our TEAM event and whether we would negotiate with the hotels.

The WSO staff and Board would use the Area's estimate as the number of attendees and plan accordingly. The WSO would negotiate with the venues and hotel.

- Is the cost of the event based on the final negotiations with the hotel for rooms and meals?

Yes.

- If I understood correctly, the event would be free to the Area. However, the Area would be responsible for sending flyers to inform the members and there might be a nominal registration fee. Members will be able to interact with the Trustees and perhaps attend a dinner.

Yes, however, meals would be an additional cost to the attendees.

- Would the event be held in just one Area, or could multiple Areas participate? Would it be open to other Areas to attend?

The event would be held in one Area, but perhaps other Areas could be involved. It would be open to other Areas to attend.

- Is there a limit to member attendance?

There are no limits. The Board wants to determine if members would be interested in participating in this event.

- Would the event be held in a hotel?

We would try to find a hotel that has sufficient meeting space for both the Board meeting, as well as for a social gathering with the fellowship. If the space provided is not sufficient to meet with the fellowship, then we would look for additional space.

- What is the criteria for choosing an Area?

We have not determined this yet, as we are only in the beginning of the planning stage. We wanted to present the information to the Conference and determine how the idea would be received.

- Due to the weather and tourism in some Areas, it would not be feasible to hold the event during July. Has the Board considered holding the event at some other time of the year?

This has not been discussed, but we would consider it. As of now, we do not have a definite answer.

- We have previously negotiated with a local university for room and meals for some of our events. Would you consider a venue that's not a hotel?

You would give us this information. We would contact the university to determine if it is a feasible option.

- Would Board members be interacting with the event attendees?

Board members would be happy to interact with the fellowship.

- I like the idea as this would help eliminate the misconception of "us" versus "them."

- This is a great opportunity to build bridges between members and the WSO.

- Would the WSO consider one of the Canadian Areas to host the event? Are there limitations associated with the event?

The Board has not established restrictions on cost, location, or members attending.

- Would you be willing to travel to Puerto Rico despite the language barrier?

Yes.

- Would the location of the July event be included in the January Chairperson of the Board letter so that members from other Areas who wanted to attend could plan accordingly?

The information of the event would be shared ahead of time with the fellowship.

The Chairperson of the Board spoke for all WSO volunteers and stated that the volunteers couldn't be happier due to the Delegates' responses, enthusiasm, and interest.

Board of Trustees World Service Conference Structure Task Force

"At the 2012 World Service Conference, the Board introduced the idea of looking at a new and exciting Conference Structure.

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

"Last year the history of the Conference Structure was presented and it brought us to what we were doing and still are doing today. The Board of Trustees and the Conference had spent years trying to come up with a plan that might work for everyone and had come up with very little. So, it was time for the Areas to think 'outside of the box.' We asked you to consider three things: freedom, vision, and no-holds-barred. We asked you to come 'out of the box.'

"So take a look at these words again.

- **Freedom**—The Board challenged and freed Areas to experiment with what might work for that specific Area.
- **Vision**—You were to ask your Areas, 'Where do you see your Area and the needs of your Area five, ten, 15, 50 years from now?'
- **No-Holds-Barred**—You were told, 'If every Area could do anything they wanted in their own Area, or with another Area, to better serve those affected by someone else's drinking; to make this program available to everyone who wants it; to ensure that Al-Anon is known and can be found by every household... what might that look like?'

"We asked you to open up your mind and your heart and let your creativity loose. We offered every Area this plan: Formulate and implement a structure in your geographical Area or combination of geographical Areas for a trial period that would enable your groups to have full communication, participation, and representation.

"The Criteria was: No Restrictions! Be Creative! Be Empowering!"

"Thinking 'Outside of the box' strategies were welcomed.

"No structure changes were off-limits provided it would not affect Policy (pages 75 - 121 of the 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual) or our Legacies.

"Although the Board did not need to approve the strategy, if the strategy in some way affects the Conference, the Area needed to present its idea to the Board to review. Requests needed to be addressed to the Chairperson of the Board and turned in by December 15 each year, in order to be heard at the following January Board meeting. The Board later added that they would be accepting requests for six years.

"And last, the financial aspects of the trial implementation were the responsibility of the Areas involved and not the Conference or the WSO as a whole.

"We would like to hear from some Area Delegates what their Areas came up with."

The following Delegates shared what their Areas had come up with:

Jayne C., Panel 52, California South

"At the 2012 World Service Conference when the conversation began, I was very excited about the future prospects for my Area. We are the largest Area in the Structure (1,242 groups), which includes approximately 100 Alateen meetings. In past panels, we were probably responsible for bringing up the topic of Conference Structure. In all my excitement last year, I shared about envisioning my state possibly splitting into three Areas! Wow, easier said than done. How naïve one could be.

"I presented my Delegate's report at our May 2012 Assembly. I talked about Conference Structure asking the question, 'Does our current Area structure best serve the needs of our members?' I added

we have been asked to think out of the box and that we have the autonomy to redesign our structure, even in cooperation with California North, as long as implementing those plans do not affect Al-Anon as a whole. As I looked out into the room, their response was the ‘deer in the headlights’ stare. No one commented.

“I introduced the topic again in August at our AWSC meeting. We decided to form a Thought Force that would include individuals from all sections of the Area. The Conference Structure Thought Force met for the first time in early October. The members for this Thought Force consist of Group Representatives, District Representatives, Past Delegates, and members at large. We have met almost every Sunday night for one hour via telephone conference call. Our charge is: Is the current World Service Conference model providing the spiritual bridge we need to expand into the future in order to meet the needs of the Area?”

“Individually, we each answered the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process to Reach an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM) questions. The responses were e-mailed to me for collating and a document was created with all of the input. Each time we met, we went over all of the answers. The call was always summarized by the note taker. The resulting document will now be framed and presented at the May 2013 Assembly with the summarization of each question. Our goal is to start the conversation. Our next step must come from the discussion at the Assembly.

“The Thought Force will probably recommend that a Task Force is formed to develop a survey to distribute to the groups. This survey would be an opportunity to understand what the groups believe they need. Perhaps the groups believe we do not need to change anything. Whatever the outcome, it will come from the groups.

“Not only have the KBDM questions provided the forum to see how difficult restructuring would be, it has also allowed us to consider many different ‘out of the box’ options. It is now up to the discussion at the Assembly to determine where we go from here.

“I have spoken to the California North Delegate many times regarding their progress. The Delegate introduced the topic at the California North October 2012 Assembly. The topic led to lots of discussion. From that discussion, a Thought Force has been formed. We both realize that one of the possibilities could be a central California Area that would come from the southernmost part of California North and the northern most part of California South. We are trying to maintain close contact, knowing that whatever each Area decides could affect the other.

“To see that we are at the point of considering some sort of action after all these years is really exciting. It shows how slowly and thoroughly ideas are vetted. What we learned from all of our discussions is that the idea is good, but implementation (if that is what our Area wants) will also need to be very slow and carefully thought out. There are so many unknowns and so much to learn from others that this will be a focus of California South’s attention for a very long time.”

Nancy M., Panel 52, Texas East

“Our Committee consists of five past Area officers plus our current Delegate. We first met in January 2013. We are just beginning to understand how we can contribute.

“From the outset, we have agreed that restructuring is but one possible outcome. We don’t know for sure, but we all expect restructuring that affects the Conference is not likely to be very important in our Area.

“However, the possibility of restructuring is a fine excuse to look for ways for our service structure to better serve our groups. We expect that our approach to researching the needs of our groups will continue to evolve.

1. We believe the role of our service structure is:

- To increase public visibility of Al-Anon.
- To improve the welcome experienced by new people.
- To support groups in retaining new members.
- To increase willingness to do Twelfth Step work.
- To increase participation in district and Area service.
- To improve involvement of Spanish-speaking groups.

2. Therefore, the goal of our Committee is to ask groups:

- How can we grow Al-Anon?
- How can we involve more members?

3. Why ask the Group Representatives? We have nearly 200 years of combined Al-Anon experience on our Committee. So why do we want to ask groups?

“We will ask the GRs because improvement starts at the group level. The only way Al-Anon can grow is when groups welcome new people. Al-Anon membership can only increase when new members stay with a group. By attracting more people to service, we can start more meetings, reach out more, etc.

4. What are we doing?

“Members of our Committee have developed a series of questions to send out before we visit the districts. Our purpose is to conduct brainstorming sessions with the GRs.

“We hope to have a similar session at the next Area Assembly which will include all District Representatives. Our Committee is keeping an ear open for things that might be improved with structural changes. However, we suspect most improvements will be things we already do that could be done better.

5. How can we contribute?

“We believe the primary role of our Committee is to encourage and empower groups. We want to nurture and cheerlead without seeming parental. We hope to increase awareness and enthusiasm within each group. Our Area has a lot of variation in the geographic and group size in districts.

“It appears unrealistic to make rules on the size of a district. Some districts have a lot of service leadership, while others do not have service-connected people. We can listen for evidence of non-functioning districts to consider whether any structural changes would help. Similarly, some groups have Sponsors and members who share on the benefits of service and others do not. We are focused solely on listening to the Group Representatives.

“One person sharing something that he or she does gives everyone else in the room the opportunity to recognize, ‘Ah-ha, that’s something I could try in my group.’

6. Supporting Materials

“We have prepared a few posters to clarify the position with Group Representative.

- We have an Al-Anon organization chart that puts the groups at the top.
- We have a map of the Area showing the counties in each district. It also lists the number of groups in each district.
- We have a table that lists the number of Group Representatives from each district at each Assembly over the last four years that includes the percentage of the groups that participated, averaged over the last eight Assemblies.”

Terry F., Panel 52, Florida North

“When we were challenged to re-structure the Conference to make it better serve Al-Anon, I really didn’t believe my Area would be involved. Surprise!

“Even before I left the Conference, the Delegate from Alabama approached me to ask if Florida North would support Alabama changing the Area’s name to Alabama/Northwest Florida. (Our Fall AWSC voted a motion of support.)

“Soon after my return to Florida North, and shortly after my first report to AWSC, I was contacted by the Area Chairperson, with an exploratory request from a district in Florida South to move to our Area.

“Florida is mostly populated along its coastlines and sparsely populated in the center of the state. This is especially true of the south central part of the state that contains the Everglades swamp. When Florida was divided into North and South, an effort was made to have an equal number of meetings in both of the new Areas. The dividing line was fairly straight forward, except for the area around Sarasota and Venice where one of the districts given to Florida South was actually surrounded on three sides by Florida North. This district felt that it was, in many ways, cut off from the southeast coast of Florida, but was much closer to the Sarasota, Tampa, St. Petersburg area of Florida North.

“There were many questions that had to be answered. Was it only some groups that wanted to join Florida North, or the whole district? Would the groups be agreeable to being absorbed by our Sarasota District? Would Florida South agree to this move? Would our own Area agree at Assembly? What about Al-Anon Members in Alateen Service (AMIAS) training? And last, but surely not least, how would we go about it?

“Working with my fellow officers and staying in close contact with the Florida South Delegate, we came up with a three-step plan. First, the district would have to vote, by group conscience, to formally request the move.

“Second, the receiving Area, Florida North, would have to agree to accept the new district, and would have to ensure that the AMIAS in that district would meet our requirements and would be grandfathered in for a period of one year. We also looked at the financial impact to the Area. Following a long-standing Al-Anon tradition, the motion was for a three-year trial period.

“Third, after the Assembly passed the motion, a written petition was received from the district. It was up to Florida South to agree or disagree. That was accomplished at its Fall Assembly.

“All that was left was the paperwork, such as forwarding a memo to the WSO, from both Florida North and Florida South, agreeing to the move along with information on group numbers, AMIAS numbers, and the like.

“I don’t want to make it sound like it was too easy. A lot of people did a lot of background work. I do believe we came up with a very straightforward process that worked without many hitches.”

Maryon K., Panel 53, Alberta/Northwest Territories

“For years, the Canadian Delegates have been discussing the complexities of how to best serve the members and groups in the Northwest Territories. This vast region, located directly above Canada, consists of approximately 456,792 square miles of land, 34 official communities, many cultures, and over 12 languages. The capital city of the Northwest Territories is Yellowknife, and because it is located directly above Alberta, it initially made sense, structurally, to include the Northwest Territories with Alberta as part of the same Assembly. In 1999, the eastern three-fifths of the Northwest Territories became a separate Canadian Territory called Nunavut, yet the Conference Structure still includes it under the umbrella of Alberta/Northwest Territories despite it being on the other side of the continent. The Delegates have spent many hours collaborating, gathering information, and writing reports about this complex situation. Their research included determining how many Northwest Territories’ groups there were, and how their location, languages, and diverse cultures made each truly unique. Added to this, the groups and districts are divided by some of the most difficult terrain and climate imaginable.

“The Canadian Areas all came together in 2011, providing funding for the airfare, lodging, public outreach materials, and CAL to provide an Al-Anon presence at the First Canadian Eastern Arctic Convention at the invitation of A.A. The Delegate from Québec West was selected by lot to attend and participate. Overall, the event was a wonderful success. It opened the door for continued discussion and collaboration regarding the current Conference Structure. Some of the groups that might have benefited by joining Québec West were sent correspondence asking them to consider if they might be better represented by a change of Area. To date, they have not responded. Following the encouragement from the WSO to allow our thinking to be creative and empowering, we continue to ponder the idea that each province be responsible for the Northwest Territories and/or Nunavut groups located directly above their Areas, just extending the provincial boundaries straight upwards considering the flight paths and travel restrictions of the North. This change would be cost effective and allow more members an opportunity to participate at Area Assemblies and events, while not affecting the Conference, Policy, our Legacies, or Al-Anon as a whole.

“Many of our members are using the opportunity for ‘no-holds barred’ restructuring to research and consider how to achieve the best possible representation of our districts, Area Assemblies, and the Conference. We have to trust the process and believe it will reflect positively in our Area.”

David G., Panel 52, Rhode Island

“This is what we are doing in Rhode Island and how structural freedom can impact small Areas.

“Facts: We are geographically small; the state size is 48 miles long and 37 miles wide. We are within a one- to two-hour drive of every New England state. We only have 49 groups. We have five districts. We have 15 Area positions. We have trouble filling the service positions in the Area. We have trouble getting GRs for our groups. Many people fear group or Area service, as they don’t want to have to go to Assemblies or Area service meetings.

“What we have done:

1. I first included the Conference’s challenge in my Delegate report to Area.
2. We then created an Area Thought Force.
3. We then created an Area Task Force.

“In response to a challenge from the Al-Anon Board of Trustees at the 2012 World Service Conference, the Rhode Island Area World Service Committee formed a Thought Force ‘to explore possible Area structure changes that would maximize our ability to serve the needs of the fellowship.’ At the November Area Assembly, we had a breakout session where we shared ideas about possible changes. We presented our ‘thoughts’ to the Assembly and they voted to create a Task Force to make recommendations to the Group Representatives on Area structure changes at the next Area Assembly.

“Ideas that came out of our discussion include:

- Have the November Assembly as part of the workshop.
- Change from five districts to three: North, South, and East.
- Expand the pool of candidates for Delegate to include District Representatives and AWSC current and past active members.
- Create shorter terms of service for GRs (and possibly AWSC officers, Coordinators, and DRs).
- Create GR training, job descriptions, handbook.
- Embrace technology.
- Network with other Areas.
- Encourage GR Service Sponsors.
- Stagger terms of office for AWSC officers, Coordinators, and DRs.
- Create apprenticeships to educate new officers/Coordinators.

“We also discussed what we like about the current Area structure:

- AWSC meets every six weeks.
- E-mail correspondence.
- Keep the number or increase the number of officers/Coordinators to minimize the amount of work.

“This Task Force is to formulate a recommendation to be presented at the June Assembly.

“We put in a request for regional sharing at our Regional Delegates’ Meeting. Specifically, asking each Delegate to bring a list of their Area officers/Coordinators, as well as a copy of their proposed 2013 budget. We will have our Area officers contact their Area officers for specific information and sharing. We want to look to our neighbors to see how their Areas work, and adopt their best practices. As our states are so close, we will try, regionally, to have representatives at each other’s state conventions.

“We are also looking at job descriptions and seeing if they are needed, or could be better defined. If we can’t fill Area jobs, do we really need them?

“We are using this opportunity to look inward at the Area to address our own structural weaknesses. How can our small size be an advantage in organizational structure?”

After these five Delegates finished sharing, the Conference was asked the following:

What, if anything, did your Area come up with? Although maybe not implemented yet, please give us the best plan your Area is thinking of pursuing. Did anybody get audacious?

Please share with us your stumbling blocks and lessons learned which could help Delegates to understand how to begin their Area conversations and work through the challenge of explaining and considering structure changes.

If your Area decided to do nothing, let us know what they talked about and why they came to that decision.

And last, if you have not even had this discussion yet in your Area, think right now and answer this question: If we, as a structure, were starting from scratch right now, what would we do different today than our cofounders did? What would our structure look like?

The floor was opened for discussion and the following comments were made:

- If the Texas Areas decided to change their boundaries, would that need to be approved by the WSO?

Originally, the Texas Area created its own division; it was not the WSO or the Conference. The WSO is not a governing entity. If Areas realign themselves, that is up to Area autonomy. If Areas

decide to change their boundary lines, and both Areas come to that agreement, they can do so since it doesn't affect the Conference Structure. All the WSO would need is the documentation.

- Our Area is in the early stages of redistricting and redefining Area boundaries. We've encountered longtime members unwilling to listen to our discussion and consider supporting change. Is there any information the WSO could provide to help us overcome the verbal and strong, minority appeal. They have made this into an "us versus them" topic. Perhaps the WSO can provide us with guidance and review our information.

The WSO and the Conference have provided the fellowship with two tools that can be very effective in resolving conflict—the Conflict Resolution Cards (S-72) and the KBDM. The KBDM process is to build on the idea that there are no preconceived answers, and to get all the various parties in the same group and let them answer those questions. Remind members that they are not being asked to make a decision, but only to bring their answers to the KBDM questions back to the Assembly.

I would form a Thought Force comprised of members from both Areas and let the members be of the "opposite" sides of opinion and see what they can develop. The WSO will not intervene on Area issues, as that is not the WSO's role. The WSO would encourage all parties to talk to each other. It can give guidance, but is not an authority.

- We continue to struggle in our Area with integrating districts that are more remote and have more in common with adjacent Areas. We are currently reviewing our process and are trying to form a Thought Force to answer the KBDM questions and come up with ideas and solutions to better serve our Area and integrate districts.
- In our Area, we've joined adjacent districts with no participation with districts that do have participation. Although the number of districts has decreased, they are all currently well-represented. We also created a Spanish-speaking district to better serve Spanish-speaking members and give those members the opportunity to be DRs and Area officers.
- California South did a great job with the discussion in their Area. We presented the topic at our California North Assembly. However, despite having 800 groups, we only had 300 GRs attend, so the majority was not there to participate. We surveyed the Area and asked how the districts are being served and what are the challenges they are facing. We formed a Thought Force and started to answer the KBDM questions. We also want to get people engaged in the conversation and to discuss what a well-served group looks like.
- In our Area, we decided to take our time and be thoughtful and careful about the restructuring in deciding which direction we would want to take. We divided the state in sectors and started our discussion from there. Our Area created a Thought Force and we are going through KBDM. We are meeting regularly by conference call. We plan to present our findings and strategies at our upcoming Assembly. We discovered that while some districts excel, others are lacking. We would like to even things out. We would also like more group participation at the Assembly, as only two-thirds of the GRs are attending.
- This process doesn't really impact our Area. We've redistricted in Ottawa, and this happened by mutual agreement.
- I just want to confirm that if things are working well for an Area, we do not need to make changes.
- We created a Thought Force in our Area to discuss current geographical issues within our Area, including the possibility of redistricting to get all districts active and share what service and participation can do for them.
- The western part of our Area has been more motivated to participate. We are currently working on reestablishing groups and developing a carpool system so the GRs and DRs can attend Assemblies in both Areas. I think the key is also to make ourselves available.
- Our Area faces challenges with some longtime members who do not like change. These members expressed their concern that if our Area, which is rather small, would merge with another Area, a specific Region would have more voice due to the number of groups in a certain location. We are discussing restructuring groups in a town bordering Vermont. The only concern noted is that if one group joins the adjoining Area, all future groups in that town would be affected by this decision. We will continue all our discussions.

- Our Area has issues regarding the distances between districts. We've also discussed the possibility of realigning some of the districts in a manner that better suits our Area. We created a Thought Force to study this possibility. In the past, districts were aligned with A.A.'s districts. We've also discussed reaching out to the western portions of the state to reach Native American communities. In addition, in an effort to obtain maximum participation while taking into consideration costs, we are considering implementing a voice/video over Internet program in order for members in remote locations who cannot attend the Assembly in order to still participate.
- Our Area showed no interest in this topic. However, I plan on sharing this information and perhaps discuss redistricting some of the districts that are not involved or lack participation.
- Our Area has been undergoing change for about six years. We face challenges due to our geography. We had a group that went with the neighboring Area and after several years returned to our Area. We have remote locations with very small populations, and travel is difficult as there are mountainous regions. We've also faced a lot of resistance with the implementation of KBDM. Some groups are no longer attending the Assembly, and some meetings do not have GRs so they are not represented. There has also been controversy since a district separated itself from the Area, because the Area separated its Assembly meeting date/location from A.A.'s.
- Our Area felt that it does not need to restructure itself, but we found this to be a wonderful opportunity to create a Thought Force to examine the strengths and weaknesses of our AWSC. Despite the distances, the Assembly rotates through the state to make it fair for all regions of the state to attend. We've also given the groups the freedom to consider "jumping" district boundaries, if it suits them best.
- We had a motion come to our Assembly from two districts that wanted to merge, as they decided that would be the best for them.
- When you start the conversation of possibly restructuring an Area, the Delegates can start with open questions that will restart the conversation and set the tone for lively discussions. I've learned that when we are "stuck" in a discussion, the key is to change the question.

Before the session ended, the Chairperson of the Board noted, "This discussion illustrates the diversity of our fellowship. I hope that this was helpful to those of you who didn't know where to start the conversation, as well as provided even more creative ideas to everyone. Remember, this is a six-year trial. If you heard something here today that you want to follow up on, please write down that Delegate's name and Area now, so you can talk to them later. As we say in Al-Anon, 'Talk to each other.' It is the purpose of the Conference to ensure the future of Al-Anon."

Task Force: Piece with Criteria to Help Service Arms Identify Service Jobs for Dual Members

At the 2011 World Service Conference, the Thought Force for "Areas to Show How Service Contributes to Growth and Is an Integral Part of the Al-Anon Program" was asked to present strategies to create enthusiasm for Area service and to show personal benefits to the individual members. The Task Force opened the presentation with the following:

"The charge for our Task Force was to create text for a piece of service material (guideline, leaflet, etc.) that groups, districts, and Areas can use to identify and explain to dual members the opportunities for service that are available to them in the Al-Anon program. We were to generate and present a list of criteria to include in the piece, which would help to identify those service jobs that are available in the various structure levels that are appropriate for dual members.

"We felt that the first order of business was to define what we mean by a 'dual member.' We also believed that this definition should be easy to find, so we suggest putting the statement in an attention grabbing box, bold font, or other attention-grabbing means.

"In Al-Anon, dual membership specifically refers to those members of Al-Anon who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.). In Al-Anon, we have many members who are also members of other organizations, but that does not automatically mean they are 'dual members' even if the other organization is another Twelve Step fellowship, such as Overeaters Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous.

Geneva D., Chairperson
Panel 51
Missouri

“It is important to remember that dual members *are* Al-Anon members and that service is an important part of *everyone’s* recovery. At the same time, it is important to remember that the fellowships of A.A. and Al-Anon have a special relationship. Our origins are similar. We adapted our Twelve Steps and Traditions from A.A., and the Concepts are based on the principles that A.A. had already worked out. There are family ties across the fellowships, not just husbands and wives, but children, parents, other relatives, and friends.

“The primary purpose of each fellowship is different. In each fellowship, the primary purpose is defined in their respective Fifth Tradition. In A.A., they state, ‘Each group has but one primary purpose... to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.’ Our own Tradition Five states, ‘Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics.’ It goes on to tell us how to do this, ‘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.’

“In Al-Anon service, it is essential that we keep the focus on our own purpose.

“The founders of A.A. and Al-Anon wanted to preserve separate fellowships to avoid two conflicting structures that could give the appearance of speaking for A.A. This seems to be a fact that is not always understood. When presenting to your Assembly, you may want to refer to the guideline ‘Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.’ (G-3)

“This brings us to the two principle ideas to avoid a conflict of interest in service. Dual members may serve in positions that don’t affect Al-Anon policy, and they may serve in positions that do *not* lead to membership in the World Service Conference.

“Bearing these two points in mind, we recognize and respect the autonomy of the various service arms (AIS, LDC, convention, etc.) as they determine who is a voting member. However, it is also essential that we remember the rest of Tradition Four—the part about ‘except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.’ So, when allowing dual members to stand for a position, the decision must be based on whether that position can make policy decisions. When electing their Delegate, Areas base their requirements upon the constraints provided by the *Service Manual*. While they may or may not choose to add other qualifications, the *Service Manual* defines the requirements for Al-Anon as a whole.

“In creating the handout, the Task Force incorporated the principles adhering to Tradition Four and identified specific positions to avoid confusion and provide guidance.

“The Task Force prepared this document to support the service arms in identifying service opportunities for dual members, clarifying the criteria to use when deciding which service opportunities are appropriate for dual members, and creating a list of available service opportunities that can be filled by dual members. It is important to remember that local policies vary widely, so all positions may not be available in your Area.

“The Task Force realizes this subject has been talked about for many years, so now we would like to change that conversation here at the World Service Conference, and we hope you will be able to do the same within your own Areas.”

The Thought Force asked two questions. Conference members shared on each.

How has your Area tried to include dual members in your service structure?

- Many dual members in our Area have felt like second-class citizens so we have given them ideas on how they could serve and feel included. We’ve also reminded members attending Assemblies who could and who could not vote.
- How much of this information can we include in our Delegate’s report?

The text submitted is a draft for the Board to review and then give to the staff for implementation. We are discussing this with the Conference to possibly obtain more information to include in the text. You can discuss with your Area more ways that dual members can serve. This discussion would also help you determine where your Area is on this topic.

- In our Area, we have numerous dual members who have become Group Treasurers.
- We are not discussing the current policy, but rather the application of the policy from a positive perspective on how they can serve.
- In our Area, dual members are encouraged to participate at the group level, except as Group Representative or Alternate Group Representative. Dual members are encouraged to participate in district workshops, as well as in planning or chairing the workshops. In one district, there wasn’t a Group Representative, and a dual member was encouraged to act as an e-buddy in the absence of a Group Representative to pass along Area information to the group.

- In our Area, groups are sending dual members to the Assemblies as their Group Representatives, which is an issue.
- In one of our districts, the district Public Outreach Coordinator is a dual member who is actively engaged in service work, but cannot vote at district meetings.
- It can be difficult to tell someone who is willing to serve that they can't. Perhaps within the text, statements could be incorporated to help members come up with ideas on how dual members can serve and not be discouraged.
- Could an Area Coordinator participate at the Area level, as long as the position does not lead to Area Delegate?

Dual members cannot serve in any position that is involved in policy-making decisions or development of policy at the Area level. It's not just positions that lead to being elected as a Delegate. Every Area is autonomous regarding which Area positions can vote or are involved in decision-making.

This information is provided as a foundation for Areas to have the conversation and determine which positions dual members can serve while adhering to the current policy. It is a guideline for Areas to adapt to their needs and current structure. One of the reasons for this policy is that two entities would be speaking on different policies and would create the appearance of a conflict on who is speaking for A.A.

Some members can separate their membership in both fellowships, while others can't. This cannot be determined on a personal basis, as we would be making policy based on personalities instead of principles.

- Areas could create a Coordinator position that is non-voting, as it is up to Area autonomy to determine what would suit the Area's needs.
- The information here is very exciting, as we have always focused on why dual members cannot serve: this brings a wealth of ideas on how they can serve.

Does your Area have written criteria explaining how dual members are able to serve?

- Our Area does not have written criteria, but perhaps we should develop a guideline based on the policies and the ideas given to us by the Task Force, as we are always encouraging dual members to serve.
- Our Area does not have written criteria, but we do allow dual members to participate in positions that are not policy-making positions or ones that can vote.
- Dual members are not allowed to participate on the Speaker Committee in our Area, as the Area feels that they would have substantial policy influence in the membership and would be sharing their A.A. membership.
- The information given will help us start the conversation in our Area and develop criteria.

The Chairperson of the Board noted that the next step is to take the suggestions and comments given by the Conference members, as well as the information developed by the Task Force, to the Board and review the information in its entirety. Then the information would be given to the staff for implementation.

Task Force: Tool Kit on Service and Personal Growth

At the 2011 World Service Conference, the Thought Force for Areas to Show How Service Contributes to Growth and Is an Integral Part of the Al-Anon Program was asked to present strategies to create enthusiasm for Area service and to show personal benefits to the individual members. The Thought Force proposed six strategies; the most popular strategy was to develop a "Take Out Tool Kit" of service items. These items could be used by members in group service, by members serving on convention committees, or by members already participating in service to enhance their experience.

As a result, the Task Force to Develop Text for at Least Five Pieces was created and it was charged with developing text for at least five pieces that could be included in a "Take Out Tool Kit" for use at the group, district, or Area level. The "Tool Kit" needed to include information that would apply to those new in service, as well as those who have participated in service at varying levels.

Shirley R., Chairperson
Panel 51
Arkansas

The five pieces are:

- Members New to Group Service.
- Members Serving the District.
- Members Serving the Area.
- Gifts of Service.
- How Does Service Work for Me?

The Task Force gave a presentation to the Conference. The presentation ended by posing the following questions for discussion to the Conference:

How could you use this information at the group, district, and Area level?

What did you find helpful in the information in the presentation?

Is there anything that you would like to see added?

The floor was opened for discussion and the following comments were made:

- How will we use this information? Will it be used at the various Area levels?

When this is developed by the staff, we will inform the fellowship. The Task Force was asked to develop text, not the final product. We hope that the final product will be used at all Area levels. The purpose of these questions is to obtain feedback from the Conference and perhaps expand the information presented.

- Our districts are energized about service and are planning workshops on service. This information is very helpful. We can use it at all levels as a PowerPoint presentation, or as information to facilitate a workshop discussion.
- This will be a great tool to help members be enthusiastic about service and put into practice “When I got busy, I got better!”
- I think more Areas should try to have TEAM events! Our Area was very energized after the TEAM event.
- I think a way to engage members is by asking thought-provoking questions so members can come up with different ideas on how to get involved in service.
- Members will see that service provides different tools, including practicing safekeeping, establishing boundaries, and the opportunity to fail in a safe environment.
- We should also add the “fun” part of being involved in service and the camaraderie. This might help to spark enthusiasm.
- We need to fill positions with members who are willing to do the work, not just fill a position.
- I think this will be a helpful tool to instill in newcomers the importance of service.
- Can we discuss this information at our upcoming Assembly? Will the tool kit be available?

The tool kit has not been developed, but you can start the conversation.

- I don’t think members realize that they can be involved at various levels, including just submitting sharings for *The Forum* and other publications.
- We asked outgoing members to share with possible candidates for Area positions their biggest fear when they started in a service position and how they grew in the position. This helped other members see the various positions differently and connect with those who are currently in service.
- We try to encourage members to bring other members to Assemblies by offering prizes to whoever brings the most guests.
- We developed an inventory where members shared what their greatest fears were when they took the position. The common trait was that members felt they wouldn’t be able to do a good job. Also, members were asked to share what personal growth they received from holding that position.
- Thank you to the Task Force for combining “ingredients” that will inspire all facets and levels of service in one tool kit.
- When I started my journey in service, I noticed a member who had her *Service Manual* full of Post-it Notes. I asked her to sit with me and share her experience and input. I asked about every

service position. She asked where I was in my life and suggested where I could start to be of service. At that point, I started as a Lone Member contact, as this was the most suitable for me at the time. I follow this example when I sponsor members.

- I think it is important to create the idea of having the outgoing Coordinator train the incoming Coordinator. In this way, we won't lose the wealth of information that the outgoing Coordinator can provide.
- Encouragement can go a long way! Members experienced in service should help those who are new and let them know that they can be successful and we will help them achieve that goal.
- We need to let members know that doing service is as simple as sharing their story, putting literature out at the meetings, and being a greeter. When I started the program, I was approached by group members and asked to help with some tasks, and although minor, this was a real ego booster for me.
- In *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) it is explained how Al-Anon service is unconditional love. I believe this sets the tone and spirituality of our service. In order for us to be fully self-supporting, we have to have people willing to fill the service positions.

The Chairperson of the Board noted that the Board will review the text developed by the Task Force, as well as the information shared by the Conference members, and submit all the text to the staff for implementation.

Task Force: Workshop on Importance of CAL in Meetings

At the 2011 World Service Conference, the Thought Force to Support Areas in Dealing with Groups Whose Activities Fail to Consider Al-Anon or Alateen as a Whole was charged with identifying the issues that lead to this problem and developing strategies that will assist the Areas in dealing with these groups in a positive and productive manner.

The Thought Force identified ten practices, and then six strategies that could be implemented to address the practices. After these were presented, the Conference members discussed them and shared their thoughts on each strategy. It became apparent that many members of the Conference were concerned about the use of outside literature at many of the groups with these issues, so Strategy Six—to create a workshop based on why groups need to use CAL—was preferred.

This Task Force's charge was to create a workshop, based on the pamphlet, *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (P-35), that can be used by groups, districts, and Areas to clarify why it is necessary to use only CAL in Al-Anon meetings. Along with clarifying the use of CAL, the workshop needs to address the reasons that use of outside literature in Al-Anon meetings, workshops, etc., including but not limited to the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous, is not an accepted practice in Al-Anon Family Groups.

The Task Force presented a lively skit followed by a PowerPoint Presentation on the importance of CAL at meetings. After the presentation concluded, the following questions were asked to Conference members for them to share on each:

- Why is the use of CAL important to group unity?
- How does use of CAL avoid confusion?
- What CAL would you recommend to discuss this topic?

Conference member shared:

- We had a member who consistently tried to use the "Big Book" at our meetings. The member also tried to recruit newcomers to do the same. Our group took a group conscience and agreed that no outside literature would be allowed in order to keep the focus on Al-Anon.
- I received a call from a longtime member who shared her concern that one of the members in her group kept referring to psychology literature. The longtime member was requesting guidance. I would like to ask the WSO what is considered a brief reference?

A brief reference means that you mention it without elaborating on the actual content. For example, you can say, "In a psychology book, I read . . .," and just reference the information rather than go into detail about it and sidetrack the entire meeting.

Norm W., Chairperson
Panel 51
New Mexico/El Paso



- It helps when there is a variety of CAL available to lead the meeting.
- I think this skit is a wonderful tool to share in my Area. We currently have a workshop in our Assembly regarding “what aggravates you in a meeting and what to do about it.” This information will enhance our workshop because the use of outside literature is an issue within our groups.
- In my meeting, we ask the person currently chairing the meeting to contact the person who signed up to chair the following meeting and ensure that they only use CAL when they chair the upcoming meeting. We do this in order to maintain group unity.
- The fifth meeting of every month, we discuss the importance of CAL.
- I have been asked by members the reasoning behind using new terms in our literature, such as “qualifier” and “crosstalk,” as these are being perceived as accepted terms.

If you find examples of where in our literature you can find these terms, the Literature Committee would be glad to discuss this. When the WSO receives sharings with the term “qualifier,” the staff changes it the term to “alcoholic” for consistency. In addition, words do change and outside terms have become more widespread, not just in Al-Anon, but in the world. At one point, detachment was considered an outside term and now it is a part of our language.

The Chairperson of the Board ended the discussion by noting that the Task Force had completed its charge and that the skit and presentation would be available on e-Communities for Delegates to take back to the Areas.

Thought Force: Strategies to Strengthen Personal Connections

Kathleen B., Chairperson

Panel 51

Alaska

One of the strengths of the Al-Anon program is the personal connection members make through their sharings with each other before, during, and after meetings. However, in this time of a “fast moving, no time world,” many of these connections are no longer available for our newer members, as well as our continuing members, because the Al-Anon members don’t take the time they used to for discussions and “meetings after the meeting.” The first place, and one of the most important connections, is a home group. Both newcomers and longtime members make many of their first personal connections at a home group, which is why a home group is so important to a member’s recovery.

This Thought Force was charged with “developing strategies to be used by home groups to strengthen the personal connections between all members of the program.”

The Thought Force developed five strategies:

1. Develop a welcome home kit to show how to connect in a home group by socializing and working together.
2. Develop a skit to encourage active participation in a home group that includes the benefits of service.
3. Hold social functions, such as luncheons, dances, pot luck suppers, picnics, fundraisers, or after-the-meeting coffee clubs.
4. Facilitate regular workshops that encourage participation in a home group.
5. Develop an informational piece to include meeting topics that encourage home group participation.

Following the Thought Force’s presentation, Conference members were asked to share which strategies they liked/disliked and to propose other possible strategies. The Conference floor was opened and the following comments were made:

- For the past nine years, my Area has performed a skit at the A.A. Convention. We have many newcomers participate. We also rotate service and try to get as much participation as we can. This had been a terrific social event.
- I like the idea of developing a welcome home kit, since it all begins at the group level. The basis of our Al-Anon foundation begins at our home group. Anything we can do to strengthen the home group is a great idea.
- We invite speakers from bordering Areas. That helps to create excitement and revive our personal connections.

- I grew up in a less-than-ideal home. Finding a home in Al-Anon was very important—this home was my home group. In my home group, we have expanded to what each of us aspires to have in our spiritual home. The welcome home kit is a wonderful opportunity to expand on this idea.
- The idea of a home group is important because this is where we get to know other members. When someone is absent, we miss that person. We invite newcomers to the business meetings.
- One important position in my home group is the position of “greeter” to welcome people at the door. When I was assigned this position, I was more petrified than the person I was greeting. Through holding this position, I learned the importance of welcoming everyone who walks through our door.
- We practice shared leadership in my Area by asking each group within the districts to host a monthly speaker meeting. The hosting group selects the speaker, distributes flyers, and chairs the meeting. I ask the people I sponsor to participate at the speaker meeting. Members have all been willing to participate. This has helped the relationships with our home group grow.
- We need to strengthen personal connections. People don’t return to meetings because they do not feel welcomed or connected. However, I am concerned that we want to create a “kit” for every topic.
- I like the information presented but I am concerned that we are looking for gimmicks to maintain membership, rather than focusing on the spiritual principles of the program.
- We have created calendars for members to sign up to chair meetings and encourage all members to be involved. During our speaker meetings, members compete to be the “greeters” during the speaker meeting. We also support two Alateen groups. As a result, we have entire families attending meetings at our location.
- We have made the newcomer meetings longer and take a break during the meeting so we can interact with the newcomers and ensure that they feel welcomed. I also feel that strong meetings attract potential members.
- Is it possible just to write “welcome home” on the newcomer packets instead of developing a kit?
- We ensure that we always have an empty seat available for the possible newcomer who might attend a meeting. We also need to make sure that we don’t isolate the newcomer when they are at meetings.
- In our group, we have members who have volunteered to be temporary Sponsors for the newcomers.
- I think the idea of the home group varies among Areas. It is our job to reach out.
- The idea of being welcoming and having personal connections has to begin with “me.” I try to arrive early so I can greet newcomers. Then I invite them to have coffee before or after the meeting.
- When we share our personal stories, we are making a connection. We also need to remember how we felt at our first Al-Anon meeting and what it meant when someone reached out to us.
- It can take time to connect with others. When we celebrate our anniversaries, one of the members celebrating their Al-Anon anniversary speaks. Someone else brings a cake.
- A smile can make a world of difference to someone. Remember that it doesn’t matter what our day was like, we are happy to be at our meeting. I introduce myself to the newcomer and ask that person to sit next to me. Personal connections are what makes Al-Anon real.
- When newcomers return to our meeting, we say we’re glad they came back. We like making people feel acknowledged and missed.

Following the discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked the Conference what it desired to do with the information presented by the Thought Force. After much discussion, the Conference agreed to give the information presented to the Home Group Thought Force, as creating another Task Force or Thought Force with similar charges could create a conflict. The Chairperson of the Board will revise the charge of the Home Group Thought Force.

Thought Force: Use of Computers at the World Service Conference (WSC)

Bette R./Cathy B., Chairperson
Panel 50/Panel 51
Oregon/Illinois South

In 1997 the Board of Trustees, after input from the Conference evaluations and the Conference Leadership Team, decided that laptop computers would not be used during the general sessions of the Conference for a variety of reasons. At the 2011 Conference, the issue of computer use by Conference members was brought forward because of the increase in the use of technology for communication and informational purposes. Since many of the Conference members stated that they feel as comfortable using their laptops as they do working off of paper copies, it was asked whether it is time to consider how computers could be used during the Conference. The Thought Force was asked to brainstorm the pros and cons of computer use by Conference members at the Conference and to develop a variety of strategies that demonstrate the specific ways that laptops could help individual Conference members in their responsibilities during the Conference week.

The original charge posed to this Thought Force dealt with laptop computer use at the World Service Conference (WSC). With permission of the Board Chair, the Thought Force changed the charge to the use of electronic devices at the WSC. The term “electronic devices” includes laptop computers, tablets, smart phones, e-readers, etc.

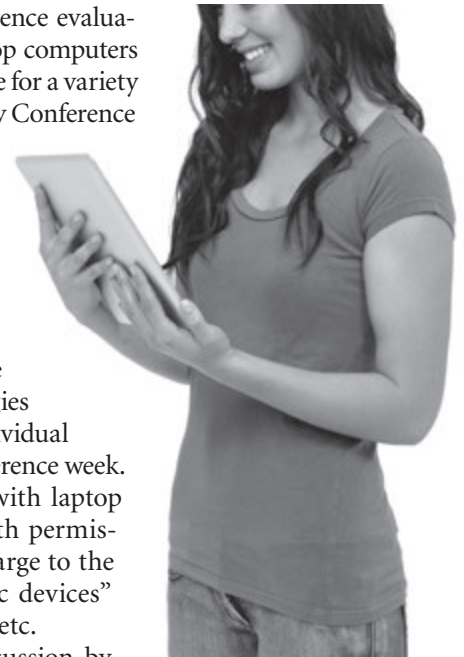
The Chairperson of the Thought Force opened the discussion by stating the following: “The world is rapidly adopting technology, as is much of the Al-Anon membership. Our cofounder Lois was all for change to ensure progress in Al-Anon. The World Service Office has adopted many uses of technology, such as e-mails, e-Communities, Web sites, e-literature, Al-Anon on-line meetings, Alateen chat rooms, use of blogs, social networks, etc., but Conference members have been asked not to use electronic devices during Conference sessions. A Delegate brought up a proposed motion during the 2011 World Service Conference ‘to develop policies that would allow optional usage of computer devices for all World Service Conference members during the general sessions of the Conference.’ (2011 Conference Summary, page 80)

“Our trusted servants bring matters for discussion to the WSC that need consideration for adoption, rejection, or direction, thus ensuring and making effective leadership possible with trust in our Higher Power, Al-Anon, and each other. The use of electronic devices can improve communication, participation, and representation in carrying the message in unity, working in harmony with mutual trust, and singleness of purpose.

“Note that electronic devices are very different in their software and hardware. They use different types of storage media and have a variety of ways to transfer data back and forth to the device. Some can use USB flash drives, some use memory cards, some require a cable to connect to a computer. The wide variation in electronic media software is of concern, as noted.

“If there is a Task Force for this issue, it may wish to consider strategies for placing restrictions on the use of these electronic devices during the Conference. This was not our issue to consider.”

The Thought Force members presented the following strategies, including the pros and cons for each.



Strategy One

Use electronic devices to share information and documents with other Conference members during Conference

- Electronic/digital materials are easier and faster to distribute during Conference.
- Facilitate common access to documents on e-Communities.
- Conference material may be easier to find and access on these devices than in the Conference Notebook.
- All Conference Notebook materials could be stored on the device and are accessible at any time by the members.
- Presentation handouts can be shared electronically instead of making paper copies.
- All information on the Members' Web site would be accessible during the Conference.

- Notes can be shared with other Conference members (e.g., in case someone is out of the room when something important happens; or if someone's device fails).

Pros

- ✓ Schedule changes and updates to materials could be done dynamically, and everyone could see the updates instantly on their device.
- ✓ Enhances communications among Conference members.

Cons

- ✓ Sharing information and documents with other Conference members during the WSC could be a distraction to current activity.
- ✓ Some members' perception of what is important to share can be different from others' perception.
- ✓ Not all devices can easily share information with other dissimilar devices.
- ✓ This could be a violation of Concepts Three and Four.
- ✓ This could be a violation of the no side conversations rule.

Strategy Two

Use electronic devices to improve understanding during Conference

- Enhances the experience and the performance (view PSAs and podcasts during Public Outreach presentations, view WSO Web site, look up/research for information in "notebook" materials, find Conference materials faster/easier if the device has a search capability).
- Helps to prepare and organize thoughts, for example, when speaking at the microphone.
- All notebook materials could be available on the electronic device.

Pros

- ✓ Access to current/accurate information as being presented during the Conference.
- ✓ Can receive presentation handouts electronically, instead of making paper copies.

Cons

- ✓ Everyone may not be working from the same document version.
- ✓ Not everyone may have universal software.

Strategy Three

Facilitate common access to documents on e-Communities and WSO Web site

- Real-time Internet access to e-Communities and WSO Web site.
- Users can download files to their preferred electronic device at their convenience.

Pros

- ✓ Files can be distributed to all Conference members through e-Communities by the Conference Leadership Team.

Cons

- ✓ Some may engage in sidebars on Web site, instead of staying focused on the topic.

Strategy Four

Use electronic devices to ensure that the Conference's work is done effectively

- The use of electronic devices may encourage greater participation.

Pros

- ✓ Conference Notebook materials could be stored on the electronic device.
- ✓ Much less paper used during Conference.
- ✓ Can share presentation handouts electronically instead of making paper copies.

Cons

- ✓ Members who are not comfortable using electronic devices or members who do not have an electronic device could be discouraged from serving.
- ✓ Some members may view other non-AI-Anon sites during the Conference.

Conference members were asked to respond to 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 are missing?

The Conference floor was opened for discussion and the following comments were made:

- The rules seem to differ between Trustees and the Conference, as Trustees are allowed to use laptops during the Board of Trustees and Policy Committee meetings.
The Board made the decision to use laptops for its meetings, the Conference would need to make a decision for its use of laptops.
The needs of the Board and the Conference are different, including the work that each body does.
- The decision to discontinue the use of computers at the Conference was due to the excessive noise the machines and keyboards made.
- If computers or other electronic devices are allowed to be used, the Conference would need to be guaranteed adequate Internet access.
- The use of electronic devices would facilitate note-taking during the Conference. Even without Internet access, computers could still be used to take notes.
- Internet access could help Conference members who speak a different language translate words on their devices, to help them better understand the discussions.
- The fact that we don't use electronic devices seems archaic, as electronic devices have considerably improved since the decision not to use them was made. The use of technology could enhance our communication at all levels. We can establish rules to prevent distractions and remind all Conference members that we are here for a purpose.
- The use of electronic devices could be a great thing, but perhaps we are not there yet, and we need to further research how it would work best for us.
- For an individual like me who has a disability, it is easier for me to take notes on my computer than by hand.
- I often plan to transfer my hand-written notes to my laptop when I go back to my room, but after a long day of meetings, it is very difficult for me to do so.
- It is easy for me to get distracted with the information on other people's computers, as well as for me to stay focused, if I can access my e-mail. Perhaps the use of computers could be limited to the back rows or a certain side of the room, and Conference members could be given the option to use or not use electronic devices.
- We need to determine whether we would use the electronic devices to take notes or to access the Internet as well.
- We need to review our guidelines and take all factors into consideration to make a decision regarding this matter.
- As Delegates, it is our responsibility to take information to and from the Area. I believe that electronic devices could enhance our communication. We need to decide what would work best for all of us, and find a solution.
- As we are trying to attract younger people into our fellowship and into service, we need to recognize that technology is an important part of their lives. By using electronic devices, we could be perceived as more welcoming.
- I would hate to give all the information in advance to the Conference members, including the presentations and take away the excitement of showing the presentations for the first time and having the Conference have the conversation on the topic.

The Chairperson of the Board noted that the Board will consider all the suggestions and comments made by the Conference and will determine what the next step is. A Task Force may be formed to develop strategies to move forward with this topic.

DELEGATES (PANEL 51)

Kathleen B., Alaska

I cannot even begin at “me.” I come from a large, loving family of multi-generational problem drinkers. Secrets were our stock in trade. Entering my first Al-Anon meeting, the last person I knew or understood was me. I felt a peace I had not known. It frightened me.

I was a stillborn birth. For those who know me, the “still” part of stillborn was not accurate. My father told everyone that I would be the strongest and most vocal of the family. I lived his words. I needed to prove my worth and took on a profession filled with danger. I even added the challenge of being in a marriage to an alcoholic, addict, gambler, and abuser. I never did anything in half-measures.

Al-Anon introduced me to me. I knew everything about everyone, but I didn’t know about myself. The “we” of the program gave me a sense of peace. The gift of a Sponsor, who loved me unconditionally, started the blooming process. I learned to be present, honest, vulnerable, and fearless with others.

The Steps, Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties are an integral part of my life. Choosing to be in service was not an option. I wanted what I saw in others and was willing to do whatever it took to achieve that goal. When I experience me/mine in the program, I have an attachment to the outcome with ego involved. “We” allows me to be a part of, to be of service without strings attached, to love unconditionally, and to be a lifelong member of the fellowship. Service is my saving grace. Outreach is my passion. We accomplish amazing things together.

As Delegate, I have learned more than I can ever articulate and more than I can ever repay. The joy in being part of the World Service Conference—working together, striving together, agreeing or disagreeing, and wishing only for the success for all—is life-changing and affirming. We are greater by being “we” than ever this “me” could imagine.

I was terrified my first day at Conference as a new Delegate. What could I offer? Within two hours, my fears became gratitude and enthusiasm. I am here, at the right time and place. I am home in these rooms and will always hold each of you in love. We are the proof of the Al-Anon Declaration, holding out our hands to the new Delegates, to those we have come to love and will continue to love. We witness the longed-for miracles of lives filled with the experience, strength, and hope granted in grace by living in Al-Anon.

I hold each of you in my heart and prayers. Thank you from the former “me.” Thank you for allowing this one to become “we.”

Shirley R., Arkansas

Being the youngest of three daughters, I learned at an early age that there was just enough of an age difference that I wouldn’t be included in their “reindeer games.” My imagination and I soon passed away the hours.

In college, I was really into drama. No, I didn’t major in it—I just lived it. When a popular group sang, “One is the loneliest number that you’ll ever know,” I felt their pain. I wanted to wave my cigarette lighter, but I didn’t smoke.

My first husband spent most nights at the local beer joint. Again, I found myself all alone, but I was used to it by now. Me, myself, and I had become good friends.

In my second marriage, I knew I didn’t want a repeat of the first. He was really into A.A., and it was suggested I check out Al-Anon. I thought I would look into it because I loved him so much. I didn’t go to those first few meetings thinking I would stop after a month or two. I felt a part of after the second meeting and knew this was where I wanted and needed to be.

Al-Anon taught me that even if I’m physically by myself, I’m still with my Higher Power. I can go to most towns and cities and find a meeting. When I walk into these meetings, our bond is already there. I don’t know your name, but we already know a lot about each other. Where else could you find this shared understanding and togetherness? A department store? The grocery store? I think not. Bless those poor little “normal” people’s hearts! They don’t know what they’re missing.

I have learned more about myself since I’ve become a member of good standing in Al-Anon. I have learned if I feel lonely, I can pick up some Al-Anon literature, call my Sponsor—personal or service—or get on my knees and have some quiet time with my friend.

Alcoholism in my first marriage was the cause of a lot of shame, anger, and embarrassment. The disease of alcoholism is still with me in my second marriage, but we are both working our programs. This has brought me a lot of happiness, pride, and amazement.

Today, I know I will never be all alone again because, you see, I have found you.

Rita C., Connecticut

I began my spiritual journey when I stepped into the rooms of Al-Anon. Little did I know that I would find new beginnings and a new home. I had the chance to be me! An opportunity to rebuild a structure based in faith, hope, and principles that would support me each step of the way.

The day I stood in front of our Area Assembly requesting to be the Delegate for Connecticut, I felt strong, yet vulnerable. It was an awesome feeling to have my heart open, to surrender and take a leap of faith, and to have the willingness to accept God’s will. Even though my legs were shaking, I’m ever so grateful to have been elected by the Assembly. This experience has afforded me many growth opportunities.

My spiritual journey has not always been easy. I have been faced with challenges, deadlines to meet, being stretched, and feeling I’m out of my comfort zone. I have been encouraged by so many. Thank you for the letters of encouragement, loving support, and all correspondence both positive and negative. My experience as Delegate continues to be extraordinary and challenges me to flourish. By putting one step in front of the other and having the willingness to embrace this awesome experience, I feel I have made a valued contribution to this fellowship.

Just when I feel I belong, it’s time to say goodbye. I will always have memories of the World Service Conference and represent-

ing Connecticut. I have developed more skills, my self-esteem has increased, and I'm grateful for making new friends. One of the highlights is the sharing of my broader understanding of this worldwide fellowship with my Area. It has brought me pleasure when members have taken the time to read my Delegate's Report and their group has been part of the channel of information. My appreciation and gratitude to the Conference is unmeasured.

No longer is it useful to have the old attitude of "us vs. them." With a changed attitude, through working the Al-Anon Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, I found me. As I worked my program and said "yes" to service, I had a greater realization that it is not all about "me," but "we." We can walk this path together, no longer alone or afraid, and carry the message of hope to those affected by someone else's drinking.

Kathy B., Idaho

I'm a grateful member of Al-Anon. I attended my first Al-Anon meeting October 11, 1980, in Vernal, Utah.

My Al-Anon journey has been long and fruitful, but most stubborn of my character defects to deal with has been my self-imposed isolation. My mother died when I was ten, leaving behind two young girls and an inconsolable alcoholic husband. My father's journey into the depths of alcoholism took the two of us with him.

I tried, but could not stop his drinking. We lived through what I now know as alcoholic hallucinosis, and the delirium tremens. In the end, the bank foreclosed on our home and my sister and I went to live with our aunt.

Throughout this time, my sister and I lived like shadows, going to school and participating on the fringes of life, while holding a heavy secret inside.

My Al-Anon journey has dealt with many of those old patterns of behavior and I find myself a freer, happier person these days. The one exception has been the ability to trust. I continue to make small inroads in this area: my first Al-Anon home group that loved and accepted me, my first Al-Anon Sponsor who included me where ever she went for Al-Anon, and the members who I've sponsored, some successfully others not so.

The most successful relationship of my life, which would not have been possible without the healing hand of Al-Anon, is with my loving A.A. husband. Yet when the WSO announced the Conference theme, "Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing 'Me' to 'We,'" I was unsure how I could relate. And then, my husband and I went to Peck, Idaho.

A district in Northern Idaho asked my husband and me to speak at its First Annual Gratitude Luncheon held in a little town. As the town is so small, I thought we would be speaking to 20 or 30 people. Was I ever wrong! As people arrived, a cheerful bustle ensued: setting up the potluck luncheon, arranging the tables, setting up the sound system, and selling raffle tickets. People seemed to fit in and work together, and they even found ways to include me. I behaved as if I belonged; folding napkins, arranging flowers, organizing the potluck tables, talking quietly about personal struggles with one another. I looked around that big hall filled with a hundred people—both Al-Anon and A.A. members—and realized the miracle had found me. This was Al-Anon in action. This was "me" into "we." And yet again, I

see it as I look out on this group of us from all walks of life, banded together putting principles into action. Thank you for showing me how and for making room for me.

Cathy B., Illinois South

Nearly 20 years ago when I finally chose the path of Al-Anon, I never dreamed I'd be where I am today. I can also say that I wouldn't be as deeply rooted in service had it not been for the encouragement I received from members just like all of you. Today I stand here as the Delegate for Illinois South. It's such a privilege and an honor to serve, and I'm so grateful to have a Higher Power to lean on and carry me along this chosen path.

I was referred to Al-Anon by a counselor and was told I could find help and the answers I so desperately needed. While attending my first several meetings, I was intent on asking, "Why?" and "How come?" They told me to "Keep Coming Back" and said that when the time was right, I would indeed receive those answers. I came early and often. I would open the doors to the meeting place, make the coffee, and set out the literature. Then I began to chair the meetings and stay afterwards to help clean up.

Within four months, I got a Sponsor and worked the Steps. Afterwards, my Sponsor told me I was ready to sponsor others, so I did. This helped me understand myself better and built a sense of confidence that I hadn't experienced before. Eventually our group needed a Group Representative (GR), and I was voted in unanimously. I started attending Area Assembly meetings as a GR, and there I began to learn the difference between an Al-Anon meeting and the business of Al-Anon. I liked them both and was intrigued about how to do both. When I attended my first district meeting, I learned about the other groups in the district and was introduced to the structure of Al-Anon. I wanted to be a part of this structure, so I became the district's Treasurer, then the Literature Coordinator, and eventually the District Representative.

Reporting back to my district and group became important to me because I could see how we could truly help one another to grow in the Al-Anon program. I wanted to see our membership not only grow in numbers, but to see our members continue to grow and mature in a healthy fashion. I loved this fellowship so much that I wanted to share it with everyone!

Area Assembly allowed me to become the Recording Secretary, the Alternate Delegate, and then the Delegate. Once again I saw the potential for even more growth. Sharing information is important to me, and next year, as a Past Delegate, I'll still find more ways to assist our fellowship and encourage the synergy for growth.

Maddie P., Iowa

There I stood, one lonely me, at the door of my first Al-Anon meeting. The words of our Conference theme held quite a different meaning for me then.

I had confused spiritual with religious and had turned the God of my religion into an unforgiving judge who had deserted me. The only journey I was concerned with was to just somehow make it through the next miserable day. And there was absolutely nothing spiritual about how I accomplished that.

I had tried everything, but he just wouldn't change! However unacceptable my life and the situations around me became, it was familiar chaos. Just living with it seemed safer than risking the unknown. I didn't change, so nothing changed.

There was no real "me" left. Obsessed with the disease of alcoholism, I had lost any sense of who I was. I hated the person I had become, and I was sure you did, too. I had done my best to push away anyone who had not already run for their lives from this crazy woman. There was no room in my heart for anyone, so there could be no "we."

My spiritual journey began when I gratefully stepped into Al-Anon groups, actively recovering through the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service. Well, maybe I didn't fully embrace the Concepts of Service right away. You accepted and loved me where I was, which allowed me to discover and learn more about Al-Anon and myself. You continued to encourage me to be a part of and to "get in the car."

I started to see positive changes in my attitude and gratitude, and I was learning to play well with others. My willingness and need to share, give back, and reach out to others started to grow with great purpose in my life. I was smiling and laughing a lot more too. I had discovered the joy of service! Service revealed a more confident "me" and talents I didn't know I had. Love, respect, and trust for myself, others, and God continue to grow on my spiritual journey.

The Conference theme begins with "Our Legacies." The word "our" defines possession and brings us the responsibility of protecting, supporting, and sharing these spiritual principles entrusted to us by our founders. I must continue to take action in my daily life for my personal recovery, to contribute to the strength and unity of my group, and to carry the message of hope worldwide to those still alone in this disease.

Thank you for allowing me to walk this spiritual journey with you as a member of Al-Anon's worldwide "we."

Sylvia G., Louisiana

I noticed very early in my spiritual journey that the Twelve Steps started with "We."

For most of my life, I lived with my hopes and dreams that one day my life would be _____, and depending on the situation, I would fill in the blank. As my life continued, those hopes and dreams became less vivid and soon there was no color. There was a black hole in the middle of my shredded heart.

In a moment of clarity, I saw myself as a mother who did not know how to nurture my newborn, a wife who knew I was losing the battle against something I did not understand, and a daughter who was dealing with the murder of an absent father. I felt hopeless, fearful, and totally alone.

Then, I was introduced to Al-Anon Family Groups. In the beginning, I did not fully understand what was happening around me or to me. But I knew that for one hour, I was not alone. Then I began to notice that I had slowly allowed others in my life. Before I knew it, I was becoming involved. I was a part of something greater than myself.

"We" were moving "me" along by shared experience, support, encouragement, acceptance, and tender, tender love. Service became a huge part of my recovery. My world expanded,

and "we" were always there to share my tears, hold my hand, and show me the way.

I was seeing, understanding, and experiencing God. He was guiding me, teaching me, comforting me, and healing my heart. He had strategically placed me exactly where I needed to be in order to be of service to become part of the "we."

My prayer of gratitude today is that God showed me that we are not alone on this spiritual journey. That no matter what may come, we have our Legacies, and we have one another.

Rita C., Maine

As I sit here thinking of how to begin sharing my Al-Anon journey, I simply must start when my life in Al-Anon began many years ago. I first learned about Al-Anon from my hairdresser, who planted a seed that took many years to grow. There is an old saying that goes, "Only your hairdresser knows for sure." There is some truth to that.

When I first came into Al-Anon, I thought I was all alone in dealing with a problem-drinker, because I didn't know anything about the disease of alcoholism. I also didn't know that I had to change because I played a part in this problem, too. I did learn early on that I was not in this alone and there was an entire family and fellowship of equals, just like me, struggling with this disease called alcoholism.

It didn't take very long for the "me" feeling to become a "we" feeling—"Together We Can Make It." With God in my heart and being around a lot of like-minded, service people, I was taken along on a lot of rides to many meetings, conventions, and Assemblies. I have been very fortunate in my Al-Anon journey. I am a survivor. I have struggled with life-threatening illnesses with my Al-Anon family always by my side—maybe just sitting with me in silence, but giving of their time. Again, "me" changing to "we." I cannot even begin to express my gratitude and thanks in words just knowing there was someone there with me.

One time I was in ICU, and there was an Area meeting going on at the same time upstairs in the hospital. My friends brought a tape recorder so they could record a message to me. They ended the message with a good friend and fellow member singing The Lord's Prayer. I may not have known much of what was going on with me at the time, but when that tape recording was brought downstairs and played for me, what a special feeling I felt. It has been many years and I still have and cherish that tape.

I am reminded each and every week at my home group meeting, the very group my hairdresser invited me to attend years ago, that when we stand in a circle holding hands and say the closing prayer, that this is very much a "we" program.

My journey in Al-Anon has not ended, so I just want to close by saying thank you to everyone who believed in me and taught "me" how to become a "we." It has been an exciting journey so far!

Geneva D., Missouri

When I arrived at the doors of Al-Anon 23 years ago, it was all about me! Even I was beginning to become aware that I was self-centered, but those moments of awareness were fleeting. I generally believed myself to be generous and compassionate—I was more delusional than in denial. It wasn't until I asked

someone to be my Sponsor and worked on Steps Four and Five, that I became aware of how self-centered and self-serving I was. Fortunately, my Sponsor kept me moving through the Steps, so I was able to make the amends that mean changing my way of doing things in Steps Eight, Nine, and Ten. Admitting out loud that I was wrong set the stage for the change to happen.

The Traditions began to play a part in changing “me” to “we” when I became the District Representative (DR). It wasn’t long into my first term before the former DR came to me and said, “We elected you to be the DR, not the boss.” She quoted the sentence from Tradition Two, “Our leaders are but trusted servants—they do not govern.”

It wasn’t easy for them or me, but I began to learn that a group conscious—whether for a group or at a district meeting—means giving others a chance to express their point of view and *listening* to their point of view. It was amazing how many times someone else had a better idea or more insight than I did.

Tradition Four also played a big part in this amazing transition. Here we have that wonderful statement, “Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.” When it was suggested I could use the Traditions in my family, someone also pointed out that each family can behave however it wants to up to the point where it breaks laws or bothers its neighbors. Hmmmm—I can no longer yell at the top of my lungs, and I have to keep my grass mowed.

Our Concepts are something I am learning to appreciate more and more, especially Concept Ten, “Service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority and double-headed management is avoided.” That means I trust you to do your job and keep my hands out of it. Surprisingly, that gives me more time to do my own job, and I can do it better since I’m not trying to do yours as well. We are mutually dependant. I need your work to be done, and you need mine to be done. We benefit from each other, and it is safe to give up the delusion of self-sufficiency.

Craig M., Nebraska

In addition to being a grateful member of Al-Anon, I also love to ride a bicycle. Bicyclists have taken a lesson from nature in imitating geese. Have you ever closely watched a flock of geese; flying overhead in a “V” formation?

I was a participant in a large bicycle tour with thousands of riders. On one particularly difficult day, fraught with hills, heat, and head-winds, I found myself saying this little prayer: “God, this is too hard for me today; I cannot do this. I’m not going to make it. Please, help me.” The answer to my prayer was a clear but quiet thought that told me to, “find somebody to help.”

Soon after having this thought, two or three teenage kids passed me on their bicycles. As they passed, I couldn’t help but notice that one of them was crying. I overheard her gasp to her friend next to her, “This is too hard for me; I’m not going to make it!” I remembered that thought, “find somebody to help.”

I introduced myself to these kids and asked if they knew anything about drafting. When they said they did not, I explained that I was going to ride my bicycle to the front of them and that they should line up behind me, single file and that they would find the going a little easier.

No sooner had I taken the lead, another rider came up next

to me, recognized what I was trying to do, and said, “Hey, can I take a turn?” and got in front of me. And then another rider, and another, and another, all did the same to him, until, within minutes we had over 50 bicycles all riding single file.

Then I noticed it. Our group was riding twice as fast as we had been riding just minutes earlier when we were all riding alone. Those kids behind me were laughing, singing songs, and telling their story. And we rode all day.

We had changed “me” into “we.” You taught me that. By myself, I am nothing, but with you, there is nothing I cannot do. You taught me that when I am of service to others—when you let me help you—life can be better for us both. That, in my opinion, is the miracle of the Al-Anon/Alateen program; that I get to keep the gift of serenity—conditional on my willingness to share it with others. Thank you for the “gift” of recovery. Thank you for letting me serve.

Denise S., Nevada

I cannot imagine what my life would be like without Al-Anon. Most of my life was about taking care of others. However, when I began attending Al-Anon meetings, I was told to focus on me. As the years passed and the Legacies became part of my everyday life, I received the gifts of the program to be part of the “we.”

I didn’t intend to be a part of the group. I was just forging ahead and “fixing” what was not being done correctly at the group level. The literature person was not ordering the correct number of pamphlets and books. My motives were to just straighten things out for the group. I am grateful my Higher Power has a sense of humor. That opportunity to be of service was the beginning of giving and receiving through the fellowship.

As new service opportunities became available, I stepped up and participated. My spiritual growth in the program was developing, and my understanding moved beyond the Steps to the Traditions. I realized that while I was giving and doing for others, I actually was carrying the message by practicing the principles in all my affairs. I interacted with members by just being me and not forcing solutions for the group.

In time, I began to participate at the Area level, and my eyes were opened to the worldwide picture of Al-Anon. I enjoyed riding with others to Area Assembly, planning events together, asking for help, and sharing ideas. I began to have confidence in myself and love for what Al-Anon really is.

As my personal life changed, my service to Al-Anon expanded. The business of Al-Anon became an important part of who I am. I’m a hands-on person and learn best by others’ examples, so I followed and became a part of the “we” at the Area level. I interacted with members I only saw twice a year. I listened and learned. It was not all about me and my idea of what was right for Al-Anon.

I must admit that being Delegate was not in my plan. A friend sent me a message stating ten reasons I should submit a résumé for Delegate. As I look back on that list, I laugh to myself. I guess she was nudging “me” into the “we.” Here I am today, participating in the third year of my service to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups, and all I can say is thank you to everyone for being a part of my journey of change.

Pauline M., Newfoundland/Labrador

I feel so honoured to be standing here as a Delegate. No one will ever know the difficulty I had with accepting this position. It was not something that I ever aspired to do. However, the need was there, and I felt that since Al-Anon had done so much for me, the least I could do was try.

I grew up in an alcoholic home, and although I vowed never to marry an alcoholic, I did. My eldest son then married an alcoholic. My dad has passed away, my spouse is sober (for now), my eldest son passed away, and my daughter-in-law is still drinking. I thank my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God, for Al-Anon. I have to continually remind myself that my son loved this woman, and would want me to treat her with grace and dignity. By doing this I have been able to have an excellent relationship with my grandchildren, who are such a wonderful blessing.

I worked at the local hospital. When I had finally hit my bottom, I went to the Employee Assistance Program, where I was referred to a counsellor who recommended Al-Anon. However, I was not hearing any of that. I stumbled along for awhile and eventually found my way to Al-Anon. Although I came to Al-Anon by myself, I quickly learned that I was part of a larger group and without the other members, “we” would not be able to help ourselves or others. I cried the first month, but I heard things that kept me coming back. I heard “One Day at a Time”; “First Things First”; take care of yourself; and don’t make any decisions until you become stronger.

In the beginning I had to take care of me, otherwise there would be no me. I have to continually fight trying to control others, especially my family. I want to save them the pain that life deals all of us. I have to remind myself that we all experience happiness and sadness, and although I can sympathize with them, I need to let them work their own way through life. My journey in Al-Anon has brought me to this place that I am right now, the journey of me becoming “we,” a Delegate, who represents our Area. It has been a wonderful experience. Although I sometimes feel very inadequate, I do my very best, and I am not afraid to ask for advice. I am surrounded by good friends who are ready to help, and I have a very wise, kind Sponsor. This journey would have been impossible were it not for my Higher Power and other Al-Anon members who have had trust in me and who have encouraged me all the way on this journey. We have accomplished so much together.

Nancy P., New Hampshire

When this year’s Conference theme was announced, I immediately thought about how hard I’ve worked to become me. I had lost “me” as a child enmeshed with two alcoholic parents who defined individual family members as “we.” Surely, there’d been a mistake!

However, after reviewing the Chairperson of the Board’s quarterly letter last summer, the theme became clearer—there had been no mistake. A group conscience never took place in my alcoholic home. In learning about how Al-Anon works, I observed others using their voice at group business meetings. They were allowed to talk, even if no one agreed with the opinions being expressed. Everyone worked together; everyone was

heard; a decision was made and everyone agreed to abide by the decision. Wow! These Traditions and Concepts we sometimes read about actually worked.

I gained the courage to speak up, got involved with service by updating my home group’s phone list, and was later elected Group Representative. I was hooked on service. The group listened to information I brought back from Area Assemblies and offered suggestions to take to district and Area meetings. I began to see how “we” worked.

I became District Representative and saw energy become contagious. “We” got excited organizing what appears to be an annual district workshop, and everyone had fun doing it. In a skit about program tools, I played a newcomer who learned those tools were not hammers and saws used in non-appropriate ways. We, the participants in that workshop, used laughter to heal.

As Alternate Delegate, I saw groups get excited about changes we made to Area documents. Serving as chair of the task force changing those documents energized me; the Area became a “we” where all voices were heard.

I will have the opportunity as Delegate to visit all of New Hampshire’s registered groups by the end of 2013. By encouraging participation in service, we’re seeing greater involvement within some groups and districts. Members can see each “me” becoming part of the Area’s “we.” New voices are being heard at the Area level. Members can also see a connection to a greater we with the WSO.

New voices open possibilities for change which can encounter resistance and obstacles to overcome. Gossip and criticism can hinder growth. Practicing our program’s principles helps us become a “we” where members are learning it’s okay to care about others while taking care of themselves.

With my Higher Power’s help, I’m learning to be more compassionate, speak up when I have a dissenting view, maintain my own “me,” and can see progress coming full circle from my unhealthy childhood “we” to our program’s healthier “we.”

That Conference skit “piglet” I played last year might go “we-we-we” all the way home to an Al-Anon home group.

Norm W., New Mexico/El Paso

Fears and insecurities dominated my life before Al-Anon and still haunt me on occasion. I came to realize that every major decision I had made for the first 48 years of my life was motivated by fear and insecurity. They have manifested in my needing to be right and a desperate need of your approval. I knew there was something intrinsically wrong with me. If anyone knew me, they would be revolted or run away from me in disgust. This led me to compensate by being outwardly arrogant and controlling. Everything was about me.

I began my service work three months after joining Al-Anon by becoming Group Representative (GR) of our group. Service became the core of my recovery, where I was forced to face some of my darkest demons. I eventually learned what it meant to give from my heart and soul and not for what I could get back for it.

I regret to say that GR position was the first of many service positions I accepted where my motives were stained by ego and self-promotion. One year into Al-Anon, I found myself on the committee drafting our Area’s Safety Requirements, and later I presented them to the Assembly and became entangled in a

heated interchange with a very strong Past Delegate. One of my greatest fears is of female anger. I was literally shaking afterward when I saw the Past Delegate, the last person on earth I wanted to see, heading towards me. She came up to me and gave me a hug. What a lesson in acceptance, Tradition Two, and the love of our fellowship.

At my first Conference, I felt your love and acceptance. You showed me that listening was more important than convincing. For the first time in my life, it wasn't about me, about "winning," or about being right. It was all about accepting God's wisdom, as expressed in the group conscience. Slowly, I only needed to participate and not dominate. Even when I acted out of fear, you forgave me and cared for me.

You listened to me with respect and kindness, even though I had less time in program than anyone else at Conference. You taught me that to disagree was not a personal attack. Your love led me to change the focus from "me" to "we." I began to understand what presume goodwill meant and those deep fear-based holes began to close. I am no longer on the outside, I am a part.

Thank you for your patience and love. You are my teachers. I will miss you all more than you can know. I love you each dearly.

Petra L., New York South

When I came into Al-Anon, I wanted to fix someone else. I thought I was the only one with those troubles and also felt unique, since I had come from a different continent. But as you can see, I am still here, as I wound up staying for myself.

It has been interesting getting to know myself, as my spiritual journey continues. Times were difficult, not only in our Area: 9/11 happened while I lived in the city, and Hurricane Sandy recently washed my garden and land to sea. Thanks to you, I had a program with tools and lots of faith to hold on too.

I truly believe in our three Legacies that form the triangle. The Steps keep it all in check. The Steps made me aware, led me to acceptance, and guided me to unburden any guilt and shame so I could develop a relationship with my Higher Power. In this relationship, I learned how to trust and gained the freedom to grow into my own self and to become that person I want to come home to.

The Traditions made me feel safe, a structure I could rely on and believe in as a union.

Service kept me coming back; from my first job setting up chairs, to leading a meeting, to hosting a workshop in Manhattan. I became a Group Representative, District Representative, served on Action Committees and on the Intergroup Board. I visited institutions and eventually served as Alternate Delegate and now as Delegate.

The Legacies keep it all together and create a circle of trust. I see the importance of having the Legacies displayed at each of our meetings.

There were always challenges on each job, and everything turned out differently than originally planned. Somehow on many occasions what we accomplished together exceeded my wildest expectations.

First I had to show up and say "yes," become available, engage in discussions, and step out of my comfort zone. No one ever said it would be easy. However, using the conflict resolution tools

and accepting the group conscience and ultimately my Higher Power's will, something different emerged. A new me emerged, guided by my Higher Power, who assures me that it is all good and all He wants me to be is free to be happy and joyous.

I learned to better manage my worries, fears, and struggles, especially when I remembered that He would only give me as much as I can handle. When I listen to you, I have hope and know that there are meetings nearby, as well as all over the world in many different languages. Al-Anon is truly worldwide fellowship that has changed my viewpoint from "you" to "me" and eventually into "we."

I am so grateful. Let's keep those Legacies alive.

Margaret R., Ontario North

The longer we're in the fellowship following the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, the longer we're on a team working together for the betterment of others, so they can have the same satisfaction and serenity as we, who have lived and followed our Legacies.

I came to the program twice. The first time was in 1981. After three months, I did not like to think that I had to change. I returned in 1984, where I had my first spiritual awakening, although I didn't realize it until many years later. What I heard was that I could not fix anyone but myself. Being the controller in my home, that was a "light bulb" moment.

Was service painful? At times, yes. I volunteered and the responsible person in me said I could not back out. During my years of service, I have grown. When issues came up either at the Area or at the district level, I went to our *Service Manual* for the answers. I allowed my Higher Power direct the issue, not me. Each issue was resolved, sometimes not the way I thought it should be, but the way it was meant to be.

In the fall of 2010 when no one would stand as Delegate, I was asked to run. I expressed to our Area World Service Committee that as a Delegate on Panel 30 in the early 90s, I had just been hired for a full time job, had a home with three teenagers, a spouse in sobriety, and ageing parents, one of whom passed away while I was Delegate. I survived that journey, always gaining more self-confidence with the tools that I had received through the program and with my Higher Power's guidance.

Through the years, "me" has turned to "we." I know that through my service work in local public outreach, newcomers have found our program. Four years ago on New Year's Eve, I opened up our meeting room not expecting anyone to attend and a newcomer came through the door. This past summer, that newcomer told his Al-Anon story at the group he attends. During his talk, he thanked me for being there, on a cold New Year's Eve, sharing the experience, strength, and hope of our fellowship.

My journey will never end, I am so grateful for our Legacies of recovery, unity, and service, that have worked so well for 62 years. The Legacies will be here for many more years, helping others on their spiritual journey living with the family disease of alcoholism.

Sara M., Puerto Rico

The World Service Conference has been a spiritual journey of changing since the day I agreed to be Delegate. When a Past

Delegate suggested that I consider serving as Delegate, I told her that I was not ready for that journey. She persisted. I said I would put it in the hands of my Higher Power, and my Higher Power would show me the path.

The Assembly came, and I just said, “Yes, I will be available for the service.” The members voted, and I was elected as the new Delegate of Puerto Rico. Everything was okay during the first month, however, when the first task was approaching—the Regional Delegates’ Meeting—I was so scared. I was petrified.

How can I do this? I have never represented a whole country. I have never been out of the boundaries of my comfort zone as an Al-Anon member. Also, my English is not very good to be a Delegate. How can I introduce myself to a group of Al-Anon members if I am shy. These and other questions came to my mind.

The travel day came, and my partner left me at the airport. I felt abandoned, I wanted to cry, I wanted to quit. However, I told myself, “You can’t quit. You can do it.” The whole flight, I was thinking, “How will I do this?” Now I realize that I had forgotten my God at home. However, my Higher Power was caring for me the whole journey. He sent the two ladies sitting beside me on the flight. I didn’t know it at first, however, I discovered that those two friends, sitting in the same row, were Al-Anon members, too. They were Delegates in route to the same regional meeting. How wonderful is my Higher Power, He let me know that He is caring for me all the time.

Today, I understand that this service, as a Delegate, was a spiritual journey in my life. Every day, I experience different spiritual moments. Today, I understand that this journey is a journey of “we.” I need my Al-Anon family. I live a new life now as an Al-Anon member.

After my journey as a Delegate, I will never forget all the spiritual moments during the World Service Conferences. Thanks to every member of the 2011, 2012, and 2013 Conferences for showing me how to live and change my journey to a “we” journey.

Linda B., Saskatchewan

When I arrived at Al-Anon, I felt very alone. I was obsessed with my teenage daughter’s drinking and behaviour. I was full of worry and fear because drinking and driving had killed her dad. I came to learn how to get my daughter on a different path—a path that would not have tragic results like her dad’s.

My spirit was very broken, but as I listened to members share their experience, strength, and hope, I slowly realized that I was not alone. What a relief! You told me to keep coming back. I couldn’t wait to get back to the people who understood what it was like to have their child affected by alcoholism. You taught me to change the things I can—me—and to keep the focus on myself.

I am so grateful that over 60 years ago, Lois and Anne realized that they could help family members struggling with their loved one’s alcoholism through our Legacies. I couldn’t recover alone. I needed all of you to help me. I continue to work on my own personal recovery by working the Steps. This is an ongoing process. I continue to discover more about myself every day. The Steps show me a better way of life.

I am not sure how or when my service journey began, but I was blessed to receive many special nudges along the way. Some-

one asked me to chair a meeting, share my story, become the Group Representative, then the District Representative. My self-esteem and self-confidence grew. I served as Literature Coordinator before letting my name stand for Delegate. I, alone, could not succeed. It is a “we” program. You allowed “me” to give back what so many had given. It has been an amazing spiritual journey. The Traditions showed me how to work and live with others. The more involved I become in service work, the more I learn about the Concepts. I am grateful for Al-Anon’s Legacies.

I was alone and broken when I first arrived. All of you, the “we” of the program, helped me heal and grow. Never in my wildest dreams did I think that I would have such a spiritual experience. To be part of the mortgage burning, Al-Anon’s 60th Anniversary, visit Stepping Stones, and now return to Virginia Beach and the World Service Office. The vastness of the ocean reminds me how wide spread our fellowship is. It truly has been a spiritual experience I will never forget.

I am so grateful to be part of this worldwide fellowship and experiencing such a wonderful service opportunity. It truly has been a “journey of a lifetime.”

Jan R., South Carolina

When I walked through the doors of Al-Anon, it was all about me. Look what he had brought me down to! Why was he doing this to me? Didn’t he love me enough to stop drinking? How can these people help me? That was February 1987. The husband I had then eventually succumbed to this disease.

Since that night, I have been on a journey to find out about me. What was there about me that needed to change? What did I need to do to make my life joyous and free? As a former Sponsor suggested, going to meetings, reading literature, and working the Steps was a good beginning. At first, it was just me trying to do the work. Then, I got a Sponsor. We worked the Steps together. I learned that I wasn’t the cause, couldn’t cure the disease, and couldn’t control the alcoholic. But my Sponsor and I could work the Steps, participate in Al-Anon service work, and spend time with others in recovery. I could cope with what life brought. We began a journey of recovery together.

From that point, my journey took several turns and twists, but always working toward recovery. I went back to school, got my degree, married another alcoholic, continued going to meetings, doing service work, and participating in Al-Anon activities. Along the way, I met such wonderfully gifted, spiritual people in the program. They have taught me to live “One Day at a Time” and have the courage to change what I can about myself. They gave me hope for today about my life. They gave me a method of finding a Higher Power who today is the God of my understanding.

I went from understanding the group dynamics, to the district concerns, to the Area business of Al-Anon. Along the way, more Al-Anon members taught me the Traditions and Concepts and links of service. Today as Area Delegate, I have increased the “we” in my life exponentially by knowing the other Delegates at the World Service Conference and the representatives from around the world. At the International Convention this summer, as in Pittsburgh in 2008, I will have the opportunity to

meet even more Al-Anon members who will expand my experience in recovery. What a wonderful opportunity for all of us!

Rhonda P., South Dakota

I walked through the doors of Al-Anon ten years ago. I had just returned home from a vacation at my daughter's home in Suffolk, Virginia. It was there that I was introduced to Al-Anon by my son-in-law's friend. I had felt my life was in complete despair and didn't know where to turn. I was lonely, scared, and confused, not knowing what was happening in my life.

My son-in-law's friend talked to me about Al-Anon, and I made a commitment to give it a try. As I first entered the Al-Anon meeting, you were beginning to read the Twelve Steps. I was afraid to come into the room, but then I heard, "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." At that moment, I knew I didn't need to be afraid or alone. You referred to "we," not just "me." I realized what was going on in my life—the disease of alcoholism. I knew I had come to the right place. I soon realized that alcoholism is a disease, and you were willing to help me learn about the family disease of alcoholism.

I once heard that by myself I am nothing; but with you, I am everything. "We" face many challenges every day, and with the help of Al-Anon, those hills and valleys don't seem so big or deep.

We come into this program thinking we are alone and no one could understand what we are going through. We feel the support of others, and changes start happening within us. We then can give that support to others.

Today, I have a wonderful Sponsor and Service Sponsor who have shown me that service work is important to our fellowship. They got me involved in service from the beginning. It has been a spiritual journey and one I will cherish the rest of my life. I have never had to do anything alone. There is always another Al-Anon member willing to step up to the plate and help out when needed. The "me" is always being changed to "we" as we go through this journey.

You taught me it was okay to talk about the problem of alcoholism which I had buried so deep in my soul. It was the "we" who pulled me through the tough days, and today I can stand before you with confidence, hope, and a much deeper understanding of the disease of alcoholism.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and for changing "me" to "we"!

Mary Y., Utah

When I found you, it was just me. I was angry, resentful, raging, and struggling against a nameless, faceless monster that consumed my every waking hour. Confused and hopeless, I went to my first meeting. There I was met with some attitudes that were foreign to me. People seemed to exude joy, serenity, and love. These words weren't even in my current vocabulary. Yet I was strangely attracted to these people. I was so hungry, so willing to do whatever it took to get some of that in my life. I tried more meetings, there were different people, but always a few who seemed to have that same something. At first I thought, they can't be living with an alcoholic like mine, there is no way

that their situation is like mine. But I listened, and I heard my story over and over, with just a little different twist.

You seemed to know what I was thinking, and you seemed so willing to want to include me in your group. No matter what meeting I went to, I found smiles, hugs, and understanding. You said, "Come with us this weekend. We are just going to meet with other people around the state." I was afraid, but I went along on the ride. My life in service began. You told me that together we can do things and that they did not have to be done perfectly. It's always okay to ask for help. What a relief, and what a concept. You called this service. I called it fun.

By applying the Legacies and practicing the principles, my life began to change. As I accepted my Higher Power's guidance, I learned to accept myself as I am. In doing that, I learned that I could accept others for who they are. I began to live with serenity, joy, and love. I had those things for myself, and found I had something to give away to others. I no longer felt alone. I had accepted that we can change, we can forgive, we can find happiness in our lives, in God's time.

My Al-Anon family continues to grow. Wherever I attend meetings, whenever I meet a newcomer, every level of service position has added to those I choose to call family. Where else in the world could I feel so accepted and loved? And now that I have learned to be accepting and loving, what better place is there to be? In 11 short years, "we" have changed "me" into someone I am proud to be. Thank you for accepting me as part of your family.

Carol W., Wyoming

Prior to Al-Anon, my focus was all about *them*—what they were thinking, what they wanted, what they were doing. With the help of Al-Anon, and a good first Sponsor, the focus changed. It became all about me—what I wanted, who I was, what I was doing—both right and wrong. But as we all know, the disease of alcoholism is one of extremes. I had only swung from one end of the spectrum to the other, and I was still suffering.

My dream of recovery is one of balancing the extremes. I wanted and needed them in my life, but I didn't know how to make that happen. So I married, and moved 185 miles away, and that worked well for 22 years. I had the space I needed to carry on, and I was elected Delegate.

Then life happened, and *they* needed help. So I sold my house, quit my job, and moved back—but they hadn't changed. I am still struggling to make them a part of my life. For most of my life, I believed that my problem was that they had abandoned me. What I have learned is that I have abandoned myself repeatedly over the years.

Now I am gaining a new perspective of detachment; one that no longer includes physical distance. I am learning that even if they call me a tree a thousand times, it doesn't make me a tree. I am also learning about love, loving myself, and loving and accepting them.

This disease is about extremes—about "eithers" and "ors." Recovery for me is about balancing and integrating those extremes. It is about both "either" and "or," and more. The quotation on page 87 of the *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) daily reader states, "I have learned silence from the talkative; tolerance from the intolerant and kindness from the unkind. I should not be ungrateful to those teachers."

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Laura Castro F., México

I belong to Al-Anon Family Groups because I have family members who have problems with alcoholism.

I'm incredibly happy and very grateful to my Higher Power for giving me the opportunity to have my dream come true. Being far away from my country, México, makes me appreciate the effort that my General Service Office and members of the groups made by giving their contributions in order for me to be here as an International Representative to this 53rd World Service Conference.

I am currently serving as a Regional Trustee, and I'm finishing my second term as Executive Committee Chairperson. I also provide service for the Alateen Committee; I'm the Coordinator of the project "Al-Anon Spoken Here," and the *Delta* magazine, and I am the Guidelines Committee Chairperson.

When I first came to the Al-Anon program, I felt I began to live in an unknown zone, totally different from the style of life I was used to. I immediately wanted to share with my three wonderful daughters all the sweetness Al-Anon was giving me. I almost pushed them to start going to the Alateen program.

I think I've matured in some aspects of my life, especially by facing my fears with determination and courage. Five months ago, my alcoholic mother passed away. God gave me the opportunity to take care of her, and I gave her my love until the last days of her life.

Currently, the Board in México is composed of nine Trustees, five Regional Trustees, four Counselors without geographic limits (Trustees at Large), and the Executive Director. We have been working hard in the reorganization of the office, establishing operating procedures, preparing individual contracts for employees, and hiring outside accountants to manage the financial administration. Through the Finance Committee, we were able to do a thorough review of the financial statements. We reassigned the administrative secretaries according to their demonstrated skills.

The most impressive and exciting experience recently was the celebration of our 40th National Service Conference. We fulfilled 40 years of love and service. We gave all our effort, joy, and commitment to achieve a Conference that left footprints on our hearts and in every member that assisted. One of the surprises was the presence of our guests Ric B., Executive Director of the World Service Office, and Roger C., Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee. This completed our spiritual banquet.

This year, the Regional Service Seminar will be held in the city of Aguascalientes in July. It is a beautiful, picturesque Mexican city right in the centre of the country, and its climate is perfect. Our fellowship is so excited. We will have a formal dinner, giving thanks for our 40th Anniversary. Our theme is: "I asked my Higher Power for health and He gave me service."

The fellowship of Al-Anon in México is really lovely people who love Al-Anon and have a strong belief in God's love. I also feel delighted and privileged to know beautiful people like you. Even though I don't understand English very well, we all speak the same language of Al-Anon—the language of the heart.

I'm infinitely grateful to consider myself part of this World Service Conference. Today I can tell my brothers, husband, Al-Anon fellows, the members in the Areas, and my Trustee team that you are beautiful people. I received humility during these days I have been learning from you. You are nice, and willing to serve.

I assure you that what I heard and saw here will be shared by me with my fellowship, with joy and enthusiasm, not to boast myself about the service, but to give this knowledge that this Conference has prepared to meet a single purpose: helping the families and friends of alcoholics.

Thank you very much for sharing the light of our Higher Power, the light of hope, consolation, and wisdom. God bless you today and always.

OPENING DINNER SPEAKER

Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services

I think that I was born, bred, and well-trained to get involved with Al-Anon service. I learned at an early age to be an over-achiever, a people-pleaser, and to "do unto others." I came from a family where it was not okay to get angry, so I didn't have a clue how to deal with anger, either my own or someone else's. Throw in a mother whose drinking escalated as her kids grew up, and I was an Al-Anon trusted servant waiting in the wings.

I came to Al-Anon in 1983 (at the age of 12) to find out how to get my boyfriend to stop drinking so much. I was hooked at my first meeting, because these insane people had found a way to laugh through their pain. I was too busy trying to fix everyone in my life to laugh. I started going to several local meetings, and joined a home group. There was a woman there who knew

everything. She carried a steno notebook, and talked about gratitude dinners, district, Information Service, and Assembly. I like to know stuff too, so I was already interested. When my group held its elections and asked if anyone was willing to serve as Group Representative (GR), like everyone else, I looked at the floor. Then someone in the back of the room said, "I think Mary Lou would make a wonderful GR." There was applause, and I was elected.

So I went to my first Assembly, which was an election Assembly. As an incoming GR, I was expected to vote for the officers, including Delegate. I said to my outgoing GR, "How can I possibly vote when I know nothing about these people?" She suggested that I ask my Higher Power to help me. Craziest thing

I'd ever heard, but I tried, and somehow the election got done.

That was the start of my first term of Area service. And let me tell you, it was not pretty. There were some angry people at my Area Assembly. It seemed like the adult children were mad at the "regular" Al-Anons, and the "regular" Al-Anons were mad at the adult children. I was both, so I didn't get it. I remember telling my Sponsor self-righteously after one contentious Assembly, "These people should know better than to behave this way...they are GRs!" She just smiled.

I was elected Alternate District Representative (DR), and a year later the DR resigned. As DR, I was forced to work on my perfectionism. My view of my job included: visiting every group in the district; planning a district agenda each month in advance; and mailing copies to all the GRs. Let me tell you, it never happened. I did not get to every group. I often didn't write the agenda until the night before the meeting. And I felt guilty. But you know what? The meetings went well. We would have discussions, sometimes heated, but we would get through them, and people would thank me for a great meeting. It dawned on me that I wasn't perfect in this role, and that it was still okay. I started to think that maybe I didn't have to be perfect in other areas of my life. What a concept.

As my term as DR was ending, I was willing to continue in Area service. After 12 years of research and discussion, Florida had petitioned the Conference to divide, and in 1988 I became the first Area Chair for the new Florida South Area. We still had some contentious members, and I left some Assemblies with migraine headaches, but we got through it. It was a time of transition and an exciting time to be in service. I also became an Alateen Group Sponsor, another wonderful life-altering experience for sure.

While I was Area Chair, I got married (to a recovering alcoholic—as he told me, the Area Chair needed an alcoholic in her life!). I thought I had found my Prince Charming, and we would ride off into the recovery sunset together. When my short marriage crashed and burned within that three-year term, I stepped up my meeting attendance, continued serving my Area, and felt like a phoenix rising from the ashes of divorce when my Area elected me as its Panel 31 Delegate.

I attended my first Conference in Stamford, Connecticut, in 1991. I was standing at the opening reception, and a bubbly young woman was very excited to see me. She hoped that she might no longer be the youngest Delegate. We compared notes, and determined that she was younger, and still the youngest Delegate, but we bonded and remain friends to this day. Now if you believed that I was 12 in 1983, you know that I'd now be 20 years old. I was actually 39 at that Conference; I am the same age as Al-Anon.

At that first WSC, I sat in the middle of the room, just in front of a brand new Trustee named Ric B. He was very quiet in those days. There were some angry Delegates at that Conference. I remember thinking, "These people should know better than to behave this way—they are Delegates."

I reviewed some of the *Conference Summaries* last week. There were 34 motions made in 1991; 23 were carried. The motions that didn't carry reflected some of the turmoil going on: there was disagreement on what to call adult children

Al-Anon groups; some Delegates were angry that we didn't have a balanced budget; and there was tension within the Literature Committee. One Delegate was so angry, he sent a letter to all Delegates that he was planning to boycott the Conference, just stay home, and serve his Area. I worked on a response, I don't remember what I wrote. I set it aside, and decided to let it go—I didn't mail it. A short time later, we learned that this Delegate had passed away. I felt there was a message there on setting our priorities and valuing the important things in life.

In 1992, my second Conference, there were 30 motions, 23 that carried. One motion denied was to make the Conference non-smoking. In those days, there was a smoking section of the room. There were still some rumblings from the Literature Committee, and a committee was formed to study the future computer software compatibility needs for Group Records at the WSO. Don't think we could have guessed at that time that in 20 years or so, the Area Group Records Coordinators could actually access the WSO database from their homes.

In 1993, my final Conference as Delegate, there were 28 motions made, and only a few that didn't carry, so we had a little more unanimity. Most of the motions were changes to the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies." The Conference approved leaving the gender-specific language in the "World Service Handbook," but did not approve polling the groups to change the gender references in the Steps. That year marked the motion approving the development of a book on the Legacies; what would be our *Paths to Recovery* book. Ending my term as Delegate was a bittersweet time.

Meeting the WSO staff at the Conferences was very special—I saw a group of knowledgeable, competent Al-Anon members. I remember thinking, "Wouldn't it be *wonderful* to work at the WSO?" We knew in 1993 that the WSO would be moving somewhere in 1996, and I thought that would probably be a good time to apply for a job. A couple of the staff members encouraged me to send in a résumé, so I did, with a note that I would be interested in applying for a job when the office moved. I had no intention of moving to New York, then moving again.

Of course, after my term as Delegate ended, I ended up leaving my job, and was a little up in the air as to what I would do next. As I was filling out my notice, I got a call from the WSO, letting me know that they had a vacant position, and asking if I would be interested in applying. Of course I said "yes," and the rest is history. I moved to northern New Jersey in July 1994, and went to work at the WSO as the Administrative Coordinator, who supports the Executive Director in his or her role as Secretary for the Board of Trustees. I took minutes at Board and Executive Committee meetings and killed a lot of trees in distributing the Board's paperwork. And other than having to stop myself from raising my hand to speak, it was a great experience. I was impressed with the care and attention given to every topic of discussion. It is so easy when you hear the results of a discussion to think that a decision was made quickly or rashly. The reality is that it's discussed in detail and with great concern for our fellowship.

In 1995 I was back at the World Service Conference (WSC) site, working behind the scenes in the office. In 1996, our last Conference before the office would move to Virginia, I was

asked to substitute at the WSC for a staff member who was ill. With the move to Virginia, I became an Associate Director, and have been a Conference member again since 1997. My first Associate Director position was for Literature, and I got to work on that Legacies book I mentioned earlier. *Paths to Recovery* was released in 1997. I also worked on two Alateen books—*Living Today in Alateen* and *Courage to Be Me*.

Several years after the move, a new position opened up in the Public Outreach Department, and I applied. I had worked in the media before my job at WSO, and it was exciting to work with our public service announcements. PSAs were a topic of consideration at two of the Conferences I attended as Delegate, so again, I was able to participate in the implementation of projects discussed during my panel. And in 2007, I moved to the Group Services Department, and work with Alateen and Al-Anon group services where I engage in a lot of discussions and interchange with members, which is always interesting.

This is my 21st World Service Conference as a Conference member. I like the changes that have been made over the years. I like that we work to have clarity on our roles here. I like that we have a lot of discussion and background information before we bring a motion to the floor. There have been many motions made in the past from an emotional perspective, rather than a principle-based perspective. In 2012, there were just four WSC

motions made. That was an exception, but I think it is indicative of the care we want to put into the decisions we make and the projects we implement.

I would not have dreamed in 1983, when I came into the rooms of Al-Anon, that I would find a career here as well as a lifelong personal recovery program. As many do, I thought I would quickly find some answers that would fix “him” so that I could be happy. I found so much more. I like to say that Al-Anon transformed my life. I was certainly headed down a road of lifelong unhappiness and depression, in the footsteps of my mother. I did not want to be like her, but didn’t know how to change my life until I found this program.

I have learned that I have continual choices in my life. I can choose misery, or I can choose recovery. I am much less of a perfectionist. I fill my life with people and activities that make me happy. This quotation from *Hope for Today* (B-27) sums up some of what I hoped to say today: “Today the program provides me with the spiritual direction I crave. I’ve learned that everything about my recovery begins and ends with me. I’ve found that the power of my own mind and heart can either help me or hurt me, but it’s my choice.” And I leave you with the thought for the day on page 213: “Are my mind and heart focused on my recovery, or do they linger somewhere else that does me less good?”

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Maddie P., Panel 51, Iowa

As I began my recovery journey, I discovered I had been preparing for my first Al-Anon meeting my whole life. It also became clear that the God I was positive had deserted me, remained present in my life every step of the way.

If there is such a thing as a functional family, I grew up in one. There was rarely drinking in my home. I was that little Sunday school girl in white hat and gloves trusting in a loving God. My parents raised me with good morals and values by living them every day, encouraging me to always do my best. However, I didn’t hear it as encouragement. What I heard was, “Not good enough, do better.” I knew they loved me, and yet I felt very unlovable. Looking back while working the Steps, it was already obvious it wasn’t what or who was around me, but what was within me that was going to cause my biggest problems.

I always wanted to be around my two older brothers, even though that never turned out well for me. They would ask me to go along to walk the fence lines and hand me a thin wire which would quickly and painfully come alive in my hands. They were using me to test the electric fence. You would think after a while I would have rethought my decisions to go with them. Even then, I was willing to do things over and over again, knowing full well I was probably going to get hurt. All for the sake of feeling included and being a part of.

My younger sister was very sick as a child, so Mom spent extra time caring for her. I took over many chores at an early age to

help out. I learned a lot. Unfortunately, I took these lessons to an unhealthy level turning responsibility into the need to control and obsessive worry, and organization into perfectionism and fear of change.

I was painfully shy in school. The literature teacher sparked my interest in the drama club with the magic words, “You can become whoever you want to be on that stage.” I didn’t like me, so the idea of being someone else intrigued me. It was fun, and I found a hidden talent for acting and writing skits. The bad thing was I carried this acting into all my relationships. I could become whoever you wanted me to be in hopes that you would like and accept me.

The excitement surrounding the drinkers always attracted me. I liked the “bad boys.” First I lived vicariously from the sidelines, but soon I was doing things I never dreamed possible. Because of who I had become, I was certain God had turned His back on me. One of those “bad boys” asked me to leave town with him. This was my chance to leave behind that risqué person and the scared little girl, to magically become a different person. But no matter where I went, I was still me. Nothing had changed, except now I was far from home, in an increasingly violent alcoholic relationship.

What was unacceptable to me had changed drastically. In Las Vegas, I got locked out of the van we were living in, so I slept under a park bench. I made this acceptable because it was a concrete bench with a base and sides, so I wasn’t on the ground. I tried everything to stop the lies, hurt, and blame. I felt alone,

trapped, and angry all the time. In Al-Anon, I discovered my anger was really my fear coming out sideways. Fear was weakness and it wasn't safe to appear vulnerable. Through incredible events, that God who I was certain had deserted me guided me to safely leave that relationship and return to Iowa. But I still denied His presence.

I pushed my confusing feelings, attitudes, and fears deep down inside, not dealing with anything, and vowed never to revisit any of it again. I decided relationships were hurtful and painful. I put up my defensive walls and no one was allowed to get too close.

Until the night I looked up, and there he was. Cute, exciting, sense of humor, and he was a happy drinker. I may have missed a couple red flags, but this relationship was going to be different. I made it clear I would not put up with any lies or indiscretions. He said he promised and understood completely. I felt in total control. We were married in less than a year. Alcohol-related incidents kept occurring, but I let denial ease my mind as long as I could. Then came the lie I wanted to believe, but could see the truth clearly. I knew I couldn't trust him anymore. I began to obsessively watch his every move, my full focus was on desperate attempts to control, manipulate, and change him. Hurt, anger, and resentment gripped my heart and fear began to paralyze me. All those old attitudes, fears, and reactions I thought were hidden away quickly came back to a full boil with the heat of active alcoholism. Once again, no matter what I tried, alcoholism continued its rampage against both of us. It was no longer just in my marriage, but had started affecting every avenue of my life. I started lashing out in anger at everyone around me. Someone or something had to be to blame. Then, finally, I saw the one common factor in all this misery. Me. This all had to be my fault because I was a terrible person.

My four step-children were caught in this insanity. I am very grateful that they were not with us 100 percent of the time, because a crazy woman lived in our house. Although alcoholism affected their lives in so many ways, it appears their families are happy, enjoying life, guided by their own Higher Powers. I say "appears," because this is a deceptive disease. Because of Al-Anon, today I have a loving relationship with these incredible kids and our ten perfect grandchildren. I also learned that I didn't marry a terrible man who intentionally hurt me. I married a wonderful man with a terrible disease. This made it possible for me to love the man and hate the disease.

My reactions were becoming dangerous. In an uncontrollable rage, I hit my husband in the chest with both fists pushing him into the wall. I was cutting lettuce at the time and had no recollection of laying the knife down. I know God took that knife from my hand, once again making His presence known when I wouldn't even acknowledge Him. A few days later, I didn't remember trashing our living room. But there I was sitting on the floor, totally empty. I finally said the words out loud that had been inside for so long: I want to die.

My mind and heart went to a very dark place as I made plans to end this despair. I am still in awe of how God's plan unfolded in the next few hours that night. My husband's sudden change of routine, a stranger's call, perfect timing and words, the warm smile and outstretched hand of an Al-Anon member, and I

found myself at my first Al-Anon meeting. What I thought was the end was a new beginning.

I wasn't able to share this part of my life with anyone at first. With the healing of time and working the Steps, the loving support of my Sponsor and fellow members, I no longer need to hide from or be ashamed of my past. I know God will help me use this experience to share Al-Anon's message of hope with others.

I gratefully stepped into Al-Anon rooms whose members had a firm foundation of recovery through our three Legacies. You not only accepted me as I was, but you knew me. You helped get my feet back on the ground and pick my heart up off the ground. I don't know that I heard anything that night, but I felt safe and what I know now was hope. And I wanted more.

I first heard those little words with huge meaning—we, our, us. I was no longer alone. Not only did I have all of you, but you shared with me that I could have a powerful God in my life who would love and accept me just as I am. I came to realize I didn't need a new God. I needed to get back to the God of that little girl who knew He loved her, and she loved and trusted Him.

Fear no longer controls my decisions. I can't say I approach everything fearlessly, but I am able to work through it courageously. I used to subscribe to the saying "What doesn't kill me will make me stronger." Now I know my true strength comes from God and the friends and family that surround me. My humbling, honest, self-discovering walk through the Steps helps me to accept God's forgiveness, as I learn to forgive and accept myself and others.

Becoming willing and asking God to remove my defects reminds me of those mini, static-charged, foam packing pellets. I don't want or need them, but as hard as I try to get rid of them, when I least expect it, there's one back sticking on me again. Progress not perfection.

You said pray, so I prayed even though I felt it was purely lip service, my words just bouncing off the ceiling, with no one listening. Until one morning, I began the Serenity Prayer with "God," and there He was. I knew He was there, listening to me, and He has never stopped. My prayer and meditation is no longer a constant effort, but a constant contact.

I can never repay Al-Anon for what I have received, but I can try to give back and show my gratitude through the action of service. Since my first meeting, God has surrounded me with members actively recovering through service. Once in a while, I wondered if I was really grateful for this, as I was stretched and pulled outside of my comfort zone. Service helps me to take the focus off me and put it on back on giving and our primary purpose, reaching out to others. It is no longer the act of doing, it is the result of loving. My trust in God continues to grow and strengthen as He puts me exactly where He wants me to be, providing all I need to fulfill His plan. Of course, I always wrap this up in a prayer asking for courage. I'm glad Step Twelve asks that we "...practice these principles in all our affairs." Practice means to learn by repetition. So when I fall short, I can make my amends, begin again, and keep learning.

I wasn't likeable, but you loved and accepted me until I could love myself. You showed me how to be a friend by being my friend. I am grateful for and enjoy life and all its wonders, I love

to laugh and have fun. But I take seriously my recovery and the recovery of those around me, because alcoholism is a deadly disease. I can trust that God will guide me safely through every joy and success, along with the sorrows and challenges. I never fully appreciated the phrase “life-changing” until, through Al-Anon, it was my life that was changed.

Thank you for allowing me to join you on this wonderful service adventure as we continue our spiritual journey together. I will hold each of you forever in my heart. “In closing I would like to say...let the understanding, love, and peace of the program grow in you one day at a time.”

Norm W., Panel 51, New Mexico/El Paso

I cannot tell you how honored I am to have been asked to be one of the spiritual speakers at this Conference. I feel like a complete novice in my relationship with my Higher Power. As I look around the room, I see dozens of you who should be speaking and I listening. But this is a common theme for me, even as I progress along the path of my recovery, I continue to tell myself that I am “not good enough,” and “not worthy of your love.”

From my earliest meetings, I would listen to adult children share and hear my own story, but there was no alcohol in the home I was raised in. I believe that my mom is an untreated Al-Anon, but that is not for me to say, and some things are not talked about in my family. In the home I grew up in, my mom was the rager and the one I desperately feared. She believed it was in my best interest that she not show me love. She had never been given love as a child (or as an adult) and this must have just seemed natural to her. I grew up angry with her and blaming her for everything that went wrong in my life.

I worshipped my dad. He was your prototypical Depression-era child/WWII veteran. He was a good man, but completely closed down emotionally. On one level, I knew that I was the center of his universe, but the first time he told me that he loved me, he was 83 years old and weeks away from dying of cancer. At the time of his death, I had been in program a little over three months. There was so much left unsaid.

The home I grew up in was a silent home. There was never any talking or inquiries into each other's days. The only sound was the TV that we all sat silently around. That silence was only broken by the vilifying rages of my mother. I would hide in my room.

I knew I was unlovable—that at my core there was something intrinsically wrong with me. I believed that if anyone knew me, was aware of my thoughts or feelings, they would be disgusted or ridicule me. This led me to be completely incapable of intimacy. It was with this deep-seated self-loathing that I entered my teen years. Your approval was essential. I would do anything for that nod or smile, some indication that I belonged, that I was okay. I heard a speaker describe it as “approval-sucking,” not “people-pleasing.” I became the consummate chameleon. I would lie and tell you anything you wanted to hear and be anything you wanted me to be. This had a devastating effect on me and took my self-hatred to new and unrealized levels. I lived in a complete state of denial and fear of being found out. This expressed itself in outbursts of anger and rage, often directed at

those whose only sin was to love me.

I thought if I was with an attractive enough woman, if she looked good enough on the outside, you would think I was okay. I believed that “she” could make me feel whole. I went through a series of relationships with other wounded souls, putting the burden of my happiness and emotional well-being on them. I made each and every one of them my God, because I had no God of my own. I dragged myself from one failed relationship to another. Always desperately hanging on, despite knowing how sad and miserable the relationship was, because anything was better than being alone. I was depressed, disconsolate, the consummate victim. Before I met my first alcoholic, I had two ex-wives and three failed marriages.

My character defects blossomed in my first alcoholic relationship. Denial, judgment, victimhood and the dishonesty to others—but worse to myself—overwhelmed me. Core values were abandoned and the disconnect from my soul widened. This chasm was filled with anger, violence, pain, and self-hatred. I had no God to turn to. I was sure that the God I knew hated me as much as I feared Him.

I used to always begin my sharing talking about the night when sheriff's deputies filled my house, my children hid in their rooms crying, and I was spread-eagle outside my home, accused of domestic violence. I used to say my recovery began that night. But that too was a lie. I took absolutely no responsibility for what happened that night. “If she hadn't attacked my daughter”; “If she'd only stop drinking, I'd be fine.” But deep down I knew how untrue that was.

My recovery actually began three and a half months later, when I returned home to find my son outside the house in tears after she had attacked him. My daughter was already gone, living with her mother, and now my son would be forced to leave as well. I had continued to accept the unacceptable—infidelity, physical and emotional abuse of my children—all because I was terrified of being alone. After dropping my son off at his mom's house, I pulled off to the side of the road, and bawled like a starved infant. My dad had died ten days earlier, and I barely shed a tear. Here I was despondent because this horrid and abusive relationship was ending, another failed marriage. My only thought was: “I am fat, 48 years old, who would ever have me?” As the denial began to melt away, I saw how truly pathetic I had become. At that point, I crossed that bridge from believing all my problems were her fault, to “Oh my God, it's me.” For the first time in my life, I sought help for me.

I returned to my meetings. This time without arrogance and judgment, but instead sincerely wanting what you had. I asked a man to be my Sponsor and began working the Steps. Slowly I began to heal. I was compelled to take a long hard look at myself and applied the rigorous honesty of our program. I was forced to face the motives my actions and words were grounded on. I was devastated when I realized that every major decision I'd made for the first my 48 years was based in fear and insecurity. As I pushed aside my denial from the very depth of my despair, I felt your unconditional love.

At first I identified it as just my home group, but slowly I began to feel the presence and love of a Power unlike anything I had ever known. It was the first time I felt touched by a kind

and loving God. I felt a glow within me that warmed my soul and even temporarily filled me with peace and serenity. For the first time, I was not alone. At first I would only experience this for those few minutes as I drove home from my meetings. I so related to the Camus quotation, in *Courage to Change*: “In the midst of winter, I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer.”

This past summer I was drawn to a new Sponsor. I knew I needed to work the Steps again, but even more, I needed to strengthen my connection with my Higher Power. When we met the first time, he asked me: “Where are you with the Second Step?” What? I paused.

Developing a spiritual connection with the God of my understanding has been a long, slow process, nothing like the sudden thunderbolt Bill W. experienced. I had always distrusted religion. At my first meetings, I was incredibly uncomfortable with all the “God talk.” The God of my childhood was an angry, punishing God who kept track of all my “sins” and filled me with terror, shame, and guilt. He was a punishing God who would one day hold me accountable for all horrible things I had done. He was a God of fear and pain, Whom I had rejected with every fiber of my being.

But you explained the concept of a God of my understanding and the difference between “religious” and “spiritual.” Even as I began to feel the benign presence of a loving God in my life and wanted desperately to believe in Her, I still had problems trusting something that I could not touch, feel, or understand. Another quotation from *Courage to Change*, a Zen saying, helped immensely: “If you understand, things are just as they are; if you do not understand, things are just as they are.”

I have not the slightest conception nor understanding of the form of my God. However, what I do *know* is that there is a piece of Her within me. I use the feminine to describe Her, because my God has qualities that I associate with the eternal feminine: nurturing, forgiving, compassionate, healing, and the embodiment of love. She expresses Herself as an inner voice, a very quiet voice that I must become very still to hear. It is not a spoken voice, but manifests itself as a calm, warm feeling within me,

that lets me know when something is good for me or I am about to stray from Her will for me. That pain comes when I ignore Her will and allow my self-will to run my life. She only wants what is best for me and loves me completely, just as I am. I love the Emerson quotation that appears in both *One Day at a Time* and *Courage to Change*: “There is guidance for each of us, and by lowly listening, we shall hear the right word. . . . Place yourself in the middle of the stream of power and wisdom which flows into your life. Then, without effort, you are impelled to truth and to perfect contentment.”

I understand that the key to healing is to accept my God’s love for me and to accept on a soul level I am a perfect child of my God, untouched by alcoholism, emotional deprivation, fear, and insecurity. That I already am every quality that I admire, everything I value and think of as good. That is who I am at my core. Slowly I have made progress in believing that I am worthy of your love and believing my God truly loves me just as I am. As the result, those “soul holes”—not being good enough, self-loathing, and being unlovable—have begun to close. But this is still a struggle for me. I know true healing cannot occur until I forgive myself, as my God has already forgiven me.

I know I am still a spiritual novice, with so far to travel. There are still times when my instinctive responses are still driven by the wounds of the past. I know this no longer serves me. I am at least far enough along on my path that I can usually catch myself prior to causing myself and others pain. As I continue to work the Steps, with the loving guidance of a kind and caring Sponsor, I am slowly learning to accept the nurturing love of my Higher Power, as She loves me back to wholeness. You have given me the Step Twelve spiritual awakening. I now have a relationship with a loving God, who only wants what is best for me. You have allowed me to experience love and healing at a level I never dreamed possible.

Although progress has been slow, and there is still so much for me to learn, I am infinitely grateful for being blessed with so many wise teachers. Thank you for loving me, forgiving me, and teaching me by your example. I love you each so much.

CLOSING SESSION

In the closing session of the 53rd World Service Conference, the Chairperson of the Board stated, “The Spiritual Journey of Changing ‘Me’ to ‘We’—what a powerful statement and what a powerful Conference. We have spent our four days together laughing, crying, and sharing with each other. The ‘we’ has overshadowed the ‘me’ over and over again, as we listened with an open mind and open heart as ‘we’ shared ideas for the betterment of Al-Anon Family Groups and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

“The Policy motions, the financial discussions, the Thought and Task Force presentations, as well as all the other activities, were considered through the lens of our spiritual principles. These principles—honesty, responsibility, unity, anonymity, autonomy, and many more—continue to guide us just as they did Lois, Anne, and other pioneers. As each of us—the ‘me’—continue to live by the spiritual principles embodied in our Legacies, all of us—the ‘we’—will continue to come together to have those conversations that will keep us on our spiritual journey of helping the friends and families of problem drinkers.”

The Conference Chairperson asked Conference members to reflect on the week and to consider the following questions. How did you fulfill your individual roles as Delegates, staff members, Trustees, and Executive Committee members to form that effective group conscience we saw in action this week? What wisdom have you absorbed this week? Will you go away from this year’s Conference with the knowledge of how powerful our gathering has been? How will you tell the story of the 53rd WSC to members in your Area or home group? Will you tell them they can be secure in the knowledge that we, as leaders, take seriously the trust given us in Concept Three to act as the fellowship’s overall conscience through discussions centered on our spiritual principles? Will you share with them that the key to a sustainable future for Al-Anon rests with us, the membership, to be open to change and willing to communicate with each other?

Conference members then took a few minutes for quiet reflection to evaluate the work of the 2013 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 theme came alive for me when the outgoing panel members shared “me” to “we” in their personal sharings.
- The minority has a voice and can indeed impact a decision.
- The discussions reflected all of our goals.

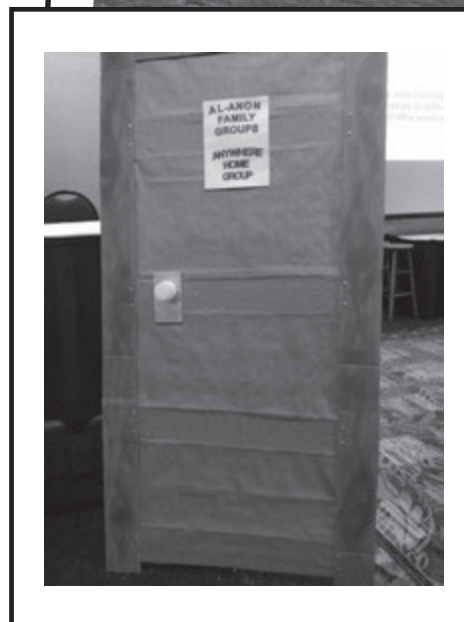
Following the Closing Dinner, scroll presentations to the Panel 51 Delegates, and the Spiritual Speakers, the Conference Chairperson rapped her gavel on the lectern to close the 53rd World Service Conference.

Karen R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Bev A.

Conference Chairperson, Trustee



2013 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

MOTION #1 – CARRIED (BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2013 World Service Conference:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach

Director of Business Services
Non-Al-Anon Member

Laura Castro F.

International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

Beverly S.

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

With no voice and no vote:

Pamela Walters

Marketing Information Analyst
Non-Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2 – CARRIED (97 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the Conference Leadership Team's recommendation that the requests of the Alabama Area, the New Mexico Area, the Manitoba Area, and the Wisconsin Area to officially change their Area names to the designations of Alabama/Northwest Florida, New Mexico/El Paso, Manitoba/Northwest Ontario, and Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan respectively be accepted.

MOTION #3 – CARRIED (98 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2012 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #4 – CARRIED (96 yes, 1 no, 1 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2013 Finance Committee Report.

MOTION #5 – CARRIED (96 yes, 1 no, 1 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2012 Annual Report.

MOTION #6 – CARRIED (97 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

That the 2013 WSC give conceptual approval to develop a new pamphlet to address parents and grandparents whose children (teenagers and young adults) are problem drinkers.

MOTION #7 – CARRIED (98 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend the text on pages 88-91 beginning with the section "Anonymity and the Media" on page 88 and ending with the new section "Anonymity in Al-Anon /Alateen Publications" on page 91 in the Policy Digest section of the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, as follows (New text is underlined and bold; moved text is underlined. Strikethrough indicates deletion.):

Anonymity Outside Al-Anon/Alateen

Anonymity and the General Public

There are no changes to the section "Anonymity and the General Public."

Anonymity and the Media

Tradition Eleven gives a specific guideline: "we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV." It is Al-Anon/Alateen policy to interpret Tradition Eleven to include the Internet as well as all forms of evolving public media. Personal anonymity in the media guards the fellowship from the Al-Anon/Alateen member who may be tempted to seek public recognition.

When speaking or writing as an Al-Anon/Alateen member in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet, or other evolving public media, members use only their first names and last initial or pseudonyms. Members can also speak without identifying themselves or sign articles "Anonymous."

Photographs, video, film, or Web postings in published or broadcast media should not reveal full face images of those identified as members.

On any Web site accessible to the public, whether an Al-Anon site or not, ~~members' full names, and faces, phone numbers, or other identifying information~~ are not posted if they are identified as belonging to Al-Anon/Alateen members.

(See "Anonymity in Al-Anon/Alateen Publications" in the "Anonymity Within Al-Anon/Alateen" section)

Anonymity and Professionals

There are no changes to the section "Anonymity and Professionals."

Electronic Communication outside of Al-Anon

There are no changes to the section “Electronic Communication outside of Al-Anon.”

Anonymity Within Al-Anon/Alateen

Members use their full names within the fellowship when they wish. The degree of anonymity a member chooses (first name, pseudonym, or full name) is not subject to criticism. Each member has the right to decide.

Regardless of our personal choice, we guard the anonymity of everyone else in the fellowship, Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A. This means not revealing to anyone—even to relatives, friends, and other members—whom we see and what we hear at a meeting.

Anonymity goes well beyond mere names. All of us need to feel secure in the knowledge that nothing seen or heard at a meeting will be revealed. We feel free to express ourselves among our fellow Al-Anons **members** because we can be sure that what we say will be held in confidence.

Anonymity at open meetings and Al-Anon/Alateen events

At open Al-Anon meetings, group anniversaries, conventions, or workshops where non-members may be present, Al-Anon and Alateen members are free to decide how much anonymity they prefer. It is well to begin these meetings with a brief explanation of the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. One suggestion is as follows:

There may be some who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet, and other electronic media.

If so, we respectfully ask that no Al-Anon, Alateen or A.A. speaker or member be identified by full name or picture in published, broadcast, or Web-posted reports of our meeting.

The assurance of anonymity is essential to our efforts to help other families of alcoholics, and our Tradition of anonymity reminds us to place Al-Anon and Alateen principles above personalities.

At any function that records its speakers, members need to be aware that some recorders have Web sites that are open to the public. If speakers use full names, their sharings including full names, could be posted, **which violates the principle of anonymity.**

Anonymity in Service

In Al-Anon/Alateen service positions (Group Representatives, District Representatives, Coordinators, World Service Conference members, etc.) it is practical to use full names and addresses to facilitate communication.

Confidential Mailing Lists

Confidential mailing lists are maintained throughout our service structure by groups, districts, Areas, and the WSO. Care must be taken that members' identifying information from these confidential lists is not made available to the public

in published materials or posted on public Al-Anon Web sites.

However, anonymity and our Tradition of non-endorsement could be compromised in electronic communication with e-mail lists and methods of forwarding messages, as well as on public Web sites. Posting material originally meant for members only (such as printed flyers, reports, letters, e-mail messages, and newsletters) on Web sites could result in posting a member's full name, which violates the principle of anonymity.

Service Communication

Service communication via e-mail is expedient and efficient, but care and common sense must be taken in its use, particularly in forwarding messages. Use of blind copies protects members' anonymity. Members should select with care the e-mail address(es) they use to conduct Al-Anon/Alateen business. It is recommended not to use members' full names in them. Business e-mail addresses might not provide privacy and could imply affiliation.

- **Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs), Group Representatives (GRs), and other trusted servants sending information by e-mail to group members take care in the wording of e-mail subject lines and use an e-mail address that protects anonymity as the e-mail addresses to which they are mailing may not be private.**
- **E-mail addresses of trusted servants are assumed to be private. Electronic correspondence sent among the links of service may include the name Al-Anon or Alateen.**

As postal correspondence is delivered by public means, Letters (including the return address) to an Al-Anon or Alateen member should never have the name Al-Anon or Alateen on the envelope. The WSO uses “AFG, Inc.” on envelopes sent to members in order to maintain **protect** anonymity. Care should also be taken in the wording of e-mail subject lines, as the e-mail address may not be private.

Anonymity in Al-Anon/Alateen Publications

In all publications available to the general public, personal anonymity is maintained. Although WSO requests that member submissions to WSO publications The Forum should include full names, addresses, and phone numbers, WSO publishes the material that is published will be signed any way the writer wishes: with first name and initial, initials only, “Anonymous” either with or without a geographical location. Because The Forum is a publication available to the general public, personal anonymity is maintained or a pseudonym. Service arm publications usually follow this procedure if the same publishing policy if when distributed outside the fellowship.

Publications and other materials meant for members only (such as flyers, reports, letters, e-mail messages, newsletters) that identify members by full name or provide members' phone number or address can be posted on Al-Anon/Alateen password-protected Web sites. Posting material originally meant

for members only on Web sites **that are not password-protected** could result in publishing a member's full name, **which violates the principle of anonymity.** (See **"Anonymity and the Media"** in the **"Anonymity Outside of Al-Anon/Alateen"** section.)

MOTION #8 – CARRIED

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

To amend the text on pages 107-109 of the entire "Public Relations" section of the Policy Digest beginning with the section "Public Outreach" and ending with the new section "*Social Networking--WSO*" in the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, as follows (New text is underlined and bold; moved text is underlined. Strikethrough indicates deletion.):

Public Relations Outreach

Much of the direction for Al-Anon's Public Outreach has been based on the 1966 WSC Statement on Public Relations that has long been a part of the Policy Digest. Many of the spiritual principles that form the foundation of Al-Anon's Policy are contained in the statement included here in its entirety. Excerpts denoted in this section are annotated with the symbol (\$).

Attraction—Not Promotion

The 1966 WSC Statement on Public Relations

Our Traditions state that our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion. For clarification, the sixth World Service Conference (1966) adopted the following statement, which was reaffirmed at the 1971 WSC:

It is the consensus of the sixth World Service Conference that if Al-Anon is to continue to exist, it must continue to grow. There is no standing still without retrogression. Al-Anon must continue to grow if it is going to fulfill its primary purpose of reaching millions who need Al-Anon's help but who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.

We will fulfill this primary purpose most effectively by attraction and cooperation—not promotion or affiliation. For the guidance of our fellowship here are authoritative definitions of these sometimes controversial terms:

to attract:	to draw by other than physical influence; to invite; to draw to; to cause to approach
to promote:	to push forward; to further advance, as in a business venture (implies "hard sell," advancement for profit)
cooperation:	joint operation or action (implies coming together of two or more people to work together for a common goal or benefit or on a common problem)
affiliation:	association or close connection; a uniting (implies lending one's name, endorsement, legal or financial association)

Al-Anon is *attracting* when it tells people why we are, what we are, what we do and how; we let them know that we are available if and when help is needed. We state the facts, which are communicated via the press, radio, TV, and films, always stressing anonymity at the public level.

Al-Anon is *cooperating* when it works with others,* rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened and we reach many more of those in need.

[footnote with paragraph above]

*§Examples are federal, state, provincial, and municipal alcoholism agencies; private health agencies; law enforcement, judicial, and correctional agencies and institutions; general hospitals and state, county, or city mental hospitals; councils of churches, doctors, nurses, clergymen, social workers, educators.

Anonymity

Tradition Eleven is sustained if, when appearing on a television program as an Al-Anon or Alateen member, you maintain anonymity and take precautions to avoid recognition of the participants, e.g., back to camera or silhouette.

In either of the above cases a pseudonym or first name only should be used. This policy applies equally to visual tapes for closed-circuit TV (schools, etc.).

When appearing on a TV program as the relative of an alcoholic, a member can face the camera and give his full name, providing he does not reveal his membership in Al-Anon or Alateen.

Any Al-Anon/Alateen member may write an article about the fellowship for local or national publications and may be financially remunerated. The personal anonymity of someone writing as a member is maintained by signing anonymously or using a pseudonym.

The Philosophy and Spiritual Principles for Al-Anon's Public Outreach

Our Public Outreach is based on the following spiritual principles that promote unity and clarity within the fellowship as well as awareness and hope outside the fellowship. Whenever there are questions concerning public outreach it is helpful to return to these spiritual principles for resolution:

- Members and groups carry the message.
- Outreach is based on attraction, rather than promotion.
- Personal anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, films, TV, and the Internet.
- Cooperation and goodwill strengthen public outreach.
- Members continually broaden the way they carry the message by using new and innovative forms of communication.

Members and groups carry the message

Carrying the message is essential to attracting new members. Our Twelfth Step suggests that members carry the message of recovery to others and make Al-Anon known in their communities.

Al-Anon members who do Twelfth Step work carry the message of Al-Anon recovery keeping in mind adherence to Tradition Eleven. There is no replacement for individual Al-Anon members carrying the spiritual message of recovery within their communities in ways that media cannot.

Local Public Outreach: Roles and Responsibilities

Al-Anon members who have an understanding of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions have an important role in local Public Outreach. They carry the message of hope through local media, and to professionals throughout their communities.

Providing speakers and literature for community events, participating and exhibiting at health fairs, placing ads in public places, and talking with local radio/TV stations to request that they play Public Service Announcements are some local outreach opportunities. (See also, “Members continually broaden the way they carry the message by using new and innovative forms of communication”).

Making contact with professionals

To ensure that professionals are aware of Al-Anon as a credible resource for helping friends and families of alcoholics, groups, districts, and other service arms can host public meetings inviting members of the professional community. Meeting schedules and contact information on the Web sites of Area and local service arms should contain current and accurate information. In this way, the public will have direct and ready access to information, furthering Al-Anon/Alateen’s reputation as a credible local resource.

Personal sharing with professionals is one way to carry the message of hope to others. Members may have established relationships with doctors, nurses, members of the clergy, therapists, educators, or other professionals. Every Al-Anon member is encouraged to share the benefits of Al-Anon with members of the professional community with whom they come into contact, divulging their Al-Anon membership whenever they are comfortable doing so. These one-on-one relationships provide the professional with credible evidence of the benefits of Al-Anon’s program of recovery, and may encourage them to learn more about Al-Anon and perhaps recommend the Al-Anon program to others. Al-Anon does not endorse any outside enterprise. Professionals may endorse the Al-Anon program without violating the Traditions—providing they do not reveal Al-Anon membership.

National and International Public Outreach: Roles and Responsibilities

Although Al-Anon members carry the message of Al-Anon,

it is the WSO which is solely responsible for creating public outreach messages beyond the local level. This ensures that there is consistency in media messages throughout the world.

The World Service Conference has designated the WSO as sole publishing agent for the fellowship and sole producer of public service announcements (PSAs). The WSO is responsible for production and distribution of all multi-Area, national, and worldwide communications including those on the Internet.

National Publicity

Whenever national publicity on Al-Anon/Alateen may be of interest to local groups, they are, if possible, notified in advance by the WSO.

An Al-Anon general service structure outside the United States and Canada that has received permission from the WSO to print Conference Approved Literature may reprint WSO public outreach materials. The general service structure is not limited in the number of public outreach pieces it can produce. The WSO reserves the right to review such items before publication or broadcast.

Criticism of the Fellowship

In accordance with Tradition Ten, the Al-Anon fellowship does not officially respond to adverse publicity and therefore attempts to avoid public controversy. As individuals, members may take any action they wish.

Public Information

Paid Advertisements

A group may pay for an ad in a newspaper or magazine the media to make the community aware of Al-Anon and Alateen. In accordance with our Traditions, an individual member may pay for such an ad space with group approval. This payment can be considered a member’s personal contribution.

Members and local service arms may pay for local advertisements, for example; billboards, screen ads at movie theaters, and transit signs. The WSO reserves the right to approve the content of the message before public placement.

Publicizing meeting locations

Meeting information may be printed in church bulletins, newspapers and other venues for sharing public information.

WSO Produced Posters

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

Posters and Flyers for Public Outreach for Al-Anon Service Arms

Al-Anon Information Services and Area World Service Com-

mittees may have a need for **public outreach** posters that can be produced **inexpensively** and distributed within their area of service. Although the Conference has designated Al-Anon's WSO as the sole publishing agent for the fellowship, **This could include outreach to a particular cultural group, for example, Districts, Information Services, and Areas work together on such projects so the Al-Anon message remains consistent and unity among the service arms is ensured. Service arms contact the WSO before creating a poster. The WSO has posters available on a variety of needs and topics that might meet the needs of an AIS or Area.** The WSO extends permission for such posters, reserving the right to review these items before they are printed and distributed in order to protect **preserve our Al-Anon's public outreach message image. These outreach posters may appear on the Internet provided that no member's name, phone number, or other identifying information appears, so that anonymity is maintained.**

Such permission is not required when posters **public outreach flyers are created made up for a single local events. Flyers on the Internet are accessible to the public and must protect members' anonymity.**

Public Information Literature

Outreach Publications – AIS/Area

Although the Conference has designated Al-Anon's WSO as the sole publishing agent for the fellowship, the WSO extends permission to **Al-Anon** Information Services or Area World Service Committees **for the production of only one publication for public outreach; to publish only one Public Information piece, which can be produced inexpensively and for distributed distribution solely within their area of service.** This often is incorporated with the local meeting schedule, **reserving the right to review these items publication before they are printed and distributed in order to protect preserve our Al-Anon's public outreach message image. Such permission is not required when posters are made up for single local events. To assist potential members in locating a meeting, a meeting schedule is frequently included with such a publication.**

Outreach Publications - International

Each general service structure working in countries outside the United States and Canada may reprint WSO material and is not limited to printing one PI piece. There are public information needs based on cultural differences and tradition. **An Al-Anon general service structure outside the United States and Canada that has received permission from the WSO to print Conference Approved Literature may reprint WSO public outreach materials. The General Service Structure is not limited in the number of public outreach pieces produced.** The WSO also reserves the right to review such items before publication.

Public Service Announcements

The media (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) offer free air time or print space for to not-for-profit organizations for public service announcements (PSAs). **Al-Anon provides such PSAs to inform the general public about Al-Anon and Alateen. The World Service Conference has designated the WSO as sole**

producer of public service announcements for the fellowship to use in public outreach work. The World Service Conference (WSC) has authorized the WSO to produce PSAs which inform the general public about Al-Anon and Alateen.

Area/Local Public Outreach Messages

Areas and local service arms may produce and participate in public announcements, programs, broadcasts, or community calendar items that are of local interest, have local impact or reflect a local culture's needs. These may be provided to local radio, television, or community cable stations. In such projects, Tradition Eleven is maintained by avoiding recognition of the participants and by the use of first names or pseudonyms. Prior to broadcast, the WSO reserves the right to review such projects for consistency with the Al-Anon message.

Outreach is based on attraction, rather than promotion

It has always been Al-Anon's approach to carry a clear and simple message about our program of recovery – that is: to let people know what we are, what we do, and how they can come into contact with us. We do this in many creative ways while avoiding high pressure tactics which distort our message of hope or bring us into public controversy.

We attract interest in Al-Anon Family Groups when we communicate what our lives were like before we came to Al-Anon, what we found in Al-Anon that helped us, and what our lives are like today. In error, we would be promoting Al-Anon if we offered promises, guarantees, personal advice, or gave the impression that we are the experts who know what is best for all families and friends of alcoholics.

Personal anonymity is maintained at the level of press, radio, films, TV, and the Internet

Tradition Twelve tells us that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our entire program. Members maintain personal anonymity in all forms of public media including press, radio, films, TV, and the Internet, as well as other ways of reaching the public. It is essential that members consider Tradition Eleven as they keep public outreach messages free from personalities. No one person can ever be the sole representative of Al-Anon. The message of recovery in the media is too important to be overshadowed by a single person or group no matter how well-intentioned.

Anonymity at Local Events for Individuals and Service Arms

As an organization Al-Anon is not a secret; however, we always protect our members' anonymity. Members are encouraged to participate in local events where Al-Anon information can be shared. Participation at health fairs, speaking at schools, etc., where members might be recognized, is not considered a break in anonymity since it does not occur at the level of press, radio, films, TV, and the Internet.

If the media is present, members who staff such events are requested to practice the principle of personal anonymity. (See “Anonymity in Public Media for Individuals and Local Service Arms”).

Anonymity in Public Media for Individuals and Local Service Arms

Tradition Eleven is sustained when members maintain personal anonymity by using first name only or a pseudonym, and by appearing back to the camera or in silhouette. This principle applies to all types of visual, audio, or print media, or in any way on the Internet when Al-Anon/Alateen membership is revealed.

If membership is not revealed when participating in any form of public media, members can use their full name, face the camera, or appear in print.

Members avoid revealing the identity of any A.A. member.

As an individual, not an Al-Anon spokesperson, any member may write an article about the fellowship for local or national publications and may be financially remunerated. The personal anonymity of someone writing as a member is maintained by signing anonymously or using a pseudonym. Personal anonymity also applies to members who author books or create other public communications.

Cooperation and goodwill strengthen public outreach

Al-Anon fulfills our primary purpose most effectively by cooperating with others and creating goodwill in the media and in the professional community.

Al-Anon is cooperating when it works with others, rather than alone. In working with others, our scope and contacts are broadened and we reach many more of those in need. However, we would give the impression of affiliation if we posted links to professional services on an Al-Anon Web site, or if we added the Al-Anon name as sponsor or co-sponsor for a commercial or community event. The concept of goodwill is simply maintaining our positive relationships and reputation as we work with others. Al-Anon exhibits goodwill when it works harmoniously in the community to provide information and carry the message of hope. *Criticism of the Fellowship* In accordance with Tradition Ten, the Al-Anon fellowship does not officially respond to adverse publicity and avoids public controversy. As individuals, members may take any action they wish as long as they do not divulge their membership or appear to be a spokesperson for Al-Anon.

Members continually broaden the way they carry the message by using new and innovative forms of communication

In the dynamic world in which we live, we need always consider broadening our outreach efforts so that those needing our help may easily find us. This means that there is no end to the possibilities for carrying our message locally, nationally, and internationally.

In developing or conducting public outreach using new forms of communication, including emerging technologies, Al-Anon's outreach message is safeguarded by consistently referencing the primary purpose of public outreach and by applying its underlying spiritual principles.

Media

Individual Al-Anon members and groups are encouraged to work with their districts, Al-Anon Information Services, and Area World Service Committees on projects for media outreach. In this way, a broad group conscience is reached and the Al-Anon message remains consistent.

The Internet

The Internet is a global computer network that is in the public domain. Service arms are encouraged to post WSO Public Service Announcements on the Internet or to create links to the WSO Public Outreach Web site. In keeping with our Legacies, Al-Anon members guard with care their own and others' anonymity, and avoid any actions or behaviors that could draw Al-Anon into public controversy or harm Al-Anon's name. (See “Social Networking-Individual Members/Groups/Service Arms”. Service guidelines are available on the Al-Anon Members' Web site.)

Social Networking Media

While social networking and social media Internet sites and blogs present special challenges to members and the WSO, social networking can be an important venue for carrying the message of Al-Anon as it fulfills its primary purpose of reaching millions who are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.

Social Networking-Individual Members/Groups/Service Arms

Blogs, profiles, social networks, or other forms of social media are appropriate for public outreach. Members maintain the principle of anonymity and do not appear to speak for Al-Anon as a whole. They avoid actions, behaviors, or commentary that could draw Al-Anon into public controversy or harm Al-Anon's name and public outreach message.

The names “Al-Anon” and “Alateen” are trademark names and may not be used as usernames, logos, or identifying characteristics on profiles, blogs, or in titles of social media pages. Only Al-Anon service arms may use the Al-Anon logo. (See also “Anonymity” and “Symbols/Logos” section of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies”).

Social Networking–WSO

The WSO, in carrying out its responsibility for creating public outreach messages beyond the local level, will continually look for new ways to do so using the capabilities of social networking and emerging technologies while adhering to Al-Anon's spiritual principles.

2012 ANNUAL REPORT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ADMINISTRATION

OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

Ric B., Executive Director

The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) meets quarterly and is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the World Service Conference (WSC), establishing business policies of the World Service Office (WSO), estimating revenue, administering services 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 47 full-time employees) and for administration of the organization's policies. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Communication Services, or the Executive Director's designee, acts in his stead. 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

Karen 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 as 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 the following Guidelines: Archives Oversight, Executive Committee, Finance Committee, Policy Committee, Board Presentations Work Group, Literature Committee, and Trial Alateen Work Group.
- To create an envelope for individual contributions that will include the shoe design and the related quote from *Lois Remembers* (B-7), as well as the Finance Committee logo.
- To approve the Engagement Letter for the Auditing Firm as presented.
- To approve the establishment of a LinkedIn "Page" and a LinkedIn "Group," both in the name of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.,
- To approve the recommendations for updating the Al-Anon Newcomer Packet (K-10), with the exception that the *Just for Today* Bookmark (M-12) be retained or the *Just for Today* Wallet Card (M-10) be used, depending on the Task Force's intent, in addition to adding the *Sponsorship—Working Together to Recover* Bookmark (M-78) to the Newcomer Packet.
- To approve staff travel for participation as a panel member at the U.S. Government's Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) "Role of the Family in Recovery" seminar in Rockville, MD, September 25-26, 2012.
- To no longer publish an annual index in the December issue of *The Forum*, beginning in December 2012, in order to allow more sharings to be published within the issue.
- To offer *The Forum* electronically in various formats in conjunction with third-party vendors, at an annual subscription price of \$9.99 U.S.
- To approve At-Large Literature Committee members, At-Large Audit Committee members, At-Large *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee members, and Alateen Work Group member for 2012-2013.
- To approve a Thought Force of up to five Al-Anon members to provide updated information about procedures, program, and Committee responsibilities for the Area Archives.
- To approve the plan submitted by the Administrative Team to update and revise the Unlimited Abundant Resources Skills Inventory Survey as presented.
- To approve the 2012-2014 Alateen Work Group Trial Proposal including the plan submitted with the condition that item four be revised and submitted to the Executive Director for review and approval, and item six be resubmitted for actual approval.
- To approve the 2012 World Service Office Alateen Task/Thought Force Résumé for all Areas for the three electronic Thought/Task Forces as presented.
- To extend the trial of the softcover of *How Al-Anon Works*

for *Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32) in English for one more year.

The Board, in its legal and financial capacity, took the following actions:

- At the Annual Meeting:
 - ✓ To approve the 2012 Finance Committee Report.
 - ✓ To approve the 2011 Annual Report.
 - ✓ To approve the 2011 Auditor's Report.
 - ✓ To elect four Trustee at Large (TAL) nominees, four Regional Trustee (RT) nominees, the At-Large member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee At-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and ECRPM following traditional approval by the Conference where required.
 - ✓ To approve the Committee Chairperson appointments for 2012-2013.
- To approve changes to the *Employee Policies and Procedures Manual*.
- To approve the purchase of an electronic voting system to be used at World Service Conference at a cost not to exceed \$3,000.00 U.S.
- To approve that the equalized expense for the 2013 World Service Conference be \$1,280.00 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the 2013 World Service Conference is \$1,968.00 U.S.
- To end the three-year trial of Finance Committee assuming the responsibilities of the Investment Committee, and to authorize the Finance Committee to assume the responsibilities of the Investment Committee, thus permanently dissolving the Investment Committee.
- To amend the By-Laws, Article XII COMMITTEES, by adding after paragraph 1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT paragraph and to renumber all subsequent paragraphs.
- To approve the 2013 International Convention Proposed Budget.
- To approve the 2013 International Convention proposed registration fee as follows:
 - \$115 by December 31, 2012
 - \$140 from January 1, 2013 through May 31, 2013
 - \$165 from June 1, 2013 through onsite registration
- To accept the sixth triennial report of the Executive Committee on Real Property Management.
- To approve that the International Coordination Committee (ICC) members and International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Delegates be allowed to travel in business class to the 2012 IAGSM and to charge the additional cost above each coach fare to the Reserve Fund.
- To affirm the duties of the Vice Chairperson of the Board as they are in the By-Laws.

- To affirm that the firm of Cherry, Bekaert, & Holland be retained by the Board as the independent audit firm for this year, the second of a three year term.
- To translate the book *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) in Spanish, at a cost not to exceed \$3,500.00 U.S., to be completed in 12 months.
- To translate the book *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) in French, at a cost not to exceed \$3,500.00 U.S., to be completed in 12 months.
- To set the "Day of Connecting" registration fees as follows:
 - \$15 preregistration
 - \$20 onsite registration
- To approve the purchase of software that will enable the Public Outreach section to engage more effectively with new media sources of news and information, not to exceed \$3,300.00 U.S.
- To authorize the production of seven Alateen newcomer podcasts for the Public Outreach Web site, at a cost not to exceed \$300.00 U.S.

The Board, in its oversight capacity, took the following actions:

- To approve the 2013 World Service Conference theme as follows:
 - Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing "Me" to "We"
- To approve the 2012 World Service Conference tentative agenda topics as presented.
- To approve the dissolution of the Group Services and Admissions/Handbook Committees.
- To distribute the Board Profile to the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) and the Regional Committee on Trustee (RCT) on a three-year trial basis, beginning in August 2012.
- To permanently allow Public Outreach Committee, Literature Committee, and *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee At-Large members to live anywhere within the WSC structure, and that these members no longer meet quarterly at the WSO or during the WSC, and that participation in meetings is via conference call.
- To approve the Communications Section and the Member Services Section portions of the Strategic Plan for 2013.
- To affirm that the 2018 International Convention be held in Baltimore, MD in July 2018.
- To reaffirm the Investment Guidelines and Philosophy.

The Board, in its strategic capacity, continues its work with a Strategic Plan:

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 additional, as well as different priorities arise.

The Board of Trustees has agreed to a 15-month process for reviewing the Strategic Plan of Al-Anon Family Groups:

October 20xx	Brainstorm Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT)
January 20xx + 1	Identify and prioritize goals for the following year
April 20xx + 1	Interim report by staff regarding implementation plan
July 20xx + 1	Review the proposed staff implementation plan
October 20xx + 1	Approve plan for 20xx + 1/SWOT for 20xx + 2
November 20xx + 1	Proposed budget submitted to the Finance Committee
December 20xx + 1	Incorporate expenses into budget

We are utilizing an open and creative process of taking our inventory, prioritizing the findings of this inventory, and creating actions that are necessary to move Al-Anon toward its Vision and Mission Statements. Using input from the 2011 inventory, the Board agreed on three priorities for its 2012/13 Strategic Plan:

1. To increase the visibility of Al-Anon so that it is recognized as the number one resource throughout the world for helping friends and families of problem drinkers.
2. To empower the Al-Anon fellowship to be vibrant, inclusive, and flexible.
3. To achieve a viable future for Al-Anon Family Groups, the Board will be adaptive and strategic in its use of talents, skills, and abilities.

The WSO staff was asked to support items #1. and #2. by creating activities that would accomplish these goals. The Board of Trustees is working with item #3. as it pertains to the actions of the Board. The implementation plans for each of these priorities has been approved and any actions requiring funding have been submitted to the Finance Committee for approval. As that plan goes into implementation, the Board did the SWOT analysis for the next year followed by the intent to identify and prioritize goals to come at the January 2013 Board meeting.

One item was retained from the Strategic Plan in its old format which is under the theme of “Universal Understanding of Recovery.” It is the definition of recovery that the Board and fellowship has been refining for approximately two years:

- Goal 3: Everyone—both within Al-Anon and outside—will have the same universal understanding of family recovery. The meaning of recovery will be understood by everyone, 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.
 - Objective #1: Develop a clear and concise definition of family recovery.

Progress: A test definition developed from member input was sent to a selected group of professionals. The professionals’ input has been analyzed with a clear majority stating they could live with the definition. The Work Group is now deciding to do an additional survey with professionals using their suggested changes to gauge whether a new definition has broader support. Following that analysis, original members will be resurveyed,

followed by discussion and approval of the Board of Trustees and ultimately the World Service Conference.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mary Ann R., Chairperson

The Executive Committee, which meets each month, is the administrator of the World Service Office, with legal authority granted by the Board of Trustees to conduct its daily affairs. Its seven members, one of whom serves as Chairperson, are appointed by the Trustees. They include the Executive Director, one member of the administrative staff, the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees, and three Al-Anon members elected by the Board of Trustees who contribute experience in specific fields and situations. Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

On-going work of the Executive Committee:

- Approves the minutes and actions of the Finance Committee.
- Accepts the monthly unaudited Financial Statement.
- Approves special projects of the Board and staff that involve day-to-day operations.
- Receives monthly service updates from the Executive Director and the Directors of Business Services, Communication Services, and Member Services.
- Reviews additions, updates, and corrections to policies and procedures for the *Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc.*
- Reviews and updates policies and procedures regarding the WSO Archives.
- Approves Committee Guidelines.
- Approves resumes for At-Large Committee members and certain Thought and Task Force members.
- Reviews all presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference in order to present a consistent, accurate message.
- Reviews the annual letter from the WSO’s copyright lawyer regarding the copyright laws and the Internet.
- Approves and receives updates on the progress of Project Approvals and Proposals to Study submitted by the staff.

Actions approved by the Executive Committee and presented to the Board of Trustees:

- Approved the creation of an envelope for individual contributions that will include the shoe design and the related quote from *Lois Remembers* as well as the Finance Committee logo. The new envelope will be presented at the 2013 World Service Conference for use at the 2013 International Convention and the 2014 World Service Conference.
- Approved the publishing of *Having Had a Spiritual Awakening...* (eB-25) electronically in various formats in conjunction with third-party vendors, to sell at a price of \$9.99 U.S.

- Approved the placement of the top four rated downloads from “Thinking Abundantly In...” blog on the Members’ Web site: “Sharing with Others in Sponsorship,” “Acceptance,” “Supporting Our Trusted Servants,” and “Understanding Our Legacies.”

POLICY COMMITTEE

Paula B., Chairperson

Harriet T., Co-Chairperson

Robert S. and Barbara O., Secretary

The Policy Committee meets quarterly and utilizes spiritual principles that guide policy. It is the largest group conscience outside of the World Service Conference. The Policy Committee is comprised of the Board of Trustees, WSC staff members, and the At-Large members of the Executive Committee. The Policy Committee ensures that the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” (Policy Digest) contains clear and concise policies without process or procedure. The Policy Committee makes recommendations to the Board of Trustees. If the Board approves a change in the Policy Digest, the change requires approval by no less than a two-thirds vote at the WSC to take effect.

Public Relations

The 2010 WSC referred the “Public Relations” section, pages 98-100 in the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, to the Policy Committee to provide further clarity. Each quarter the Policy Committee discussed the proposed new text section by section to ensure that these principles provide guidance to Al-Anon members and service arms in their public outreach endeavors. In October 2012, the Policy Committee recommended the new text to the Board of Trustees. Following Board approval, the Policy text was distributed to the World Service Delegates for discussion in their Areas. The text will be discussed at the 2013 WSC.

Memorial Contributions

During the 2011 WSC discussion on memorial contributions, members requested further study of the current policy on restricting non-member memorial contributions to honor a deceased family member who was an Al-Anon member. A Thought Force completed extensive research on the policy of accepting family non-member donations that was in place from 1962 to 1984. The Policy Committee discussed the material and concurred that the Twelve Traditions provide the most guidance in relation to this topic. A Policy Task Force reviewed the archival material and will present the information to the 2013 WSC for discussion.

“Do Not Refer”

At the 2011 WSC there was a request for the World Service Office to develop a procedure of not referring newcomers to Al-Anon groups that service arms believe are operating outside

of the Legacies. The Policy Committee discussed this request in depth and brought a presentation to the 2012 WSC that would encourage service arms to identify principles that are important for an Area to consider when developing a policy to deal with groups that are believed to be operating outside of the Legacies and also to identify principles that are important for the Area to use as they encourage, support, and educate the groups to return to operating in a manner that is within the Legacies. After discussions of the principles, Areas would then be able to develop a principle-based policy when determining whether or not a group is adhering to the Twelve Traditions. These spiritual principles may also provide guidance to the groups to more fully comply with the Twelve Traditions. Once Areas have had this discussion and have a policy in place, the Policy Committee would discuss what role the World Service Office would play in supporting Areas and groups who implement a “do not refer” policy.

Dual Members in Service

In October 2011, a Policy Committee Task Force was appointed to further clarify the dual member policy while incorporating the spiritual foundation of the policy. The Task Force utilized information from past World Service Conference discussions, previous Policy Digest language, and Al-Anon guidelines. The Policy Committee continues work on this text with the goal of bringing it to the WSC for discussion and approval.

Policy on Cooperation With Researchers

The Policy Committee discussed the policy on collaboration with researchers during the Open Policy Committee Meeting at the 2012 World Service Conference. Based on that discussion, the Committee affirmed that participation with researchers benefits Al-Anon as a whole and provided assurance that the procedure for review would be closely followed for all future proposals. In October, a work group of two staff and two volunteers evaluated a research proposal on the affects of alcoholism on adult children of alcoholics and agreed that it would be of benefit to the fellowship and is consistent with the Twelve Traditions. The project proposal was forwarded to WSO staff to negotiate an agreement with the researcher, define boundaries, and state the scope of Al-Anon’s participation in the project. This project was completed in 2012.

E-Literature Publishing

In May 2012, the Policy Committee agreed that using a third party vendor to sell electronic CAL is in accordance with the Traditions.

Addresses in E-mail Correspondence From the WSO

The Policy Committee reviewed language on pages 90 – 91 of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” related to the spiritual principles of confidentiality and anonymity in various Al-Anon publications. The Committee continued discussion on e-mail correspondence between the group’s current mailing address (CMA) or service arm and the World Service Office and agreed that the WSO could continue to send e-mail from

its address, wso@al-anon.org, since the e-mail address of the member is assumed to be private.

ADMINISTRATION

The “Using Al-Anon’s ‘Steps, Traditions, or Concepts of Service’ in Our Personal Lives” blogs were active on the Members’ Web site in English, Spanish, and French throughout 2012. No additional podcasts or materials were added to the previous introductory text of the Legacies. Al-Anon members were able to read postings and listen to conversations on each of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as well as post comments about their interpretation of any of the three Legacies. The total number of comments on the Steps blog was 571 in English, 124 in French, and 581 in Spanish. Total comments on the Traditions blog were 389 in English, 114 in French, and 103 in Spanish. Total comments on the Concepts blog were 382 in English, 63 in French, and 62 in Spanish.

The blogs were taken down at the end of the year. A new podcast on the Steps will be posted on the Public Outreach and Members’ Web sites. A plan to also produce similar, but not exact, podcasts on the Steps in Spanish and French is underway.

At the beginning of the year, the Information Analyst resigned. The position was reconfigured to Marketing Information Analyst and the position was moved to the Communication Services section. The former Information Analyst was hired on a temporary basis to assist in the transition of existing projects and to begin the work on the 2012 Membership Survey. The Personnel/Training Manager also left in late January. Her position was assessed and a part-time Human Resources consultant was hired to assess the need for a full-time position as well as standardize policies and procedures already in place. While some responsibilities were transferred to the Controller, other responsibilities will be assigned to the managers and supervisors along with a training program developed by the consultant to ensure success. After the training program is completed in early 2013, the consultant will only be used on an as needed basis. There were no significant problems as a result of eliminating this position.

The Graphic Designer left in August and portions of this position are being outsourced until a complete assessment of this position can be made. Current plans are to ultimately eliminate the position, if feasible. The receptionist left in December and the position has been filled. The Administrative Secretary also left at the end of December and her position was filled by an internal promotion from the Group Records Department. The clerk position will be filled on a temporary basis until we are able to assess future needs based on projected electronic updates to the Alateen Group Records process and the new interactive voice recognition system (IVR) for group information.

With the departure of the Information Analyst, the feedback from professionals who have worked with Al-Anon Family Groups in a variety of situations was not analyzed until late in the year. The analysis was compiled and was then discussed with the Work Group overseeing this definition. Additional information can be found in the Communication Services section of the report.

The on-line 2012 Membership Survey was completed. Details will be posted after review of the results by the Board of Trustees in January 2013. Various formats as were presented in 2009 will also be created to assist the membership in conveying this information both within and outside of the fellowship.

After the Board reviewed the Policy regarding “Collaboration with Researchers” at the January Board meeting, the Executive Director reviewed the process to be sure all steps had been followed. After review of minutes, discussions with the former Information Analyst and staff, it was discovered that the step which requires the Policy Chairperson to appoint a work group of two volunteers and two staff members to evaluate whether cooperation with the research project would benefit Al-Anon, was not followed. The project was reviewed by the Executive Committee which has six volunteers and two staff members but it was not the process the Policy Committee had approved. As a result, the Executive Director made amends to the full Conference and asked the Delegates to carry this information back to the membership. (Additional information can be found in the Policy Committee portion of this report as well as the 2011 Annual Report contained in the *2012 World Service Conference Summary*.)

Some groups and a few members continued to write to the Board or the WSO complaining about the existence of the Policy itself. Those members were answered stating that the various bodies that reviewed the Policy believe that the Policy is within the Traditions and would benefit Al-Anon as a whole. A member also pointed out that she believed that the word “collaboration” was itself a violation of the Traditions. Her concern will be brought to a future Policy meeting for discussion.

The survey has been completed and a final report of the results has not yet been published. Additional surveys were posted on the Members’ Web site after the process was fully complied with. (See the Policy Committee section for details.)

Progress on implementation of electronic literature continues to be slow. After the discussions at the 2012 WSC, the Executive Director also discussed with A.A. staff regarding their various approaches to electronic literature. After that discussion, the Policy Committee found that using third party vendors to sell our literature was consistent with the Traditions and would allow us to offer *The Forum* and other books in more formats without large investments of cash for technology that would be ever-changing and require additional investments.

The outside consultant contacted various electronic vendors who not only sell electronic readers but also have apps that allow customers to download books onto a variety of smart phones. We are currently on hold regarding the sale of *The Forum* with the various vendors as they are either behind in the implementation of magazine subscriptions or have not fully updated their software applications. As a result, we are also moving ahead with plans to offer *Having Had a Spiritual Awakening* (B-25) in an electronic format. While the print version is no longer printed, this electronic version will have full color pictures of the original artwork previously printed in black and white. (See Board and Executive Committee sections regarding pricing.)

During the IAGSM in Cape Town, South Africa, a Delegate who is active in the publishing field spoke with the Executive Director about the electronic publishing topic. She stated that their pub-

lishers were learning that they needed to price their electronic books on the basis of their content and to not undersell it. A member would read an Al-Anon book many times over a lifetime as opposed to fiction that one reads once and passes on. This information was shared with the Executive Committee and key staff.

The preliminary audio version of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22) was completed by the consultant and the Communication Section reviewed the file for accuracy. The sound quality engineering work is in progress. No decision has been made regarding a process to offer it to the fellowship.

The Finance Committee approved the continuation of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) in soft cover in English only. The Executive Committee discussed a concern related by members that groups and individuals have not grasped the concept of “paying it forward” as a part of the motivation for the lower price. Other marketing messages to reinforce this idea were posted on the District Representatives and Literature Coordinators e-Communities. No decisions have been reached regarding the soft cover version in Spanish and French due to the low sales numbers of the hardcover books and the possible impact on sales to structures outside the U.S. The topic will again be considered when the trial period is up.

New designs for all Al-Anon pamphlets were created, approved by the Executive Committee, and previewed at the 2012 World Service Conference. The new designs will be used as pamphlets are reprinted. A Task Force on redesign and content of the Newcomers Kit (K-11) completed its work and its recommendations were approved with some changes. A new envelope will also be created as a part of this redesign.

Subtitles in Spanish and French have been completed for *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31 DVD). The masters will now be sent for copying and marketing materials will be introduced in early 2013.

The update to the Public Outreach Web site in French and Spanish was completed and plans for an update and redesigned Members' Web site in all three languages are under way. Staff met to brainstorm new ways of presenting material and Sections reviewed all materials currently posted for accuracy, timeliness, and look. The outside consultant has been posting material as it is identified and plans are to have the English site completed by the 2013 World Service Conference with translation of appropriate parts for the French and Spanish sites to begin when final text is approved.

A project manager was appointed to implement recommendations from a Conference Thought Force on Conflict Resolution. A staff Task Force had previously suggested a series of cards outlining the use of the Traditions as a guide to resolving conflict but the earlier versions were not approved. The new project manager created a smaller Task Force and has redesigned the cards with the goal of approval in early 2013. Other tools will then be considered as the original suggestion was to create a kit with multiple tools for group/district/Area and individual use.

The WSO continues to work with Areas regarding issues involving incorporation and revisions to Bylaws. Several new Areas who followed other Area incorporation documents realized that they also had incorrectly incorporated the Assembly and the groups (our spiritual arms). The Executive Director continues to provide suggestions for revisions to Bylaws and other language to

help clarify the Area's organizational needs in accordance with the Concepts of Service. The Executive Director is also working with the attorney for an AIS whose Bylaws provide the ability for a small number of groups to repeatedly call meetings to discuss similar topics even though the groups and the Board of the AIS have provided the information or denied the proposals by vote.

A phone bridge contacted the office about posting the Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome and other material available in *Groups at Work* (P-24) on a Web site so that members did not have to purchase the booklet or come prepared to chair the meeting. It was explained that the material is copyright-protected and only the WSO has permission to post this material on the Internet. It was also suggested to use the material that is already posted on the Members' Web site in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* 2010-2013 (P-24/27) which is readily available to any member with Web access.

A poster campaign was announced at the 2012 World Service Conference. The idea was to have members create posters using the theme “Is Someone Else's Drinking Tearing You Apart?” When posters were suitable, they would be posted on the Members' Web site for groups, districts, and Areas to use to attract newcomers to their meetings. These posters would allow for local contact information. While the idea was well-received at the Conference, only six posters have been received. To date, they were not professional looking or did not use the theme suggested. Members are still invited to submit their ideas. The text on “Posters” in the *Service Manual* may assist members in understanding the goal of producing posters that would adequately protect our public image and have universal appeal.

A few members continue to object to the tagline on our stationary and new literature. This is based on a misconception that everything printed is Conference Approved. The Executive Director went over the history of taglines at the 2012 Conference pointing out that taglines are used and have been periodically updated to explain to the general public who we are and what we do as opposed to our primary purpose which has never changed.

The bulletin board feature on e-Communities was activated for the various audiences. The idea was to have a discussion in the open about issues or concerns related to that service role. Some members posted their personal e-mail addresses on the site asking for information to be shared with them thus defeating the purpose of the bulletin board. Other members who had the ability to view a particular site even though it was not related to their service role began to engage in the discussion giving their opinions when it was not their role. Guidelines regarding use of the bulletin boards were posted and the staff has been sending confidential reminders to violators asking them to conform to the guidelines. Inappropriate postings are then removed to keep from creating the idea that this is correct behavior.

One Delegate did ask other Areas to share their policies regarding receiving gifts or bequests from members on the Delegates' bulletin board. Based on limited response, it appears this is a topic that most Areas have yet to address. In answer to a question at the 2012 WSC, the Executive Director suggested that having this conversation before a gift was received was preferable to having a sum of money and then having to discuss whether it can be accepted or not.

The Director of Business Services, the Controller, and the Executive Director continue to explore options to address concerns related to internal control of funds coming into the office as well as the processing of checks, orders, etc., in the event of a disaster. The auditors suggested that additional ideas could be presented during the 2012 Audit.

The Director of Business Services, the Controller, and the Executive Director consulted with our Canadian attorney regarding methods to document the costs of services being provided to the Canadian groups for which the Canadian Corporation was responsible. A contract outlining the services provided and method of calculating costs associated will be presented to the Board of Trustees at its January 2013 meeting. A similar meeting will be held with the Canadian Corporation when feasible.

The Executive Director and the Director of Business Services held teleconferences with agents from Canada Revenue to outline the process of holding the Convention in Vancouver as a foreign corporation as well as the process for selling limited goods at the event. Letters of recognition and procedures to follow were received and will be shared with the Vancouver Convention and Visitors Bureau and the respective hotels where the World Service Office is holding paid events or buying rooms.

The Board of Trustees decided to hold a limited number of TEAM events (four) in the fall of 2013 as a result of the International in Vancouver. By the end of 2012, no Areas had requested an event for 2013.

The Executive Director attended the biannual Colombia Convention in Medellin at their expense. He met with local service members in Bogota before flying to the Convention, met with additional service members and later the Board, in Medellin and then attended the three day Convention. Colombia provided translators so that he could understand each session as well as the two sessions that he was asked to present. One session was to explain the difference and similarities of the World Service Office and the General Service Office in Colombia followed by questions from the floor. The second session was on "Gratitude in Service" which included a discussion of how giving back is a sign not only of gratitude but a benefit of the abundant thinking that we have been introduced to as a result of working the program. Members suggested that the Executive Director be invited again in 2014 as they felt that they benefitted personally from the interaction and discussions.

As a result of several structures sharing the direct benefits they have received as a result of World Service Office staff and Trustee visits, several structures have extended invitations to pay for staff to attend events in their countries in 2013.

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 Communication Services, has full authority to act on behalf of the Executive Director in his absence due to travel or illness.

Over the past several years, the Administrative Team has developed and refined disaster recovery plans so as to be able to restore services quickly should any emergency affect daily office operations. In 2012, plans to place electronic data in the cloud were implemented and data on several servers are now stored offsite. In the event of a disaster, staff could move to a safe location and with Internet access, could download software and records, and begin to operate within hours. Several of the servers have undergone tests to ensure that the process does, in fact, work and that the data provided is accurate. Additional tests for other servers are planned for early 2013.

After the Information Analyst left, the Executive Director asked the Administrative Team to appoint a project manager to complete the Traditions piece related to the Conflict Resolution kit. A project manager was also appointed to manage the implementation of the new Members' Web site once plans for the new site were established. As a result of these project managers, the projects have moved forward with minimum supervision.

After requests from the Web Architect regarding updating the data produced by the Unlimited Abundant Resources Skills Inventory, the Administrative Team decided that much of the information sought on the current site is not useful for staff and is not being used by anyone else. Plans to refine the Skills Inventory and provide for a process to allow members to periodically update their information were approved by the Executive Committee. The Director of Member Services will follow-up with the Web Architect to complete this revision and update the process.

After the Board adopted new goals in the update of its Strategic Plan, the Administrative Team was asked to create new objectives and a work plan to implement those goals in 2013. The Team discussed the capacity of staff to accomplish additional projects and identified objectives and a process to accomplish them after the Board approved them in October. Plans are underway for implementation with quarterly updates to the Board.

In a discussion regarding interactive voice recognition (IVR) software to provide meeting information 24/7, it was suggested that a new phone system was needed. A new system was installed and the Administrative Team appointed a project manager to plan the identification of the information to be shared, a process for the software to follow at each step, and the development of a request for proposals from various companies who provide this service. Five companies were contacted and several responses did not fully comply with the criteria sought in the proposal. Possible contracts have now been provided to the Executive Director for review and discussion with the Executive Committee in January 2013. The original goal set by the Executive Director was to have this process in place in all three languages by mid-2013. Plans appear to be on track.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public Service Announcement (PSA) Campaigns. In 2012, more local Al-Anon members worked harder than ever before to reach out to their local television and radio stations, to thank the stations for broadcasting Al-Anon's PSAs or to encourage them to do so. For the first time, WSO distributed personalized information packets to each of the 67 Public Outreach Coordinators that included contact information (names and phone numbers) for TV stations in their Area. A total of four of these personalized packets were sent to each Coordinator throughout the year, updating them quarterly on the airplay information for the TV stations in their Area, as reported by Nielsen. Support for Al-Anon's PSA program was the subject of a conference call with Public Outreach Coordinators, as well as a topic addressed by WSO staff at several TEAM events.

WSO staff also worked directly with individual members who expressed an interest in outreach, and encouraged them to contact their Area Public Outreach Coordinator and participate in this project. "The Best of Public Outreach: A "How to Do It Service Tool for Public Outreach," has extensive information on how members can approach TV stations. It was the subject of a second conference call for all Public Outreach Coordinators in 2012.

The USA Network put Al-Anon's PSAs into its rotation for the first time. Multiple broadcasts gave exposure to Al-Anon's message in major cities, such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Boston, Philadelphia, Phoenix, San Diego, and others. This success was a result of a WSO staff member's meetings with TV network representatives in New York City.

In total, Al-Anon's Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaigns on television and radio reached a combined audience of more than 620 million people across the U.S. and Canada in 2012, according to preliminary data. This 16 percent increase over last year's total audience size was unexpected because TV stations usually cut back on PSA broadcasts in an election year, due to increased paid advertising. In 2012, however, Al-Anon's PSAs greatly outperformed those of other organizations. Compared to 2011, Al-Anon's share of the TV market for PSA airplays increased by 20 percent. Based on total number of airplays on TV, we expect Al-Anon to be ranked in the 99th percentile among all organizations that distributed PSAs in 2012, according to preliminary data from Nielsen.

The impact of the PSA campaigns, however, varied greatly from city to city, with some cities getting more than 1,000 PSA airplays, while others got none. For example, Nielsen tracked nearly 4,200 Al-Anon PSA airplays on 11 TV stations in Rapid City, South Dakota. This free air time is equivalent to an estimated \$571,000 in paid advertising. In Chicago, Nielsen tracked nearly 2,000 airplays on ten TV stations, including more than 100 airplays on WGN, a superstation that is carried by cable TV networks to numerous cities across the country. In contrast, there were fewer than 150 TV PSA airplays in all six New England states combined. Consequently, some Areas have seen a notable impact from the PSA broadcasts, while others have not. Member participation in this project has been enthusiastic but far from universal. We hope for broader member participation next year.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism. In 2012, Al-Anon members distributed 357,000 copies of our annual Public Outreach magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, which is our largest member participation outreach project. The February printing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2012* established a new all-time high mark for a single printing, at 184,500, but results for the first printing of the 2013 edition declined. For calendar year 2012, the total number of copies was down by 1.2 percent.

New media. While substantial growth is expected to take place in new media over the next decade, the audience reach through new media is still very small. In August, we began a new initiative to bring the Al-Anon message to on-line news sources, such as bloggers, on-line news sites, and RSS feeds. We have electronically distributed two news releases to these news sources per month since September. One of these releases was posted on 87 different Web sites, while others were posted on 20 to 30 Web sites. In total, eight Al-Anon news releases have been posted on 235 different Web sites.

The WSO's Twitter account now has more than 1,500 followers. Nearly 300 tweets were posted throughout the year. The WSO's Facebook page generated 8,536 page views for the year, and attracted 1,631 "likes."

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Judy A., Karen W-P, Chairpersons

Pat Q., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Public Outreach/Media

The Public Outreach Committee consists of Delegates from each panel, up to five At-Large members, the WSO staff liaison, and a WSO Volunteer Chairperson. The Director of Communications and the Associate Director of Communications—Public Outreach/Professionals are non-voting members. The Committee meets three times per year via conference call, with additional calls as needed.

The WSO Public Outreach Committee provided guidance to staff for developing important tools to engage the fellowship in local Public Outreach activities. The Committee presented at the World Service Conference a collection of how-to-do-it tools in an updated, electronic version of "The Best of Public Outreach" which is now published on the Members' Web site and posted on the Public Outreach Coordinators' e-Community.

The Public Outreach Committee identified priority audiences for upcoming projects. Target audiences include women in their 30s, parents of alcoholics, college students, and teens. The Committee invited the fellowship to send thank-you messages to various media for giving attention to Al-Anon Family Groups. They also invited the fellowship to ask the media to disseminate more information about the help that Al-Anon and Alateen can offer to families and friends of alcoholics.

The Public Outreach Committee reviewed and approved public service announcements for presentation to the Board,

the World Service Conference, and the Executive Director for final approval.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

Reaching for Personal Freedom By the beginning of 2012, the freelance writer/editor (an Al-Anon member) provided a first draft of the first section (the Twelve Steps) of the LEGACIES WORKBOOK (working title), based on the outline approved by the Literature Committee and using postings from the “Using Al-Anon’s Steps in Our Personal Lives” blog on the Members’ site. Once the first drafts were approved by the Committee, the writer/editor made revisions based on Committee comments, and completed all work by June.

Once the Committee approved it, the final draft was sent to Policy reviewers and the Executive Director for final approval. By October, design of the book was complete and it was submitted to the Translation Department. Also in October, an ad hoc Titling Committee recommended the title, *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies*, which was approved.

INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title): The WSO has received almost 700 sharings for the intimacy piece approved by the 2011 Conference, but still needs more if this piece is to express the diversity of our fellowship. Requests for sharings have appeared in *The Forum*, *Area Highlights*, and *Group eNews*. The guidelines for sharing for this piece have also been posted to all Literature Coordinators.

“CAL Corner:” Monthly articles were requested, gathered, and edited for the “CAL Corner” department of *The Forum*, featuring sharings of how Conference Approved Literature has enhanced members’ recovery.

Literature Coordinators: Regular postings were made throughout the year to the Literature Coordinator e-Community, including updates on literature projects, ideas for Coordinators, and workshops/presentations shared by various Coordinators. The Coordinators are being encouraged to spread the word about the *Parents of Alcoholics* (R-18) timely reprint, the intended purpose of the soft cover *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32), and the need for more diverse sharings on intimacy from the fellowship. In addition, the discussion board was reorganized, so that it would be easier for the Coordinators to communicate with each other on topics specific to their role.

Coordinator Conference Calls: In March and October the Associate Director of Communications—Literature hosted hour-long conference calls with Area Literature Coordinators to continue enhancing communication and cooperation regarding their role. Forty-two out of 67 Coordinators participated in the March call, with 40 included in the October call.

The Forum: Personal subscriptions to *The Forum* held steady at about 20,300.

FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Charles Y., Chairperson

Robert S., Staff Liaison, Director of Communication Services

The Committee consists of the Volunteer Chairperson, four At-Large members, the WSO Staff Liaison, and a Board of Trustees Liaison. The Communications Manager and Communication Assistant attend with voice and no vote.

Members of the Committee work on an individual basis throughout the year, evaluating member-submitted sharings. This year they reviewed approximately 900 sharings. They meet together as a Committee twice each year by telephone conference call.

In May, the Committee recommended to eliminate publishing the year-end index in *The Forum*. Printing the index requires up to six pages which reduces the number of member sharings in the December issue. The index is published on-line in the Members’ Web site.

The Committee wanted to know what happens when a sharing is given different grades. Staff explained that if a sharing has been reviewed by three members of the Committee and the sharing receives three different grades, it could indicate that what speaks to one person, might not speak to another. In that instance the *Forum* staff will take another look at the sharing and try to understand the reason for the grading disparity. In some cases, the sharing will not be used. Generally, however, the grades agree.

In November, the Committee discussed the plans for launching an electronic version of *The Forum*. The rising popularity of “tablets” is such that there is a three month waiting period to get listed on Amazon’s Kindle. The electronic version is tentatively scheduled for production in spring 2013. The subscription cost would be the same as that of the hard copy. It would, however, benefit all members greatly, especially in Canada, as there would be no postage or delay in delivery.

FEAC Committee Guidelines were reviewed and updated. The Executive Committee approved the draft with edits.

The Committee discussed adding a new department to *The Forum* that highlights the benefits of service. Opinions were divided on whether a separate department was needed, as opposed to treating the service sharing as a feature and to make a commitment to include one in every issue. The consensus was that a lot depended on whether *The Forum* received quality sharings.

Forum staff asked for feedback on the quotation now published on the back cover of the magazine underneath the traditional photo. All liked it and were in agreement about keeping it an ongoing practice.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Charlyn F., Tina B., Chairpersons

Tom C., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Literature

The Committee, consisting of eight Delegate members, five At-Large members, the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Volunteer Chairperson, continued to meet via quarterly conference calls.

The primary activity of the Literature Committee during the first half of 2012 was the review of the *LEGACIES WORKBOOK* (working title), which had been given conceptual approval by the 2010 World Service Conference. The workbook includes sharings from the English, French, and Spanish Legacy blogs, and is scheduled to be released in all three languages in July 2013 at the Al-Anon/Alateen International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia.

The Committee also approved a major revision of *Why Anonym-*

ity in Al-Anon (P-33), which had been given conceptual approval by the 2010 Conference, and reviewed updated wording of *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (P-21) considering input from the Alateen Advisory Committee and the Group Services Department.

During its March conference call, after reviewing a suggestion from an Al-Anon member, the Committee decided to bring to the Conference the idea of a new piece about mental, emotional, verbal, and physical abuse. Because reaction at the Conference was very mixed, the Committee continued to discuss the idea throughout the remainder of the year using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process for an informed group conscience. Discussion will continue in 2013 to determine whether or not to bring the idea back to the Conference.

The Committee also reviewed several other suggestions from the fellowship for new literature or revisions to existing literature. Discussion continues on whether to recommend development of a new daily reader that could include topics that would meet the needs of an evolving fellowship.

MEMBER SERVICES

GROUP SERVICES

GROUP SERVICES PODCASTS

Three podcasts on sponsorship were posted to the Members' Web site, making a total of five podcasts on the topic. The podcasts added were "The Role of a Sponsor," "Becoming a Sponsor," and "Choosing a Sponsor." Each Sponsorship podcast has been listened to by an average of 640 visitors to the Members' Web site, and the five Sponsorship podcasts have generated a total of 16 comments from members.

GROUP SERVICE CORRESPONDENCE

One Area developed and approved a "Do Not Refer" policy, and submitted it to the WSO. Following its procedure, the Area delisted four groups, and a district made up of those four groups. As is recommended, the Area is letting the groups know what steps need to be taken to be relisted. The groups continue to be Al-Anon groups with voice and vote at Area service meetings.

The Group Services Department responds to numerous questions from groups and members regarding Al-Anon policies and procedures. A frequent topic is how to set up a group bank account. Groups have reported increasing requests from meeting facilities for group insurance.

ALATEEN

One new chat room was opened in 2012. Areas in the World Service Conference (WSC) structure are hosting nine English and one French Alateen chat meetings. There has been an increase from a year ago from three or four teens attending regularly, to a dozen. All English chat meetings have had one or

two teens attending regularly; some meetings have had as many as five Alateens at a time. The Areas using their chat meeting as a public outreach tool have had the greatest attendance. Once teens find the chat meeting rooms, they tend to participate in more than one meeting each week. Additionally, France's General Service Office (GSO) is hosting a monthly meeting for French-speaking Alateens in Europe, in collaboration with the French-speaking Belgium and Switzerland GSOs. The WSO is working with Poland's GSO to set up a chat room in Polish.

As part of their annual review, numerous Areas updated their Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Several Areas added background checks to their screening process. Others revised the frequency of repeat background checks. Some Areas have added a training component to the process to become an Alateen Group Sponsor. One Area increased the minimum age for certification from 23 to 25, as they experienced some problems with younger transitioned Alateens serving as Alateen Group Sponsors. Another Area lowered the minimum age for Alateen service from 23 to 21, in hopes that more young people would be willing to serve.

AL-ANON INFORMATION SERVICES (AISs)

AISs in three different Areas requested information from the WSO on volunteer training. They were given information from the WSO toll-free meeting line operator training procedure manual. As the AISs update their guidelines, the WSO is requesting a copy, in hopes of being able to share sample training guidelines with other AISs on e-Communities. A discussion board topic on volunteer training has also been added to e-Communities, and three AISs have responded to date.

GROUP RECORDS

Ninety-five percent of the Area Group Records Coordinators accessed the WSO On-line Group Records application in 2012. The WSO Group Records Coordinator contacted the few remaining Areas, to encourage them to take advantage of this service tool to administer their group records and offer assistance to access and navigate the site, if needed.

A WSO On-line Group Records upgrade was also released in July. This upgrade included a Login Report available to Delegates only, more accessible instructions within the application, and a shortcut when changing a CMA (Current Mailing Address, who is also the Group Representative). The Al-Anon Annual Update date field was changed to become an editable field, since more Areas are requesting groups to send the completed form to the Area instead of to the WSO. The WSO asked Area Group Records Coordinators to process any changes within seven business days and add the current date in the Al-Anon Annual Update date field, or to send the sheet to WSO for processing if they're not able to process it in a timely manner.

A second upgrade was released in October, which included a read-only extension of the application for Alateen, to the Area Alateen Process Persons, Area Alateen Coordinators, DRs and Area Group Records Coordinators.

The total number of registered groups in 2012 is 25,418:

- US/PR/BDA Al-Anon 13,245
- US/PR/BDA Alateen 1,002
- Canada Al-Anon 1,329
- Canada Alateen 88
- International Al-Anon 9,046
- International Alateen 708

Electronic meeting info: 105 registered active Al-Anon electronic meetings:

- 61 telephone
- 29 e-mail
- 7 chat
- 8 Bulletin Board
- 2 voice via Internet (Skype)

A thirty percent decrease (from 845 groups to 543) in the volume of returned mail has been noted within the last ten months, as well as a significant decline in the number of callers (from more than five a week to two) notifying the WSO of inaccurate meeting information on the toll-free meeting information line. The WSO attributed the decrease mainly to the WSO On-line Group Records Application, which now allows not only Area Group Records Coordinators, but also DRs to access the groups' information "on demand" so group records can be verified regularly.

The group printout information included in the new group packet has been revised to display more group information, including the location instructions and name of the Group Representative.

An error on the 2012 Al-Anon Annual Update Sheets mailed to the Northeast and Southeast Regions was discovered. The CMA information was duplicated in the GR section of the form.

The vendor was notified of the error and corrected the mistake on the template before the next mailing. Members were minimally impacted by this mistake, as the information was correct in the WSO's database.

As of October 2012 the WSO has a total of 7,247 valid group e-mail addresses in its database. The number of e-mail addresses for English-speaking groups has increased by 11 percent (833) within the last year. Areas are informing the groups about the *Group e-News*, the electronic monthly newsletter, and encouraging their groups to provide e-mail addresses, so they can receive this new publication. The Group Records Department has been working with the Coordinators to get e-mail addresses for the remaining groups.

The November issue of *Group e-News* was the first issue to be sent in all three languages: English, French, and Spanish. Of the 746 Spanish-speaking groups, only 263 have provided valid e-mail addresses and only 78 of the French-speaking groups have provided valid CMA e-mail addresses. Group Records Coordinators and the Group Records Department continue to request CMA e-mail addresses from the French-, Spanish-, and English-speaking groups in order to have better and timelier communication with all groups.

GROUP RECORDS CONFERENCE CALLS

Two conference calls were held in February and October for all Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs). Area Delegates and Alateen Coordinators were invited to listen during the conference calls. The February call focused on the review of the Annual Area Alateen Recertification Process. Thirty-one Areas opted to receive the Alateen Annual Recertification Packet in February, and all of them requested an electronic copy of their Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) certification list. The option to request an electronic version of the list was added on the 2012 Alateen Annual Recertification Request as an additional tool to help AAPPs keep their records up-to-date. The focus of the October call was the introduction of the WSO On-line Group Records extension for viewing Alateen groups, AMIAS, and Alateen Group Sponsors.

This year, 4,954 Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) were registered.

The Area Group Records Coordinator call was held in March. The main focus of the call was the release of the WSO On-line Group Records application 3.0. The release included "read only" access to the DRs and additional reports. Area Group Records Coordinators were notified that the Areas were able to have one additional Group Records person access the WSO On-line Group Records application. Areas interested in having one additional person accessing the application are asked to complete the WSO On-line Group Records Access Form, which requires the Area Delegate's or Area Chairperson's signature.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE AND AREA DELEGATES

The Panel 52 Delegates were given access to e-Communities, the on-line system the WSO uses to communicate with the Delegates.

At the end of 2012, Conference members submitted a total of eight Chosen Agenda Items (CAIs). The Conference Leadership Team created a Task Force, consisting of two Delegates and the Conference Chairperson, to combine similar CAI topics into one question. Sixty-four Conference members voted.

Ninety-five voting members attended the 52nd World Service Conference in Stamford, Connecticut, April 11-15, 2012. Mexico and New Zealand each sent a General Service Office Representative to attend the 2012 Conference. The 2012 World Service Conference Summary is posted on the Members' Web site.

E-COMMUNITIES

In order to increase communication, provide more timely communications, and support Area World Service Committee members, more information is being posted on the e-Communities for Area Chairpersons and District Representatives. The number of Area Chairpersons and District Representatives accessing e-Communities increased in 2012. Seventy percent of the Area Chairpersons have logged on to their e-Community. Of the 70 percent that have logged in, only 25 logged in during the fourth quarter. Fifty-nine percent of the 886 District Representatives have logged on to their e-Community.

DISCUSSION BOARDS

During 2012, Delegates discussed the following topics on the discussion boards: Area Public Outreach Structure; Criteria for Delisting; Donations/Bequests to the Area; Elections; Ineffective Officers/Coordinators; Re-districting; and TEAM events.

TEAM EVENTS

Thirteen TEAM Events were held in 2012, two in Canada and 11 in the United States. Seven of the TEAM Events took place over two days and six were one-day events. The anticipated attendance for the events varied widely from the actual attendance ranging from a low of only 35 percent actual attendance to a high of 150 percent. One-day TEAM events had higher anticipated attendance with five out of the six events reaching at least 75 percent of anticipated attendance. Only one of the two day TEAM events reached at least 75 percent of the anticipated attendance. Five TEAM events offered translation for Spanish-speaking members.

The presentations were well-received and included more shared leadership presentations with Area trusted servants pairing up with WSO Task Force members. The majority of attendees who completed the evaluation form indicated that they would attend another TEAM event. Members reported

especially enjoying the interactive sessions and having the opportunity to reinforce their understanding of the General Session presentations in breakout sessions.

Only a limited number of TEAM Events will be confirmed in 2013 due to the Day of Connecting and the 2013 Al-Anon International Convention in Vancouver July 4-7, 2013. None have been confirmed yet. One TEAM event has been confirmed for 2014. A TEAM event calendar is available on the TEAM section of the Members' Web site and also in *The Forum* calendar on the Members' Web site.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

2013 Al-Anon International Convention

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

July 5-7, 2013

Ric B., Chairperson, 2013

Suzanne M., Coordinator, 2013

Barbara O., Co-Coordinator, 2013

Teresa A., Co-Coordinator-in-training, 2013

The 2013 International Convention budget, based on attendance of 4,000, was finalized and approved by the Finance Committee. The registration fee was set at \$115, if received by December 31, 2012; \$140, if received between January 1 and May 31, 2013; and \$165 from June 1 through onsite registration. The price to attend the Pioneer Luncheon, a ticketed event, was set at \$55. The Planning Committee signed a contract with the registration company that managed the registration process for the 2008 International Convention. An agreement was reached with the University of British Columbia, to offer a variety of low-cost dorm housing options.

A new Web site, www.al-anoninternationalconvention.org, debuted in English, Spanish, and French in July.

In addition to registration being available on-line in English, Spanish, and French, registration forms for the 2013 International Convention were mailed in September to all groups, District Representatives, Newsletter Editors, Lone Members, AIS/LDCs, electronic meetings, as well as past and current Trustees and Delegates, and past staff. A second mailing was processed at the end of November, to encourage members to take advantage of the lowest registration fee of \$115.

2015 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous with Al-Anon Participation

Atlanta, Georgia

July 3-5, 2015

Ric B., Chairperson, 2015

Barbara O., Coordinator, 2015

Teresa A., Co-Coordinator, 2015

The Planning Committee for this convention will convene in late 2013.

2018 Al-Anon International Convention

Baltimore, Maryland
July 6-8, 2018

Ric B., Chairperson, 2018

Teresa A., Coordinator, 2018

Barbara O., Co-Coordinator, 2018

Contracts are currently being negotiated.

TRANSLATION

The following new materials were translated into Spanish and French: transcripts and subtitles of the DVD *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (SAV-31, FAV-31), *Conflict Resolution Wallet Card* (SS-71, FS-71), and the *Parents of Alcoholics Reprint* (SR-18, FR-18). Portions of the Public Outreach Web site were also translated for the Spanish and French Public Outreach Web sites.

AL-ANON/ALATEEN INTERNATIONAL

Africa

South Africa: The General Service Office (GSO) hosted the 2012 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). Activity around the "HOPE" Public Outreach campaign continued to be well-received within the professional community.

Ghana: A contact from Accra advised that members are involved in public outreach activities. It was recommended that they continue using literature and informational meetings to raise awareness about the benefits of Al-Anon in the community. There is currently one Al-Anon meeting located in a medical facility.

Europe

Belgium (French-speaking): The GSO advised its service structure has 41 French, two English, and one Polish-speaking Al-Anon meetings, as well as three Alateen meetings. After not having a representative to send to the IAGSM since 2000, French-speaking Belgium sent a Delegate to the 2012 IAGSM.

Bulgaria: A contact, located in Sofia, registered the first Al-Anon group for this city.

Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union): The Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) located in Moscow hosted a roundtable discussion on the topic of "How to get members involved in service."

Denmark: The GSO reported that after a one-year trial period, the Service Conference voted that the service board would become a legal entity and will be called the "Board of

Trustees". An invitation for a WSO staff person to attend their Conference in 2013 was extended.

Finland: The GSO advised the booklet *Living with Sobriety* (P-49) was edited, reprinted, and well-received by the members. Finland extended an invitation to a WSO staff person to attend its 60th Anniversary Celebration in October 2013.

France: The GSO worked with the WSO to set up an Alateen chat meeting. The service structure reprinted *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (FB-6).

Greece: The contact for the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) advised its Literature Committee completed the translation of the book *Paths to Recovery – Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* (B-24) in Greek.

Iceland: The GSO translated and printed the book *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) in Icelandic. An electronic meeting in Icelandic was registered with the World Service Office.

Hungary: The contact advised that the AIS is creating a public outreach poster (for release in early 2013), to inform the professional community and raise awareness about Al-Anon Family Groups. This will be their first poster.

Italy: The GSO contact advised that since using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KDBM) process in its national service meeting, communication with all links of service has improved throughout the service structure.

Malta: The contact for the AIS advised a decision was made to translate the book *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) into the Maltese language. A Literature Committee was created to work on this project.

Netherlands: The GSO reported that the Literature Committee is working in cooperation with the Literature Committee for the Belgium (Flemish-speaking) GSO, to update current Conference Approved Literature (CAL), before either structure reprints.

Norway: The GSO now has a part-time General Secretary.

Poland: The GSO worked with the WSO to host a Polish-speaking Alateen Chat meeting.

Portugal: The GSO advised that it participated in open meetings with A.A. to pass along the message of hope to professionals, on behalf of both fellowships.

Serbia: The contact reported that the translation and printing of the pamphlets *A Guide for the Family* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This is Al-Anon* (P-32) was completed.

Slovenia: In addition to completing the translation of the *2010–2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), a contact for the AIS advised that translations of the pamphlets *A Guide for the Family* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This is Al-Anon* (P-32) were also completed. The AIS has plans to print the pamphlets in early 2013.

Sweden: After not having been able to attend the IAGSM for some time, the GSO sent a Delegate to the 2012 IAGSM in Cape Town, South Africa.

Switzerland (German-speaking): The GSO reported the German translation of the book *Discovering Choices* (B-30), done by the GSO in Germany, has been received enthusiastically and the new CAL was welcomed.

Turkey: The contact advised that members in Istanbul report that a high number of newcomers are attending the meetings. The AIS is discussing the possibility of translating and printing the book *Hope for Today* (B-27).

UK & Eire: The General Secretary advised that TEAM was introduced to the members at the annual Service Conference.

Ukraine: A contact for the service structure advised that they had a public outreach meeting that included church ministers and other officials within the community. The resource used to help with ideas was *The Best of Public Outreach*, which that can be found on the WSO Members' Web site, www.al-anon.org/members.

Asia

Bhutan: A contact advised the WSO of an active Al-Anon meeting, the first in the country. The WSO sent registration materials to the contact.

India: The contact for the Trial National Service Structure reported that the National Service Conference members voted for the structure to become permanent and form a General Service Office. Plans include the eventual relocation of the office to Mumbai.

Japan: The GSO reported that despite the national disaster (earthquake) that occurred in Japan, members were able to participate in the 20th National Service Conference that took place in June. Al-Anon remained very active throughout the year with various public outreach projects.

Australia/New Zealand

Australia: The GSO advised that a poster was created for a Public Outreach campaign aimed at Alateen. In addition, a public information calendar was produced for groups to give suggestions each month, of ways of informing the community about Al-Anon and Alateen. In cooperation with New Zealand, both structures extended an invitation for the Executive Director to visit their structures in 2013.

New Zealand: The GSO contact advised that they set the updating of Al-Anon/Alateen guidelines as a priority. Although the structure was not ready to move forward, general discussions began within the service structure and with the WSO about hosting Alateen Chat meetings.

North and Central America

Aruba: The first Al-Anon meeting located in Oranjestad registered with the WSO.

Belize: Contact was made by a member to register a group in San Pedro. This is the first Al-Anon meeting that has registered in this country.

Costa Rica: The GSO advised that in addition to the annual open house at the GSO, the Sixteenth National Service Conference was held in San Jose.

Mexico: The GSO reports that one of the Board of Trustees projects completed was the update of service roles for Standing Committees. An invitation for a WSO staff person to attend its Conference in 2013 was extended.

South America

Argentina: The GSO advised that its 28th National Conference approved the attendance of a Delegate to the IAGSM in Cape Town, South Africa. In addition, the Board of Trustees began its work to update its service structure By-Laws.

Brazil: The GSO continues to work with Portugal by providing literature to the service structure in Portuguese. Public outreach activity included cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) by participating in its national convention.

Colombia: The GSO invited (and paid all expenses) for the WSO Executive Director to participate in its national convention. In addition to participating on the program, during the convention the Executive Director was asked to meet with Area and local members, and with the Board of Trustees for questions and discussions to assist them with their service work.

Peru: To raise revenue, the GSO hosted a Conference Approved Literature Book Fair. A workshop was also hosted on CAL. The GSO sent a representative to the 2012 IAGSM.

Venezuela: The contact for the GSO advised, because of more interest in service, the GSO hosted a workshop using the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* as a resource.

COMMITTEES, WORK GROUPS, TASK AND THOUGHT FORCES

TRIAL ALATEEN WORK GROUP

Carol V, Chairperson

Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services.

Continuation of the trial Alateen Work Group (AWG) was approved in February 2012. The five member Work Group identified topics of interest pertaining to the future of Alateen, and scheduled Thought/Task Force meetings to discuss these topics with Alateen members.

One face-to-face Thought Force meeting was held to discuss the outreach DVD, *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31). The Thought Force reviewed the five Alateen segments and discussed the overall value of the DVD as a public outreach service tool. The teens felt that it was a viable outreach tool, though there could be a problem showing the DVD at schools because of references to God. The Alateens felt they would use the video. The teens further suggested that it would be helpful for presenters to be familiar with it by viewing the video in advance. The video would be appropriate for churches, schools, and counselors. Comments from the Thought Force will be used in updating suggestions for the use of the DVD in Alateen outreach.

The teens were also asked how Alateens can participate in public outreach campaigns. They felt that, for many reasons, adults (AMIAS) are needed to make contact with schools and other facilities, but teens with some experience, strength, and hope to share could assist. A meeting schedule should be presented, as well.

Additional Thought Force meetings are planned to be held by electronic means early in 2013. All Areas were invited to encourage Alateen members to submit the résumés required to participate in WSO committees, but we have not yet received enough candidates to schedule a meeting.

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Bev A., Chairperson

Connie H., Co-Chairperson

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference

In initial planning for the 2013 WSC, the Conference Leadership Team unanimously agreed on (and the Board approved) the 2013 Conference theme: Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing "Me" to "We." The full cost to attend the 2013 World Service Conference was set at \$1,968 and the Equalized Expense at \$1,280.

Staff has finalized a fully executed contract for the 2013 WSC, which will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 14-18, 2013. The following sessions will take place on Sunday, April 14: The New Member Orientation Session, Committees/Task Forces/Thought Forces, Sharing Area Highlights, and the Opening Dinner. The Confer-

ence will begin Monday, April 15, and the Closing Dinner will be held Thursday, April 18, 2013.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Roger C., Chairperson

J.P. M., Co-Chairperson

Marsha W., Associate Director of Member Services – International

For the first time in the history of the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM), the host site for this closed service meeting was on the continent of Africa. Cape Town, South Africa was the city where 16 service structures (including the U.S. and Canada) met to share service experience. The dates of the meeting were October 3-6, 2012.

All General Session topics were presented by the Delegates and included the following:

- Overcoming Tension in the Service Structure
- Understanding the Balance between Concepts Six and Seven
- Public Outreach (ways to communicate at the public level within the community)
- An Inventory of the IAGSM in two parts
- Building Bridges – between different communities within the Al-Anon Structure
- Anonymity
- Alateen Sponsorship
- Adult Children and other specialized groups
- Reports from Central American and European Zonal Meetings

Workshop discussion topics, also Delegate-led included:

- Staff and members in two tracks
- Conflict Resolution, attracting members in service in two tracks
- Finance
- Self support: Reprinting, financially feasible?

A detailed report of this lively and informative meeting is available on the Members' Web site www.al-anon.org/members. The Al-Anon General Service Office for South Africa hosted a visit to their office for the Delegates. The site for the 2014 IAGSM is Virginia Beach, VA.

BUSINESS SERVICES

Both monthly and quarterly financial reporting is now paperless for the Board of Trustees and the Finance and Executive Committees. We have begun accruing payroll each month, to more accurately report monthly financial activity.

We have tested the disaster recovery systems for the network, both in the cloud system and virtual servers. We have tested the Customer Service function of iMIS and the accounting system. We will schedule tests for the other users of iMIS soon after the first of the year.

The telephone system was replaced in October at a cost of

\$25,778. The new telephone system will be expensed through depreciation over the next ten years.

We have sent request for proposals to vendors for an interactive voice response system that will enable us to have meeting information available 24 hours a day/seven days a week.

Three rooftop HVAC units were replaced in July at a total cost of \$201,289. The cost will be expensed through depreciation over the next ten years. The Executive Committee for Real Property Management has planned for these expenditures by maintaining an escrow account for such repairs.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Penny R., Chairperson

David Zach, Director of Business Services

The Finance Committee meets monthly and reports to the Executive Committee immediately following the Finance meeting. During the Conference, the Finance Committee reports directly to the Board.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee include monitoring expenses, cash flow, aligning the budget of estimated income and expenses, and recommending that the Board of Trustees set aside funds in reserve when appropriate. The Committee's oversight ensures that we remain solvent.

The Committee reviews the financial feasibility of proposed projects not already included in the budget, taking into consideration the goals and desired outcomes, cost-effectiveness, timing, and the relationship to the Strategic Plan. Additionally, it sets prices for new or existing literature. The Committee reports those actions to the Executive Committee.

- 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:

- Revised the look and wording on financial contribution envelopes.
- Reviewed shipping revenue with actual shipping costs and increased the shipping charges for literature orders.
- Created "talking points" so Conference members could better understand the annual financial statements and the budget.
- Reviewed the WSO policy for reimbursing Delegates and WSO volunteers for travel expenses.
- Discontinued the *Thinking Abundantly In...* blog.

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 2013 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.

BY-LAWS OF AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

Effective April 30, 1988

ARTICLE I ~ NAMES

The name of this Corporation, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, is Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. In these BY-LAWS, the Corporation is sometimes referred to as the Corporation or as the World Service Office. For the purpose of these BY-LAWS, the term Corporation and the name World Service Office shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable with each other and with the name Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

1. As used in these BY-LAWS:
 - a) Al-Anon group means a group of relatives and friends of alcoholics organized and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
 - b) Alateen group means a group of teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics organized and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
 - c) World Service Conference means the organization described in Article XI of these BY-LAWS.
 - d) Trustee means a person who is or becomes a Trustee pursuant to these BY-LAWS.

ARTICLE II ~ PURPOSES

1. The purposes for which the Corporation was formed, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, are: "To encourage, assist and serve the families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with the problems concerning and attendant on alcoholism; to reinforce their efforts to understand the alcoholic and to foster his or her restoration to normal life; to disseminate information in relation thereto and to conduct, and participate in, any other classes of service to assist families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with their problems."
2. In furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Certificate of Incorporation, the World Service Office will:
 - a) Coordinate policy among the Al-Anon and Alateen groups throughout the world;
 - b) Assist Al-Anon and Alateen groups in the conduct of their activities;
 - c) Provide relatives and friends of alcoholics with information about the principles and Traditions of Al-Anon and locations of Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - d) Assist in the formation of new Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - e) Publish literature of interest to Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - f) Bring Al-Anon or Alateen groups to the attention of the concerned public;
 - g) Provide information and other assistance to persons for whom regular attendance at meetings of Al-Anon or Alateen groups is difficult or impractical;
 - h) Establish and maintain national and international public relations; and
 - i) Establish and maintain policies for the work of the World Service Office.

ARTICLE III ~ MEMBERS

1. The members of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a member upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a member upon ceasing to be a Trustee.
2. Members shall not be required to pay dues or any other compensation to the Corporation, or to any one else, as a condition of membership.
3. Members will be required to sign appropriate documents to avoid potential conflicts of interest and clarify desired conduct as set by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE IV ~ TRUSTEES

1. The Directors of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a Director upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a Director upon ceasing to be a Trustee. For the purpose of these BY-LAWS, the term Director and Trustee shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable so far as necessary to conform to the Certificate of Incorporation of the Corporation which contemplates, and refers to, Directors.
2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than seven nor more than twenty-one persons of the following classifications: Trustees at Large, Regional Trustees, Lifetime Trustees, and a Sustaining Trustee, as those terms are described in these BY-LAWS. The actual number of Trustees and the composition of the Board as among the classifications referred to shall be as established by the Board from time to time and in this regard the Board will generally be guided by the directions of the World Service Conference.
3. Trustees at Large are Trustees whose nomination originates with, or with the consent of, the Board of Trustees. The total number of such Trustees shall be set by the Board of Trustees from time to time and shall always be a number evenly divisible by three. One-third of the number of Trustees at Large shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, and shall take office on the day following such meeting.
4. The Nominating Committee, prior to the next annual meeting of the Board, is charged to submit nominations for Trustee at Large positions to replace those whose term will expire. In the event a nominee for Trustee at Large is not elected by the Board of Trustees, the nominee shall be withdrawn and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 9.
5. Regional Trustees are Trustees who live in geographic areas of the United States and Canada designated as official regions by the World Service Conference. Their purpose is to bring a regional perspective to the Board. They do not represent the members of the region, nor are they responsible to the region. Nominees for Regional Trustee shall be designated annually by the World Service Conference in accordance with such procedures as that body may establish. The total number of Regional Trustees shall be a number evenly divisible by three and one-third of the number shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees to take office on the day following such meeting. In the event that a World Service Conference's nominee is not elected by the Board of Trustees, the nominee shall be withdrawn, and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 9.
6. The Sustaining Trustee is the person employed by the World Service Office established by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to hold the office of Executive Director of the World Service Office. The term of office of the Sustaining Trustee shall be for the same period as the person is employed by the World Service Office as Executive Director.
7. Lois W. and Anne B., the co-founders of Al-Anon, were Lifetime Trustees who served as Trustee as long as each lived.
8. Any Trustee may resign by sending written notice to the Secretary of the Corporation.
9. Any vacancy in the office of a Trustee at Large or Regional Trustee which occurs in any year between the annual meeting and the next World Service Conference may be filled by the Board of Trustees until the next annual meeting.
10. The length of time any Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee may serve on the Board is two three-year terms which may be consecutive.
11. Any member of the Board of Trustees may be removed for just cause by a vote of two-thirds of the written ballots cast by the Board of Trustees. Just cause is defined as absence from two meetings during any 12 month period; a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment violation; or failure to adhere to any written policies and procedures of the Board of Trustees. Such removal shall occur at a regular or specifically called meeting of the Board of Trustees. Upon a finding of just cause by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, the Treasurer and the Executive Committee Chairperson, the Secretary of the Board of Trustees shall send a notice of the proposed removal by mail, certified or registered, if possible, to the last recorded address of such member at least fifteen (15) days before final action is taken on such removal. The member shall have the opportunity to present any relevant information, in writing, in person, or through a representative, to the Board of Trustees before final action is taken.
12. Trustees shall serve without remuneration but they shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.

ARTICLE V ~ POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees shall control and manage the affairs of the Corporation.
2. Without limiting the generality of the preceding paragraph, the Board of Trustees shall have the following powers:
 - a) To establish and maintain the policies of the World Service Office;
 - b) To control the property and finances of the World Service Office;
 - c) To establish plans and conduct the operations of the World Service Office;
 - d) To authorize expenditures;
 - e) To elect the officers of the Corporation;
 - f) To elect the at-large members of the Executive Committee and appoint members of other committees in accordance with these BY-LAWS;
 - g) To appoint an Executive Director and a Director of Business Services for the World Service Office; and
 - h) To take such measures as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the World Service Office.
3. Any Trustee having a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorization by the Board of Trustees shall not vote on the matter.

ARTICLE VI ~ OFFICERS

1. The Officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer and a Secretary, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary from time to time by the Board. The Executive Director serves as the Secretary of the Corporation.
2. The President, the Vice President, and the Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting of Trustees from among the Trustees for a term of one year each.
3. The President shall also be known as the Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Chairperson), and the Vice President shall also be known as the Vice Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Vice Chairperson).
4. Any vacancy may be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the Trustees.
5. Any Officer may be removed from office by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

ARTICLE VII ~ DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. **THE PRESIDENT.** The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees, and shall perform all the necessary duties, and exercise all the customary powers incident to the office of President, including appointment of committee Chairpersons, with the exception of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The President shall have general supervision of all of the affairs of the World Service Office, and shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
2. **THE VICE PRESIDENT.** The Vice President shall be an aide to the President and shall perform the duties of the President in the absence or disability of the President. The Board of Trustees shall in its sole discretion determine the matter of the President's disability. In the event the Board determines that disability has occurred, the office shall be deemed vacant. The Board of Trustees may elect a successor to serve until the next annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.
3. **THE TREASURER.** The Treasurer shall be the financial officer of the Corporation and shall provide advice to the Corporation with respect to general financial policy and ancillary matters such as the collection, custody, and control of funds of the World Service Office and maintenance of books of accounts and financial records subject to such directions as may be given by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer is responsible for having the books of account of the Corporation audited by a Certified Public Accountant at regular intervals as directed by the Board of Trustees. He may be an authorized signatory for disposition of funds of the Corporation on deposit in banks and other holding accounts. The Treasurer shall not be individually responsible for accounting procedures, security of funds, books of accounts or financial records, but does have general oversight authority respecting these matters.

4. **THE SECRETARY.** The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Corporation, shall be the custodian of books and records of the Corporation and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated. The Secretary shall be an ex officio member of all committees.
5. The Officers of the Corporation shall each perform such other duties as may be delegated to them by the Board of Trustees as well as such other duties as shall pertain to their respective offices.

ARTICLE VIII ~ FINANCES

1. The fiscal year of the World Service Office shall begin on the first day of January in each year and end on the 31st day of December thereof.
2. Checks shall be made in the name of the Corporation and shall be signed by two officers or employees as may from time to time be designated by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE IX ~ MEETINGS

1. The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be held on the day following the World Service Conference in April of each year at such place as is designated by the Board of Trustees, except when special circumstances warrant a change of date of the Conference.
2. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held three times a year in January, July and October at a time and place designated by the Chairperson. In addition, there will be a regular meeting in April of each year on a date to be determined by the Board of Trustees.

If all the Trustees consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting, a Trustee may participate in a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and a Trustee participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.

3. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Chairperson at any time. The Chairperson shall call a special meeting upon the written application of three Trustees or upon the written application of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for the transaction of such business as may be described in such application.
4. At least fourteen days' notice of each meeting shall be given to the Trustees by mail. Forty-eight hours written notice of any meeting may be sent by electronic means. Trustees may waive notice of meetings by executing appropriate waivers.
5. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business in any meeting. Each member shall have one vote. The vote of the majority of the Trustees present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is then present, shall be the act of the Board of Trustees, except as otherwise provided by law. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Trustees present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is obtained.
6. Any member unable to attend any meeting of the Board shall give advance notice of the absence to the Chairperson or Secretary of the Board and indicate the reason for the absence. Any member who fails to attend two meetings per year for reasons deemed inadequate by the Board shall be subject to dismissal by the Board for such cause. For the purposes of this paragraph, the Board of Trustees meetings during the World Service Conference shall be deemed to be one meeting.
7. Unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson, the order of business at all meetings shall be as follows:
 - a) Calling of roll;
 - b) Approval of minutes;
 - c) Report of Treasurer;
 - d) Committee reports and communications;
 - e) Elections (if such action is scheduled for such meetings);
 - f) New Business.

ARTICLE X ~ INDEMNIFICATION

1. Each individual serving or having served as Trustee or Officer, or both, of the Corporation shall be indemnified in the circumstances and to the full extent permitted by law, against any and all costs, expenses and financial consequences of whatever nature, including legal fees actually incurred in connection with any action, suit or legal proceeding of any kind in which such an individual is a defendant by reason of serving or having served as an Officer or Trustee, or both, of the corporation. This indemnification shall also extend to any individual made party defendant to any actions, suits or legal proceedings referenced in the preceding sentence by reason of the fact that his testator or intestate served as Trustee or Officer of the Corporation.
2. The foregoing indemnification shall apply also to each individual serving or having served (in his individual capacity, and not as a Trustee or officer) as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees or of any special committee as may be authorized from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XI ~ WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

1. The World Service Conference consists of the following persons:
 - a) Al-Anon Delegates from the United States and Canada;
 - b) Trustees of the Corporation;
 - c) Al-Anon members who serve as Directors and Associate Directors of the World Service Office;
 - d) The Chairpersons of committees established by the Board of Trustees;
 - e) The persons comprising the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees; and
 - f) Such other persons as deemed necessary for Conference business and representatives from countries not served by the World Service Conference Structure may be admitted by Conference vote. These persons may participate but not vote.
2. The World Service Conference shall be the permanent body empowered to express the conscience of the Al-Anon fellowship.
3. The Board of Trustees shall consult with the World Service Conference and, when required, accept its decision. However, the Board of Trustees shall continue to be vested with the full legal powers and responsibilities for the World Service Office.
4. Three-fourths of all authorized participants registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the World Service Office as or when it is deemed essential. They may request the resignation of the entire Board of Trustees and nominate a new slate of Trustees. In this regard the annual election of Trustees shall be conditional upon the understanding of each, that his resignation is required on call for the same by the Conference, subject to the further understanding that prior to any such resignation becoming effective each Trustee shall be deemed to vote for the successor slate of Trustees presented by the Conference. For the purpose of bringing about a reorganization of the World Service Office, the number of World Service Office participants voting shall be limited to one-fourth of the total Conference vote.

ARTICLE XII ~ COMMITTEES

1. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall elect at each annual meeting an Executive Committee consisting of seven persons. The Executive Committee shall include the Executive Director of the World Service Office, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee, an Al-Anon member from the administrative staff of the World Service Office, and three Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees. The Executive Committee shall meet at such times as the Board of Trustees may direct and shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees.

The Committee shall report all such action to the full Board no later than the next meeting of the Board. The Board of Trustees shall elect one volunteer member of the Executive Committee as the Chairperson. The Executive Director is the Secretary.

The President, an ex officio member, shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee in that person's absence.

2. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint at each annual meeting the necessary members to complete an Executive Committee for Real Property Management consisting of five persons. The Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall include the Business Manager (Director of Business Services), the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and three AI-Anon members who are not trustees. The Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall meet at such time as the Board of Trustees may direct but at least twice per year. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Executive Committee for Real Property Management the oversight and the management of the real property owned by the AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. in accordance with Motion 6 of the 2011 World Service Conference. For the purposes outlined in Motion 6, the Executive Director and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees are not ex-officio members of this Executive Committee and may not attend its meetings unless invited to do so. The nomination of the three AI-Anon members, who are not trustees, for the Executive Committee for Real Property Management will be conducted by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Conference Committee on Trustees. After said nominees receive traditional approval by the Conference, the Board will elect them.

The Board of Trustees shall elect annually one of the volunteer members, who are not trustees, as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management in that person's absence, or, once an opening has been declared, until a new Chairperson is appointed.

3. **FINANCE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Finance Committee consisting of the following members: the Treasurer of the Corporation, the President, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, one other Trustee designated by the President, and the Executive Director. The Treasurer shall be the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The Executive Director is the Secretary. The Finance Committee shall plan the yearly budget of the World Service Office and shall render such other services as may be requested by the Board of Trustees.

The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee in the absence of the Treasurer.

4. **POLICY COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Policy Committee consisting of the following members: Trustees, Executive Committee members, the Chairpersons of all committees of the World Service Office, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff. The Chairperson of the Policy Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Board of Trustees. The Policy Committee shall consider AI-Anon policies particularly in relation to AI-Anon's Traditions, make recommendations to the Board of Trustees, and render such other services as the Board of Trustees may request.

The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Policy Committee in that person's absence.

5. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** At each annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board appoints the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, with Board approval. After the annual meeting, the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board, appoints the members of the Nominating Committee.
6. The Board of Trustees may appoint such other committees as they may from time to time determine appropriate.
7. Committee members with the exception of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall hold office for a term of one (1) year. Executive Committee for Real Property Management members shall hold office for a maximum of one three (3) year term or part thereof.
8. Committee members shall serve without remuneration but shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.
9. Any Committee member may be removed from office for cause by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

ARTICLE XIII ~ AMENDMENTS

The Board of Trustees shall have the power to amend or alter these BY-LAWS in whole or in part by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees at a meeting called for the purpose of amending the BY-LAWS.

Amended: January 27, 2012
Presented to the 2012 World Service Conference

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Bev A.
Tina B.
Roger C.
Char G.F.
Vicki H.
Connie H.
J.P. M.
Harriet T.
Karen W.-P.

Regional Trustees

Paula B., US Southeast
Ann C., Canada East
Sandie D., Canada Central
Anne F., US Northeast
Marilyn M., Canada West
Penny R., US Northwest
Karen R., US Southwest
Annette T., US South Central
Carol V., US North Central

Executive Committee

Mary Ann R., Chairperson
Ric B., Executive Director
Karen R., Board Chairperson
(Ex-officio)
Penny R., Treasurer
Paula B., Policy Chairperson
Mary G., Member at Large
Doris W., Member at Large
Robert S., Staff member

Non-Trustee Committee Chairpersons

Beverly S., ECRPM Chairperson**

International Representative

Laura Castro F., Mexico**

World Service Office Staff

Ric B., Executive Director
David Zach, Director of Business
Services*
Barbara O., Director of Member
Services
Robert S., Director of
Communication Services
Claire R., Associate Director
of Communications—
Professionals
Mary Lou M., Associate Director of
Member Services
Marsha W., Associate Director
of Member Services—
International
Pamela Walters, Marketing
Information Analyst*
Pat Q., Associate Director of
Communications—Media
Suzanne M., Associate Director of
Member Services—Conference
Teresa A., Associate Director of
Member Services—Spanish
Tom C., Associate Director of
Communications—Literature

*Non-member, non-voting

**Non-voting

AREA DELEGATES

Darcy N., Alabama/Northwest
Florida

Kathleen B., Alaska

Maryon K., Alberta/Northwest
Territories

Vali F., Arizona

Shirley R., Arkansas

Lois K., British Columbia/Yukon

Patrick B., California North

Jayne C., California South

Marilyn B., Colorado

Rita C., Connecticut

Judith S., Delaware

Terry K., Florida North

Jennifer D., Florida South

Cathy O., Georgia

Tom N., Hawaii

Kathy B., Idaho

Gene W., Illinois North

Cathy B., Illinois South

Brenda L., Indiana

Maddie P., Iowa

Judy W., Kansas

Jo Etta M., Kentucky

Sylvia G., Louisiana

Rita C., Maine

Kerry L., Manitoba/Northwest
Ontario

Rosemarie K., Maritime Provinces

Jack S., Maryland/District of
Columbia

Linda W., Massachusetts

Liz P., Michigan

Doris K., Minnesota North

Vicky A., Minnesota South

Hedy H., Mississippi

Geneva D., Missouri

Connie W., Montana

Craig M., Nebraska

Denise S., Nevada

Pauline M., Newfoundland/
Labrador

Nancy P., New Hampshire

Rich M., New Jersey

Norm W., New Mexico/El Paso

Ruth S., New York North

Petra L., New York South

Woody M., North Carolina/
Bermuda

Donna J., North Dakota

Rex M., Ohio

Lisa B-C., Oklahoma

Margaret R., Ontario North

Jane H., Ontario South

Colleen G., Oregon

Maria A., Pennsylvania

Sara M., Puerto Rico

Solange R., Québec East

Hélène D., Québec West

David G., Rhode Island

Linda B., Saskatchewan

Jan R., South Carolina

Rhonda P., South Dakota

Grace M., Tennessee

Nancy M., Texas East

Debbe P., Texas West

Mary Y., Utah

Bud S., Vermont

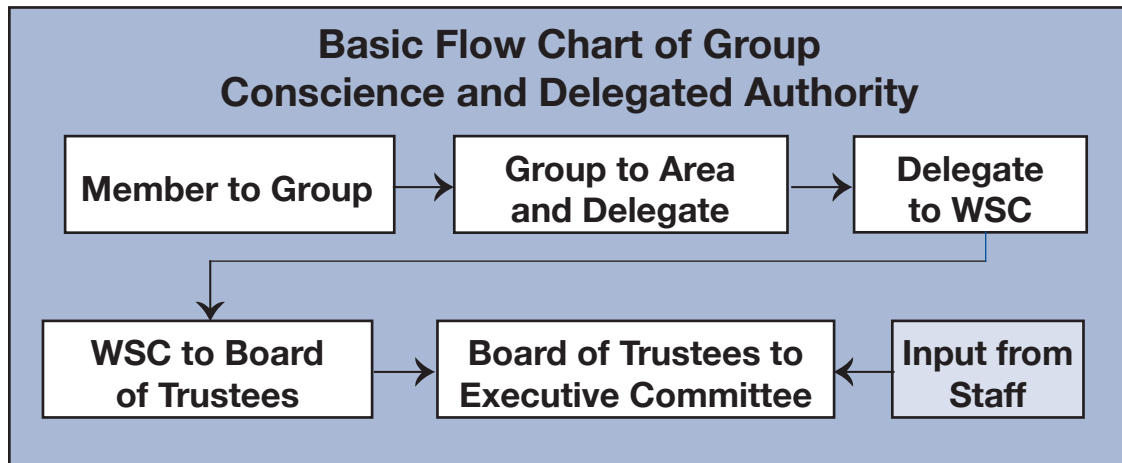
Beverly W., Virginia

Sue C., Washington

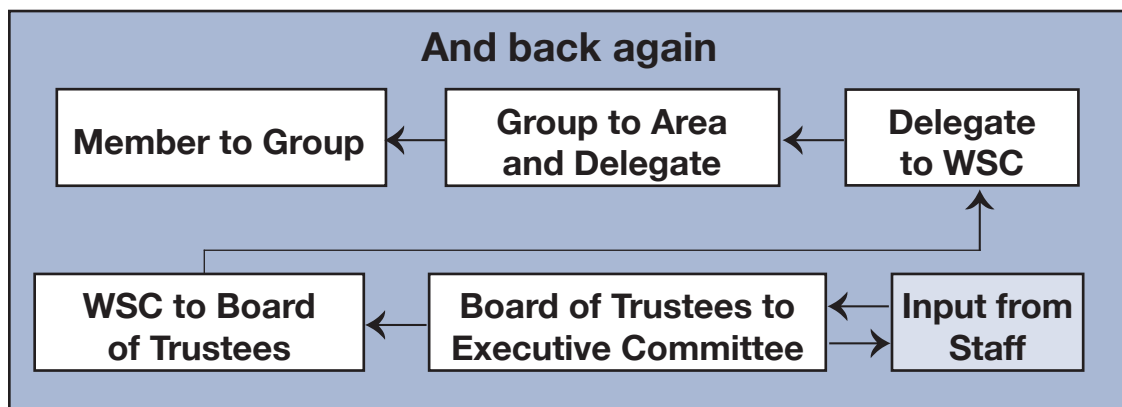
Christine S., West Virginia

Cathy T., Wisconsin and the Upper
Peninsula of Michigan

Carol W., Wyoming



Note that the Executive Committee often receives input from the World Service Office staff as it works with projects.



This chart shows how both delegated authority and group conscience goes back through the same channels. Communication is what makes the process work.