

2014 World Service Conference Summary

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE: Our Spiritual Principles in Action



54th Annual World Service Conference

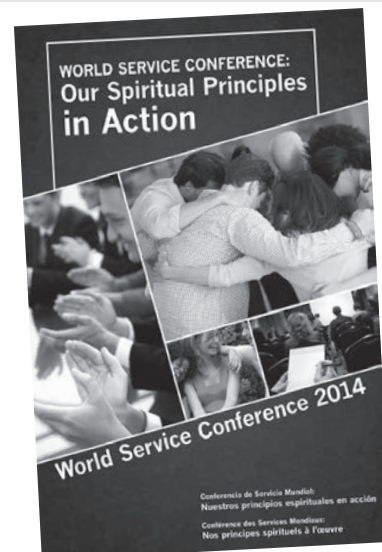
Conferencia de Servicio Mundial:
Nuestros principios espirituales en acción

Conférence des Services Mondiaux:
Nos principes spirituels à l'œuvre

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

2014 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."**

*2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen
Service Manual (P-24/27)
page 184*

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Headquarters, Inc. 2014

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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WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE: Our Spiritual Principles in Action

Conférence des Services Mondiaux:
Nos principes spirituels à l'œuvre
Conferencia de Servicio Mundial:
Nuestros principios espirituales en acción

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

The day before the 2014 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

She 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 a suggestion to add text to a portion of the *Service Manual* for clarity. 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 (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience 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 descriptions and present them 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.



She then described the roles of the members of Selected Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, and Task Forces:

- All are participating members 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.

She 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.



2014 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES, WORK GROUPS, THOUGHT FORCES, AND TASK FORCES

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

Assignment	Panel 52 (2012-2014)	Panel 53 (2013-2015)	Panel 54 (2014-2016)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Vicky A., Chair, MN(S) Brenda L., IN Jayme C., CA(S)	Rosemarie K., Chair Elect, MP Christine S., WV Darcy N., ALNWF	Jan R., NE Patrick M., UT Virginia B., IA
Literature Committee	David G., RI Gene W., IL(N) Jane H., ON(S) Maria A., PA	Doris K., MN(N)	Angela A., LA Jud L., NM/EP Lyri M., IL(S)
Public Outreach Committee	Debbe P., TX(W) Grace M., TN Nancy M., TX(E)	Donna J., ND Lois K., BC/YT Marilyn B., CO	Nancy Jo W., ID Pat W., NH
Thought Force: Create Strategies to Help the Membership Welcome New Trends into the Fellowship	Hélène D., QC(W) Liz P., MI	Linda W., MA, Chair	Janice B., NV Jennifer B., SK
Thought Force: Create Strategies to Show Spiritual Connection of Being a Registered Group	Jennifer D., FL(S) Kerry L., MB/NWO	Cathy T., WIUPMI Lisa B-C., OK Vali F., AZ, Chair	Liesel B., AK Sandy F., ME Sherry H., WY
Thought Force: Create Strategies to Show the Importance of Abundance and Spirituality in Money Discussions	Jack S., MD/DC Judy W., KS	Rich M., NJ, Chair Sue C., WA Woody M., NC/BDA	Maxine D., NF/LB Michele R., NY(S)
Task Force: Create Ways to Raise Awareness of the Tools Available to Alateen	Jo Etta M., KY Judith S., DE	Bud S., VT, Chair Cathy O'D., GA Solange R., QC(E)	Ann B., CT Karen L., MO
Task Force: Identify, Gather and Present Practices that Demonstrate a Healthy, Thriving Group	Patrick B., CA(N) Ruth S., NY(N) Tom N., HI	Connie W., MT, Chair Beverly W., VA Colleen G., OR Maryon K., AB/NWT	Jinkie R., AR Kathleen A., SD

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 Sharing Area Highlights Chairperson, Liz P., Panel 52, Michigan, asked Delegates to share for one minute on their Area's successes and challenges. The Delegates had submitted their written summary to the recorder, Jayme C., Panel 52, California South, 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:

- Conducting Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) Recertification Process and training by conference calls was a huge success.
- Considering service structure changes to allow more groups to participate.
- Using Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience helped with creating a new Web site.
- Traveling workshop for Group Representatives (GRs) and District Representatives (DRs) presented by Past Delegates.
- Hosting conference calls with the Delegate between Assemblies is creating a way to deliver timely information to GRs.
- Placing Al-Anon billboards in public places.
- Updating Area policies and procedures and discussing a written process for those struggling in a position.
- Using conflict resolution skills proved to be an awesome experience.
- Holding annual weekend service event and forming Thought and Task Forces chaired by Area Officers and Coordinators as ways for more members to serve.
- Looking at job duties and instituting a résumé process helped the Assembly address the problem of trusted servants not fulfilling the duties of their positions.
- Sending Public Outreach electronic newsletter to professionals throughout the Area.
- Sharing Area positions.
- Pairing Area World Service Committee members with Coordinators to create a "link" between Assemblies.
- Using Concept Five (can you live with it?) and the Warranties at all levels of service.
- Adopting staggered terms for Coordinators and Area Officers.
- Electronically disseminating information.

Area concerns included:

- Difficulty finding Alateen Group Sponsors in a mostly rural geographic Area.
- Declining Assembly attendance and lack of Alateen participation.



- Non-compliance with Alateen requirements by an Alateen Conference with its own Board.
- Lack of commitment of DRs and Coordinators to fulfilling duties of their positions.
- Inattention by Area Treasurer, resulting in unpaid bills.
- Reluctance of parents to bring their children to Alateen.
- Loss of longtime members to service.
- Difficulty in linking to Spanish-speaking groups.
- Uneven distribution of groups across Area.
- Difficulty in filling DR positions.
- Lack of service sponsorship

Before the session ended, Doris K., Panel 53, Minnesota North, was elected to serve as Chairperson for Sharing Area Highlights in 2015, and Cathy T., Panel 53, Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, was elected to serve as the Recorder for the 2015 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 2014 World Service Conference welcomed everyone and opened with the theme:

World Service Conference: Our Spiritual Principles in Action

The Co-Chairperson continued, noting that the theme is a spiritual opportunity that our pioneers shared. She asked Conference members to think about:

- What principles will we need as we set out to do our work this week?
- What will you take back to your Areas?
- What made you laugh?

The Chairperson of the Board welcomed new Conference members to their first World Service Conference and introduced the Board and Executive Committee. The Executive Director introduced the staff and asked everyone to use our Al-Anon spiritual principles saying, “We have a variety of constituencies that we are representing. When we speak at the microphone, we are all equals. When we are listening, ask what is the spiritual principle that is being expressed. Those people we come across, as Bill W. said, ‘...listen to them, they have something for us to learn.’”

During dinner all attendees participated in an activity at their tables. Each table had a packet of cards with a question on each. Members at the table drew a card and shared their responses with their table partners as an ice breaker exercise.

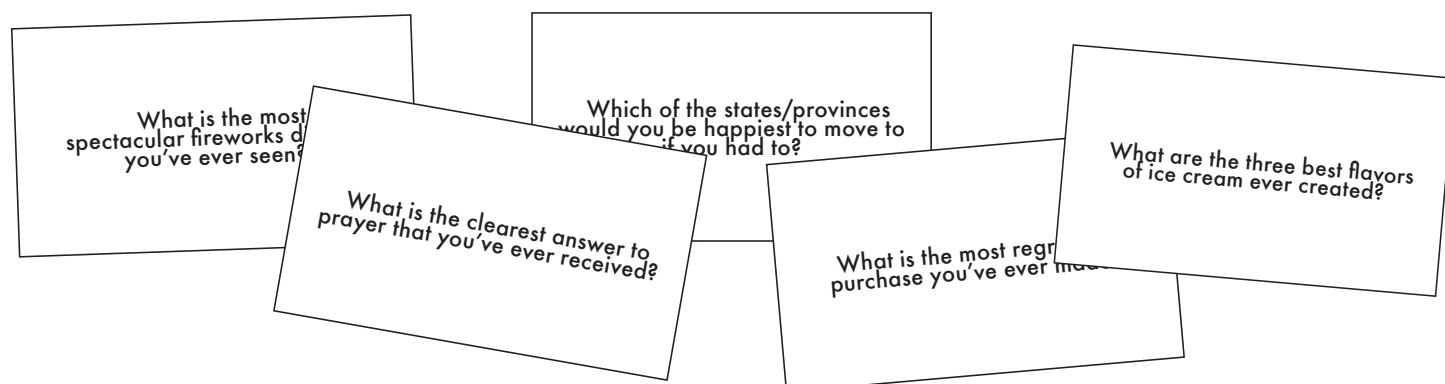
Following dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 54 Delegates and new Conference members. Each first-time Conference attendee received a 2014 WSC pin.

Bev A., Conference Chairperson, Trustee at Large, was the opening dinner speaker. Bev shared experiences from her three years as Delegate. (See page 83 for her talk.)

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

Karen W-P.

Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee



CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Bev A.
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Karen W-P.
Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee

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

The 2014 Conference theme, “World Service Conference: Our Spiritual Principles in Action,” laid the foundation for the spiritual tone of this year’s World Service Conference (WSC). It encouraged members to use the Legacies of our program to empower members rather than create barriers to success in service. This idea led to thoughtful discussion, creative thinking and focused decision-making throughout the 54th World Service Conference held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 25-29, 2014. This year’s Conference was opened by the Conference Chairperson with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. The Conference Chairperson continued her greeting:

“As we begin this Fifty-Fourth World Service Conference, let us take a moment to remember those who came before us. The pioneers intuitively knew for Al-Anon to thrive, more than a clearinghouse would be needed to carry out service activities.

“Their vision to expand the service structure with the creation of a Conference established the spiritual foundation needed for Al-Anon to explore new ideas, collaborate, and have a guarantee that world services would continue to function under all conditions.

“The Conference quickly became the practical means by which Al-Anon’s group conscience could speak. It provided a venue for our cofounders to be open-minded toward all values and virtues that freed them from perceived limitations, giving the Conference the ability to achieve greatness. The pioneers demonstrated this by the creation of Conference Approved Literature, matters of Policy, and sharing that unity among the groups would benefit Al-Anon as a whole. The spiritual principle of delegated authority has allowed the World Service Conference to deal openly with obstacles, conflict, and opportunities in a way that promotes listening, understanding of differing perspectives, and constructively working toward a solution. This commitment has been seen with the purchase of property, Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, and honest dialogue about each member’s responsibility to financially support world services.

“Over the next few days much will be expected of us. We have been entrusted with the authority to make decisions for the fellowship and world services—what a tremendous and awesome duty. We will achieve this by the spiritual application of the countless principles found within our program to assure our actions remain democratic and efficient, convinced that God will lead the way.

“I’m going to ask you to stretch your mind to such an extent that you will never be the same again. Value your own judgment and inner guidance, but be willing to expand your awareness. Other members’ perspectives on reality are as valid as your own. By exploring all possibilities in an open and supportive environment, we will be acting in a spirit which supports Al-Anon’s primary purpose. Even if the results of Conference decisions are not immediately obvious, we will know steps forward have

been taken without altering our core values.

“Every morning before entering this general session room, I ask you to drop, outside these doors, those obstacles and anxieties you may have that prevent you from good spiritual practice. Bring in qualities of love, tolerance, integrity, and whatever else you need to trust this path our Higher Powers have placed us on.

“So, if you are ready to embrace this journey, I will open the Fifty-Fourth World Service Conference.”

With a rap of the gavel, the Chairperson announced, “I now formally open the 2014 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 (CLT) 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

Catalina C.

International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) business, but no vote:

Carrie K.

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

With voice limited to the Universal Understanding of Recovery discussion and the presentation of the results of the “Readiness for Step Twelve” survey, but no vote:

Pamela Walters

Marketing Information Analyst
Non-Al-Anon Member

That the following WSO staff member be seated as part of her ongoing training at the 2014 World Service Conference on Saturday, April 26, 2014, and Monday, April 28, 2014, **with no voice and no vote:**

Julie M.

Communications Manager
Al-Anon Member

The Motion carried by consensus. (See WSC Motion #1, page 89)

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 54th World Service Conference. Our theme this year, ‘World Service Conference: Our Spiritual Principles in Action,’ epitomizes the proceedings of the Conference. As we join together every year to do the work of the fellowship, we reflect on the principles of our program during our discussions and deliberations of the items that are important for the organization and the fellowship to consider.

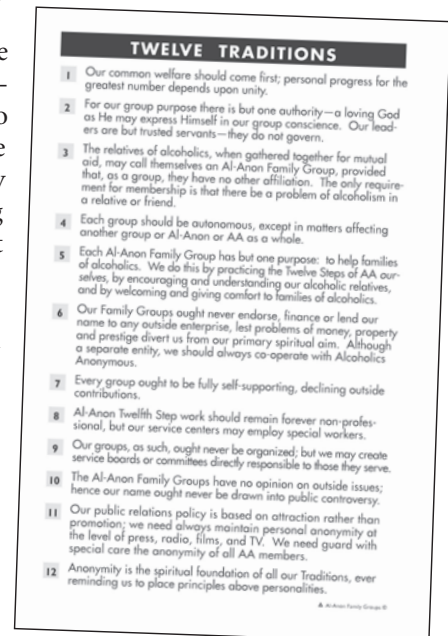
“Since the Conference was created in order to have an effective way to hear and reach the many groups scattered throughout our structure, the principle of delegated authority was initiated. Found in Concept Three, this is demonstrated starting with the Group Representative who becomes the voice of the group, and as such, goes to his or her Area Assembly to elect a Delegate to become the voice of the Area at the Conference. When the Delegates come to Conference, they bring the voices of their Areas, but are given the freedom to vote their consciences after listening to the many opinions and ideas from all the Conference members. This regard for what is best for Al-Anon as a whole responds to the principle of unity within our fellowship along with the knowledge that together, with our Higher Power, our combined voice is superior to one single voice or a single vision. This reminds me of a quote from one of my favorite characters of all time, Spock, from *Star Trek*. He states as he saves the ship and the crew that ‘The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few or the one.’ This not only speaks to our common purpose and the unity of the fellowship, but to anonymity because it acknowledges that while we all have a voice, when the Conference speaks, we need to support the voice of the Conference, even when we may not have agreed with the decision. It is not about us, it is about the group conscience.

“As consideration is given to some of the other principles in action at the Conference, mutual respect and a culture of trust are two that we all want to be apparent throughout the week. Each of us respects the work styles and skills of everyone else. Each Conference member acknowledges the effort and responsibility of the other members. The members trust each other to do their part, knowing that all of those parts will work together for the betterment of the fellowship and organization.

“Conference is a time for each one of us to contemplate the importance of practicing our principles during the activities of the week. These principles are what keep the fellowship firmly grounded in our Legacies—the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts. As we move forward continuing to ensure the Al-Anon Family Group name is recognized and acknowledged as the leading resource for the friends and families of problem drinkers, our principles are our guides.”

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

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees



ORIENTATION

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Chairperson began the session with a review of the goals for the Conference saying: “For many of you, some of this will be repetition and for others it will be relatively new. I know for myself that often, repetition brings a deeper understanding of a procedure, a process, or an explanation. Hopefully, that will be the same for you with the repetition today.”

Board Goals for the Conference

Goal 1: Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the structure, and be able to articulate Conference discussions and decisions.

Goal 2: The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members.

Goal 3: Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will presume goodwill.

The Chairperson of the Board asked if the Conference agreed to these goals of the Conference. There was agreement by a show of hands.

The Chairperson asked Conference members to consider a personal Conference goal that they would like to attain at the Conference, write it down, and share the goal with the Conference members sitting around them. The Chairperson shared that her Conference goal is to: “Actively listen and engage with each sharing, presentation, and activity and to consider every decision and discussion in light of what is best for Al-Anon Family Groups worldwide.”

Several Conference members shared their personal goals:

- Be present, be flexible in thinking, be firm in principles, be free, and leave without resentments.
- Release any preconceived notions and be willing and courageous enough to speak my truth.
- See our spiritual principles in action.
- Gain enough information that I can give a good report to my Assembly. Be an effective and good Conference member.
- Make the best choice for the group as whole.
- Rely on my Higher Power and invest myself fully in the conversations.



Goal 1

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

Goal 3

Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will presume goodwill.

Goal 2

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

The Chairperson asked Conference members to keep these goals in mind as we go through the week doing the work of worldwide Al-Anon. She stated that she was going to review her personal goal every morning before Conference reconvenes to remind herself why she is at Conference.

Conference members then discussed their roles at the Conference. Conference members have differing roles, perspectives, and responsibilities, though many tasks are the same. All Conference members listen and participate in discussions, and vote their conscience on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. Conference members have different roles too. Members shared:

Delegates—bring the viewpoint of their Area on matters affecting the entire fellowship, then return to their Area to share a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide.

Trustees—bring the broad experience of the fellowship back to the Conference and are responsible for carrying out the goals and directions of the World Service Conference (WSC).

Executive Committee members—bring the perspective of monthly business affairs and are responsible for carrying out the goals and directions of the Conference.

WSO Staff members—bring the perspective they obtain from day-to-day contact with members and are responsible for implementing the decisions of the Conference.

International Representatives—listen and gain information regarding Conference procedures and policies and carry that information back to their structures.

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) Chairperson—ensures that the spirit and letter of the resolution to create the ECRPM to handle the management of the property is complied with, and acts as the Conference “timer.”

Non-Voting Staff members—support the work of all the members of the Conference in numerous ways.

The Chairperson continued, “In realizing the similarities and differences of our roles, we all have the responsibility to share our thoughts and opinions as well as vote our conscience.

Delegated authority

“Now that we have clarity on our roles at the Conference, I want to talk a little about the Path to Group Conscience through delegated authority. Every one of us here has been given delegated authority to have the discussions and vote on the topics that come up at this Conference. That means when the Conference makes a decision, I must trust the group conscience. This is one of the ideas I have had trouble with. I thought if I was not involved in the conversation, I was not sure my concerns and issues were discussed. It never occurred to me to just ask the ‘trusted servant’ who was involved in the conversation. I wanted to be involved in everything. Well, that is not how it works. I clearly did not understand Concept Three and delegated authority. So, I wanted to share some of what I have learned about this in the hopes it will be helpful to you.

Member to Group Representative

“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 we call it in my group, a ‘group conscience meeting.’ The members of the meeting discuss each issue put before the group and reach a group conscience decision. The Group Representative (GR), as the delegated authority, takes that discussion and decision and carries it forward when it involves an issue outside of the group.

Group Representative to Delegate

“Next is the group to the Area and ultimately to the Delegate. GRs go to the Area Assembly with their group’s information, they listen to opinions, and they make decisions for Area Al-Anon as a whole. The GRs go back to their groups and report back the discussions while supporting the Area decisions. The Delegate is the delegated authority that gathers the concerns, questions, and experiences from all of the Group Representatives.

Delegates to World Service Conference

“The Delegates then come to Conference from their Areas with all of their Areas’ concerns, questions, and experiences. As this information is shared at the Conference, the Delegates also listen to the ideas and opinions of other Delegates and Conference members and informed group conscience decisions are made that can be supported by all.

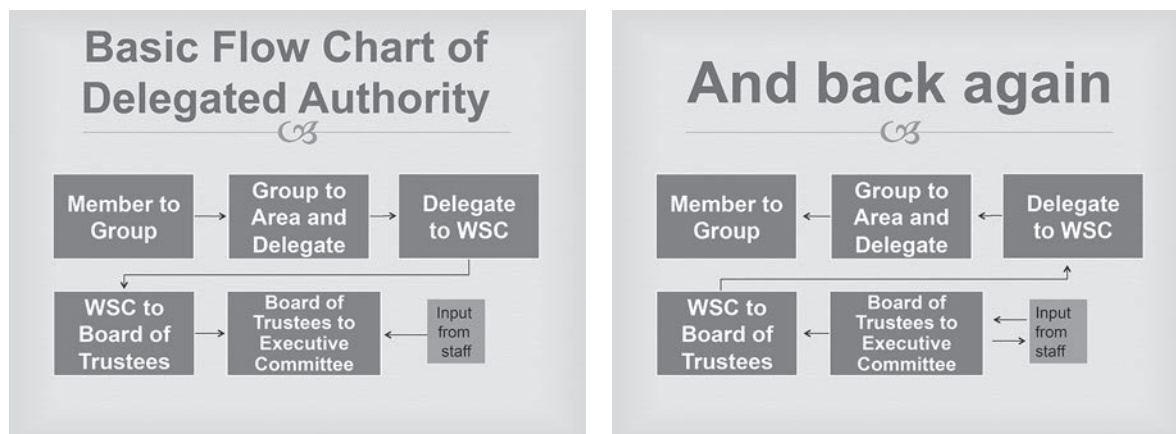
“The WSC then gives the delegated authority to the Trustees. Concept Six says, ‘The Conference acknowledges the primary administrative responsibility of the Trustees.’

“While that completes the ‘Path to a Group Conscience,’ there is still more to say about delegated authority. 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 guardians of the Traditions.

Trustees to Executive Committee

“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. The Executive Committee reports all of its actions to the members of the Board of Trustees monthly, who can ask questions and voice concerns. Then the actions of the Executive Committee are approved by the Board of Trustees.”



The Chairperson introduced a flow chart illustrating the steps that had been outlined noting that the Executive Committee often receives input from the WSO staff as it works with projects. Another chart illustrated how both delegated authority and group conscience go back to the groups through the same channels, going down the chain then up the chain.

“Communication is what makes the process work. You have just learned the path which will be used to carry your group conscience, but, how do you achieve that group conscience at each point along the path?

“The answer is the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience.

There are five elements to KBDM:

- Open communication between leadership and membership.
- Dialogue before deliberation.
- Common access to full information for all decision-makers.
- Existence in a culture of trust.
- Confidence in the competency of our partners.

Relationship of WSC Participants

The Chairperson of the Board concluded by saying: “As we use the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience, we know that all of us who are voting members of the Conference, regardless of our different perspectives and responsibilities, will listen to all ideas and opinions, so the vote will be based on an informed group conscience. If we don’t all take seriously our responsibility to share all facts and opinions, then our group conscience will not be totally informed. Everyone shares everything. It is our responsibility.

Each Member...One Vote

“Once all WSC members hear the facts and opinions and know that the Conference has heard all sides of the issue, then all members will vote according to their conscience believing that their decision is based on what is best for Al-Anon as a whole. Each member has one vote and one vote only. All votes are equal.”

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

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board acted out a brief skit demonstrating the difference between Al-Anon, the organization, which Lois incorporated as Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) in 1954; and Al-Anon Family Groups (AFG), the fellowship. The skit explained the relationship and differences between the organization and the fellowship in order to help Delegates be better able to communicate to the members in their Areas the connection between the organization and the fellowship.

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Connie H.
Vice Chairperson, Board of Trustees

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 in the U.S. and Canada and can accept contributions that may be tax-deductible.
- 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 unless excepted by the Conference.
- 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; contributions are not tax-deductible.
- 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

2013 Auditor's Report

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

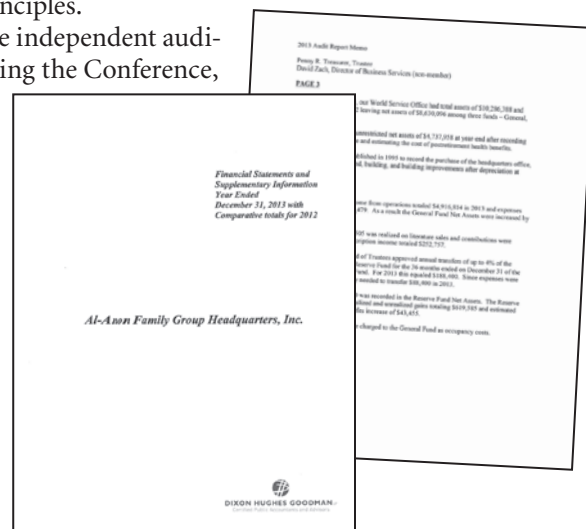
Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit, including the opinion letter of the independent auditors, was posted on e-Communities for all Conference members to review. During the Conference, the Director gave a page-by-page explanation of the audit. A copy of the audit can be found on the Members'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

There were no questions from Conference members.

A Motion to approve the 2013 Audited Financial Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #3, page 89.)

Penny R.
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach
Director of Business Services
(non-member)



SCHEDULE 1

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc.

	2014 Budget	2013 Actual
<u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Salaries	2,657,000	2,690,889
Payroll Taxes	199,000	204,831
Employee Benefits	<u>575,000</u>	<u>587,721</u>
Total Labor Costs	3,431,000	3,483,441
Building Occupancy	287,000	280,253
Packing & Shipping (Net)		(22,587)
Postage	298,000	219,553
Telephone	54,000	54,602
Stationery & Office Supplies	101,000	113,578
Outreach Activities	6,000	5,518
Office Services & Expenses	189,000	216,306
Repairs & Maintenance	9,000	6,987
Travel & Meetings	157,000	138,206
Direct Conference Costs (Net) Schedule 2	56,000	54,714
Legal & Audit	40,000	37,085
Printing	211,000	151,754
Canadian Office	2,000	2,034
In-Office Volunteers	2,000	1,140
Membership Survey		1,500
PSA Campaign	130,000	82,764
Miscellaneous	<u>39,000</u>	<u>43,786</u>
Total Operating Expense	5,012,000	4,870,634
Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)	<u>65,000</u>	<u>40,845</u>
Total Expense	\$5,077,000	\$4,911,479
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>		
Literature Sales less cost of printing	3,100,000	3,143,505
Contributions	1,500,000	1,405,814
Forum Subscriptions	250,000	252,757
International Convention		69,821
Loss on Disposal of Property and Equipment		(15,060)
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	<u>200,000</u>	<u>59,977</u>
Total Estimated Revenue	5,050,000	\$4,916,814
Net increase (decrease)	(27,000)	5,335

2014 Budget

“Our Conference theme this year is, ‘World Service Conference: Our Spiritual Principles in Action.’ What could this theme possibly have in common with our budget? The answer is simple. When we know how much we need to spend to carry out our mission, and we can rely on how much revenue we have coming in, we can spend more of our time on the spiritual and less of our time worrying about the bank balance.

“Last year, the Finance Committee made some tough decisions to reduce the deficit we projected for 2013. We delayed the printing of the new *Service Manual* from 2013 to 2014. We limited the amount of pay increases for our staff to cost of living increases only. We reduced the travel for Board members and staff, and we reduced the number of public service announcements from three to two. In addition, we recommended an increase in the price of literature, which had not been done since 2006.

“Those decisions paid off. We ended the year with net revenue of \$5,335. The Finance Committee works with the World Service Office (WSO) staff to try to keep our expenses in line with our revenue. Currently, we have 45 staff members, down from 47 a year ago, and down from 56 when we first moved to Virginia Beach. We have cut staff as far as we can without reducing services to the groups.

“But expenses are only part of the budget. The other component of our finances is revenue. The revenue portion of our budget is the responsibility of Al-Anon members and Al-Anon groups.

“Concept One states, ‘The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world services belongs to the Al-Anon groups.’ Part of that responsibility is for the groups to financially support the services they ask the World Service Office to provide.

“In 2013, 64 percent came from literature sales; 28.6 percent of our revenue came from contributions; and 61.8 percent of groups contributed to the WSO. This is the highest percentage ever. Contributions increased to \$1,406,000 last year. Literature revenue also increased last year, partly because we increased prices and partly because we introduced a new workbook. We view every penny of support we receive from our members and groups as an expression of gratitude.

“I want to share with you what one Area did to support the WSO. It’s an example of how small amounts of money can have a big impact. This Area created a year-long fundraising campaign for the WSO. They called it, ‘Pennies for Penny.’ I thought the play on words was pretty cute. Each group collected pennies throughout the year. I visited this Area at its Fall Assembly. The Group Representatives (GRs) lined up and presented me with checks representing the pennies that they had collected over the last year. Their pennies totaled \$2,316.79!

“Here’s another example of how small amounts of money can have a big impact: If each group contributes \$6.18 more than it did last year, we would meet our budgeted contributions. If each group contributes just \$8.00 more this year than it did last year, we would cover our deficit.”

In February, Delegates received the Preliminary Budget. They had an opportunity to submit questions on that budget. The Finance Committee met again just before the Conference began and made some revisions to the budget based on additional information. The 2014 Budget was presented to Conference members by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2014 Budget shows that expenses are expected to be \$27,000 more than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,077,000 and revenues to be \$5,050,000.

Projected Expenses

Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$165,000 from last year’s actual. The decrease in Packing and Shipping is due to the increase in our shipping charges which were effective last year. The increase in Postage and Printing reflects the cost to print and mail the new *Service Manual*. Travel is budgeted to be more than 2013 due to expected TEAM meetings during the year. The increase in PSA Campaign is due to a schedule change in the timing of the radio distribution. Labor costs are expected to decrease \$52,000 due to unfilled staff positions and fewer employees enrolled in our group medical insurance.

Estimated Income

We are estimating income from literature sales to be about \$44,000 less than last year and *Forum* subscription income to be about the same. We are budgeting contributions to be \$1,500,000, which is about \$94,000 more than last year’s actual. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer up to 4 per cent of the fair value of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund. Since we expect to need the full 4 percent from the Reserve Fund, we are budgeting investment income \$140,000 more than last year.

Penny R.

Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach

Director of Business Services
(non-member)

The following were questions and comments from the Conference floor:

- What is the thinking behind believing that we will get 7 percent more in contributions than last year?

We have been budgeting \$1.5 million for several years. If we budgeted less than that, we would have a much larger deficit. Where would the Conference like us to cut? When we look at services to the groups, it is a small amount per group that would make the difference. It is not just groups; members can contribute, too. Perhaps a personal inventory can change the thinking about giving a monthly contribution or through a will.

- What is the Equalized Expense for Delegates? Is it for everyone to attend?

The Equalized Expense is 67 percent of the full amount. The full amount is what it actually costs for each Delegate to attend Conference. The WSO estimates costs of a Delegate's participation and asks Areas to provide a percentage of the cost. [See page 145 in the "World Service Handbook" section of the 2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)]

- Do some Areas send more than the Equalized Expense amount?

Yes.

- Reduction in staff tends to have those who are left work more. How is it possible to maintain the same services and reduce the number of employees?

A variety of things. An example is the IVR system (Interactive Voice Recognition) that allows meeting information to be available 24 hours a day. It would require eight additional people to do that. With the use of technology, we are able to accomplish many tasks formerly done by people. We still offer people the toll-free meeting line from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern Time, but sometimes, rather than answering a phone all day long, secretarial skills can be better utilized. Based on performance, I don't believe the staff is overburdened currently. There is no other place to cut now. We receive complaints that literature orders are not filled quickly enough. Delegates could take back to the Areas the idea that if members want to send extra contributions per group, we can provide a lot more service than is currently provided. Let them know we are trying to live within the money they give us. Cuts have happened in a manner so that the fellowship did not feel or see it. We are looking at new positions we are not currently able to fill because of a lack of skill sets. As staff leave or retire, we upgrade with additional skills. There has been no firing because of loss of revenue, but with retirement or attrition, we have re-evaluated positions. We are trying to be good stewards of the money the membership gives us.

- Is the World Service Conference Summary in the Conference costs because it is a benefit of the Conference, therefore raising the Equalized Expense?

The cost of the Summary is included in printing costs. People other than Conference members can receive it and it is sold for the cost of mailing.

- Group Services does not have Spanish translation. Will that position be replaced? How will that be handled?

The position of the Associate Director of Group Services is focused on all groups. A secondary responsibility is to provide support for Spanish groups, not really as a translator but to review translations. The Spanish Translator is continuing in the job. The position is partially eliminated and some duties have been farmed out to staff with the skills. We are doing more in Spanish all the time and we try to meet deadlines and whenever possible to produce all three languages at one time. We hope Many Voices, One Journey (B-31) will be ready this summer. The responsibility for review of the book has been revised. The Group Services Assistant is bilingual and we have upgraded the job responsibilities. That person will have translation oversight. The former Translation Services Manager is providing training in the review process so we are on target to get the book out on time. Spanish groups need to be aware of the commitment at the WSO to provide equivalent services to Spanish and French groups, but not equal. It is not possible to do everything all the time. We provide service not only for 800 Spanish-speaking groups in the U.S., but those groups around the world because there is only one Spanish translation. When groups buy from Mexico, they are putting Mexico's license in jeopardy because they are only licensed to sell in Mexico. Our groups need to buy from the WSO because it supports Spanish services worldwide. As our inventory declines, we are able to revise and reprint more quickly.

- In states with two Areas, contributions from conventions include both Areas. Can we get a breakdown of what each Area gave? Does this include the amount our AWSC contributes? I would like to see it separated so I can tell the Assembly the exact figure on conventions.

We don't put that in because to get the idea of the average group contributions, we would have to add two lines to show the contributions you are talking about for each Area. We can consider that in the Finance Committee.

- We are starting to spread the word and doing "Pennies for Penny." It helped bring in more money.
- We ask if there are any special contributions and suggest members donate for the number of years in Al-Anon and we give half of the amount to the Area and half to the WSO.
- I like showing a deficit budget. It generates awareness and puts a spur in us. Once we stopped talking about *Forum* sales, they went flat. This helps create awareness that we need to up our contributions.
- For Al-Anon there is a prudent middle ground, "But when it comes to the spending of cash for Al-Anon service overhead, many of us turn reluctant. When we drop money in the meeting basket, its usefulness is not as obvious as when we talk to a newcomer. There is no romance in paying the landlord." (*Service Manual*, page 217).

The Treasurer shared that, "When thinking about how to present the budget, e-Communities has talking points and documents for understanding budgets and why we don't need to have balanced budgets. The fellowship thinks all is well with a balanced budget. There is also a new 'Passing the Basket' paragraph in the 'Groups at Work' section of the 2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen *Service Manual* on page nine. Encourage groups to use it."

A Motion to approve the 2014 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #4, page 89.)

2013 Annual Report

The 2013 Annual Report was sent to the Delegates prior to the Conference. The report included updates from various Board Committees, as well as WSO departments. In addition, Conference members were asked to submit questions in advance of the Conference, which were answered and distributed at the Conference. Since the report was provided in advance, the Executive Director made only brief comments before opening the floor for questions and comments.

Ric B.
Executive Director

The following questions were asked:

- In my Area, we get a lot of requests to add to our electronic literature. Are we seeing a way forward past barriers to put more literature out in e-books and audio books?

Some of the barriers are current pricing policies of the organizations we would use to sell literature. At this point, the royalties are punitive and would substantially support the outside entity rather than Al-Anon, so the Finance Committee decided it was not prudent at this time. The idea that electronic literature is cheap is a myth of the Internet. When comparing our books to a novel, a novel is read once, but our books are more like support or reference guides so our materials are more expensive than say a bestseller. We seem to be in the ballpark, but the fellowship thinks we are going to be cheap. Lois speaks to this in Warranty One descriptive text in the "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service" section of the Service Manual.

The audio version of One Day at a Time in Al-Anon (B-6) is available. It is priced at \$19.99 and includes the entire book. Several years ago, we promised to go slowly with electronic literature. We are trying to make things available not only for readers and computers, but also for cell phones. Some software is proprietary and unless you subscribe to it, you can't use the app.

- In the Board Vision Statement, we say we want to be seen as the number one resource for helping families of problem drinkers. Are we using the need to be number one in comparison to other programs? Why is it important to say it? What are we trying to measure?

We want everyone to say Al-Anon Family Groups when anyone asks where they should go if there is a problem with alcohol. We want everyone to know we are a resource for anyone suffering

from the effects of someone else's drinking. We aren't in competition with any other organization.

- It is difficult as a member to know when changes are made to a piece of literature. It causes confusion. Whoever makes the decision, could something be placed on the copyright page when a substantial change is made?

For the last five to seven years, the internal policy has been that unless the need for a change is a major issue, we don't make minor changes for three years because it places a great deal of stress on the Translation Department. A revision changes the literature and the page numbers. We are cognizant of it, but don't know if we can do what you are asking. We can notify Literature Coordinators about where the changes are and count on the Coordinators to carry the message to the fellowship.

- My Area is celebrating the 60th anniversary of *The Forum*. Can the WSO Archives do a search for dates and names of contributors from our Area?

You cannot reprint all of the articles written by members from your Area because that would be a substantial reprint for which we do not give permission. Not all Forum issues are scanned in yet, so you would not have a totally inclusive list without the Archivist having to go through each issue.

- How does the idea of appreciative inquiry fit with the principles of the program?

The WSO is not an Al-Anon meeting. Not everyone in the office is a member. So we do not always talk about the program because that would be restrictive and offputting to non-members. We don't ask WSO employees if they are a member except those employees who are in a position where Al-Anon membership is required. Appreciative inquiry implies mutual respect, mutual trust, openness, and commitment. The idea that not only will supervisors supervise using those principles, supervisors will use those principles to draw out strengths of those they supervise in order to empower the staff members to understand their jobs and utilize their skills to succeed or realize that perhaps what they are doing is not a good "job fit" for them. Appreciative inquiry is office procedure, but does have Al-Anon core principles underlying it. Lois was always willing to take ideas from anyone [see Bill's essay on leadership in the Concept Nine descriptive text in the Service Manual]

- Our Area has a situation described on page 123 of the 2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual. We have an outside entity that is very divisive and manipulative in A.A. and Al-Anon. My understanding was that if I knew it was an A.A. or Al-Anon event, I could trust they would make a financial report back to some entity of A.A. or Al-Anon. How do I reconcile ". . . contributions from conferences, conventions, workshops, etc., that may or may not be tied to a service structure" on page 9 of the 2013 Annual Report? If money comes from an entity outside A.A., how do I reconcile this with taking money from what appears to be outside entity?

Your concerns are exactly why the Policy Committee was having the discussion brought forward by a member of the Conference. I refer you to page 96 in the Service Manual. On research, there are parts that do need more clarification when talking about conventions. The point is, we only accept contributions from these entities, if they are based on the percentage of Al-Anon members attending.

- This is a divisive issue in the Area. If I belong to a group and decide to have an event and include on the registration form that anyone from A.A. and Al-Anon can attend, it opens a door.

The discussion of the Policy Committee will be based on the spiritual principles behind it. Manipulation is getting someone to do something he or she doesn't want to do and wouldn't if he or she had all the facts. The Annual Report is a picture of what is happening from January 1st to December 31st, so if a project is not completed, it won't be in the report. In the interest of transparency, you could send your concerns for the Policy Committee to look at in order to add to the discussion. Boutique Al-Anon conventions are in demand. It's Al-Anon, but it is not connected to a structure and there is no accounting to anyone but the Board of the group. We don't want to necessarily stop that, but we don't want to become manipulated by people using Al-Anon's name for a private purpose. We have to be careful because some members interpret it as an outside entity if it is incorporated. If they are using our name, it has to be part of the fellowship. They need to comply or call themselves something else. As Lois said, "Al-Anon is prepared to give away its knowledge and experience—all except the Al-Anon name itself."

The Executive Director updated the Conference on the following topics.

TEAM Presentations

Abundance was part of TEAM presentations last year. The Board has agreed to allow posting some of the Abundance PowerPoint presentation slides on the Members' Web site. A notice will be sent when the slides are posted. Members have been asking for this. In addition, the WSO wants groups to hear what it is doing with their money.

Group e-News

The WSO has been having a series of conversations about the purpose of *Group e-News*, how to get a wider distribution, and what to do to enhance two-way conversation with the WSO, not around the links of service, but in combination with them. A flyer will be sent to District Representatives (DRs) and will be posted on the DR e-community. It will supplement what the Group Records Department is doing to try to get groups to provide e-mail addresses in order to get electronic news to the members. The WSO is going to archive links on the Members' Web site so that members will be able to find links for last three months. We are always looking for feedback, so if you have ideas, please send them to the Group Services Department to share with staff.



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

Group Records Department

Starting this year, annual Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) Recertification will only be available through the World Service Office (WSO) On-line Group Records Web-based application, and must be completed on-line. The On-line AMIAS Recertification was released to the Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) in mid-March. It will save AAPPs time and significantly decrease the amount of paperwork required by the WSO.

Two GoToMeeting on-line AMIAS Recertification training sessions were held for AAPPs. A day-time and an evening session were offered to accommodate the participants' schedules. An average of ten AAPPs per session attended the training. The majority of participants were incoming AAPPs who had no previous experience with the on-line AMIAS Recertification. Several participants shared at the end of the session that they found the training beneficial and that the session took away the anxiety of using a Web-based application to complete their annual Alateen Recertification.

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

Alateen

The World Service Office (WSO) Alateen Work Group launched the first on-line Alateen survey in April. Alateen members aged 13 to 18 were invited to participate in this survey on the use of technology in Alateen public outreach. There were just a few questions to answer. It is hoped that the results will help to identify the needs of teenage members of the fellowship in utilizing outreach with various media. Alateen members were also asked if they were willing to participate in future Thought and Task Forces. Alateens accessed the survey, which was completely anonymous, on the Members' Web site.

A flyer regarding the survey was posted on the Alateen Coordinator e-Community. A copy of the flyer was mailed to every registered Alateen group with the group's copy of *Alateen Talk*, as well as to all *Alateen Talk* subscribers. The flyer features "coupons" that can be cut out and distributed to individual Alateens.

In a conference call, Area Alateen Coordinators brainstormed ways of helping to spread the word about the survey, which included:

- E-mailing the flyer to all Alateen Group Sponsors in the Area.
- E-Mailing the flyer to District Representatives (DRs) and/or district Alateen contacts to distribute to AMIASs in their district.
- Printing copies of the flyer to take to events attended by Alateens before the survey ends in mid-May, and taking a computer to events where Alateens would be and setting it up to let Alateens take the survey.

Results of the survey will be reported to the Alateen Coordinators and through announcements in WSO publications.

A Motion to approve the 2013 Annual Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #5, page 89. The complete report can be found on pages 91-110.)

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE (WSO) VISIT

Conference members arrived at the World Service Office (WSO) on a double-decker motor coach to a warm greeting and applause by WSO Trustees and Executive Committee members saying, “Welcome home.” There were tears and hugs as the Delegates walked into the lobby and began looking around.

Before the Delegates dispersed, the Executive Director noted the building’s unique architecture and pointed out the architect’s intent to incorporate the idea of the Al-Anon logo in the architecture. The Executive Director pointed out the portraits of Al-Anon’s cofounders, Lois W. and Anne B., as well as Lois’s typewriter that was used to write to the first 87 groups and an exhibit of Al-Anon and Alateen literature in many languages.

Delegates enjoyed a luncheon hosted by WSO staff, Trustees, and Executive Committee members. They then assembled into “tour groups” where they were briefed on current activities and programs in the office and explored the WSO Archives, one of the most popular parts of the tour. Following their tour, Delegates had time to walk about the grounds, talk with staff and volunteers, and take photographs to share with their Areas.

On returning to the hotel, a Delegate commented, “It made me feel ‘part of’—the hugs, the applause, and the ‘welcome home’ greeting. It is not about bricks and mortar, but the people who work there who are concerned about our well-being so that we can do the work in our Areas.”



ALATEEN SERVICE E-MANUAL

Conference members were given an overview of the Alateen Home page on the Members' Web site through a PowerPoint presentation. The Alateen Home page has four sections, each for a slightly different audience. There is also a link to the Alateen Survey.

A new feature on the "Alateen Members" section is an electronic sharing sheet. Members can also read sample sharings from *Alateen Talk*. There is a link to register for Alateen chat meetings and information about Alateen literature.

The second section has information on "How to Start an Alateen Group." It stresses the Area process and the need to connect with the Area Alateen Coordinator. For more detailed information, there is a direct link, and it is also linked within the *Alateen Service e-Manual*.

There is a section on "Alateen at Events" that the World Service Office (WSO) hopes will support the Areas and their efforts to bring all events in the Area into compliance with the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

The "main event" of the presentation however, was the new *Alateen Service e-Manual*! This section provides information for members on all aspects of Alateen service. It is an on-line tool that can be used for Sponsor training and by individual members. The WSO will be adding discussion boards, to make the *e-Manual* more interactive.

The main page of the Alateen *e-Manual* lists the major topic headings. These include: An "Overview of Alateen Service" that gives succinct information on the need for certification; the basic duties of an Alateen Group Sponsor; and starting a group with links to take the member to pages with more detailed information.

A section about becoming an Alateen Group Sponsor stresses the Area process, and the need to be connected. There are lists and links to various resources, both in the Area and the WSO.

There are sections about the role of Alateen Group Sponsors both inside Alateen meetings and outside. This is guided by our Policy statement found in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* on page 89. For those planning to become Alateen Group Sponsors, there is guidance about who leads the Alateen meeting and the difference between teaching and sharing. A great discussion topic to talk about is how the Sponsors relate to individual Alateens both in and between meetings. Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) can provide service to Alateen at Alateen events, such as Area Conferences and Conventions. The spiritual principles of Alateen service include encouraging all Alateen Group Sponsors to connect with their local district and Al-Anon Information Service (AIS). It is important to have that connection to the Al-Anon Family Groups structure and not to be isolated.

There is a section about Alateen public outreach which often falls to the Alateen Group Sponsor. Areas can encourage their Area and district Public Outreach Coordinators and committees to include Alateen in their outreach plans, and Alateen and public outreach trusted servants may want to collaborate on Alateen outreach. The *Best of Public Outreach* service tool contains many suggestions applicable to Alateen public outreach.

Tips in the "Challenges in Alateen Service" section can be helpful to Alateen Group Sponsors to be aware of some of the challenges that may arise. Alateen Group Sponsors need other Sponsors and district/Area trusted servants to talk to when problems arise.

There are sections on WSO resources, Alateen Safety, and Legal Issues. The Alateen Safety section provides background to educate visitors on the history of the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements in order to support the Area Requirements, and the 2003 Alateen Motion is there with directions to contact the Area Alateen Coordinator to learn more about Area Requirements. The WSO Group Services Department always responds to questions from members and non-members, and refers members to their Area Alateen Coordinator. The Legal Issues section references the need to be familiar with local/state laws on mandatory reporting of crimes against minors. This could be used as a resource in Alateen training workshops.

The Group Services Department continues to hold conference calls with Area Alateen Coordinators to get their feedback and suggestions on how Areas can use and encourage use of the *Alateen Service e-Manual*. Alateen Coordinators were encouraged to circulate the Web address, and members were encouraged to use the search feature within the site. Highlights from the *Alateen Service e-Manual* can be included in Area newsletters or linked from Area Web sites.

Mary Lou M.

Associate Director of Member Services



The *e-Manual* information is compatible with the PowerPoint Training Modules, available to Area Alateen Coordinators to use in Area training programs. Area-specific information can be added, as well as references to the *e-Manual*. For those doing on-line training, the *e-Manual* could be included in on-line workshops or in a separate tour in a Webinar format. The WSO plans to offer more specific suggestions for local Alateen public outreach, as well as plans to add references to the *e-Manual* to the WSO PowerPoint modules. With input from the Area Alateen Coordinators, the WSO plans to expand sections and offer new topics as needed.

The presenter asked:

What else would you like to know?

Can you see a value to the *e-Manual* in your Area?

The floor was opened for questions and comments:

- Where is the survey located?

On the Members' Web site in the Alateen section. Click on the "Alateen" tab, which will take you to the Alateen page.

- This is going to be a great asset for AMIAS, members, and Alateen members.
- Will there be any links to individual Areas?

At this time, there is only wording for more information—there are no links from the Alateen section.

- I have concerns about Alateen members saying things that the Alateen Group Sponsors may need to report.

Child abuse laws relating to mandatory disclosure usually refer to individuals performing in a professional capacity, and not volunteers. Areas should investigate their state/province/country laws. Alateen Group Sponsors and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) should be familiar with their state/provincial laws regarding mandatory reporting of any suspected child abuse. If mandatory reporting is in place in your Area, inform the Alateen members at the beginning of every meeting before sharing begins. The Alateen Safety Guidelines (G-34) should be included in AMIAS training. See "Legal and Traditional Responsibility of AMIAS, Including Alateen Group Sponsors" on page 4 of the guideline.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATE

2013 Al-Anon International Convention Update

Ric B.
Chairperson

Suzanne M.
Coordinator

Barbara O.
Co-Coordinator

The Al-Anon International Convention Coordinator began by holding up a poster of Vancouver with a cut out for a face, saying "For the past few Conferences, Barbara O. and I have gotten up here and asked you, "Can you picture of yourself in Vancouver?" Today, I am asking you, "Did you get a picture of yourself in Vancouver?"

It was reported that there were:

- 3,763 attendees
- 411 Alcoholics Anonymous members
- 51 Alateens
- 42 French-speaking and 117 Spanish-speaking attendees

After the Convention, an on-line survey invitation was sent to 2,509 English-speaking, 29 French-speaking, and 57 Spanish-speaking members. Preliminary results indicated that 70 percent were very satisfied with their experience at the Convention and 24 percent were satisfied. Ninety-one percent said they would encourage members to attend the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore, Maryland.

The Convention Coordinator closed the report by thanking Conference members for looking at the funny posters for all those years and saying, "I will see you in Baltimore!"



2015 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon Participation Update

The Coordinator announced that Al-Anon has accepted an invitation from Alcoholics Anonymous to participate in the 2015 A.A. International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, July 2 - 5, 2015. Al-Anon and Alateen meetings will be held during the daytime. Registered members participation will include dances and Big Meetings. Information will be sent in August. On-line registration will begin Wednesday, September 3, 2014. The World Service Office heard the complaints about breaking anonymity after mailing registration forms to our groups for the last A.A. International Convention and this time, all information will be sent out electronically, through *Group e-News*, and the International Convention Web site, www.al-anoninternationalconvention.org. The Web site will be accessible from the Public Outreach Web site and through the Members' Web site. There was an article in the June issue of *The Forum* about the Convention and how to access the Web site for more information.

A flyer was handed out to Conference members to give to District Representatives (DRs) asking for cooperation in getting e-mail addresses for the 41 percent of the groups that don't have an e-mail address listed with the group's CMA's (Current Mailing Address) contact information that the World Service Office has on file in order to help all groups to be fully informed of the event.

Barbara O.
Coordinator

LITERATURE COMMITTEE REPORT

Floor Discussion—Should the World Service Conference give conceptual approval to develop a new daily reader that reflects the diversity of our fellowship?

The Literature Committee Board Liaison and the World Service Office (WSO) staff member presented background information regarding the possibility of developing a new daily reader that reflects the current diversity of our fellowship. This was a recommendation of the Literature Committee, including the new Delegate members who had not participated in the conversation over the last two years.

From 1988 to the present, the Conference has consistently turned down conceptual approval if it was for specific audiences. To clarify, it is not the intention to have it be a daily reader *about* diversity, but one that would reflect the diversity *in* our fellowship. The Literature Committee asked the Conference to consider giving conceptual approval for a new daily reader that will address the needs of *all* our fellowship.

As background, during the March 2012 conference call, the Literature Committee began discussing a suggestion for a new daily reader. The Committee considered the fact that it takes an average of three to five years to develop a daily reader, primarily because of the time it takes to receive enough suitable, thought-provoking sharings. The discussion continued for five more conference calls, using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience.

In an attempt to consider what the needs of the fellowship might be five years from now, the Committee took into account that a new daily reader could give members an opportunity to share on topics that they feel are under-represented in our current daily readers. A daily reader addressing the many voices of Al-Anon could bring forward all the conversations about segments of the population that are not fully represented in Al-Anon's literature currently.

The Literature Committee felt that a new daily reader could provide an opportunity for all members to express what Al-Anon is today, with topics that are pertinent to them now, much as *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) did in 1968; *Courage to Change* (B-16) did in 1992; and *Hope for Today* (B-27) did in 2002. This proposed book could illustrate the diversity of relationships that lead people to Al-Anon, while still focusing on what we have in common—both in problems and solutions.

Discussion included following:

- When I heard that there was a new Al-Anon adult children daily reader, I thought, "What am I going to do with another daily reader?" In 2002, I bought *Hope for Today*. At a most difficult time in my life, it got me through.
- Has the Literature Committee thought of a plan to reach people in a diversity of communities to get them enthused to write and send in sharings?

We have no control over who decides to write, but we can encourage members. That is what we are all asked to do if we decide to go forward, encourage our average member to write.

Annette T.
Trustee, Literature Committee
Board Liaison

Tom C.
Associate Director of
Communications—Literature

Unlike Courage to Change, we will not edit out differences between us. It will be more like Hope for Today with a variety of sharings. We want to reflect the diversity of experiences—encourage members to reveal, where appropriate, what makes us different as well as the same in growing in the program.

- Our Area World Service Committee (AWSC) thinks the more Conference Approved Literature (CAL) the better. All would benefit from a reflection of our diversity. Updating of the language would help.
- Let us see what is reflected in our membership by inviting people to write what is under-reflected in our membership. Have it as an e-book.
- What is the risk of developing a new daily reader?

This falls under the KBDM question, “What do we wish we knew, but don’t?” Daily readers are among our most popular pieces of literature. They have been best sellers since 1968, but that is not a guarantee. By the time a new one would be ready, it would be 26 years since Courage to Change and 16 years since Hope for Today. The Literature Committee’s responsibility is to keep up with the times so that we appeal to new members.

- Our population is changing and we need to change with it. If we want to draw new members into the program, we need to let them know we’re current and welcoming. We can do that by learning about differences. Keep in mind the idea that if Al-Anon can help that person, it could help me. Look forward and think forward.
- How will the diversity of our fellowship reveal itself in a new daily reader and how does the program differ for those who have outward differences? We need to go into different ethnic communities.

Is Al-Anon different for each of us? How we each incorporate it into our lives is different. For example, detachment for parents with children. Each has his/her own struggles that are different. We share experience, strength, and hope. The more varied the experience, the greater the strength and hope. This is an opportunity for everyone to cover issues not previously or fully covered. Al-Anon hasn’t changed, but the world has.

- Demographics of my home group have changed over the years. The purpose of literature is to unite us using the printed word. CAL is a powerful tool. We need to trust that the Literature Committee will expand on the diversity of the membership today. Our diversity is a driving force. We must keep current with language changes. Focus on unity and how we come to be part of the fellowship. Literature naturally represents the inherent diversity of the fellowship.
- We all have different life experiences. If we have them in a daily reader, we would have a ready resource for the newcomer and members, too.
- Areas can be rural, wealthy, or inner cities. Attending meetings in different places, I see the commonality of Al-Anon spoken, but differences in the sharings. Transitional Alateens would use it differently. It could be a vehicle to reach out to young adults.
- What are we going to do differently to appeal to different groups? Is the way we write a daily reader going to appeal to new members? Not just in the language, but shorter segments?
- I sponsor women for whom *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) doesn’t make sense. I like the idea of thinking long range. The world changes, but language doesn’t always translate. When we expand it, we have to be sure we are addressing the audience.
- Some Areas have mountains, some have forests, some have water on the edges, and some have it in the interior. But we all have lakes and rivers that contribute to that. In the presentation, it was stated that people have been asking for another daily reader for 11 years, so our participation may make this come to fruition.
- If a motion passed, could we consider a different format?

In 2001, with Hope for Today, we discussed whether sharings should be limited to one page. Some felt that the WSC had said “daily reader” and they will expect it to be like Courage to Change. I would like to see the will of the Conference reflected in the motion, so we are not told that we are not doing what the Conference wanted.

- Should the proposed motion be changed to read a “new piece” instead of new daily reader? Focusing on the day of the year?

It is better to keep “daily reader” in the motion as long as that allows the Committee freedom to format the book as it sees best. I was wondering, if approved, whether the Delegates can go back and discuss diversity and how the world and fellowship have changed; and develop sharings to reflect that. Will the Conference agree on that?

- What is the next step? What might we hear over the next year?

If approved, the first step is for the Literature Committee to form a Task Force to develop ideas for wording to include in the sharing request that would be produced and sent to the fellowship, so the Literature Committee Task Force can show results to the Literature Committee who will send out a request for sharings and stress the need for sharings.

- Will this be for anyone in Al-Anon who wants to send a sharing?

If the Conference approves a motion, the next step is for every Delegate to go back and foster the kind of discussion about how to get diverse points of view for this daily reader and about what diversity means in Al-Anon so we can break the barriers to inclusion. The idea is get to principle-based discussion in the Areas and let the Areas come up with ideas of the kinds of sharings wanted. If groups want this new daily reader, ask the members what they are going to do to make this happen.

- Keep the wording as “daily reader” because it is popular in the membership and vital to recovery, as opposed to a history book. I invite the Literature Committee to think outside the box as to what that would look like.
- The Literature Committee hasn’t failed the membership yet when introducing literature that is relevant, so the principle in allowing the Committee and the World Service Office (WSO) staff to conceptualize and format the book is in good hands. I will go back to my Area, keep talking about it, and ask how we are going to get sharings to make this happen.
- I have a concern if we’re not modifying the language of the motion. Some members are very literal and have a preconceived notion of what a daily reader is. We need the language in the *Conference Summary* showing the broader discussion and thinking outside the box. A “piece” gives more freedom for styles and format.
- I encourage all of us to think out of box. Have blogs at the Area level.
- It is critical how diversity is explained and discussed in the Areas. If we want responses, it will hinge on how the discussion goes. Being able to open up discussion, I would favor inclusiveness.

There is concern in several Areas because the word “diversity” freaked them out. It was suggested that using the idea of a new daily reader reflecting the inclusiveness of the fellowship might allow Delegates to have an easier time explaining this in Areas.

- Are we trying to describe the complexion of fellowship or to focus sharings?

We are trying to reflect how diverse the membership is.

- What is the definition of diversity vs inclusivity?

There are several definitions, which is why it is such a hot button.

- What is the spirit of the word diversity?

Part of the Committee meeting discussion had to do with diverse relationships, not just the diverse people who make up our fellowship, but also the diverse types of relationships that brought us here.

- I thought we were taking the lid off because there are multiple areas of diversity that we don’t even know about.

When asked by the Conference Chairperson, a majority voted to keep the original wording of the motion as proposed.

Following discussion, the Conference Chairperson asked the members if there was a desire to move forward with a formal motion.

A Motion was made, seconded, and carried that the 2014 World Service Conference give conceptual approval to develop a new daily reader that reflects the diversity of the Al-Anon fellowship. (See Motion #2 on page 89).

“MEET THE BOARD” EVENT

Ann C.
Trustee

Barbara O.
Director of Member Services

On December 13, 2013, the Board of Trustees announced to Conference members that the first “Meet the Board” event will be held in the Newfoundland/Labrador Area on Saturday, July 19, 2014.

This event is part of a three-year trial. Conference members received an invitation to (and were asked to encourage their Areas to submit a bid for) the second “Meet the Board” event to be held in July 2015. The invitation included a Request Form to host an event in 2015.

The “Meet the Board” event is an opportunity for local Al-Anon members to meet and interact with the 19 members of the Board of Trustees and three members of the Executive Committee. The content of the event is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees; the Area is responsible for publicity; and all monies are handled by the World Service Office (WSO).

The Area Delegate, the Area Chair, and the Area Contact person for the event need to complete and sign the “Meet the Board” event Request Form. Bids need to be received at the WSO by the September 15, 2014 deadline.

As a result of the experience with the first event, some stipulations and criteria have been broadened:

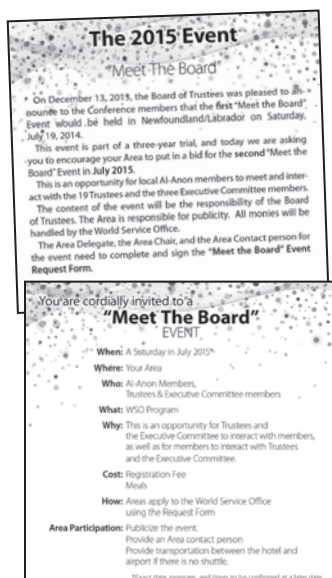
- A regional airport is sufficient. It is not necessary to have an international airport.
- It is the Area’s responsibility to complete the form, publicize the event, and provide a contact.
- The Area will provide transportation to and from the airport, if there is no complimentary shuttle.
- The hotel needs to have wireless capabilities.
- In selecting a city, the hotel needs to have meeting space for the Board to meet and for accommodating the expected attendance.
- The event will be held the third or fourth weekend in July.
- It is important to make sure the facility can meet our needs.
- The Area selected will be pulled from a hat.
- An Area, once chosen, cannot resubmit during the trial period.

Conference members shared the following experience with the process:

- The Newfoundland/Labrador Delegate shared information on how it worked for her Area having gone through the process.
- All Areas, including small Areas, can submit as long as the Area meets the criteria. There is no minimum or maximum attendance required.
- Does the Board have a format for the day? What should we expect?

Members meet and have a meal with the WSO Trustees and Executive Committee members. In the breakouts and presentations the Trustees and Executive Committee members talk with you, not to you.

In closing the session, Conference members were reminded that this event is a work in progress.



READINESS FOR TWELFTH STEP SURVEY RESULTS

Pamela Walters
WSO Marketing Information Analyst
(non-member)

This Survey was an effort to gain insight into why members may not get involved in Twelfth Step work and what we can give them as tools to use to engage people in Twelfth Step work. It is hoped that it will help to feed discussions with Conference members about getting more people involved in service.

Goal #1 of the Board of Trustees Strategic Plan for the Communication Services: Increase members’ willingness to participate in Twelfth Step work.

This survey was developed to measure members’:

1. Level of involvement in service work.
2. Motivations and fears in participating in service work.
3. Demographic information.

Results of this survey will serve as a benchmark to measure future changes in levels of willingness to participate.

The survey questionnaire was developed from July 2012 through February 2013 by the Communication Services staff. This was an on-line survey programmed in three languages to enable French and

Spanish participation. It was conducted through the Members' Web site between May and July 2013.

We received 1,817 complete responses. Of those who specified, 86 percent were from the U.S., Bermuda, and Puerto Rico, and 14 percent were from Canada. The results showed that:

- 92% of the responses were completed in English.
- 5% were completed in French.
- 3% were completed in Spanish.

Fifty-three percent of members indicated they had been involved in service activities.

The average length of membership of respondents was 15 years. Fifty-three percent of those who took the survey said they were involved in service and spent an average of 3.65 hours per month on it. That percentage increases when a member gets behind an activity to promote it. Enthusiasm can make a difference.

The survey asked about the level of involvement in service work from the group level through Area service and about specific service activities. At the group level, this ranged from individual sharing to member sponsorship to giving a phone number for calls between meetings. There were ten activities in each category ranging from putting a flyer on a bulletin board to public service announcement (PSA) distribution.

Survey Results:

- Those who indicated the least amount of participation, participated the least number of times, and took the most time to get involved in service.
- The main reason for first participating, and continuing to participate, was to give back. Other reasons included progression of recovery, to carry the message to help others, and to learn more about Al-Anon Family Groups and service roles.
- The main barrier to participating in service activities was time. Nearly one-half of the members indicated that was their top concern. Other concerns were interference in family life, anonymity, not yet on the Twelfth Step, and not knowledgeable enough about service. Of those who responded, 40 percent were already highly engaged in service work and five percent indicated that they were not asked.
- We also found that 82 percent of members believe Twelfth Step work to be a very important part of their recovery.
- The WSO social media pages were visited by 20 percent of members.
- While the survey indicated that 92 percent of respondents have/do read *The Forum*, we estimate that only 10 – 20 percent of members regularly see or read it. What this tells us is:
 - * The results of this survey are representative of *The Forum* readers, who are relatively highly involved in service for Al-Anon, but we know that is actually one percent of members.
 - * The survey didn't reach 90 percent of the fellowship and we need to think of new ways to communicate. Our messages are not heard by 80 to 90 percent of the fellowship.

Messages to Communicate:

- Implement a communications strategy that is focused on highlighting the importance of service work in recovery to all members—especially at the newcomer level. The strategy should focus on the main reasons members gave in this survey for participating in service work.
- Increase participation in service activities. The categories of service activity that have the least amount of participation and take the longest amount of time for members to become involved in are public outreach, followed by individual sharings, and above the group level activities. Importance should be placed on educating members about available service activities in these categories, and the ways in which they can become involved. The idea would be that by providing more information, members will feel more comfortable, therefore becoming involved.
- Place emphasis on providing clarity about Traditions Eleven and Twelve in an effort to maintain and improve levels of understanding. The following are particular service activities which should be addressed to alleviate member concerns in participating: public outreach activities that involve speaking on the radio, at an open meeting, conference, school, or to government agencies and large treatment centers.
- Increase members' involvement with WSO social media Web sites.
- Find strategies to overcome time as a reason not to participate.

Results of the survey can be found on the Members' Web site.

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

2014 RCT Out-of-Region Delegate Selection

Debbie G.
Trustee

The Trustee gave an overview of the Regional Trustee Selection Process and explained the deadlines and roles and responsibilities in the nominating process. Each Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) consists of the current Delegates serving the Areas of the Region, as well as Out-of-Region Delegates, drawn by lot.

The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
Canada East	Judith S., DE, Panel 52	Darcy N., ALNWFL, Panel 53
Canada Central	Hélène D., QC(W), Panel 52	Maria A., PA, Panel 52
Canada West	Jud L., NM/EP, Panel 54	Linda W., MA, Panel 53

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
Canada East	Rosemarie K., MP, Panel 53	Maxine D., NF/LB, Panel 54
Canada Central	Jane H., ON(S), Panel 52	Kerry L., MB/NWO, Panel 52
Canada West	Maryon K., AB/NWT, Panel 53	Jennie B., SK, Panel 54

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Vicky A.
Chairperson, Panel 52,
Minnesota South

The CCT Chairperson opened her report by thanking the members who submitted their résumés and the Committee members for participating in the nominating process. She noted that all who served showed a commitment to ensure the decisions made were completed with our best effort and integrity. She thanked the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) and the World Service Office (WSO) staff for their diligence and work in completing their responsibilities during the past year.

"The Conference Committee on Trustees is composed of World Service Conference Delegates and elects its own Chairperson annually. Résumés for Trustee at Large (TAL) and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) are submitted to the World Service Office in August of each year. The CCT members review the résumés and score each résumé based on skill sets, understand-

ing 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. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates they have 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.

“This year’s theme, ‘World Service Conference: Our Spiritual Principles in Action,’ was evident in each Committee member’s service. It was a gift to work on behalf of our fellowship with trusted servants who practiced the principles of this program. We were able to do our part in the chain of service that seeks to provide our fellowship with qualified leaders with the skills for the current needs of the TAL and ECRPM positions.

“As in all my service experience, serving the fellowship as the Chairperson of the CCT has been an opportunity to grow along spiritual lines. Thank you for the opportunity. It has been one of my great honors in walking this spiritual journey.”

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

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

“In 1961, the first trial World Service Conference (WSC) 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 (CCT) 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 (RCT) 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. At its Annual Meeting, 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 CCT, the 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 World Service Office (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 the response to an additional written question are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. The CCT Chairperson 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 at the Board’s Annual Meeting.

Char G.F.
Chairperson, Trustee

“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 South Central, US Southwest, US Northwest, and US Northeast Regional Committees on Trustees each consisted of the Regions’ Delegates and three Out-of-Region Delegates and the alternates chosen by lot. The RCT 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 RCT, 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 South Central, US Southwest, US Northwest, and US Northeast Regions. These proposed nominees having been given traditional approval by the Conference as a whole, and may be elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting 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 2014 WSC:

Trustee at Large:

Terry F., Florida North, 1st three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Joan S., US Northeast, remaining two years of 1st three-year term

Donna E., US Northwest, 1st three-year term

Annette T., US South Central, 2nd three-year term

Joyce B., US Southwest, 1st three-year term

Board Officers:

Paula B., Chairperson

Connie H., Vice Chairperson

Jennie McC., Treasurer

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

Lynn McC., three-year term

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2014-2015

Karen R., 1st one-year term, Chairperson

Roger C., 2nd one-year term

Bev A., 1st one-year term

Barbara O., WSO Staff, 1st year of a two-year term

THE FORUM REPORT

"I have some good news about *The Forum*, and some bad news. The good news is that *The Forum* is currently Al-Anon's most effective means of communicating with individual Al-Anon members and with Al-Anon groups. That good news comes in three parts.

"First, the magazine delivers information that Al-Anon members value. According to the most recent Readership Survey, 90 percent of *Forum* readers say the magazine provides stories that they find helpful in their program. Fifty-four percent said the magazine contains information that they can't find anywhere else. And 54 percent said they read the entire magazine, from cover-to-cover, *on the day that it arrives* in the mail.

"The second bit of good news is that the magazine appears to reach deeper into the fellowship than any other publication. Every month, more than 33,600 copies are distributed to individual subscribers and to Al-Anon groups throughout the U.S. and Canada.

"And third, based on recent surveys, it appears that the *Forum* reaches a cross-section of Al-Anon members that is ten-times more engaged in Al-Anon service than the fellowship as a whole. And that's what every magazine wants: readership that represents a highly engaged demographic. Here's an example of engagement:

More than 3,000 readers participated in the last *Forum* Readership Survey, in 2010. Out of 33,600 copies, that's almost 9 percent. It's equal to about 15 percent of the members who have their own personal subscriptions. But, if you assume that all of the complimentary group copies are read, then the participation rate in the *Forum* Readership survey is still nearly 9 percent of all *Forum* readers, which is a terrifically high response. Compare this participation rate with the response to the most recent Al-Anon Membership Survey. In 2012, we invited *all* Al-Anon members to participate in the Membership Survey. We invited them by publishing a notice in *The Forum*, as well as in every other communications medium available to us. About 3,200 members participated. That means that by using *all* the communications means available to us *in addition to The Forum*, the Membership Survey was able to attract only 200 more participants than *The Forum* Readership Survey was able to attract, by means of *The Forum* alone.

"Participation of 3,200 members in the Membership Survey is a good response. But as a percentage of the total Al-Anon membership, it's close to 1.5 percent, which is just a fraction of the 9 to 15 percent participation rate of *Forum* readers in *The Forum* Readership Survey.

"That fact speaks volumes about the high level of engagement of Al-Anon members who read *The Forum*. A higher proportion of *Forum* readers participate in Al-Anon service—and participate at a higher level—than members of the Al-Anon fellowship as a whole.

"That's the good news about *The Forum*:

- Strong reader interest.
- Strong reach into the fellowship.
- Strong reader engagement.

"What's the bad news, then? The bad news is that *The Forum* reaches, in my estimate, only about 12 percent of the fellowship. That means that about 88 percent of Al-Anon members do *not* know how the magazine could help their programs; and they're unaware of the service opportunities that the magazine shares with the fellowship.

"In effect, about 88 percent of Al-Anon members miss an important opportunity to participate in Al-Anon as a worldwide fellowship and to participate in Al-Anon service at the world services level.

"We don't know the exact number of Al-Anon members. But we know that there's an average of only 1.4 personal subscriptions to *The Forum* per English-speaking group, plus one complimentary subscription that's sent to each English-speaking group. That's an average of 2.4 copies of *The Forum* per English-speaking group. By that estimate, there would be one copy of *The Forum* for every six members, reaching about 16 percent of the membership. I'm estimating only 12 percent because the complimentary copy is often left in the literature box, used for outreach, or given to newcomers, but *not* read by regular Al-Anon members.

"My own Al-Anon group has attendance of about 18 to 25 members each week. I know of only one or two members of my group who have a personal subscription to *The Forum*. With about 20 potential subscribers in the group, two personal subscriptions means that *The Forum* is seen each month by only 10 percent of my group's members. My group's complimentary copy often remains unread. It's not unusual to see four or five back issues of *The Forum* sitting in the group literature box.

Robert S.

Director of Communications



“But there’s more bad news. The number of personal subscriptions is shrinking every month. The magazine has lost about 100 subscriptions per month, every month, since July of 2010. That’s a loss of more than 4,000 subscribers in the past three-and-a-half years, or 20 percent of the magazine’s readership. With that rate of decline, it’s reasonable to wonder if *The Forum* has a viable future. That’s the question that I asked the World Service Conference in 2009: Does *The Forum* have a future?”

“When I suggested that *The Forum* might disappear due to the fellowship’s lack of interest, the Conference members rallied to support the magazine and subscriptions increased every month for an entire year. At the 2010 Conference, I thanked the Delegates for their support and declared that the threat to *The Forum*’s future was gone. But as soon as members believed that *The Forum* was not at risk, *Forum* subscriptions began to decline again, and they’ve been declining ever since.

“Has anything changed since then? Is it possible to think about *The Forum* in a new way? In fact, we learned something new and unexpected from this year’s Survey on Readiness for Twelfth Step Work.

- First, we found that 92 percent of those who took the survey on Readiness for Twelfth Step Work were *Forum* readers, compared to the only ten or 15 percent of the fellowship at large who are *Forum* readers.
- Second, those who took the survey were ten times more likely to be deeply involved in Al-Anon service than the average Al-Anon member. The survey sample had at least ten times as many members with service experience at the world services level than members of the fellowship as a whole.
- We realized from this survey that most of the other surveys that we have done over the years were, in effect, surveys of *Forum* readers, because *Forum* readers are the members who are the most actively involved in service and are therefore the members who are the most likely to take the time to respond to a survey.

“We don’t know which comes first: the chicken or the egg? Are *Forum* readers active in service because they read *The Forum*? Or do they read *The Forum* because they’re active in service? We don’t know for sure, but the more important point is that the two are linked together. Reading *The Forum* goes hand-in-hand with a strong Al-Anon program that includes participation in service.

“Some years ago, *The Forum*’s tagline was ‘A meeting in your pocket.’ That sounds like an alternative to a face-to-face Al-Anon meeting—a purely private matter, something to pull out of your pocket on a stormy night, when you don’t want to go out to a meeting.

“But *The Forum*’s current tagline says: ‘Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service’—and that’s the essence of what it means to be an Al-Anon member who is fully engaged in the program and participates in Al-Anon service.

“That tagline, ‘Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service,’ frames *The Forum* as a vital link that connects the individual Al-Anon member’s personal recovery program to the shared recovery of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups. It also connects the individual Al-Anon group with Al-Anon’s world service structure, and with participation in Al-Anon at the world services level.

“There are two reasons why *The Forum* plays an essential role in Al-Anon. First, *The Forum* gives voice to *current and contemporary* shared recovery across the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon. It’s not a meeting in a pocket. It’s a resource to be used at meetings, to be shared with newcomers who are looking for the *current and contemporary recovery stories* that highlight the hope and support that Al-Anon offers today.

“Strangely, there are still some members who think that we shouldn’t use *The Forum* at meetings, on the grounds that only Conference Approved Literature (CAL) should be used at meetings. The ‘Policy Digest’ section of the *Service Manual* clearly addresses this issue. It says: ‘*The Forum* can be used, and is encouraged to be used by all members and groups for meetings. *The Forum*, as a concept, is Conference Approved. . .’

“The other reason why *The Forum* plays an essential role in Al-Anon is that the magazine is the World Service Office’s primary pipeline to Al-Anon members who are highly engaged in all aspects of the program, including service.

“It’s worth noting that *The Forum* is a self-supporting project. The subscription cost covers printing and mailing, but *Forum* sales do not generate revenues that support the WSO’s General Fund. *The Forum*’s only purpose is to unite all Al-Anon members and all Al-Anon groups in ‘Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service.’

“In sum, increasing *Forum* readership can strengthen the personal recovery program of every Al-Anon member. *The Forum* is the most important source of *current and contemporary* recovery stories across the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

“Furthermore, increasing *Forum* readership can also strengthen Al-Anon because of the essential role the magazine plays in supporting Al-Anon service and Twelfth Step work. Increasing *Forum* readership is a path that supports increased participation in Al-Anon service.

“It’s important for us to take *The Forum* out of our pockets, and make it part of our Al-Anon meetings, at least once every month. Our approach is based on Tradition Eleven: attraction, not promotion. The magazine won’t attract increased participation without greater visibility across Al-Anon.”

TREATMENT FACILITIES OUTREACH PROJECT

Building relationships with professionals at treatment facilities is a vital public outreach activity. Our cooperation with these professionals helps bring our message of hope to the families or friends of alcoholics. We can make Al-Anon information available at a facility whether or not services for family members are available.

Project planning is the foundation of effective communications with treatment facility staff. Members are also more likely to volunteer and remain actively involved in an outreach project when it is well-coordinated.

There are four PowerPoint modules included in Treatment Facilities Outreach Project that can be used for presentations to treatment facilities. They explain how Al-Anon members go about building a relationship with treatment facilities. The presentation modules are designed to support, expand, and strengthen project planning skills. They are designed to be shown in numerical order.

The first module helps members to inventory their resources before planning a project at a treatment facility.

The “Resources Guide” is a tool that helps members plan and host a Treatment Facilities Outreach Project workshop. It includes suggestions for enhancing a presentation with audience participation. It also includes background information about the types of treatment facilities staff and services that members may encounter when developing outreach projects and communicating with professionals.

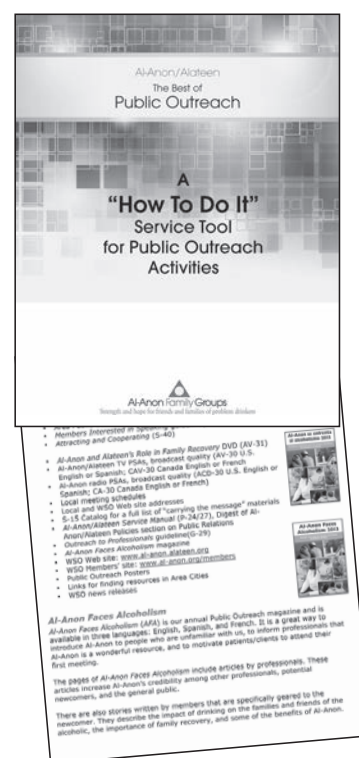
A “Presenter’s Guide” supplements the presenter’s script to the PowerPoint presentation modules. It cites the duties of the presenter and helps the presenter to prepare for a workshop presentation.

Access the modules on the “Public Outreach” section of the Members’ Web site. All of the materials are included in the English, Spanish, and French versions of *The Best of Public Outreach*.

This presentation launches a new beginning for Public Outreach and Institutions activities within an Area. Delegate support and follow-through in making announcements about the project and the Treatment Facilities Outreach Project workshop materials is critical.

The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals closed the presentation saying: “By using the guides and materials, this outreach project can come alive and motivate members. It needs to have ‘legs’ on it, and Delegates can give it ‘legs’ by taking it back to their Areas to use as a tool to help service arms host workshops so the projects can begin.”

Claire R.
Associate Director of
Communications—Professionals



ZONAL MEETINGS (HONDURAS AND GERMANY)

Zonal Meetings

As background, prior to 1999, there had not been a Zonal meeting. When the World Service Office (WSO) moved in 1996, the Latin American countries felt isolated and decided to get together in order to be involved in setting WSO’s translations priorities and have conversations about service. After a 2002 staff visit to Costa Rica with other structures attending, a Central American Meeting was held in 2003 to try to figure out how to do service since the countries were all similar in size and structure. In 2004, the World Service Office (WSO) was invited to go to Africa with the A.A. General Service Office. The WSO had the opportunity to attend a Zonal meeting that had been going for some time and got to see what the WSO role could be.

We learned that we could:

- Serve as a resource—answering questions and, because of our experience, in sharing that information, they would be helping the WSO to understand the differences in the cultures of each country.

Marsha W.
Associate Director of
Member Services—
International

- Communicate through Zonal Meetings without traveling to individual countries.
- Use it as an opportunity for us to share with them what was happening at the WSO and be able to share as one group.

Zonal meetings are not decision-making bodies. The General Service Offices (GSOs) that attend meet to support each other, share information, and support evolving structures. The Delegates representing GSOs usually also serve as their structure's Delegate to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM).

2013 Central American Zonal Meeting

Connie H.
*International Coordination
Committee Chairperson*

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

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) Chairperson and the Associate Director of Member Services—International attended the 2013 Central American Zonal Meeting in Siguatepeque, Honduras, from November 4-6, 2013. The three-day meeting was hosted by Honduras. During the meeting the WSO representatives used the services of a paid simultaneous translator.

Six countries and 19 members participated: Costa Rica, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama. Of these, Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala have national service offices. Nicaragua, Honduras, and Panama have registered an Al-Anon Information Service with the WSO.

The goal of the trip to Honduras was to participate in the Central American Zonal Meeting as a support and resource and strengthen communication in a face-to-face setting. The focus of the event was RECACSA:

R= ramas de servicio (branches of services)

E= estructuras (structures)

C= comunicación (communication)

A= apoyo (support)

C= conceptos (concepts)

S= servicio (service)

A= Al-Anon/Alateen

The WSO answered general questions which included how to get members to want to do service. The purpose and intent of the licensing agreement for a GSO to sell Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature to an evolving service structure were discussed and clarified. It was suggested as a part of her ongoing goals, that the Associate Director of Member Services—International contact every structure that has permission to reprint or translate and print, to ask for a complete up-to-date list of all of the literature that each structure is currently printing. If it is found that a structure does not have the permission for a piece of literature, the WSO would request the structure to complete the necessary forms to ensure that all have the proper documentation on file.

The ICC Chairperson shared some of what she learned on the trip to Honduras. She realized how much she had taken for granted such as the ease of purchasing Al-Anon literature in the United States and how different and difficult it is for members in other countries. She noted, "An order, that might take a week for me to receive, can take many months for those living in Central America to receive through the mail." She also shared that Honduras is a violent country and there are safety issues that members, especially women, have to think about before deciding to attend a meeting, since there are many areas where safety is a huge concern. "There are 48 meetings in the country and members often have to travel a long way to meetings and Sponsors are hard to find."

The ICC Chairperson concluded, "God has a way of letting me learn through diversity. This trip has changed my life. Al-Anon is truly a worldwide fellowship. My desire to change things impacts everyone and I have to remember that. I was treated with respect and loved as a member."

Nicaragua agreed to host the meeting in 2015.

European Zonal Meeting

Jennie McC.
Trustee

Barbara O.
Director of Member Services

The General Service Office in Germany hosted the first Trial Zonal Meeting for European service structures in August 2007. That meeting was called "European Talk." In 2013, the zonal meeting, now called the European Zonal Meeting (EZM), was held in Essen, Germany, from August 23-25, 2013.

The following European structures attended: Belgium/Flemish-speaking, Belgium/French-speaking, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland/French-speaking,

Switzerland/German-speaking, and UK and Eire. The evolving structures attending were: Russia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. All Delegates present had a vote. The WSO's role was primarily of being a resource; we did not vote.

As noted already, zonal meetings are not decision-making bodies. The General Service Offices (GSOs) attending meet to support each other, share information, and support evolving structures. The Delegates representing General Service Offices usually also serve as their structure's Delegate to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). The EZM is evolving and current discussions included reviewing a framework document with the intention of later creating a guideline for the meeting.

Topics on the framework document included:

- The location of the next meeting. Since there is not yet a process in place, discussion focused on which GSO would host; where the meeting would be held; and who would attend. The goal was to find a meeting site that was affordable and convenient to everyone. The biggest factor was cost. Another consideration was the planning work involved in making arrangements for the meeting. Several Delegates agreed to explore the possibility of their GSO hosting the next meeting.
- How communications would take place between meetings. The WSO offered the Delegates an e-Community and training for a Delegate to be the administrator. The EZM Delegates voted to use e-Communities and a Delegate volunteered to serve as administrator until the next meeting. Access to the EZM e-Communities was also discussed. Should it include only GSOs? Only those GSOs that attend the EZM? All structures, including evolving structures? It was decided that all structures, evolving and established, those who had attended and those who had never attended, would be included in the EZM e-Communities. It was affirming to see the inclusivity.

The agenda also included discussion about electronic communication, such as social networking sites. There were workshops on finance and law, and an "Ask-It-Basket." Questions in the "Ask-It-Basket" included ones about groups wanting to sell trinkets and whether the WSO kept records of revisions as about half of the structures have translated *Courage to Change* (B-16) from various English editions.

Questions were also asked about what to do when an alcoholic shares in the group and whether a member of Al-Anon who is also a member of another Twelve Step program other than A.A. is allowed to do service on a Committee or the Board of Trustees.

During breaks and meals, the WSO participated in round-table discussions and listened to the concerns of a Delegate from an evolving structure. We were impressed with the willingness and generosity of the Russian and Finnish Delegates who translated for that Delegate, who was not fluent in English. When the Russian Delegate was asked if the "Adopt a Russian Group" effort in the early '90s helped the Russian groups, the Delegate smiled broadly and declared that it had indeed!

TRIPS (AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND FINLAND)

Australia

In 2012, during the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM), the Delegate from South Africa shared that one of most meaningful things for their structure was having the Executive Director come and spend time with the members. In 2013, Australia wrote inviting the Executive Director to come to Australia to spend some time with their members in order to strengthen and broaden the connection with worldwide Al-Anon within the fellowship. The Australian Board felt strongly enough about the importance of making the connection with worldwide Al-Anon that it took money from its reserve fund to pay for the trip, including the Executive Director's travel within the country. It was their commitment that caused the trip to happen. When the World Service Office's (WSO's) Chairperson of the Board and Executive Director visited in 2002, they were there for just a few days and that was the first time anyone from the WSO had been there since Lois in the 1980s. The vast distances between cities and towns causes members to feel isolated.

Throughout the trip, the connection to the WSO was emphasized. The Executive Director visited Melbourne where the day was spent at a Board meeting where he was given voice and talked with the Board about possibilities: things they could do to empower the Australian fellowship to think about abundance, literature, and public outreach. They were encouraged to print more of their literature

Ric B.
Executive Director

since shipping costs from the U.S. are very high.

The trip continued to Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide, and Perth, where the Executive Director presented workshops for members on the Concepts and conflict resolution utilizing the *Conflict Resolution Using Our Twelve Traditions* (S-72) cards. The Executive Director observed that the list of conflicts is all the same and the spiritual principles work in every country. The trip also included meetings with members of the General Service Office (GSO), attending a public outreach meeting, talking with a group about how to incorporate an Area, discussing the process to change the Legacies, and telling his story at each stop of the trip.

During the trip to Australia and New Zealand, members asked what the process was to change the Legacies, particularly, the Steps. The Executive Director was asked by Conference members to outline the process for them as well.

First, the person or persons seeking the change would have to have a group discussion. The criteria for who was eligible to vote would be set in advance, if the group decided to proceed with the suggested changes. In accordance with Warranty Three, members wouldn't want to suggest something that only had majority support, so a determination as to what constitutes substantial unanimity would be required. It wouldn't necessarily need to be three-fourths in favor, but it could be since that is the criteria that the Charter requires for the groups worldwide.

Next, the Group Representative (GR) of the group desiring the change would need to go through the same process with the District and again the criteria regarding voting would need to be set. Here the GRs in the district would also have to decide whether it would be substantial unanimity of the GRs in attendance or of all of the groups in the district, as some groups don't always attend district meetings, if they even have a GR. If the suggested wording were changed at the district level, the GRs making the decision would have to determine again whether the originating group and the other groups in the district were in agreement with the change.

Then, the process would need to be taken to the AWSC or the Area by either the District Representative or the Group Representative, depending on the Area's process for bringing a motion to the floor for discussion. The same questions regarding criteria and process would need to be addressed, if changes were made and passed, in order to determine whether it would need to go back to the groups again before proceeding.

Here the process could proceed in alternate ways:

- The Area Delegate could bring a motion to the floor of the Conference, or
- The Area through the Area Chair or Delegate could send its suggested change to the Policy Committee or Board of Trustees and ask that the item be placed on the Conference agenda.

Again, at the Conference, it isn't one hundred percent certain that the required voting majority would be three-fourths, but usually in other matters of similar importance it has been. Once the Conference decides on substantial unanimity for this question, which could be different than other Conference motions, the discussion and vote would be held. If changes were made, in all likelihood, it would be returned to the Areas for further discussion and acceptance using each Area's voting criteria and then brought back the following year to the Conference.

If passed by substantial unanimity, the Conference would direct the Board to poll all of the groups worldwide. Then three-fourths of all the registered groups worldwide would have to vote in favor of the change. An earlier Policy Committee determined that the Charter intended that it must be three-fourths of all groups worldwide in favor of the change, and not simply three-fourths of those groups that vote or three-fourths of three-fourths of the groups who voted.

If the goal is to change of the gender of the Higher Power to "it" or "Higher Power" or "God" in the Steps, there are other barriers to getting final approval. While this is possible in English, in other languages, all nouns have to have a gender, and adjectives and verb endings have to show agreement with that gender. Many languages only have masculine and feminine gender designations even for items like table, chair, etc.

After reviewing the process, the Australian member responded, "Well, it appears that the pioneers didn't want us to change the Legacies."

New Zealand

Since the Executive Director was going to be in the “vicinity,” New Zealand invited him to visit its structure and paid for that leg of the trip. Workshops on the Concepts gave members the opportunity to talk about applying the Concepts in their personal lives. The Executive Director answered a series of “Ask-It-Basket” questions about the spiritual principle of one vote and in only one meeting, how to attract members to service activities, and literature. New Zealand is a small country with a limited stock of literature due to the cost of printing in the country and high shipping costs from the U.S. It was explained to the members that the early pioneers did not have literature and did just fine. It is meetings that are the source of recovery, not the amount of literature, and that our sole goal in meetings is to offer experience, strength, and hope.

Ric B.
Executive Director

Finland

Finland invited the Executive Director to attend its 60th Anniversary Celebration of Al-Anon in Finland. Finland had invited groups to meet with the Executive Director prior to the event to have discussions and ask questions. On the day of the Celebration, there was a literature exhibit and a reading marathon. The rules were explained and it was announced at the close of the meeting that \$4.00 would be donated to the World Service Office (WSO) for every page that was read. The reading marathon was to celebrate the importance of “Courage to Change” in their lives. About 20 people rotated reading the pages of *Courage to Change* (B-16) in sequence, word for word. They had the book in other languages in case anyone wanted to read in another language. The reading continued all day long. When the marathon ended at the appointed time, they had read 350 pages to the December 15th page. Then they read a proclamation in honor of their 60th anniversary that outlined their history and literature translations. Finland has challenged all structures to organize a reading marathon and donate the proceeds to the WSO in gratitude for the role that Conference Approved Literature plays in supporting Al-Anon unity worldwide!

Ric B.
Executive Director

2015 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE

The 2015 World Service Conference will be held Sunday, April 19 through Thursday, April 23, 2015, at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia. Immediately following the Board of Trustees meeting, Conference members will fly to New York City where they will spend the night, visit Stepping Stones, and fly home to their respective Areas the following afternoon. 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*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES’ BIG QUESTION

The World Service Conference (WSC) provides an opportunity for the Board of Trustees to have a forward-thinking conversation with the Delegates.

“The message of the Al-Anon Family Groups, Al-Anon and Alateen, is one of hope. It is the story of men, women, and children who once felt helpless, lost, and lonely because of another’s alcoholism. Although Al-Anon grew from a need expressed by family members of Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and Alateen offer help and hope to friends and families of alcoholics whether the alcoholic is still drinking or not. While many of our members no longer maintain daily contact with an alcoholic, they seek the mutual support Al-Anon and Alateen groups offer.

“Al-Anon is a unique fellowship that unites members of different backgrounds, races, and walks of life in an inspiring endeavor: helping themselves and others to lead purposeful, useful lives by overcoming the frustration and helplessness caused by close association with an alcoholic. . .

“ . . . Al-Anon will always be what we its members make it.”

Page 7, 2014–2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)

Vicki H.
Trustee

The Trustee shared, “What do you imagine the cofounders would say if they saw us, in 2014, carrying our telephones in our pockets, clutching a computer mouse in our hand, starting our cars with a push of a button, listening to music through the ‘buds’ in our ears, and reading books on a handheld screen? What would they think of social changes, such as the move away from traditional institutions and family structures?”

“The essay on leadership in Concept Nine reminds us that:

‘Vision is...the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future...’

‘... as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence.’

Page 201, 2014–2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)

“History indicates that non-profit organizations disappear if they do not change with the times; they must be relevant or they cease to exist.

“In 1995, Al-Anon’s Long-Range Study Panel created a Five-Year Plan that provided an avenue to take an ongoing fearless inventory of our Structure and work processes. In 1996, the Long-Range Study Panel presented historical data showing a surge in growth based on the treatment field’s explosion in the ’80s and then the plunge when financial cutbacks in the ’90s closed many of those programs. It was also shown, in 1997, that there were over 200 recovery programs from which the public could choose. Had our leadership not been willing to look at our future then, what might have happened to Al-Anon?”

“Our goal for this session is to have a *big* conversation. What questions will face us as service leaders, as we anticipate and ensure Al-Anon’s place in the future?

- How do we open our thinking in preparation for Al-Anon’s 100th year?
- What spiritual principles and core values will guide us?
- What opportunities will the future present us?

“In Concept Nine, we read:

‘A good leader originates plans and policies for the improvement of our fellowship. In new and important matters, he nevertheless consults widely before making decisions. Good leadership knows that a fine plan or idea can come from anyone, anywhere.’

Page 200, 2014–2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)

“Just as past Conference members were asked to participate in discussions of Al-Anon’s future, today we are asking the same of the 2014 World Service Conference! Concept Nine tells us,

‘Of course we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think about it at all. The making of estimates has several aspects. We look at past and present experience to see what we think it means... we ask how this idea ... might work in the near future. Then we ask how it might apply under differing conditions in the longer future.’

Page 202, 2014–2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)

“The focus of our discussion will be taking Al-Anon Family Groups into the future using our spiritual principles as guideposts. By sharing what each of us insists not be overlooked as Al-Anon moves into the future, we can move together without fear that the program we love might get lost in transition. So now, let’s discuss:

How can we as service leaders anticipate the future and Al-Anon’s place in it, ensuring that the necessary resources are available, with our spiritual principles as our guide?”

Board members circulated throughout the general session room with “roving” microphones as members shared their thoughts:

- We are going to have to stress our common goal—singleness of purpose.
- The guidance of our group conscience.
- Presume goodwill—keeping it in the forefront.
- Our Three Legacies are the spiritual principles that will lead us into the future.
- Concern that the principle of anonymity will become a barrier in developing relationships and establishing the ability for people to get together and meet.
- Concept Nine: Good personal leadership. Being honest and open, sharing information in a timely manner, and trusting that the decisions our leaders are making are best for the fellowship as a whole.
- We must use them as guides rather than as barriers.

- Think of the words in the Al-Anon Declaration: We can't be there if we're not willing to live outside the box to be there. Risk is part of life. Making ourselves available to people in as many ways as we can is most important. Let's have them learn about the program in schools and with new technologies.
- Commitment, responsibility, and abundance. If I think small, I'll get small; think big, and get big. We have many resources to tap into, money, making commitments to support Al-Anon, commitment to stay active in Al-Anon and nurture future leaders, and get the necessary resources to carry the program forward. Electing the best people for the job, not necessarily our friends.
- Everyone needs to be a good example of working the Steps. The Steps are an eternal truth.
- Foster basics. We need love and support. The opposite of love is fear. The only way to get over fear is service and support. If I have fear, I can't have courage, I can't be open.
- Concept Four speaks volumes in the way I want to see Al-Anon in the future: growing, inclusive, gentle, and embracing everyone. Include everyone globally—be inviting to everyone. Erase the stereotypical vision of the Al-Anon member. Meetings in places other than in churches, which may imply affiliation.
- I don't know how to get there—it is God's will how we will get there. The key principle is humility. I need to stay connected to you through a spiritual program. Technology is double-sided—people connect differently. How do we help, support, love, and learn spiritual principles?
- We need to maintain our core values, but seek and encourage flexibility where and when we can.
- Our roots become the foundation and must be supported by groups and Areas. How cool when we empower Areas and districts to become wildly successful and healthy. Diversity segments our membership.

What actions can we, as service leaders, take today to ensure Al-Anon's place in the world 15-25 years in the future?

- Embrace technology. Open the door, but keep core values.
- Speak in a language young people can understand in order to reach out to them through literature and technology. Balance this with healing through face-to-face meetings. Good leaders inspire others to be good leaders to ensure our future. Develop healthy meetings and promote healthy patterns.
- Be the best example of a good program—go to healthy meetings, provide strong sponsorship, work the Steps with someone who has already worked them.
- We are all service leaders. To ensure our place in the world, meet at hospitals and make sure the room is near the front door and handicapped-accessible. Make sure groups are fully-supported in order to be fully-engaged in conversation. Make sure not to be rigid in discussions—people bring in new ideas. Let go of the way it was always done. Look at the principles behind why we do what we do.

Thinking 15-25 years in future, how do we ensure necessary resources are available?

- Through attraction, planning, and support.
- Resources are not always money.
- Rooms will be empty, if we're not attracting younger members.
- Workshops on embracing technology—is it a problem or a solution? Virtual meetings.
- Engage all of the membership—identify a plan, gather feedback to establish unity, and invite everyone to embrace the vision and become inspired to support it. If we build it together, we will all come together to make it happen.
- Make public outreach easier. Talk about sponsorship and be willing to sponsor.

What practices or procedures (within the Al-Anon fellowship) may be limiting forward movement and future thinking? What changes need to take place?

- Computers are an asset for staying in touch.
- What if Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. doubled or tripled the fellowship, including doubling or tripling their donations?
- Look at our preconceived ideas of procedures.

- The reason to do service is to help ourselves. Ask ourselves and others what we are doing about reaching out as individuals. Focus on reaching outward, not just on the problems we have now.
- Time it takes to make decisions—have shorter World Service Conferences (WSCs) and virtual meetings throughout the year or a semi-annual virtual meeting.
- Attend meetings via Skype.
- Is this Conference the right model?
- If we limit forward movement, can we elevate procedure?

Big Question—Small Groups

Later during the Conference, members had the opportunity to participate in a small group discussion on one of six topics. The focus of the discussions was taking Al-Anon Family Groups into the future using our spiritual principles as guideposts. By sharing what Conference members insist not be overlooked as Al-Anon moves into the future, we can move forward without fear that the program we love might get lost in transition.

The breakout questions included:

Group 1

How will Al-Anon look in the year 2051, after 100 years of Al-Anon Family Groups?

Al-Anon's 100 year anniversary in the year 2051—what opportunities will the future bring?

1. What opportunities can you see that we need to begin preparing for now?
2. What do you see today that might hinder our growth into the future?
3. What do you see as the “necessary resources” needed for the future of Al-Anon? What can we do to ensure they are in place?

Group 2

Structure of the Al-Anon fellowship in 2051

1. What changes might we see in meetings as experience, strength and hope is shared in 15-25 years from now?
 - A. How will we adapt to meeting changes?
 - B. How will we maintain that “safe haven” for anyone affected by someone else’s drinking?
2. What structure will be needed to ensure the voice of the fellowship is heard in making decisions?
 - A. What entity will provide the day-to-day continuity and unity for the structure?
 - B. How might “guardianship” of the Twelve Traditions work?
 - C. Will we maintain a clearinghouse or have a different kind of “office”?
3. How will our structure continue to practice the principle of self-support?
 - A. Personally, filling service positions
 - B. Financially, providing monetary support



Group 3

Internal Communication

1. Presently trusted servants communicate within the service structure through the links of service by way of meetings, newsletters, etc.
 - A. How might trusted servants communicate in the future?
 - B. What changes need to take place to make that happen?
 - C. What are the possible improvements you foresee?
 - D. What are the difficulties you foresee?
 - E. How can changes in communication methods weaken or strengthen our unity?
2. Apart from the service structure, the fellowship communicates member-to-member in a variety of ways; meetings, conventions, sponsorship, oral and written sharings.
 - A. How might we communicate member-to-member within the fellowship in the future?

- B. What changes need to take place to make that happen?
 - C. What are the possible improvements you foresee?
 - D. What are the possible difficulties you foresee?
 - E. How can changes in communication methods weaken or strengthen our unity?
3. The World Service Office communicates with the service structures and the fellowship all around the world through correspondence, meetings such as International Al-Anon General Services Meetings, Zonal Meetings, World Service Conference, and literature.
- A. How might communication world-wide occur?
 - B. What changes need to take place to make that happen?
 - C. What are the possible improvements you foresee?
 - D. What are the possible difficulties you foresee?
 - E. How can changes in communication methods weaken or strengthen our unit?

Group 4

External Communication: carrying our message of hope in the 21st century

1. Given that we don't know what communication will look like in 2051, what do you see as necessary actions today to prepare ourselves to continue to carry the message? Do you see areas where AFG may need to be cautious (AND less cautious) in its outreach methods?
2. Whose responsibility will it be to carry the Al-Anon message of hope? How will the individual groups carry the Al-Anon message in the year 2051?
3. How can we be prepared as the professional community evolves? How will Al-Anon interact with the professional community in the year 2051? Do you see ways we can ensure that AFG is included in the fast-paced movement of the professional community?
4. How will the Al-Anon message be carried in a virtual world? What do you see that we could be doing today to prepare for this? What will be our message? What do we not want to lose in the message?

Group 5

Effect of Technology on AFG at the group level / LDC & AIS / District & Area

1. How can we utilize technology and ensure that Al-Anon will be available for all members and potential members?
2. How could technology expand or enhance the ways the structure serves the membership?
3. How can the use of technology increase participation (& communication) and while maintaining the idea of an informed group conscience (links of service/ discussion to reach informed group conscience)?
4. What standards would we need to protect "who you see hear, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here" with devices that can record both audio and video easily?

Group 6

Diversity: The global world in 2051

1. Diversity may look different in 2051. In 2051, what are the issues we will be looking at?
2. What changes would we need to make structurally or individually to accommodate those changes?
3. How will a diverse membership affect Al-Anon Family Group meetings? What factors do we need to examine in order to predict and adjust to change? For example, how could we reach those who may be physically challenged? How could we reach those who are unable to read?
4. How can we as service leaders prepare the fellowship for changes caused by diversity? What practices or principles limit us in what diversity may look like in 2051?

The Trustee noted that the Board will look at all of the Conference members' comments from the small group sessions and consider them in its future strategic planning. The Trustee encouraged Delegates to have the discussions in their Areas.

Editor's note: After the Conference, a copy of the feedback was given to each Conference member.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES' USE OF COMPUTERS TASK FORCE

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

In 2011, a Delegate introduced a proposed motion to develop policies that would allow optional usage of computer devices for all World Service Conference members during the general sessions of the Conference. After a discussion including pros and cons, the Conference Co-Chairperson asked the Conference if it would like a Thought or Task Force (to be determined by the Board of Trustees) to consider the implementation of this motion. The Conference unanimously agreed.

In 2012, a Thought Force on the Use of Computers at the World Service Conference was created to brainstorm the pros and cons of computer use at the Conference and to develop a variety of strategies that demonstrate specific ways that laptops could help individual Conference members be successful in doing their jobs (see pages 72-74, *2013 Conference Summary*). With permission of the Chairperson of the Board, the charge was changed to include electronic devices.

After the 2013 Conference discussion (see pages 80-81, *2013 Conference Summary*), the Chairperson of the Board noted that all suggestions and comments would be considered to determine what the next step will be.

At the July 2013 Board of Trustees meeting, after reviewing all of the 2013 Conference suggestions and comments, the Board decided to send out the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions prepared by the 2012 Thought Force and to invite all Delegates to add their comments to the KBDM document in preparation for a full Conference discussion which could result in a motion to move forward in some fashion, if the Conference desired. Delegate comments were added to the document and distributed to Conference members prior to discussion on the Conference floor.

The Board of Trustees asked the Conference to have a conversation about the use of computers and electronic devices at the Conference. The Chairperson of the Board noted that the Board of Trustees was only facilitating the conversation. The Board was not putting anything forward. If a motion were to come before the 2014 Conference to be voted on, Conference members would craft it. Conference members were asked the following questions:

Would we benefit as a Conference if the issue were broken into smaller pieces?

The KBDM was about use of computers generally. Do we want to look at addressing questions around just note-taking?

Would the term “electronic devices” be better than the word “computers”?

During a brief period of discussion, a suggestion was made to break down the broad topic into specific areas. Another suggestion was to look at using electronic devices on a three-year trial basis. There were comments that using only a device to take notes would make the Delegates' lives more manageable. There was a proposal to discuss the topic of being able to find documents on-line (e-Communities).

Questions arose about whether the Internet was an option being discussed, and whether note-taking using an electronic device was optional. A concern was voiced about the hotel's Internet access and computers with Windows 8 which would need power. It was clarified that if a motion was passed, the Conference Leadership Team would discuss the details of implementing the decision, and that, while the Board of Trustees may not be able to provide electrical power next year, there are other options.

Before the session ended, there was consensus to consider electronic devices for note-taking only and to continue the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience on the floor of the Conference.

At a later Conference session, the KBDM process was addressed. The following text in *italics* is what Conference members added from the floor to the KBDM document that Conference members received prior to the discussion.

Question 1: What do we know about our members' or prospective members' wants, needs, or preferences that are relevant to this discussion?

- Electronic devices help with note-taking
- Electronic devices can be an efficient tool for carrying the message back to Areas
- It can enhance productivity; improve time efficiencies
- Can be a distraction of ones using a computer, i.e.: 'clicking' noise; must be mindful of others and demonstrate mutual respect
- Members are at different levels of tech competence and use

- Younger members are attracted when more technology is used.
- Notes could be shared with other Conference members and can facilitate reporting back to their Areas.
- Some find it easier to take notes on an electronic device than to write them on paper, especially those with physical limitations.
- Many Delegates work and most are very busy. Delegates' reports need to be created and presented sometimes within weeks of Conference, for some Delegates this means prior to the release of Conference materials by the WSO staff. Having access to electronic notes assists busy Delegates in the efficient development of comprehensive reports to share information with their Areas.
- In the past some WSC members were opposed to the use of computers at the WSC as they are not comfortable doing their work on Computers.
- *In the past, some Conference members were opposed to the use of computers at the Conference because they were not comfortable doing work on computers.*
- *There would be safety issues related to the various power cords needed to power the devices.*
- *The use of computers would allow for ease of note-taking for non-English-speaking members.*
- *Use of computers does not require Internet use.*
- *There could be logistical issues related to the limited desk/work space.*
- *Personal responsibility for maintaining adequate power.*
- *We are intelligent, responsible people who can figure this out.*

Question 2: What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue?

- The world has embraced technology at a rapid pace; to keep relevant, we need to keep pace
- Not all members use technology
- Using electronic devices should be a choice not a requirement.
- We must be careful not to generalize that “older” members cannot or are not willing to utilize technology.
- The fellowship is seeking ways to beneficially use technology.
- We want Delegates to be as effective as possible in their role as link of service between their Area and the World Service Conference.
- We want to always be there when anyone anywhere reaches out for help – use of a computer at Conference could greatly assist a person with special needs.

Question 3: What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion?

- Currently, computers are not allowed during the Conference
- We have a conservative culture; some resist change
- Conference members have different technology skill levels
- Younger generations grew up using technology thus could make it more appealing to serve
- Possibility of not being able to bring liquids to the Conference tables
- 55 year olds are not ancient and like to/know how to use computers. Younger people today do not know how to write in cursive and it is hard for them to take notes by hand. In schools, they already use computers rather than traditional note-taking.
- Access to electronic devices is becoming more and more common and people are getting used to working with these tools.
- Some people may be less effective with pen and paper, since they are so used to using a keyboard.
- Devices are quieter and smaller than in the past, so less distracting to others.
- In 2009, teachers or their students used computers during instructional time often (40%) or sometimes (29%). The next-generation of AI-Anon members will be used to having electronic devices to take notes, find information, and consolidate their knowledge.
- Members that are not adept with computers can still use paper.
- Some Conference members will be more productive.
- Conference members have various levels of experience with electronics so using computers during WSC will help us be more efficient and present a contemporary image.

- More efficient tool for those that want to use it.
- Reduce frustration for those that are used to working with electronic devices.
- Delegates would not have to be up all night typing our handwritten notes to a laptop, or typing their notes when they get home.
- Typed information may be more accurate than handwritten notes.
- *Current realities may involve security issues. The more devices we have, the more security issues we have.*
- *The World Service Office will find a way to make it happen should the Conference decide to approve the use of electronic devices for note-taking.*
- *Whatever we decide this year does not mean that's the way we will always have to do it.*
- *Most people are used to handling information with technology.*
- *Focus may be impacted through the use of technology.*

Question 4: What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)? This includes consideration of how the Legacies apply.

- Each individual member of the Conference must be given a choice to use an electronic device or not
- Mutual respect must be given to all members of the Conference, including those not using an electronic device
- Unity problems may arise between members with and without an electronic device
- Attention given to presenters may be at risk
- Having computer access during WSC meetings, each Conference member will be practicing TRUST that others won't become distracted by material other than what is relevant to current discussion.
- Members who are not comfortable using electronic devices or members who do not have an electronic device could be discouraged from serving.
- The option to use of electronic devices for note-taking to me is similar to the option to use a gel pen versus a pencil. It is simply a matter of Conference Member choice and preference. Unless it impedes other Conference members' ability to participate it does not conflict with our spiritual principles.

Question 5: What do we wish we knew, but don't?

- If electronic devices are allowed during the Conference, how many members will use them?
- How many members would prefer the status quo?
- How will this decision affect the Conference? Positively or negatively?
- Will more youth be attracted to serve?
- What are the physical security implications for these electronic devices?
- Would use of technology (i.e. Use of personal computer) actually make this meeting better for the majority of attendees?
- Will Areas feel financially pressured to provide electronic devices to Delegates?
- Would the option to use electronic devices at Conference leave members without access to that technology feeling disenfranchised?
- Would the option to use electronic devices at Conference lead Areas to feel obligated to buy equipment for their Delegates?
- Will I be able to participate as fully in the Conference discussions, if I have an electronic device in front of me?
- Would I be that much more effective in capturing information, if I was able to use an electronic device?
- *Would electronic devices that also "record voice" raise a concern?*
- *Do we need to establish boundaries for appropriate use of technology?*
- *If we agree to use electronic devices, the use of such technology would not supersede our Conference Rules and/or our Conference Procedures.*
- *Would the Service Manual and e-Communities be available to download?*
- *Would the use of a computer allow members to have full participation?*

Conference members did not make any additions to two of the KBDM questions: “What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue?” and, “What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)? This includes considerations of how the Legacies apply.”

Following the discussion, the Conference Chairperson asked if the Conference was ready to move forward with a Motion to allow use of electronic devices on the floor of the Conference for the purpose of note-taking on a three-year trial basis. A majority of the Conference members indicated that they were ready for a motion.

A Motion was made, seconded, and carried to authorize the use of electronic devices for note-taking starting at the 2015 World Service Conference on a three-year trial basis. (See Motion #7 on page 90.)

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 on the Conference floor. The two topics receiving the most votes were placed on the agenda.

First Chosen Agenda Item Discussion

Topic: How can we encourage more participation in service in our groups including stepping up to serve as Group Representative and having members sign-up to lead group meetings?

Topic: How can we inspire service in Al-Anon?

Following the reading of the Chosen Agenda Item topics, the Conference members responded:

- I take Steps Ten through Twelve seriously. It is the Ph.D. part of Al-Anon. When I listed the benefits of service work, I found the voice I didn’t know I had.
- I was told to get a home group and a job in Al-Anon. Sponsorship is important and gives a personal touch. It is important to encourage members, let them know what they would be good at, and then help them do it.
- We held a workshop on participation that resulted in an article in our Area newsletter. The topic of the article was being willing to go to any lengths. Some ideas were to be willing to take someone to a convention and be a support system.
- Ask directly. Talk about what the service position entails and describe the benefits of doing service. We want people to be successful and put people in service positions where they can succeed. Let members know they are empowered to do a service position their way. At Assembly, make it fun and stay on time.
- Create a poster board with a list of things members can do in their groups, i.e. greeting people and giving out newcomer packets. When they are comfortable doing it, introduce them to district meetings. Go together; say, “Get in the car and we’ll go see what the district does.” Let them know they don’t have to be special to do jobs if they are willing to do something. They can listen and take notes at Area meetings.
- The way I work the program with people I sponsor is to go from Step One to Tradition One to Concept One and back to Step Two, etc. It leads to the next stage of discussion, which is, how are you going to do service in your group? Encourage them to lead a meeting on service and what it meant to them.
- Service is a component of a successful program in Al-Anon, but service in Al-Anon is unlike anywhere else I have served because of the spiritual aspect—we’re not just looking for someone

to do the work. Service moved my recovery forward and that made my life bigger. I became a “part of.” Service is the place that gave my life authentic depth.

- A District Representative (DR) who didn’t drive said, “You’ll be taking me Saturday morning. Meet me for breakfast, and we’ll have a meeting on the way.” She found someone from my home group to guide me for the day. Try to attract members to service. Buy the booklet, *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78), for someone who is asking about service.
- Service is connected to the group itself. Extend a personal invitation and support that member. Drop the word “work” in service. It is not just commitment, it is personal contact and willingness to be of service.
- Introduce newcomers almost immediately to service in the group. It’s the little things that make newcomers feel like they belong. Ask them to volunteer and include the benefits of service at every opportunity. Service sponsorship is important.
- Keep a binder relevant to a position and pass it on to the next person with your notes. Have phone numbers in it too. We hold an Area Service Event and have Area Officers and Past Delegates wear “Ask Me” stickers. Officers arrive early for the Assembly to greet people. Find someone personally to connect with a newcomer to help them through. This Area Service Event was voted into our policies to continue. We hold weekend long service workshops demonstrating the Area World Service Committee, and do corny stuff for laughs. It is about personal relationships.
- Districts could have potlucks and invite speakers. Spanish districts have monthly get-togethers involving food. We have a committee that calls on meetings that aren’t at district meetings or Assembly. When members ask what service is about, we ask them what we can do to support their growth, program, and service.
- Ask someone to be an Alternate. In the home group, chair a meeting on service and make a list of the group’s service positions and pass it around.
- Talk about Tradition Seven as being an important part of recovery. I held a workshop on conflict resolution and a Hispanic District Coordinator translated. There were questions about the structure and how they could represent the district at Assembly and Area. Seventy-five members attended!
- At the group level, I ask for help greeting people or setting up literature to get newcomers comfortable. Pay attention to the quiet, shy person because that person is listening, learning, and waiting to be asked. I ask a newcomer to help me chair a meeting by reading the opening and closing to help overcome any fears.
- Offer to be a temporary Sponsor. Our Assembly is making flags for seasoned members so that new members know where to go to ask questions.
- Attending meetings is service to the group. A frustration is seeing a home group not represented at the district. I tell members to just go to the meeting and bring back information to the group.
- I took GRs in my district to Assembly. They read the job descriptions and put on “Gratitude Working Clothes.” Coordinators review job descriptions at the end of their term in order to change, leave as is, or amend them.
- We seem to be moving away from service. When I came in, it was: get a home group, a Sponsor, and do service. We need to be representing and embodying what the basics do for us. I let members know that if they work the Steps, they will probably do service along the way.
- Participate in fellowship after meetings. We have busy lives, but it makes a difference. It gives a sense of togetherness that grows out of not being alone and a sense of being a “part of.”

Following the session, a Delegate summarized the discussion:

- Ask—make a direct personal connection and invite people into service.
- Foster—personal connections before and after meetings.
- Work—the Steps, it is a way to help people get to Step Twelve.
- Educate—discuss the various service positions.
- Help—offer to be a Service Sponsor. People don’t have to do it alone.
- Show—enthusiasm by sharing how service can be beneficial.
- Inspire—members into Al-Anon service.

Second Chosen Agenda Item Discussion

Topic: What strategies have been used to address obstacles to success when they arise at the Area level? The three obstacles to success lead to dissension when the principles of our program are not foremost on everyone's mind, not only at the group level, but also at district and Area levels.

Topic: What is the best action to take to preserve personal integrity and that of the program when dealing with a member (who holds elected positions) that is out of control, dominant, disrespectful, micro-managing everything and everyone and disregards the feelings and/or anonymity of other members?

Following the reading of the Chosen Agenda Item topics, the Conference members responded:

- Our most popular workshop is entitled "What aggravates you at a meeting and what can you do about it?" We set up scenarios and have members act out the difficult situation. That gets the problem on the table, gets everyone to laugh, and provides words to help. We have done it three times and the room is full every time.
- Have workshops that explain what our spiritual principles mean. It can give a broad or well-used phrase new meaning when we're talking principles and help with the practical application of the tools.
- People involved in dominance may be unaware of it. Multiple office-holding was a problem that resulted in not allowing others an opportunity to serve. When they were made aware, they stepped away, which left empty positions that needed to be filled. Perhaps we didn't realize what was happening because of the difficulty with people stepping up to fill service positions.
- We did a workshop in the Area on healthy meetings and made the format available to the districts. Try to support and be a resource by scripting possible language to use in dealing with a situation.
- Our Al-Anon Information Service/Literature Distribution Center separated as a service arm because of dominance. To support the rest of the members, the Delegate asked for time on the Assembly agenda to speak. This helped empower members. Eventually members were able to ask the dominate person to step down.
- When we encountered dominance at our Board meeting, we instituted a Tradition study. We were amazed at how it brought fresh air into the meetings.
- A contentious topic was raised in one of our Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings. A member's knitting was creating a distraction during the meeting. The Area Chairperson went around the room and asked people to share what was distracting and irritating to them during the meeting. Then they were asked what they do that could be irritating, such as side conversations. This defused the situation.
- We are doing an inventory to get away from personalities and into the issues of dominance, micro-managing, and disrespect.
- Rotation of service can be a solution to dominance. We can use the conflict resolution tools to talk to each other and reason things out. We encourage members to find their voice.
- Confusion about a voting issue created the appearance of dominance because no one knew how to handle a voting situation. Some thought the AWSC was being dominant. We used Concept Four to be open and willing to listen and Concept Five was the avenue to be heard. Reading Concept Nine has led to an ongoing conversation. We are working on policies and procedures so this conundrum doesn't recur.
- We formed a Thought Force to figure out how to handle an issue of dominance within our Intergroup.
- Groups in a non-functioning district invited the Delegate to talk to the Group Representatives (GRs) and reason things out. A committee was formed that went to the groups in the district. As a result, there is a new District Representative (DR) and a place to have meetings. We have to reach out and not be afraid to have the tough conversations.
- A member has been bullied to the point of physical abuse by another member. The solutions we talked about today had already been tried. I shared that if someone were physically abusive to me, I would call the police. The member didn't have the confidence to deal with it. We talked about alternatives. Sponsorship helped the member find the confidence to get louder which helped.

- Don't go through it alone. Have someone grounded in the principles work with you.

Following the session, a Delegate summarized the discussion:

1. Start with being proactive.
 - Give an Assembly, district, or group workshop.
 - Consider role-playing and offer specific words and phrases linked to spiritual principles.
 - Do Tradition studies whether in your Task or Thought Force, district, or Area meetings.
2. When problems arise:
 - Get all the facts on both sides.
 - Get help from a service friend. Don't do it alone.
 - Talk to the person involved, have compassion, and use conflict resolution tools.
 - Call on the spiritual principles and if that doesn't help, escalate within the structure, and get help from the Area World Service Committee, and have more conversations.
3. If dominance continues:
 - Talk to those impacted and remind them of options.
 - In case of violence, encourage them to find their voice.
 - Encourage service sponsorship.
 - If groups are affected, encourage participation beyond their troubled group or district.

DELEGATE INITIATED PROPOSED MOTION

During the Conference, a Delegate submitted background information, answers to the five questions for the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process to reach an informed group conscience decision, written text framing the discussion, and a proposed motion to the Conference Chairperson. The Conference Chairperson distributed copies of the Delegate's documents to all Conference members in advance of the discussion.

At the appointed time on the agenda, the Delegate framed the motion, "As Area Delegates we come to the World Service Conference with our collective and varied experience, strength and hope. Participation and open communication are essential elements for practicing our Legacies in the largest group conscience of Al-Anon Family Groups. To facilitate these elements, the ability for Delegates to bring topics to the floor is essential. However, many, if not most Conference members do not have the experience, confidence, resources, time, or support necessary to develop a motion that entails complicated requirements before it will be accepted for WSC consideration. In addition, individual members often talk privately to others, but their insight is never known to the WSC as a whole. Delegate Initiated Motion Sponsorship may encourage members to put forth their ideas and concerns publicly, making transparency and equality a more realized reality of Conference.

"Our Concepts encourage us to discuss and share our ideas and concerns. Having a clearly defined procedure provides Delegates with the framework and resources necessary to function equally and responsibly in the WSC decision-making processes. Participation also responds to our spiritual needs. Concept Four states: 'All of us deeply desire to belong. The Al-Anon ideal of a working partnership could never regard any member as second class. This is perhaps the main reason we have struggled to achieve participation at every level. The Right of Participation encourages us who serve Al-Anon to accept the necessary disciplines that our various tasks require. It assures us that we are truly the 'trusted servants' described in Al-Anon's Tradition Two.' (2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, page 190).

"This Delegate Initiated Motion Sponsorship procedure would ensure that the voices and concerns of the Delegates can be communicated equally and sufficiently to the entire WSC."

The Delegate's answers to the five KBDM questions:

Question 1: What do we know about our members' or prospective members' wants, needs, or preferences that are relevant to this discussion?

- Members want to express the concerns of their Area.
- Members want to express their concerns as trusted servants based on the right of decision pursuant to any and all information garnered from their experiences in service.
- Members are worthy of equal opportunity and support to be able to put forth the ideas and concerns of their Areas.

- Members and prospective members want to belong, to be recognized, to be loved unconditionally, to be respected and to be appreciated.

Question 2: What do we know about the capacity and strategic position of the organization relative to this issue? (“organization” shall be considered to be the WSC.)

- The WSC has the ability to make additions, deletions or changes to any Conference procedures.
- No one segment of the WSC has the authority over the Conference to change Conference procedures.
- As trusted servants, Conference members have the ability and are in a position to consider, without prejudice, all proposals that may make the Conference more reflective of our Legacies.

Question 3: What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics that are relevant to this discussion?

- It is difficult to bring issues to the floor of the Conference as the need may arise without going through the KBDM process, thereby minimizing the flow of open interchange among Delegates.
- Thought and Task Forces present “complete packages” to the WSC, giving the sense that any further discussion may be redundant or out-of-line.
- Thought and Task Forces have become the accepted avenue for channeling unexpected, spontaneous and spiritually inspired motions which allows them to languish for an unspecified period of time without benefit of the motion initiator’s input.
- Thought and Task Forces often present “packages” that seem to project corporate control rather than reflect the full Conference and fellowship considered requests.
- There is significant talk about how “scripted” the Conference is and that leaves no room for honest interaction between the Delegates and the WSO. The Delegates are led to agree with the thoughts coming from the WSO.

Question 4: What are the ethical implications of our choices (pros and cons)? This includes consideration of how the Legacies apply.

Pros:

- All elected Conference members will be afforded a fairer and more equitable opportunity to be heard.
- A clear voicing procedure will allow for members to respond to their “H.P. Moments” at Conference by sharing with all WSC members.
- The motion initiator will benefit from the lessons learned on framing and developing a motion that provides them with the experience and expertise to pass on to others within their Area.
- The ability to enable an informed group conscience involves the respectful use of knowledge, skills, experience and insights as they are expressed in the safety of the Conference. The WSC, through the Delegate Initiated Motion Sponsorship Procedure, will have a forum that demonstrates that the voice of a Delegate is respected and supported. This is a reflection of the belief that a Delegate’s thoughts have value, and that belief is an important and personal demonstration of recovery.

Cons:

- Delegate Initiated Motions may create an agenda time challenge for the Conference Leadership Team.
- The selected Trustee and WSO staff person will have additional responsibilities in conjunction with their already assigned WSC tasks.

Question 5: What do we wish we knew, but don’t?

- Will Delegates use this procedure?
- Will the complete framing of this motion be made available to all Conference Members?

The Delegate’s background information included:

- Often members are qualified to make a motion but they do not have the confidence to bring it or put it on the Conference floor.
- Most members are not experienced in making a KBDM-formatted motion and are unfamiliar with a process for presenting a motion that is not a part of the Conference Leadership Team’s agenda.

- Individual concerns may be expressed by members to the WSO staff or volunteers, but this first-hand information is not known to all of the WSC members.
- Since there is a continuous rotation of Delegates, a reporting back to the Conference will allow for open communication of all proposed motions—including Delegate Initiated Motions. This will ensure that thoughts and concerns are not lost or overlooked.

The Delegate's proposed motion:

To amend the Conference Procedure Booklet to create Delegate Initiated Motion Sponsorship for World Service Conference Delegates that will enable, support, and encourage the development of motions that represent personal and Area concerns based on Delegates' experience, strength and hope.

The Delegate's "DELEGATE INITIATED MOTION SPONSORSHIP PROCEDURE":

Motion Sponsors will be available to any member requesting a motion to be placed on the World Service Conference Agenda prior to or during the Conference proceedings.

When a motion receives Motion Sponsorship it may not be referred to a committee. It will be presented to the WSC for consideration by questions and discussion; and for the motion to pass, it will need a substantial majority vote by ballot.

Who are the members of the Motion Sponsorship group?

- For each motion, two volunteers (members of the Board and/or Executive Committee, excluding the Executive Director,) and one WSO Associate Director appointed by the Chair of the Conference Leadership Team.
- The Chair may reassess the selection if it becomes evident that special needs arise.

Motion Sponsors' Duties

- Provide support and comfort to the motion provider.
- Assist in the development of the motion's language.
- Supply and access information resources that will support the motion.
- Assist in the development of the five questions required to be answered for motion presentation.
- Acquire video and audio equipment for the motion's presentation.
- Rehearse the motion provider to ensure he/she is prepared for the presentation.
- Negotiate with the Chairman or leader for the time required to present, discuss and vote on the motion.
- Introduce the motion's author and provide a one-minute expression of support.

Place and Time of Motion Sponsor Selection

Based on the Delegate Initiated Motion Sponsor selection criteria listed below:

- When a Delegate requests Motion Sponsorship, the Conference Leadership Team will determine the two most qualified Trustees and WSO Associate Directors to become the Motion Sponsors.

OR

- Sponsors may be appointed by the Conference Leadership Team prior to the WSC, subject to alteration if the Conference Leadership Team decides at the Conference that the appointees are not qualified on the subject matter, ie., technology issues, and a better qualified Motion Sponsor should be acquired.

Criteria for Motion Sponsor Selection

- Will agree to support an idea in the affirmative with which they might not personally agree.
- Will articulate in public a favorable argument supporting the motion.

Motion Eligibility

- Only one motion can be sponsored per Delegate per Conference.
- The maximum Delegate Initiated Sponsored Motions that will be addressed at each WSC shall be two.
- When a Delegate Initiated Motion reflects a submitted Conference Agenda Item and Motion Sponsorship is requested of the Conference Leadership Team, the motion and request for sponsorship must be submitted by the first day of the WSC.
- A Delegate Initiated Motion that has not been submitted as a Chosen Agenda Item (CAI) must request Motion Sponsorship no later than midnight of the third day of the WSC.

- Should there be more than two Motion Sponsorship requests by the third day of the Conference, CAI submitted items will take precedence and all other requests will be considered by the earliest date and time of submission during the first three days of the convening Conference.

Delegate Initiated Motion Presentation and Subsequent Action

- Delegate Initiated Motion presentation made to WSC.
- Discussions ensue.
- Amendments made and dealt with, if appropriate.
- WSC agrees that information provided is satisfactory for a vote to be taken.
- Vote is taken.
- Passage by substantial majority (two-thirds vote).

OR

- Delegate Initiated Motion presentation made to WSC.
- Discussions ensue.
- Amendments made and dealt with, if appropriate.
- WSC agrees that information presented is insufficient for a vote to be taken.
- If the motion is referred to a committee for further work, the originator of the motion may choose to be a member of that committee.

Report Back

- The Conference Leadership Team shall report back to the WSC all proposed Delegate Initiated Motions that they received which did not meet the aforementioned Motion Eligibility requirements.
- The Conference Leadership Team may create a committee to further consider any Delegate Initiated Motions mentioned in the report back. The author of an ineligible motion shall be a member of that committee if he/she chooses.

When the floor was opened for discussion, Conference members added the following points to the KBDM questions.

Question #1:

- Delegates need a Trustee or Executive Committee member when developing motions from Task or Thought Force presentations at the World Service Conference (WSC) when they believe a motion might be appropriate.
- Members want to follow the procedure and members want to know what the procedure is.
- Members believe that not every issue needs to take up to four years.
- Conference members want to ensure that the Delegates have opportunities equal to those of the Trustees when adding topics to the agenda of the WSC.

Question #3:

- Time constraints affect the way the WSC can discuss issues.
- KBDM insures issues are fully explored to reach an informed group conscience.

Question #4:

- As a Trustee, I couldn't ethically support something with which I don't agree.

Question #5:

- Will the process for evolving motions from Delegates under the changed procedures naturally evolve under the assumption to presume goodwill and respect each other, rather than needing to put something in a different place?
- Will frivolous and/or repeat motions "clog" the system?
- How many motions will come to the floor and how long will it take for discussion of each motion?
- Will having a Motion Sponsor prevent frivolous motions?
- I wish I knew how many people were dissatisfied with the Conference procedure as it now stands.

Following the discussion, the Conference Chairperson asked for a consensus to move forward with the proposed motion. There was not a consensus to move forward with a motion.

FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Penny R.
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach
Director of Business Services
Non-member

For the past several years, the Finance Committee has developed a presentation that the World Service Conference (WSC) members could take back to their Areas to increase members' knowledge and understanding of Al-Anon money matters.

This year the focus was on the distribution of group funds. The WSO Group Services Department often receives inquiries from members on how to distribute group funds. Some groups have reserve funds, but are unsure of how much they should have in the reserve and are unsure about when they can tap into the reserve fund. Some groups never seem to have the funds to send their Group Representative (GR) to Area Assemblies. And just 61 percent of the Al-Anon groups in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico send contributions to the WSO.

In a breakout session, Conference members explored creating a group budget for an Al-Anon group and discussed the criteria to consider in establishing a reserve fund. Conference members were divided into three groups and each group created a model group budget in the same way that the Finance Committee creates the Budget and Reserve Fund at the WSO following a sample budget of the hypothetical "Al-Anapolis Al-Anon Family Group."

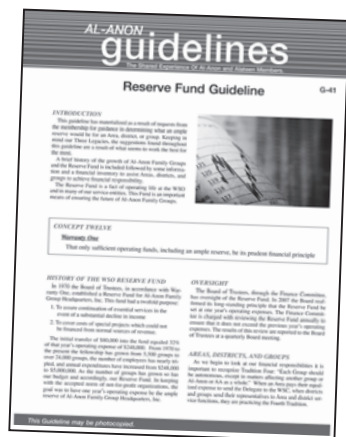
In a general session following the small group breakouts, the Treasurer asked Conference members what they learned from the exercise.

The floor was opened for comments:

- This is one of the great hands-on pieces I can take back. Money is always a good conversation. The idea can be out there for groups. Some districts have amazing bankrolls. Perhaps this will give them ideas.
- Great, practical way to look at group finances. If this is what groups needs are for the year, this is what my contribution averages out to be. The *Reserve Fund Guideline* (G-41) answers questions I've been asked.
- My groups have never looked at what to give back to world service. Never considered a particular amount and put a budget together.
- Great Assembly topic. There are a lot of new Group Representatives (GRs) and District Representatives (DRs) that don't understand that money doesn't have to be hoarded.
- Good tool for a workshop to do a budget at the district and group levels. A lot of education needs to be done. Many don't know what it costs to support a group through the WSO.
- One district in the Area was poor. They held no fundraisers or events to support themselves. Someone introduced the idea of events and now that district is rolling in money but they hoard it. I would like to see this conversation continue with more about our spiritual principles.
- Last year, I went back to our Assembly and let them know of the deficit and that there was something we could do to help. I challenged the Assembly that if there were 100 percent participation, I would match 50 percent. They gave over \$400. I told them if any group participated 100 percent, the WSO would send a certificate, which some groups did receive. It's great to see my Area paying it forward.
- I think this is great for groups, but also to get district and Area Finance Committees together and ask for their help to get this going. It would give the Finance Committee more to do than a budget and the Treasurer more to do than writing checks.
- When the Area Treasurer wrote how much each group gave, I included in my report what each group receives from WSO.
- Can I access last year's presentation to review on my own?

The presentation is on e-Communities in the archived documents for the 2013 WSC presentations and in the 2013 WSC Summary.

- "According to our Seventh Tradition, Al-Anon/Alateen groups ought to be self-supporting through our own voluntary contributions. We are encouraged to contribute in gratitude for what Al-Anon/Alateen has given us. The amount is not important; what is important is that we give whatever we can" (*Service Manual*, page 21). I think about this when I drop money in the basket, how grateful I am that our group keeps the Emergency Room at the hospital where we meet stocked with pamphlets. I am grateful for abundance when our groups support it.
- We deal with the old poverty-consciousness that many Al-Anon members have. Now we have more tools. Poverty-thinking doesn't help in our growth and spirituality. This makes things simple, logical, and not rocket science.



- I was inspired by last year's conversations about what it costs to support our groups. I wrote an essay about it saying this is what we get for what we give in contributions. I was invited to do a workshop on spirituality and abundance. This year's presentation will make it more concrete for people and help them think at the group level what they are contributing to when they give to their Area and the World Service Office.
- The Quarterly Appeal letter discusses the principle of abundance. Where in the *Service Manual* does it say abundance? Where does the principle come from?

Spiritual principles don't always fit in boxes, but the spiritual principle of abundance is in everything we do in Al-Anon. I came here with a sense of lack, of not being enough, or having enough, and unable to do or see things a different way. So, I lived in a spiritual principle of lack because it guided everything I did. I learned that I could only change me. A Sponsor said that God already thinks you're okay. What I found over the years is that we can learn to think abundantly when we realize the idea of abundance is based on gratitude. The idea that if I could only have tomorrow what I gave thanks for today, what would I have? That's what the spiritual principle of abundance is about—celebrating what we have, not what we don't have. The idea of offering a certificate was not money, it was participation. The Finance Committee didn't care if every member only put in a penny. The idea was if everyone participates, we all express our gratitude and ownership of the fellowship. When we start to talk to members about abundance, we tie giving to gratitude. What is different for us today as opposed to what we had when we came, we open the door to a fuller, more abundant life than what we thought possible. We have to voice the principle that there is enough—we have just to express the need. The spiritual principle of abundance happens. The workshop is not to say "give us more money," but to have a conversation about what we want our groups to be able to do.

- I bought the *Service Manual* for a newcomer in my home group, and showed her the paragraph change on "Passing the Basket" (page 21). We do not need to be telling newcomers they don't have to give. My Area is talking about money in the way of abundance. They talk about giving to the four service structures all the time. In mailings, the Area encloses slips with addresses of where to send to the four service entities.

POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Dual Members

The Policy Committee Chairperson framed the discussion by stating, "In 1966, the world offices of both Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon Family Groups began working together to form guidelines that would clarify the way that the two fellowships should operate as separate entities. In 1967, the Conference Advisory Actions of Alcoholics Anonymous approved the guideline entitled "Relationship Between A.A. and Al-Anon." Since that time, the topic of dual members has been discussed again and again by both the Policy Committee and the World Service Conference. The two largest group consciences have continued to affirm the policy of organization separation when it comes to service.

A Thought Force, "Members in Al-Anon Service While Maintaining Our Policies," was formed. Based on the discussions of this Thought Force, a request was made to the Policy Committee to clarify the policy based on spiritual principles. Please note: *a request to revise the Policy was not and has not been made.* The Policy Committee discussed this request at the open Policy Committee meeting in April 2011 and again in July 2011. The Committee agreed to clarify the spiritual principles that underlie this Policy and then determine if the text in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" needed revision. Based on the discussion of the spiritual principles, the Policy Committee concurred that clarifying the text with the spiritual principles would assist the fellowship in understanding and applying the Policy. This ongoing conversation in the Policy Committee meeting has been reported in the Policy Update in the Chairperson of the Board letters since 2011 and the Annual Report printed in the *World Service Conference Summary* since 2012.

"I will now respond to feedback submitted by Delegates and members from 18 Areas. I will review the Policy Committee's rationale behind the proposed wording since many of the concerns expressed were previously discussed in Policy Committee meetings. However, before I do, I want to emphasize that the request submitted in 2011 to the Policy Committee was on clarifying the Policy with the spiritual principles. It was *not* to eliminate the "dual member" policy. If the World Service Conference

Paula B.
Chairperson, Trustee

Harriet T.
Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Barbara O.
Secretary, Director of Member Services

would like to have that discussion, please follow the process in the Conference Procedures Booklet.

“You see that the proposed title of this policy has changed and the term ‘dual member’ is eliminated. During Policy Committee discussion, it was deemed that the label ‘dual member’ is inappropriate for two reasons: it breaks one’s anonymity, and it implies that there are two levels of members. Revealing one’s membership in other organizations is not appropriate during an Al-Anon meeting. In fact, many groups specifically ask members of other anonymous fellowships to remain anonymous.

“While there are certain positions that explicitly cannot be held by a member of Al-Anon who is also a member of A.A.—Group and District Representative, World Service Delegate, and members of the Board of Trustees—the Policy Committee was mindful of Area autonomy in district and Area positions. Therefore, the proposed Policy text was written in a manner that clarified that a member of Al-Anon who is also a member of A.A. does not vote in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole. It is hoped that the Area utilizes this principle when determining whether a service position can be held by a member of Al-Anon who is also a member of A.A. The Policy Committee concluded it was more important to provide principles than attempt to address every foreseeable service position in order to establish specific boundaries or limitations of voting.

“There were questions regarding why Newsletter Editor and Area Coordinator were eliminated from the list of positions. The Policy Committee discussed that Areas vary in whether these positions are voting positions. In Areas that allow Coordinators and Newsletter Editors to vote at the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meeting, an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. would not be eligible for those positions. This is why Area autonomy determines these positions.

“Since there have been concerns that the misinterpretation of the current policy limited a member of Al-Anon who is also a member of A.A. from any service above the group level, the Policy Committee wanted to clarify that there are some service positions in which these members may participate. The Committee reiterated that a member of Al-Anon who is also a member of A.A. may be an Alateen Group Sponsor. The Committee wanted to clarify that there may be Board of Trustees or World Service Office (WSO) projects where the insight and expertise of an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. would be of benefit. The feedback provided from these members would not affect another group or Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole. Please note: there are no projects or potential projects at this time.

“The Policy Committee discussed the issue of ‘former’ members of A.A. While membership in either fellowship is a matter of personal decision, it is hoped that Tradition Ten is considered. If an Al-Anon member, who is no longer a member of A.A., seeks or is holding an Al-Anon service position that votes in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole and it is causing controversy in the Area or district, it may be better for Al-Anon as a whole for that member to withdraw his/her name or step down from that position to restore unity.

“There was a concern regarding the proposed text being in conflict with the text in the “World Service Handbook” on page 163 which reads, ‘All Al-Anon/Alateen members, except those who are also members of A.A., are eligible to serve as an Area Coordinator.’ Please note that the ‘Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies’ drives the ‘World Service Handbook.’ If this text is approved, the ‘Handbook’ would be revised.

“There were many comments about the deadline for response to the proposed text. This is similar to last year. The January Policy Committee meeting is the last opportunity to present proposed text and distribute to the World Service Delegates in time for the upcoming World Service Conference. However, there is no expectation that the proposed text has to be approved at this Conference if members are not ready to decide.

“The Policy Committee reviewed the suggestions and comments received by the deadline. Some of these have been incorporated into the revised text which you received before the Conference convened. The Committee wants to thank you for the feedback from you and the members of your Area on the proposed text.

“Let’s acknowledge that there are personal preferences and many ways to state the Policy—all dependent on personal writing style. Let’s not be distracted by that. It may be easier to change a word or term rather than a whole sentence or paragraph as a change to an entire sentence can affect the flow and ease of reading. As with all Policy text, ‘style and edit’ will review the final document to ensure consistency with the WSO Style Sheet. The Conference Chairperson will ask for agreement after each paragraph.”

The Conference Chairperson asked that Conference members consider the following in reviewing the proposed amended text.

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

During the discussion, there were questions, comments, and suggestions focused on clarification of the proposed amended text. Some of the questions concerned the appearance of a conflict of interest, AFG, Inc. (the organization) and AFG (the fellowship), Area autonomy, Al-Anon's primary purpose, ways members of both fellowships can contribute, and carrying the message. Comments for clarification and in support of the proposed changes were offered.

Questions

- Why was the word “appearance” added to “...this separation helps to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest?”

“Appearance” is a more inclusive word. It is a broader word covering a whole range of anything. Appearance would create disunity in fellowship. For the unity of the fellowship, even the appearance creates the possibility of there being a conflict of interest.

- Why is “appearance” the reason for the conflict of interest? When on the Board of Trustees, a member simply would not vote on the issue.

When talking about an issue on the Board, we are talking about AFG, Inc., the organization and legal entity. In this discussion, we are talking about the fellowship. We are talking about the difference between the spiritual principles of the fellowship and the legal entity of the Board of Trustees. The fellowship doesn't comply with the law, but the Board of Trustees is a legal entity that has to have a conflict of interest policy to comply with the law. This is not a conflict of interest policy, rather, it explains the purpose of the Policy from the beginning.

- Why could a member of A.A. just not vote on that issue?

The Policy does not place a member of Al-Anon who is also a member A.A. in a position of choosing because the Policy affects Al-Anon as a whole.

- Where in current Policy does it say that a member of Al-Anon who is also a member A.A. cannot vote?

If I am a part of something and I am being asked not to do something because of a spiritual principle, I have to decide if I think I'm better than Al-Anon as a whole. For example, the World Service Office (WSO) staff is not allowed to serve in any other function other than as WSO staff. The staff members can't hold a position outside of the group. It is the same with an Al-Anon Information Service staff person. We have policies to prevent the appearance of a conflict of interest and that has been true from the beginning.

- The proposed text is talking about the two service structures. Why did it jump to “members” in the next sentence? Does it need a transition word?

Since members make up the service structure, we can't have one without the other. The word “according” is the transition between members and the service structure.

- Why is it that someone in Al-Anon a long time who then realizes the need for A.A. cannot have the unique perspective of family members and friends of alcoholics?

They can, but we keep the service structures separate so as not to contradict the service structure of A.A. When it comes to affecting matters in Al-Anon and A.A. as a whole, we can't put that in conflict with our primary focus. According to Tradition Six, there can be no joining or uniting. The origin is found in a talk Lois made at a Conference where she said that A.A.s could dominate as they did in the home.

- Are paragraphs two and three of the proposed text changes in conflict? How can someone hold office beyond the group level and not encounter conflict of voting on something that affects another group or Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole?

A couple of examples are Convention Chairperson and Area Secretary. I don't know the types of things your AWSC votes on, so I can't respond. It is a matter of Area autonomy.

- Where did the Policy or idea come from?

The origin of the Policy was that Bill W. was concerned that having A.A. members in two fellowships could bring A.A. into controversy and having A.A. members voting on positions that might put Al-Anon in opposition to A.A.'s policy could leave or give the appearance of conflict in A.A. and he asked that a member of Al-Anon who is also a member A.A. not be allowed to vote in the Al-Anon structure in ways that could create conflict. In our service positions, we don't

vote only on policy matters so a member of Al-Anon who is also a member A.A. would have to identify himself/herself as such, thus breaking his/her anonymity.

- How would the Board of Trustees invite a member of both fellowships to contribute?

The same as any member could be invited: through Group e-News, newsletters, or a message to Delegates to communicate to the Area.

Some examples of how members of both fellowships could and have contributed:

- *Our outreach pamphlet for people of color.*
- *A military member contributed in a Public Outreach project to the military.*
- *All members can contribute sharings for the new daily reader.*

- Should positions for members of both fellowships be spelled out more clearly in the Service Manual?

We often go to black-and-white thinking when we do not have enough information. The Policy is not supposed to say “you shall or shall not.” The Policy expresses spiritual principles of talk to each other, reason things out. The language intentionally is supposed to give the broadest ideas and choices of things to do; to give a range of what an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. could do. Policy is supposed to help us to get out of the box and open our minds to think of ways an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. can participate within the Policy. We have to talk about it and keep talking about it. We can craft opportunities for an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. to participate above the group level.

- I appreciate the references to Alateen (“Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,” page 88) and I see service as an Alateen Group Sponsor as inclusive.

Task Force members indicated that they were trying to mention things an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. could do without making a list of specifics. The Task Force members pointed out that sometimes things are repeated throughout the “Policy Digest” because members sometimes only go to one section for an answer, which is the reason the Task Force wanted to refer an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. to the Alateen Policy. The most important sentence in the paragraph is the first one. The intent is not to stop an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. from doing service, but to open the door without taking away Area autonomy.

- Clarifying positions a member of Al-Anon and A.A. can do, is expanding the positions that can be held above the group level. This seems like a change in policy.

We are discussing clarification. We are honoring Area autonomy. In Areas where Coordinators do not vote at AWSC meetings, Coordinators could be Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A.

- This paragraph talks about the “many” ways members of both fellowships can contribute. It is confusing in its specificity in places. Why define it if it is up to the Areas to make those determinations about the unique ways an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. can contribute?

We thought it might be too specific and we tried to find a way to be cognizant of Area autonomy yet help members to understand the broader perspective of that.

- It talks of being invited by the Board of Trustees or the World Service Office (WSO) to participate in projects. It is ambiguous for the average member to figure out what WSO committees are. What was the reason for the verbiage?

Policy drives the Service Manual and “World Service Handbook” (pages 207-208). It is impossible to define projects. In the future, we may need the perspective of a member who is also a member of A.A. Service sponsorship can help the average member to understand.

- Why do we need the paragraph about carrying the message?

Several members of the Policy Committee responded:

The spiritual principle in Step Twelve is carrying the message to others. It is not limited to A.A.s. It is planting the seed.

During our meetings, it was noted that A.A. members might have insight to offer about why more family members affected are not in an Al-Anon meeting. Twelfth Step work is important to all members.

We wanted a positive tone. Service is so important to recovery and open to everyone.

In the spirit of Tradition Twelve and carrying the message, we thought it important to expand on how to apply and think about this Policy.

- After an Area discussion, I spoke with A.A. members who are committed to Al-Anon and attended the Assembly to ask for their thoughts on the Policy. They expressed that the proposed wording change is clear, accurate, gentle, and inclusive, but fundamentally did not resolve the pain of not being full-fledged members. In my Area, we feel that this change is accurate, clear, and we can live with it, as long as it doesn't end the discussion of the Policy itself.

The Task Force was trying to look in terms of how decisions are being made in the Area where they affect the larger body, not only the group itself. They were going outside the group by asking what matters these positions actually vote on. Voting is not just limited to policy matters, they could be voting on other matters. There were numerous conversations on this. The idea was for Conference members to know how important it was and to go back to their Areas and have a conversation. It was seen as an opportunity to stimulate interest in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" in the districts and Assemblies (see 2013 Conference Summary, pages 65-67). We encourage Delegates to discuss the possibilities of what an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. can do. This could open opportunities in service structures. The guiding principle is that it cannot affect another group or Al-Anon as a whole.

- Why is it that at times we change the phrase "helping the friends of problem drinkers" to "alcoholics"?

The intention is to favor language in the Traditions within the fellowship. We use "problem drinkers" in outreach.

- If this motion is passed, when will it be in the *Service Manual*? Will it be an insert?

If passed, the electronic version of the Service Manual will be updated and it will be available for members to download the page and paste it into their Service Manuals.

Conference members comments included:

- I served on a Thought Force and a Task Force that tried to think about strategies to heighten awareness to think about what an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. could do that was not just a list. People think that "beyond the group level" means an Al-Anon member who is also a member of A.A. can't do anything outside the group. Our discussions focused on clarifying the Policy and the spiritual reasons for the Policy based on spiritual principles.
- When an Area tried to apply the wording, the interpretation was that members who are also members of A.A. could hold positions but just not vote on policy. The principle in Traditions Four and Twelve—except in matters affecting another group or Al Anon or AA as a whole—needs to be a service position principle.
- I cannot support the Motion; it does not provide additional clarity.
- I see the difference in the proposed text and current text. These policies have continually progressed. This one is more definitive than the last one. We are about progress, not perfection.
- I have spoken with Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. for a long time. They said they like the amended wording; it is much more spiritual than before.

When the discussion concluded, the Conference Chairperson asked Conference members if they thought the proposed language provided clarity, was accurate, and if they could live with it. There was consensus that Conference members could live with the proposed language.

A Motion to amend the text of the "Dual membership in Al-Anon and A.A." subsection starting on page 82 and ending on page 83 in the "Membership and Group Meetings/Convention" section of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the 2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual was made, seconded, and passed. (See WSC Motion #6, page 90).

Memorial Contributions

At the 2013 World Service Conference (WSC), a Policy conversation began on accepting memorial contributions from a non-member on behalf of his or her deceased family member who belonged to Al-Anon. This conversation came at the request of the 2011 WSC in response to a discussion on identifying information for a guideline on memorial contributions. (See *2013 Conference Summary*, pages 48-51).

The Policy Committee began the discussion in July 2011 in light of Tradition Five and “giving comfort to families of alcoholics.” Once this Tradition was fully explored, the Policy discussion expanded to include a review of all the Legacies and extensive archival research.

At the 2013 World Service Conference (WSC), members shared their opinions on the Memorial Contributions presentation, which included the archival timeline that Delegates were provided on e-Communities in preparation for this discussion. During last year’s discussion, members requested clarification on the definition of “family,” “member,” and whether there would be a limit on the memorial contribution. WSC members also requested safeguards to ensure no undue influence or “ear-marking,” and questioned whether a change to Al-Anon’s Policy would affect A.A. as a whole. At the end of the 2013 discussion, the Conference members requested that the conversation continue.

Following the 2013 World Service Conference, A.A.’s General Service Office (GSO) was consulted on whether a change in Al-Anon’s Policy would adversely affect A.A. in any way. The A.A. GSO stated it would have no impact.

Last year, the Conference requested that the Policy Committee define the term “Al-Anon member” and “family.” A Thought Force did the research in our literature and presented the following definitions to the Conference:

Definition of a “member of Al-Anon”—Who is a member?

In accordance with Tradition Three, anyone claiming to be a member is accepted as such. “Anyone who feels his personal life is or has been deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon/Alateen.” Page 81, *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27)

The second term the Committee was asked to define is “family member.” The Thought Force researched in our literature, as well as on the Internet, to come up with what it felt was not only acceptable to Al-Anon, but also includes changing societal norms:

Definition of “Family”

“Family,” for purposes of Al-Anon, is considered in the broadest sense.

“Family” means any person who plays a significant role in an individual’s life. This may include a person who is or is not legally related to the deceased member.

In the context of memorial contributions, the individual donor defines his/her relationship with the deceased Al-Anon member.

The format of a dialog between two Conference members was used to convey the following points as background for the current discussion.

- In considering a definition, the Thought Force acknowledged that there are many people who we think of as family beyond our family of origin.
- As of today, we do not accept contributions from any non-members, regardless of their relationships to the deceased.
- If people try to donate, even from an inheritance, we do not accept it. Once the money has transferred ownership to a non-member, we cannot accept the donation.
- Last year, the WSO reported receiving inquiries about family non-member contributions three to five times a year, however, the WSO wasn’t paying all that much attention. Some requests came in by e-mail, and some by phone—no one really kept track. This year, after all this discussion, the WSO began paying a bit more attention, so in the past year, there was closer to a dozen such requests to contribute.

In researching other information the Conference had requested, the Policy Committee realized the Conference first needed to decide whether it even wanted to discuss changing the current Policy since the other concerns seemed more like “process” ideas about safeguards and limits on allowable contributions. If the Conference decides to move forward with accepting contributions based on agreed upon definitions, safeguards are already a part of our general financial practice.

For purposes of this discussion, it was assumed that such a contribution would be a one-time event. Before discussion began, Conference members' asked the following questions for clarification:

- Can a contribution from a trust where one person is a member of Al-Anon be accepted?

If a member is a co-owner of a revocable trust, an estate planning tool, and the member contributes funds to the trust, the member can make a gift to Al-Anon from the trust. It must be the member's money.

- Are we using "family" and "friends" interchangeably? Does this discussion include a friend?

According to the definition, it is any person who plays a significant role. A definition of family for Al-Anon purposes is not black-and-white. The Thought Force looked everywhere, and it was through thoughtful deliberation that they came up with the definition.

- What is the spiritual principle behind this Policy?

Part of the Thought Force's charge last year was identifying the principles behind the idea. (See page 48, 2013 Conference Summary)

Conference members agreed that they now had sufficient information to begin the conversation as to whether or not to move forward with the conversation.

Is allowing "one-time family non-member memorial contributions" consistent with the Legacies?

Discussion included the following questions and comments:

- What percentage of the budget is made up of one-time contributions?

Approximately \$3,000 per year. That varies, but it is not a significant amount in my experience.

- Would this allow outside influences on Al-Anon?

We wouldn't allow that.

- This is about contributions to the WSO. Can a group accept in memory of a member?

Members would have to look at the Legacies.

Comments:

- The new definition allows me to feel comfortable, and it would be supportive without affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- I would not want to think that my son could not give a one-time contribution to honor me.
- Tradition Five defines what we are here to do. Our one purpose is to help family members of alcoholics. It implies what is outside. A contribution would be coming from inside a family.
- Considering the Traditions as a whole, it makes sense to move forward with this. Individual Traditions can make it "fuzzy."
- I understand the emotions in allowing a family member to contribute. I also think of our Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. Policy. They can't do this, but they can do that. We can tell family members what they can do, because the small amount of money we get by changing the Policy isn't worth the issues it may allow later.
- Tradition Twelve talks about anonymity. Compassion for an individual family is personal and private. The principles are that Traditions trump private personal stories. We are an organization and need to be careful in moving away from precedent at the moment.
- We already accept outside contributions when we meet in facilities that offer space, and we accept donations at events open to the public.
- The difficulty I have dealing with change is that it forces me to exclude possibilities because something *might* happen. I know that spiritual principles fit together and when I quote this or that piece I am trying to justify a position I am stuck in. Principles are supposed to expand thinking. Principles are broad enough to expand with our understanding and principles don't break because they are expanded.
- Tradition Seven is about groups and defines the WSO as not being a group. Groups think the WSO is a group and they should go with what the WSO does. We can explore other possibilities in how they can express gratitude. I caution prudence.

- I think this is a good definition of family. The conflict for me is in the definition of what is a member. I can think with my head about what Tradition Seven says, but it is different with my heart. I don't know how I would explain to someone else about this. That brings me to unity. I'm glad we're still discussing this.
- At the 2010 Conference, a Thought Force appointed by the Chairperson of the Board looked at ways family members could contribute other than money.

At the end of the session, Conference members were in agreement that they wanted to continue the discussion of whether allowing a one-time family non-member was consistent with the Legacies.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAS)

Patrick Q.
Associate Director of
Communications—Media



Each Delegate received a DVD with all the versions of the PSAs (English, French, and Spanish) 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. Conference members then previewed the two new 60-second PSAs in all three languages. They will also be posted on the Public Outreach Web site.

Following the presentation of the PSAs, the Associate Director of Communications—Media asked, "How many of us consider Step Twelve and public outreach an important part of our roles as trusted servants?" Conference members were asked to remind members to thank stations when they air our PSAs. For stations that are not airing our PSAs, Conference members were asked to remind members to take a copy of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* and to let the stations know what percentage of their audience is affected by someone else's drinking. In addition, those stations could be reminded that they would be performing a valuable service to the community if they aired our PSAs.

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 the past, Delegates served on a Committee for their entire term. For the past several years, Delegates are given the option to serve on a Committee, Task Force, or Thought Force each year.

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.

Sue C., Chairperson
Panel 53
Washington

Thought Force: Create Strategies on the Importance of a Home Group

In 2013, a Thought Force whose charge was to develop strategies to strengthen personal connections developed five strategies that could be used by home groups to help strengthen personal connections between all members of the program. (see pages 70-71 in the *2013 Conference Summary*).

The Chairperson acknowledged that the work the previous Thought Force did provide a lot of background that was helpful to this Thought Force whose charge was to "create strategies that will show the importance of a home group."

The Thought Force used a five-step process:

- Each member committed to research and review existing Al-Anon Family Group (AFG) documents and pieces of literature pertaining to our charge. During that review, we could find

no clear definition of a home group, which we found interesting since the home group is where many, if not most of us, learned the benefits of service and the gratitude and sense of belonging that we gained from service in our fellowship.

- Members continued to review the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience questions, which helped us maintain focus on the charge and ensured that the final recommendations respected what we thought were the needs and preferences of the fellowship.
- Work sessions were conducted using telephone conference calls and an on-line Internet meeting format.
- Ideas presented at the 2013 World Service Conference (WSC) by the Thought Force on Strengthening Personal Connections were considered.
- Final recommendations of strategies that show the importance of a home group were developed. This was achieved through teamwork and many revisions to the final document based on constructive suggestions from the Executive Committee and reasoning it all out.

The Thought Force members shared what they learned during their discussions and review using the KBDM process:

- We know that members want a sense of belonging.
- Many newcomers may not ever hear “home group” mentioned during a meeting.
- We know many of our members suffer from isolation.
- We sense that members may want a clear explanation of how a home group meets these needs.
- We realized that members and prospective members are often unclear on the definition of membership in Al-Anon Family Groups.

The Chairperson noted that after a thorough review of resources, brainstorming using our KBDM document, and a great deal of discussion, the Thought Force came to this initial summary statement:

It appears that the Al-Anon membership would benefit from hearing about, and emphasizing, the importance of a home group. Such an emphasis could help new (and longtime) members feel connected, encourage participation and service, and help people understand the concepts of membership in Al-Anon.

What follows are ideas (strategies) for how to achieve the goal of helping current and new members understand the home group as a concept, helping people feel connected, and to have a sense of belonging.

Thought Force members presented the following strategies:

Strategies for Groups

Use “the importance of a home group” as a meeting topic to encourage members to think about the importance of their home group.

- Groups could have a meeting about the importance of a home group. It is about belonging and feeling a “part of.” If people take ownership in a group, they are more inclined to serve the group. The Group Representative (GR) can provide leadership in making the group more attractive as a home group.
- Beginner’s meetings could include the importance of a home group as part of the meeting discussion.
- Districts could create and present workshops on the importance of being a member of a home group with District Representatives (DRs) offering specific pointers to the GRs on how they could take this issue back to their groups.
- Al-Anon members could participate by volunteering to help with workshops at district and Area levels, and at TEAM or other World Service Office (WSO) events.
- GRs and DRs could encourage members to write articles on the importance of being a member of a home group and submit them to *The Forum*.
- Groups could create a sentence to add to the standard opening, such as “If you don’t have a home group, you are welcome to consider this group your home group.”

Strategies for Districts/Areas

Get creative when seeking strategies to get members thinking about the concept of a “home group.”

- Create a presentation/workshop on home groups for use by districts and Areas.

- Design an outline for a one day or half-day event on service that starts with a home group.
- Sponsor an event on service.
- Communicate and disseminate tools and messages (from districts/Area/WSO) on this topic.
- Encourage members to submit sharings for pamphlets, *The Forum*, and other literature projects on the importance of a home group.

Strategies for the World Service Conference (WSC)/World Service Office (WSO)

Create a working definition of a “home group” that helps all members understand why they would want to participate in the Al-Anon experience of belonging.

- Integrate the definition into WSO material—*The Forum*, new Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and the *Service Manual*. The definition would then come to be used throughout Al-Anon.
- Integrate into WSO events at the national and international levels, as well as at the Area, district, and group levels.
- Initiate new ways to deliver the message and find new opportunities to utilize the definition of “home group.”
- Create a pamphlet focused on the “home group” that explores the benefits of belonging and possibilities of service in a “home group.” Some ideas were gained from a review of the *2002/2003 Service Plan: Starting with Home Groups* (S-39), which is no longer available. However, members of the Thought Force gained some ideas such as, including examples of a group working together to plan projects and host events like outreach, socials (meals together), fundraising, and how to attract the newcomer.
- Emphasize the benefits of serving within the home group by creating specific ideas for local service to make the concept more simple and realistic about how easily something can be done. Does your own home group have a service project? Does your home group think service outside home group is only the responsibility of the district or Area?
- Encourage articles for *The Forum* about the importance of a home group. In researching our literature, we discovered only older articles by members who shared about the benefits of a home group in their personal recovery and no sharings about other roles within a home group such as organizing an event or performing projects independently of other groups, districts, or the Area.

The presentation ended with the Thought Force posing the following questions to the Conference for discussion:

**How do you communicate with others about the importance of having a home group?
Which strategies presented do you believe may not be effective?
Are there any strategies you would add?**

The floor was opened for discussion of these questions. The following comments were made:

- One of the important things is to take pride in a home group and get the word out about how much we learn and rely on each other!
- When I first came to Al-Anon, I was told to get a home group and get a Sponsor in my home group because that is where we see each other.
- I was in Al-Anon six months when I was asked to help start a new group. I didn’t know what to do. My group has meant the world to me. Once a year, I remind the group that we are at the anniversary mark and we have now been in existence 15 years.
- Some members consider more than one group as their home group and they vote at all of them. Could something be added to identify and remind members that they only vote in one group and that is their home group?

Page 52, paragraph four, of the “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” section of the 2014-2017 Service Manual addresses voting in a home group under the heading “Group Business Meetings.”

- When I moved to another city, I made it a point to say while sharing that I was looking for a home group with a GR. Tradition Seven means fully self-supporting, and I need to have a home group.
- I have made it a point to make newcomers feel important as many don’t. I talk about sponsorship and let them know that if they want me to sponsor them, this meeting needs to be

their home group so I know that they are going to meetings. I don't allow members I sponsor to use me as their meeting.

- This discussion has given me guidance for our Area Action Committees, and I will take the topic back to Group Services, *Forum*, and Literature Committees to develop for my Area.
- The main focus is the newcomer to my group. We try to make them feel welcome and to also understand we are there for them. We ask them to give us six tries and talk to us if they feel uncomfortable. Everyone needs a home group—it is where we feel at home.
- We invite members who attend meetings to sign up on our phone list if they are willing to take calls between meetings knowing that newcomers may call. The list is put in the newcomer packet. It invites people to make connections.
- I like the idea of creating a definition of a “home group” and integrating it into WSO events and material. When I walk into my home group—I'm home!
- I had a flashback to the early '80s. When I came into Al-Anon, it was the custom to go around introducing ourselves and naming our home group in the introduction. If members share and name their home group and I like what they have to say, I might go to one of those groups.
- Mention selecting home group in the “Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual*.
- In my home group opening statement, we say that a vital part of our recovery in Al-Anon is in the home group. We make sure the newcomer knows who to talk to.
- On our anniversary, we have a speaker, whose name is pulled from the hat, who reads a history of the group and we have a potluck meal. This creates a feeling of inviting people in.

Following the discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked the Conference whether it wanted the strategies integrated into a presentation. There was consensus to move forward with integrating the strategies into a presentation.

Thought Force: Technology as More Inclusive Rather than Exclusive

Terry K., Chairperson
Panel 52
Florida North

The Thought Force's charge was to create strategies that show how technology used within Al-Anon is inclusive rather than exclusive, in other words, how to ensure that technology is not perceived as isolating, shifting members away from the premise that using technology is exclusive.

Since the beginning, Al-Anon has used proven technology to share information within the fellowship. Our first, and still one of the most important uses of technology, is the telephone. Today, we have Web sites, on-line meetings, and phone meetings that connect people across large areas. We have podcasts and e-Books. Our service arms use e-Communities, teleconferencing, and e-mail. As a fellowship, we want to ensure that all members can be included in service opportunities regardless of their access to technology. As service leaders, we can achieve this by providing resources which enable members to participate through technological means while not necessarily having access to these tools.

Members of the Thought Force presented the following strategies that show how technology can be inclusive for all members.

Provide Resources

- Create a “go to” resource; a technology coordinator or group of Al-Anon members able to suggest solutions in a clear and concise format, or find alternatives that guide members in using technology.
- Demonstrate on-line/Webinar meetings at Assemblies and Area meetings.
- Share technology success stories by using World Service Office (WSO) publications.
- Solicit examples via bulletin boards on e-Communities of how different Areas have been able to include members in learning to use technology.
- Create workshops and/or games to introduce members to technological problems and solutions.
- Create a technical section or blog on Area Web sites to allow members to discuss technology in Al-Anon.

Reach Everyone

- Encourage groups to discuss ways to use members' "smart phones" to receive communication.
- Utilize on-line or telephone conference calls, or other technology to help remote communities to attend service meetings and Area Assemblies.
- Conduct Delegate "live" reports via Webinar or other software between Assemblies, with several host locations for members in each district to view.
- Use Webinar for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) training with different stations throughout the Area for ease of accessibility.

After presenting these strategies to the Conference, the Thought Force presented the following questions for discussion.

Which of these strategies do you like or find viable for possible further action?**What other ideas do you have to share that show how technology used with Al-Anon is inclusive rather than exclusive?****Conference members commented:**

- My Area held Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) training via the Internet so only one person in the group had to know how to hook up. We invited other AMIAS and trained the whole group at once.
- Areas budget for technology. It is suggested not to go out and just buy something cheap.
- When we see a budget for public outreach, we know it is Al-Anon. Technology is not considered valuable because we don't include it in our budget.
- I don't know anything about Webinars.

There are two parts to a Webinar. It provides the ability to do video, seeing people at both ends of the conversation. You can also take a presentation and upload it into Web meeting software and everyone coming into the Webinar can see it as you move through it.

- In thinking about our Area guidelines, they could be uploaded into a Webinar and we could make edits as changes are happening and there could be consensus as we're doing this. The WSO can provide information on how to get into that.

Webinars are a seminar on the Web. Just to clarify, the WSO is using an on-line interactive format for meetings, Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) training, and explaining e-Communities. We are experimenting on a trial basis at the WSO doing work using technology. Committees, Thought Forces, and Task Forces are using it. The WSO's current software license is limited to 25 people at this time. Software for 25 people with unlimited use is not extremely expensive so Areas could look into it. While the Board of Trustees decided to try a particular software, there are others.

- We have a small group of young Al-Anon members who are "techno-savvy" and want to participate at the Area level. They have dragged us into the 21st Century. My first Service Sponsor was an 85-year-old woman who told me, "You will volunteer in the Al-Anon Information Service Office, and then become Group Representative of this group." I made her a promise when I became Delegate that I would not forget the group members who are not "techno-savvy" at their stage of life. So I have moved forward quickly with technology, but also do things the old way so no one gets left behind.
- Encourage Areas to look into what they can do. The idea is talk to each other. One way to get "techies" involved in the Area, and to help them become at ease with the idea of talking to each other, is to ask them to be the answer to someone who says, "I'm not comfortable using technology. Who can help me?"
- My Area purchased translation equipment and we have had great success. At Assembly, Spanish participation has increased; we now have 30-35 attending, and we still do it in English! I would love to have someone to go to and ask, "How can I do this?"
- We have Webinars in our Area and the Web Site Coordinator agreed to work with me so I could work with Coordinators. I was taken through the Area Web site, then the WSO Web site, and now I do e-Communities. Having a demonstration in a small environment was incredible. Lois used to use the typewriter and now we communicate by computer to connect all over the Area.

- Our Assembly voted to allow computers at Assembly. Spanish groups are now interested in becoming part of the Area. When we review the Alateen requirements for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), we used to go to a meeting, now we look at a computer and edit at the same time very successfully.
- We introduced PowerPoint at our Assemblies.
- We are printing QR codes on a flyer so we can access information on our smartphones. We have an Area person doing technology workshops.

Following the discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked the Conference if it wanted to take the strategies and move forward or to use them as they are. It was the group conscience of the Conference members to use the strategies as presented.



Task Force: Compilation of Area Guidelines for Trusted Servants Not Fulfilling Responsibilities

Judith S., Chairperson
Panel 52
Delaware

The Task Force was created based on background information from the 2012 World Service Conference (WSC). At the 2012 WSC, the Thought Force on Members Involved in Service Work Who Are Unable to Effectively Fulfill the Responsibility of the Position presented numerous long-term and short-term strategies (see pages 65-68 of the *2012 Conference Summary*).

After the 2012 discussion, it was apparent that numerous Areas already had some guidelines in place for this situation. Disseminating the information that is already being used by these Areas could help other Areas that have not yet developed their own guidelines to address this issue.

The Task Force's charge was to: identify and compile procedures from Area guidelines that contain a process, or parts of a process, to remove trusted servants who are not fulfilling the responsibilities of their service positions.

The Task Force approached this charge by contacting each Area Delegate to determine which Areas had guidelines, and then compiling them into the document posted on e-Communities.

The following is a summary of the information gathered by the Task Force:

- Proactive processes include job descriptions (which may include reasonable expectations, and an impact statement if the job is not done), the use of résumés, AWSC training at the beginning of each term, Service Sponsors, and clear communication paths for raising concerns.
- Action processes include presume goodwill, identify what constitutes non-fulfillment for removal, include an investigative process to verify complaints, identify the responsible officers to work together, and find positive ways to approach the individual. It is important to avoid gossip at all costs, offer help, and be open to hearing all sides. Warranty Four states "that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy."
- Removal processes include the Area officer's guidelines for how to take action, the appointment of a replacement, the content of the communication with the removed trusted servant, and the record-keeping documentation.

The Task Force members noted that some information was very detailed, while other information was a bit vague. While some Areas did not have this type of guideline, some were interested in having guidelines and offered suggestions of what they would like to see included. Suggestions included asking questions, such as the following, that might help Areas when considering creating a process:

- Who or what makes the determination whether a trusted servant is fulfilling their responsibilities?
- How many members of the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) need to be involved and at what point in the decision and impending action?
- How can we communicate love and acceptance of others and still sustain our service responsibilities to the fellowship?

The compilation of the guidelines is posted on e-Communities for Conference members and is intended to be a working document that can be updated periodically as Areas experience changes. The World Service Office will continue to keep it current. The Associate Director of Member Services—Conference will update changes and post the documents.

The Thought Force asked Conference members the following question:

How might this compilation be of use in your Area?

Conference members commented:

- Is the Current Mailing Address (CMA) a service position? What is *Group e-News*? This information would be good for creating guidelines for the member serving as the Current Mailing Address (CMA).

Group e-News is a monthly, electronic publication sent by the World Service Office (WSO) to the groups.

The CMA is the communication link between a group and the WSO. CMA information is required for registration with the WSO. The WSO is now requesting a CMA e-mail address where Group e-News can be sent. The CMA will take information to the group according to the way the group has decided to receive information. Some groups want Group e-News printed, others want it forwarded by e-mail to members, and others want it on an electronic device.
- In our Area, we have job responsibilities and we discuss how to work with a person to encourage them in the position and to outline the chain of events if there was a need to let them go. Area mentality is that anyone can do a job and the idea of needing skill sets as well as listing the responsibilities is never discussed. We had to educate groups that some positions require certain skills, for example the Web Master.
- Are there any plans to have this information printed as a guideline?

The job of this Task Force was to compile what was already happening in the Areas. To create a guideline is another task. All guidelines submitted will be posted on e-Communities for Conference members.
- Guidelines are a reminder to people to make sure they have the capabilities to do the job. It is not helpful to a person accepting a job if there aren't any guidelines.
- If your Area has guidelines in place, how are they working?
- We need to have proactive processes for job descriptions. We may not universally reference them, but as a basis for discussion to understand what a job entails. Our Area Chairperson held workshops regarding "what hat you might take off" and "what is your next hat." Job descriptions were very helpful for that.
- The more active we are in service, the more we realize guidelines are essential and protect everybody. When expectations are set in advance, it is easier to have a dialogue. Our past and current officers wrote our guidelines. They are reviewed periodically and adjusted.
- We have a conflict resolution tool that can be used for this. Position guidelines are subject to interpretation and revised by trusted servants. We have a turnover meeting, but many disappear at end of their term so there is no support for revising job descriptions or helping the incoming person in the position. We use training modules for different coordinator positions as a way to stimulate enthusiasm. People participate in them before standing.
- We had a situation and our officers met with the person privately, used conflict resolution, and reported back to the AWSC. We are still working with the person. We stopped the gossip, addressed it, and listened to both sides. We told the person that we're here to help each other, to talk to each other, and to reason things out.
- Concept Nine is a good tool. It is not about the guideline but it describes good personal leadership so we can have discussions around it and what it means at every service level. We are moving away from putting up a hand and getting elected. Discussion is important and goes to the "Big Question" (see page 37 for the Big Question session) of where we will be in 15 to 25 years.
- As a result of having patience, trust, support, and not engaging in an invitation to fight, we have had discussions and created guidelines for conflict resolution that gives us a way to work it out. This is followed up with service sponsorship.
- We have no guidelines. We have a gallery walk where each member writes what a position should consist of. We stress that if a person finds he/she can't do the job, it is okay to step down and possibly mentor the next person in the position. We are considering workshops.
- We have position descriptions but they are not popular. They are updated by the outgoing coordinator.
- We have no guidelines for removal. We have job descriptions and training that we call "passing

of the torch” and each coordinator is responsible for training a successor.

- We have old job descriptions without computers. We have revised our guidelines and have a résumé submitted with job descriptions.

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

Task Force: Create Games Using the Information in the *Service Manual*

Patrick B., Chairperson
Panel 52
California North

The Task Force’s charge was to: Create games using the information in the *Service Manual*. The members of the Task Force carried out their charge through a series of conference calls. Those meetings resulted in the creation of four games (see pages 68-70, *2012 Conference Summary*). The Task Force built the games so that all players are required to use their *Service Manuals*. There can be variations within games and the games were designed to be adaptable to different size groups and workshop functions. Members were encouraged to be creative with the games.

Service Manual Quiz

The *Service Manual* Quiz is intended to increase members’ familiarity with the contents of the five sections of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). The game can be played as a workshop activity or during an Assembly, Area World Service Committee (WSC) meeting, Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) meetings, district, or group functions. Questions are asked and the answers include the page number and section in *Service Manual*.

The moderator can either read the list of questions to the participants, or ask another member to distribute the list of questions to the attendees. Participants locate the answers to the questions using the index in the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The game has instructions, including questions (and answers). A PowerPoint overview is available.

SMINGO (Service Manual Bingo)

This game is modeled after the game of BINGO. It can be played by up to 36 members who form teams. The teams answer questions randomly selected by the “caller” and try to get five squares in a row covered on their cards. The game questions are based on the Al-Anon principles found in the *2014-2017 Service Manual*.

The game consists of instructions, multiple versions of the game card, a SMINGO question card, an answer card, and an optional PowerPoint presentation of the principles that can be projected.

As the Group Turns

This game is designed to simulate how the *2014-2017 Service Manual* is used as a resource to resolve group problems. During game play, a question is asked in much the same way that a trusted servant might be asked to provide guidance to members or groups. The players then have a specified amount of time to look up applicable references in the *Service Manual*. The team that finds the most references that are relevant to the questions wins the game. A panel of “Service Sponsors” helps with the scoring. There are scenarios provided with the game materials, but any question, including “Ask-It-Basket” questions may be used as well. The game has a list of instructions, questions and potential responses, and a PowerPoint presentation containing the questions.

Al-Anopoly

This game is modeled after the game of Monopoly. It was designed so that members use their *Service Manuals*. It can be played as a workshop activity during Area/district/group functions. Players move around the simulated board by answering questions. Spaces on the board are color-coded to sections of the *2014-2017 Service Manual*. Players answer questions that correspond with the color of the space where they have moved.

Users can add their own question and answer cards. It can be used in small groups (six to ten members) or in larger groups (100 or more members) and adapted to the amount of time available to play the game. An instruction sheet and PowerPoint presentation are included, so that the moderator can display the questions as they are read to the audience, if projection equipment is available.

Following the introduction of the games, Conference members were invited to play “Al-Anopoly.” There was organized “chaos” on the Conference floor as members formed teams. While the Task Force Chairperson explained the rules, the other members of the Task Force roamed the room organizing the “chaos” and distributing numbered flags for the “spokesperson,” dice for the “roller,” and markers for the “board markers” for each team.

The “board” consisted of colored tape strips on the floor and corresponding sheets of colored paper on the walls along the perimeter of the general session room. The Task Force moderator read a question from a card corresponding to the color of the strip on the floor where the player had landed. Each player’s team then had two minutes to locate the correct answer, including the section and page number, using the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. If a question was not answered correctly or the time limit had expired, the player moved back to the team’s previous space and an opposing team answered the question and moved forward. The first team to reach the finish line was the winner.

At the end of the session, the Chairperson of the Board noted that the Task Force had completed its charge and the games would be available on e-Communities for Delegates to take back to the Areas.

Cathy T., Chairperson
Panel 53
*Wisconsin and the Upper
Peninsula of Michigan*

Task Force: Develop a Script or Workshop to Encourage Discussion about the Difference between Principles and Procedures in Al-Anon

There has been discussion about keeping our principles at the forefront of our conversations and, ultimately, at the core of our decisions during the last few World Service Conferences. Many times the conversation gets caught up in the procedures and how the process needs to be done, and unintentionally the principles get lost. It is important for the fellowship to understand the difference between procedure and principles, and the importance of the difference.

The charge of this Task Force was to develop a script or workshop to encourage discussions at all service levels about the difference between principles and procedures in Al-Anon.

In Al-Anon, we try to be gentle and not criticize. When we see a violation of the Traditions, we may take someone aside after the meeting and talk to them, explaining how our principles guide us. An example would be a member engaged in crosstalk simply being told we don’t do that here. This may cause a person not to return. It is better to understand *why* we don’t promote crosstalk by determining what principle guides this procedure.

At the Task Force’s first meeting during the 2013 WSC, the members began by determining which principles were represented in the Steps. The principles identified were: Honesty, hope, faith, and courage. The Task Force produced a gallery walk guide (workshop) to encourage discussion on the difference between principles and procedures.

The workshop will help members think more about what guides us and will help members identify the principles that guide what we do in our meetings, districts, Areas, and the WSO.

The Task Force came up with the following definitions:

Procedure—a particular course of action or way of doing something; the established way of carrying on business.

Principle—a fundamental truth, law, doctrine, or motivating force upon which others are based.

In Al-Anon, our principles are found in the Three Legacies (Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service). The following are places where procedures may be found:

- “Groups at Work” (P-24) has procedures for conducting a meeting, how to start a group, group business, etc.
- The “World Service Handbook” section of the *Service Manual* was created as procedures to form an Area and elect a Delegate by Al-Anon’s cofounder Lois W.
- While the Twelve Concepts of Service are principles, the descriptive text (in “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service”) contains procedures.
- The Guidelines contain many procedures.
- The “Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter” describes procedures for conduct and composition of the World Service Conference, selection of District Representatives (DRs) and Delegates, etc.

The Task Force found the following examples of procedures that are used in Al-Anon:

- Election of the Delegate—Contained in the “Charter” and the “Handbook” (2014-2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* on page 150).

- Announcement of the Quarterly Appeal—Contained in the “Handbook” (2014-2017 *Service Manual* on page 145).
- Agenda for District Meeting (from G-15).
- *Members Interested in Speaking* (G-1).

The following is what the Task Force found regarding “What principles guide these procedures?” but it is not intended to be an exhaustive list. There may be more.

Principles to elect an Area Delegate:

- Rotation of service.
- Concept Three—“The right of decision makes effective leadership possible.”
- Pick a trustworthy Delegate who can make decisions that are best for Al-Anon as a whole. “Our entire Al-Anon program rests squarely on the principle of mutual trust.” (*Service Manual* on page 187).
- Concept Four—“Participation is the key to harmony.”
- “Participation also responds to our spiritual needs. All of us deeply desire to belong.” (*Service Manual* on page 190).
- Concept Nine—“Good personal leadership at all service levels is a necessity. . . ”
- “Who are the best qualified people we can name?” should be the sole thought. (*Service Manual* on page 199)
- Warranty Three—“That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.”

The election is decided by substantial unanimity. (*Service Manual* on page 276).

Principles that guide the agenda for a business meeting:

- Tradition Four—“Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.”
 “Groups are within their autonomy to determine how to conduct their group business and how to reach a group conscience. Some groups schedule business meetings on a regular basis and others hold them as needed. Business meetings can be held before, after, or during the group meeting.” (*Service Manual* on page 52). We are a democratic organization with no “governing” leaders.
- Tradition Nine—“Our groups, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”
 “While our Ninth Tradition provides that Al-Anon, as such, shall remain unorganized, it does suggest that an orderly structure and logical procedures will make it possible for Al-Anon to carry its message with maximum effectiveness.” (*Service Manual* on page 131)
 We get to govern ourselves—within limits.

Principles that guide the Quarterly Appeal Letter

- Tradition Seven—“Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”
 “In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, Al-Anon is supported by members’ contributions...” and, “The quarterly appeal gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level.” (*Service Manual* on page 95). We can meet our own needs—this applies to the World Service Office (WSO) as well.
- Warranty One—“That only sufficient operating funds, including an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle.”

This Warranty counsels prudence. Each dollar helps families to find Al-Anon (*Service Manual* on page. 217).

Principles that guide Members Interested in Speaking: Plan What to Say [Guideline (G-1)]

- Step Twelve—“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

In other words, if we want to keep it, we have to give it away. “We always protect our members’ anonymity, but the Al-Anon/Alateen *program* is not anonymous.” (*Service Manual* on page 50).

- Tradition Eight—“Al-Anon Twelfth Step work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.”

“... any Al-Anon member who is gainfully employed in an Al-Anon service does not serve as a volunteer in a policy-making position, such as Group Representative (GR), District Representative (DR), Area Assembly Officer or Coordinator, Delegate, or WSO Trustee.” (*Service Manual* on page 101). We speak as individual members of Al-Anon, sharing our own experience, strength, and hope.

- Tradition Eleven—“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.”

“There is no replacement for individual Al-Anon members carrying the spiritual message of recovery within their communities in ways that media cannot.” (*Service Manual* on page 110).

- Tradition Twelve—“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.”

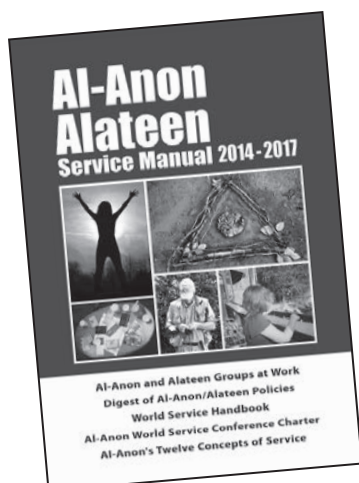
“Anonymity in Al-Anon is a sacred trust, basic to our fellowship and its survival.” (*Service Manual* on page 41) Traditions Eleven and Twelve go together. We are not speaking to gain notoriety, but merely to help families of problem drinkers. We speak only for ourselves, not Al-Anon as a whole.

Al-Anon has many procedures that are followed from the group level through the World Service Conference (WSC). Those procedures help to keep Al-Anon strong and growing. Most of our members follow these procedures and understand why we need to follow them. But what Al-Anon principles govern these procedures? The Al-Anon principles are found in the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, and the Twelve Concepts of Service.

How can we encourage our groups, districts, and Areas to talk about what principles guide our procedures? The idea is to get participants to come up with the principles that guide what we do in our meetings, districts, Areas, and the WSO. We hope this workshop will help our members to think more about what guides us.

Conference members participated in the workshop. With *Service Manuals* in hand, they formed several groups. A list of ideas for a procedure created by the Task Force was distributed. Each group chose a procedure and, using the *Service Manual*, worked together to create a list the principles that guided the procedure along with the page number and principle. After 15 minutes, time was called and a reporter for each group was given two minutes at the microphone to report back.

At the end of the workshop, the Chairperson of the Board noted that the Task Force had completed its charge and the presentation and workshop would be available on e-Communities for Delegates to take back to the Areas.



UNIVERSAL UNDERSTANDING OF RECOVERY

In 2004, the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. developed Board Vision and Mission statements to help keep the work of the Board focused on increasing the visibility and accessibility of Al-Anon Family Groups.

Vicki H.
Trustee

The BOARD VISION STATEMENT:

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

The BOARD MISSION STATEMENT:

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

The Board then developed a Strategic Plan focused on achieving its Vision and Mission. Many discussions brought forth comments from members stating that professionals do not seem to understand the need for family recovery, instead focusing on the recovery of the addicted family member in order to heal the family. Thus, one of the plan's themes became Goal #3 of the Board of Trustees Strategic Plan under the topic, Universal Understanding of Recovery. Everyone—both within Al-Anon and outside—will have a universal understanding of recovery. The rationale being that there seems to be no universally understood definition of family recovery, and a universal understanding of family recovery could be useful to professionals and could encourage additional research.

In 2008, the Universal Understanding of Recovery Theme Work Group (UUR) began to discuss how best to get the message of the need for family recovery to the professional community. As the group began its discussions, the members realized there is no known clear definition of family recovery, making it difficult to convey the need.

For Al-Anon to continue to be a credible source of information, and a reliable place for professionals to refer clients, it would be necessary to have a statement of what family recovery actually is in a language that professionals, and those who research and evaluate alcoholism and addictions, would comprehend and find measurable. Additionally, this statement would help professionals to understand that not only is recovery for someone who is trying to stop using a substance, but that personal recovery for the family members is desirable to regain their own mental and spiritual health.

UUR felt this definition would also be helpful to members doing public outreach to not only understand the definition themselves but to use it in working with the professional communities.

Conference members received a handout about the process used to survey and receive input from members and professionals to arrive at a definition that can be used both inside and outside the fellowship. The membership helped to create the definition through four progressive surveys, each one using input from the last to further refine and clarify the statement. The resulting statement was then tested with professionals, and retested after minor refinement to ensure that the statement would be useful in the professional communities. A final survey was conducted, in which 1,145 Al-Anon members participated to reach the following definition of family recovery:

“Family recovery is a process of healing and growth from the effects of living in a family affected by someone's problem drinking. This process helps individuals to make healthier life choices, and to develop relationships that are more positive and supportive.”

Prior to the World Service Conference (WSC), Conference members received background information for review and discussion at the Conference. It was intended to allow the Conference an opportunity to see the results of the many surveys done in order to craft a simple definition of family recovery that is easily understood by professionals. They were asked to discuss the following questions:

1. Is this statement consistent with our spiritual principles?
2. Are we in agreement with the statement/can we live with it?
3. Can you see how you might be able to use this statement?

Conference members responded to each question.

Is this statement consistent with our spiritual principles?

- The process definition says “heal and grow.” Spiritual principles of singleness of purpose, goodwill, hope, serenity, autonomy, love, and respect are reflected. It is consistent.
- The wording is confusing. Healing and growth are about the process. You don’t get growth from the effects.
- The definition could be expanded to include friends of family members as it says in Tradition Three.

The task at hand was the definition of family recovery. It doesn’t mention friends.

- I asked our districts to discuss this. They agreed with what is said but wondered why Al-Anon is not in this statement?

If we go back to the Board’s Mission Statement, “Anticipate the future and Al-Anon’s place in it . . .,” the professional community had not understood that family recovery is necessary; then we can get to specifics.

Are we in agreement with statement?

- I participated in all five surveys, but I am disappointed in the final result. I agree with the statement as written, but a definition of personal boundaries was removed.
- My suggestion is, “Family recovery is a process of healing and growth for family members affected by someone’s drinking. This process helps these individuals make healthier life choices and develop relationships that are more positive and supportive.”
- One goal was to make sure professionals can do research and evaluate with this for healthier life choices. Have there been any conversations with professionals on part two of the statement? Is “develop relationships that are more positive and supportive” measurable?

No specific feedback has been given by professionals.

- Did the previous group directly receive a mandate to say that as a group of professionals we need a definition of family recovery as a means to guide people to Al-Anon? Where did the need come from?

Staff did bring information from professionals because we do bring the family voice to planning sessions for Recovery Month. We participate in the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and it was apparent from those conversations that they had no understanding or knowledge of family recovery. This year, the theme for Recovery Month will include the family. The WSO Marketing/Information Analyst reported that NIAAA is not only talking on a regular basis about family recovery in their meetings, but she has been invited to give information about the Membership Survey. The Board did get input from professionals.

The need came from the fellowship and out of conversations with the Board of Trustees by members trying to reach out to professionals. The definition we are discussing now is what the fellowship voted on. It is here because the World Service Conference (WSC) is the group conscience of Al-Anon worldwide, it is here at the WSC that a definition will be decided.

- We have assumed the professional language and have created the loss of the language of Al-Anon. What we know about is how the family does get better. I am not in agreement with the statement.
- There is a definition of attraction on page 109 of the *Service Manual*. The definition in Wikipedia for Al-Anon uses the preamble. I like that language.
- I read the definition three times and I don’t understand it and I come from this field. It doesn’t seem to be from the professional field or the fellowship.
- Preparing this for professionals is an outside issue. How it is worded is important.
- Living in the family versus being a family member doesn’t fit, but I love idea of getting family recovery out in the professional community.

Can we live with it?

- I can live with the statement. My understanding is that the statement is *directed toward* the professional community. When talking to the professional community, I don't give my family story. I do talk about my family disease. I speak in the language they understand.
- Family recovery is a process. Our opening says "we who live or have lived..." There are many who are affected years later. That idea is lost in the therapy community that people are affected years later.
- Is this going to be refined for other types of recovery, or is it just Al-Anon defining for Al-Anon?

We want to get information into the professional community. It is not the intent to define it for all types of recovery, rather to begin the process of awareness of the necessity for family recovery.

- How was this statement tested with professionals? Who were the professionals it was tested with, and what was their response? Please explain what "tweaking" is. What did professionals do that leads us to think this is the best statement for professionals to understand?

Our audience was professionals. For the first survey, we used a list of professionals that the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals had worked with and tested with them. Feedback showed the quality of statements they made and we tried to "tweak" (refine) the definition to include their comments as best we could. The second survey was posted on the LinkedIn page for professionals and in the e-News newsletter for professionals. We did not reach out to the first group. The total audience distribution was approximately 600 professionals. We took themes from the comments received and came to a final definition that we tested with the membership.

- I can live with the statement as presented. The Board of Trustees' Vision Statement says "All people affected." The idea was not to promote Al-Anon, but to be a service to help people.

The Conference Chairperson thanked members for their feedback and stated that the Work Group is not done with the topic. They will continue to work on clarifying the definition to bring back to the World Service Conference.

"USING AL-ANON PRINCIPLES TO RESOLVE CONFLICT"

To kick off the introduction of the new "Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict" kit, members of the World Service Office (WSO) staff, Trustees, and Executive Committee performed a skit that included a few scenarios to demonstrate when the kit might be helpful.

Conference members first visited the "Keep It Real AFG" group in "Anytown" where discussion of religion was creating conflict.

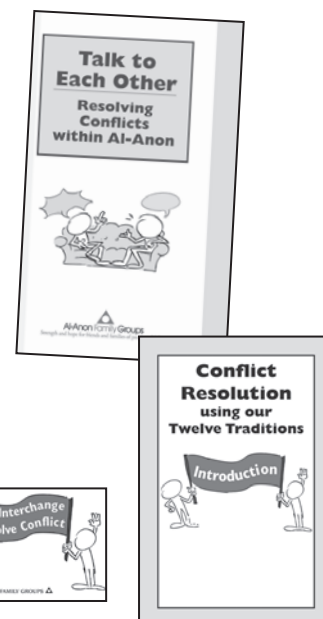
The narrator then took Conference members to visit the "Keep Coming Back for More of the Same AFG" group in "Everytown USA" just in time for the end of their meeting where there was gossip and members were not using Al-Anon principles.

Conference members then visited the "Somewhere Else" biannual Assembly where dominance was creating conflict.

At the conclusion of their visit, the narrator reminded Conference members that conflict is part of life and Al-Anon meetings are not an exception. The skit was just a few examples of common conflicts that occur in our meetings and through participation in service. The "Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict" kit (K-70) is available for members to work through such situations in a peaceful way so they can focus on recovery from the effects of someone else's alcoholism.

Conference members were invited to check out the Al-Anon online store and their local Literature Distribution Centers for the new "Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflict" kit (K-70) to get through the conflicts which arise, with help from the Twelve Traditions.

Patrick Q.
Associate Director of
Communications—Media



DELEGATES (PANEL 52)

Patrick B., California North

When I was three years old, I “lost” my spirit. I didn’t know, and wouldn’t know for more than 20 years, that I grew up in a home affected by alcoholism. As I left high school, I felt as though I had missed something. Wasn’t I supposed to be prepared for my future?

I found Al-Anon and dabbled in it for years, until a relationship brought me to my knees. I felt stuck in the relationship and knew that, even if I could get out, I would find myself in another relationship just like it unless I changed. I was finally willing to take the suggestions I had heard many times before—get a Sponsor, work the Steps, and get involved in service.

My service journey has been guided by my Higher Power. Sometimes, I volunteered for a position that allowed me to practice a skill that I wanted to develop, knowing that you would still love me if I “did it wrong.” Other times, I took a position that frightened me. This gave me the opportunity to walk through uncomfortable feelings, something I have found is necessary to my growth.

At the World Service Conference, I feel connected to Al-Anon’s pioneers. They started a conversation and shared with us what worked for them to keep the conversation going. The Conference procedures seem to have sprouted from years of experience; they foster an environment where many ideas are available. I learn because I get to hear different perspectives. I deepen my understanding of the Traditions and Concepts by applying them to the issues that come before us. When it comes time for a vote, we are able to make an informed decision. We keep coming back, keep having the conversation, and keep loving each other, even if we don’t always like each other.

At a meeting several years ago, during a moment of quiet reflection, that three-year-old who had “lost” his spirit climbed into my lap. He loved me exactly as I was, and I knew that I could take care of him and give him the love that he deserved. My spirit was back, and I was a whole person.

Today, I know my strengths, and I know how to ask for help. I set boundaries and have healthy relationships; I don’t have to “fix” Al-Anon and I can’t “break” Al-Anon. I have faith in the Traditions. I owe much of this to service.

I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to give back to Al-Anon, a program that has given so much to me. It has been a privilege to serve as Delegate and do my part in continuing the conversation.

Jayne C., California South

In 1980, our cofounder Lois W. spoke at the A.A. International Convention in New Orleans. On page 263 of *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), it states: “The A.A. members, like the Al-Anon members, claimed her for their own. There was deafening applause when she stood up to speak and the applause was even more thunderous when she completed her talk. . . . [When she exited the podium, she asked,] “Did I do all right?”

I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting 34 years ago, rigid, responsible, and arrogant. I looked like I had it all together, but inside, alcoholism had robbed me of my self-worth and self-esteem. My life was in shambles, and I had stopped believing

there was any way out.

My children felt like a noose around my neck. I was so preoccupied with the drinking that I was unaware that my five-year-old had lost 80 percent of her hearing in one ear. It took a kindergarten teacher to tell me there was something wrong with my daughter’s hearing! From that very first meeting I felt a connection, but I did not understand it. I threw myself into service immediately. I wanted to be busy and hoped it would bring relief. Service provided that spiritual connection for me and relieved the pain.

Walking into my first World Service Conference, I felt like a newcomer again. I was in awe. I knew I didn’t belong. I looked around the room and all of you were much more accomplished than I was. What was I doing here? Did my Area make a mistake electing me? How would I ever be able to speak? Finally, losing my fear of criticism, and feeling worthy enough to contribute to the largest group conscience of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon, I went to the microphone. I felt the love of a Higher Power, I was an equal. There was that connection again; it was truly our “spiritual principles in action” for me.

When I was elected Delegate, I was told that it would change my life. Indeed it has changed my life, but more importantly, it has changed my heart. Serving as Delegate, I am presented with many opportunities and challenges daily to demonstrate those spiritual principles. I try to do this by giving back the love, respect, and energy that is practiced here.

I have learned it is not about my opinion or defending my right to be right. It is about listening to the minority voice and not being afraid. It is about displaying trust, flexibility, tolerance, accountability, responsibility, and unity. It’s about living those spiritual principles and putting them into action in all areas of my life.

And Lois’s words, “Did I do all right?” resonate so much for me.

Judith S., Delaware

When I first walked into an Al-Anon meeting, it never occurred to me that one day, as a retiring Delegate, I would stand in front of the World Service Conference sharing my experience, strength, and hope. In Al-Anon, I have grown emotionally and spiritually and that has helped me to become the person I am today. For that, I am eternally grateful.

When I went to my first meeting, I thought I was going to learn how to stop my husband’s drinking. No such luck. It did not take long to find out that was not what I would learn. I was told that I wasn’t responsible for his alcoholism; that I didn’t cause it, couldn’t control it, nor could I cure it. So why was I there? Amazingly, I was told I could contribute to it in many ways and that the only person I could possibly help was me. Next, I was told to keep the focus on myself. What an awakening!

I had no idea what a spiritual principle was and continued to ponder that question for some time. How did I learn to grow and change? It was suggested I find a Sponsor and start working with her. We began by studying one of the greatest gifts I’ve ever been given: Al-Anon’s Three Legacies. In its own way, each has played a part in my recovery. I was also encouraged to participate in service. Before long, I realized that service was an integral part of my program and as important as many other parts—including read-

ing the literature, attending meetings, praying, and meditating. Gradually, I found new and wonderful ways to grow with the help of my Higher Power and all of you. I couldn't have done it alone.

I tried to live "One Day at a Time" and began each day with a prayer of my own design that I recited before getting out of bed. To this day, I say, "Good morning Higher Power, here I am, ready for anything. Show me the way, the truth, and the light through Your will, not mine. I pray for clarity, understanding, and the willingness to accept the things I cannot change, change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference." I still close my day with the same prayer. And on those days that I need to begin over again, I say my prayer more often.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen. It has filled my heart with gratitude and love.

Terry K., Florida North

God would and could, if He were sought. I decided to share some of what I've learned in Al-Anon.

- Alcoholism tells the alcoholic that to get better he should drink more alcohol.
- I don't like everyone. Why do I expect everyone to like me? (This is very freeing.)
- The three "Cs" are true for alcoholics too.
- Al-Anon is an upside down organization. As we progress in service, we become more anonymous. If you don't believe it, just go ask a member the name of his or her Area Delegate.
- She is angry. Must I be?
- A neighbor told my wife that getting old was hard because she had trouble getting on her knees to pray. (Now my wife and I get on our knees to pray at night.)
- To me, the most important prayer is, "I give you all of me—the good and the bad—to do with as You will." I may not be able to do it completely, but I've got to mean it when I say it.
- I once asked an agnostic how she was able to do Step Three. She said she "just decided not to define God." At first, this upset me. We have to define God, don't we? Then, I realized that by defining God I was putting a fence around Him. God is bigger than my definition.
- I say God is a "He" because I grew up that way. I really don't believe God has a gender.
- What we do is less important than why we do it.
- Helping others is probably the most important thing we do.
- I used to pray, "God, make me more like You." Now I pray, "God, make me the man You want me to be."
- I didn't come into Al-Anon to pray, "God, make me an instrument of Your peace." It just turned out that way.
- When I looked back on last year's World Service Conference, I told my Sponsor that I realized this gathering contains the best people I've ever met.
- More and more, I try to follow the quote on page 183 of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6): "If thou attend to thyself and to God, thou will be little moved by what thou perceive outside of thee."
- Lois was right, it has been one hell of a journey.

Jennifer D., Florida South

I remember that first Assembly as a new Group Representative when I was asked to spend a weekend away so that my group could have a voice and vote in the Area's business. I worried all weekend that the house would burn down or someone would get hurt while I was away. I know I had a hard time focusing on the business at hand.

When I arrived home, I found that none of the tragedies I had envisioned happened, and realized how much time I had wasted worrying about "what ifs" instead of enjoying the fellowship around me. That was an "aha moment." I decided then to put as much energy into my Al-Anon recovery as I did in trying to fix everyone else. I had begun a wonderful journey of recovery and service in Al-Anon Family Groups.

I credit the majority of my growth in the program to service and the wonderful Al-Anon members who encouraged me along the way. Without your example of carrying the message, I would still be sitting on the sidelines, miserable and afraid. This year's theme, "World Service Conference: Our Spiritual Principles in Action," reminds me of all the people who have helped me along the way. As Area Chair, I worried that I wouldn't be able to serve because I didn't have a way to get to the Assemblies. I didn't have to worry. All I had to do was ask for the help of my Al-Anon friend. She was there for me and got me to all of my commitments.

Later, when I became the custodian of my two-year-old granddaughter, I worried about standing for Delegate. Would I be able to handle the responsibilities while raising a child? Another Al-Anon friend reminded me that my Higher Power hadn't brought me this far to drop me, and that it would all work out just the way my Higher Power envisioned. If I had not learned to ask for help or rely on a Power greater than myself, I would have missed this wonderful opportunity to serve.

Service has given me a safe place to put the principles of the program into action without fear of criticism. As a Delegate, that belief is confirmed. My fellow Conference members, the Executive Committee, and Trustees have all helped me to be a successful Delegate. Today, when the disease of alcoholism tells me "no"; "I can't"; or "I'm not good enough"; my Higher Power and Al-Anon tell me, "I can"; and "I'll help you." I have been shown countless times that no matter what is going on in my life, that if I put the focus on me and my Al-Anon program and put spiritual principles into action, that "I Can."

Tom N., Hawaii

Wow! I find myself thinking that a lot lately. Wow, I've been elected as Delegate to represent our Area. Wow, I'm at the last World Service Conference of my term as Delegate. It's been an exciting journey. I've found that my journey has been one of learning—about alcoholism, about myself, and about the tools of the program—and putting spiritual principles into action.

When I first came to Al-Anon, I really had no idea what "spiritual principles" were. I knew a list of "should's" that I couldn't live up to, thereby making me a failure in my mind. The disease of perfectionism was present.

I heard about service early in my recovery. My first meeting was large, over 40 people. It lasted an hour and a half and had a coffee break in the middle. I got a very important job right

away—chair person. I was responsible for putting out the chairs before the meeting and putting them away after. I then advanced to coffee person, secretary, literature, and eventually Group Representative. During this process, I learned acceptance and “being a part of.” While I first went to Al-Anon to learn to survive in an alcoholic marriage, I found a new way of living.

Service in Al-Anon has given me a purpose in life—to help families of problem drinkers. I have always tried to be helpful and Al-Anon has provided a healthy means to do that. I was introduced to spiritual principles by working the Steps, but was really given an opportunity to practice them in service. I learned that I could give and receive unconditional love and “presume goodwill.”

I also learned that I could balance those with boundaries, once I learned who I was, what I wanted, and what I could accept. I’ve adopted as my draft purpose in life what an author in *The Forum* presented: “Maybe my purpose in life is just to live my life—finding myself, setting boundaries, discovering balance, accepting myself as I am, helping others, and sharing my experience with others.” All of this is done in the context of Step Eleven, doing God’s will for me to the best of my ability.

I cannot adequately express my gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Delegate, to fulfill part of my life’s purpose, and to meet such a great group of loving people who share a similar purpose.

Gene W., Illinois North

The Twelfth Tradition and the Eleventh Step are tools that have proved invaluable to me as I’ve progressed in service.

I remember early on in Al-Anon, a woman whose sharings seemed especially helpful and spiritual. I left those meetings feeling this program was leading me in a direction in which I needed, and wanted, to go. Later, as I got to better know her, I realized she had political and religious beliefs different than mine.

Given my early characteristics, if she had come into those early meetings with a name tag announcing her political and religious beliefs, I would have discounted much of what she said. However, I was hooked, and continued to value her comments. I did not realize it, but I had been introduced to the value of the Twelfth Tradition which tells us to place principles above personalities.

As I progress in service work, I am exposed to many people with different characteristics: not only religious and political, but personality and background. The Twelfth Tradition has helped me to pay attention to the principles they share, be it in a recovery, or a business meeting.

In many ways, I’m an introvert. I used to think of this as having a defect, but I’m also ambitious and want recognition. This is a seemingly confusing mix of characteristics that has caused me some degree of stumbling while going through Steps Four through Seven. This mix of characteristics finally started to resolve itself while thinking about the Eleventh Step, which says, “praying only for knowledge of His will for us.” I had the realization that although the word humility is used only in Step Seven, it is in fact a characteristic of every single Step in our program.

So, I committed to taking the word “only” quite literally, not praying for the alcoholic, not praying for others, not praying for my health when I’m sick—instead, taking on faith that if it is God’s will for me, I will be given the power to carry that out.

When I came into Al-Anon, I wanted to fix Al-Anon by being

a czar—by governing. Step Eleven took care of that tendency and led me to being a trusted servant. Now when I walk into a meeting and think about what position I might consider, or what opinion I want to share, I try first to think about God’s will for me, and the power to carry that out. Somehow, the confusing mix of introvert and ambition characteristics has somehow largely resolved itself.

Brenda L., Indiana

When I think of spiritual principles, the ones that immediately come to mind for me are “hope” and “faith.” I have learned a lot about these principles in the rooms of Al-Anon over the years. I decided to look up hope and faith in the dictionary. “Hope” is a confident expectation that a desire will be fulfilled, or wishful trust. “Faith” is trust, confidence, or complete acceptance of a truth that cannot be proven.

Over and over again, I hear in Al-Anon to expect something other than what the “committee upstairs” (committee in my head) can conjure up. I have come to believe in the possibility or hope of something different; a chink in the armor of despair. In order to have faith, I must be willing and make a decision to trust. I think it is no mistake that two of our Twelve Steps include the words, “God as we understood Him.”

I also believe there are no mistakes in God’s world. My understanding of a Power greater than myself has changed over time. In Al-Anon, I’ve truly learned how to “Let Go and Let God.” It hasn’t been an easy journey; trust and confidence didn’t come overnight. My relationship with the God of my understanding has grown significantly in recent years, as well as my willingness to be a part of the solution and not a part of the problem.

I see these spiritual principles in action here at the World Service Conference. The World Service Conference is the largest group conscience in Al-Anon which conducts the business of the fellowship and shares that information worldwide. There must be a special relationship between the Delegates, the World Service Office, and the Board of Trustees as they are the trusted servants of the Conference. I invite my Higher Power to help support me in the discussions and decisions at the Conference; I come to the Conference with mutual respect and “presume goodwill.” I listen to others’ opinions with an open mind.

Whether we’re discussing policy changes that guide our fellowship in action, or a financial decision to purchase property, we hope the decisions made at this Conference will help sustain and carry our fellowship forward. We hope that Al-Anon will be here for those still suffering when they are ready. These decisions affect the welfare of the fellowship worldwide and we have faith that they will keep it united. In this wonderful program of recovery, I learn spiritual guidance for my personal struggles in the Steps, help with my relationships in the Traditions, and help with my service journey in the Concepts. I have confidence that my Higher Power is guiding me in the right direction.

Judy W., Kansas

My service began as Group Treasurer. I didn’t know much at that time about the Traditions and Concepts, but I heard the older group members share often about the spiritual importance of using our funds for the betterment of our program. I learned

the reason for not sitting on our funds, contrary to that in my personal life. The funds were not there to save, but to use for the group, the district, the Area, and the World Service Office. I learned about sharing, responsibility, and trusting in our Higher Power for our group's needs.

The Traditions became more important to me as I applied them to my home life. I allowed my Higher Power to be a bigger part of it, keeping my God in the back of my mind with each decision I made or was involved in with my spouse. No more did I concentrate on what was best for me, but what was best for us, placing needs and responsibility ahead of selfish desires. I learned I could trust in the Higher Power.

I never dreamed I would have the opportunity to serve my Area as Delegate. I would sit and listen to the reports from our dear Delegates before me. I loved those ladies and what they stood for, the love and unity of the Al-Anon and Alateen program. I was fascinated each year by their news from the World Service Conference. Their reports stressed what was best for Al-Anon as a whole. I wondered about the practicality of some ideas until the Delegates before me related the ideas to the principles of our Traditions and the Concepts. Before serving as Delegate, my thoughts were: "I want to be just like them, I want to know what they know."

Today, I belong to something very special, to our World Service Conference. I feel the confidence I saw in those Past Delegates, that our spiritual principles will keep Al-Anon alive, and that the Traditions and the Concepts are there to hold us together, not for me and my selfish desires, but for all of us now and those to come.

Jo Etta M., Kentucky

When I was introduced to Al-Anon, I was sure I would be placed in the "advanced program." I heard people speak of awareness, acceptance, and action. I felt bad for you that you needed to go through that acceptance step. When I had an awareness, I would take a survey of my friends, find enough people who saw it the way I did, and charge into action.

Even though I was extremely religious, I was not so spiritual. I was on the way to church when I was involved in an accident with a drunk driver. My daughter died from her injuries. I was not able to attend any of the funeral process because of my injuries. I did what I knew and went into action. I went back to work and church. My family moved in with my brother while I was in the hospital. That was the action that they knew to take. I was in Al-Anon for many years before the spirituality I had developed allowed me to walk in acceptance.

In Al-Anon service, I saw people model for me the process of awareness, acceptance, and action. I learned to pray and trust that the will of my Higher Power would become apparent. At one point, I had decided that I would let my name stand for Group Representative (GR) at my home group. I mentally prepared a speech that I would give at the meeting. I was new at trying out "Let Go and Let God." However, I prayed for God's will, and not a specific outcome.

When the night arrived for elections, I was ill and didn't go to the meeting. How could I be elected if I wasn't there to give my speech? Without being present, I was elected as GR. One of the many spiritual awareness for me was that sometimes the "action" was to go to bed, let go, and trust.

I get excited about Al-Anon service. I like to take the skits back from the Conference and see the Al-Anon members in my Area repeating the skits at the Assembly. This is another way I experience "spiritual principles in action." Many times principles that are presented in a humorous way will stay with me. I might visualize a scene from a skit that can change my perspective from fear to trust.

Two spiritual principles that will always stick with me from last year's workshop on "Importance of CAL in Meetings" are the importance of group unity and avoiding confusion. I can decide on action or inaction when I am faced with life on life's terms.

I will be forever grateful for the amazing experience of representing my Area at the World Service Conference.

Kerry L., Manitoba/Northwest Ontario

I can remember talking to my mom when she was the same age I am now, and I was commenting on how fast time goes by. Her reply was, "Wait until you get to be my age." I know what she meant as my three years as Delegate have flown by. It is a very bittersweet time. However, I am very grateful for the opportunity to serve as the Delegate for my Area.

I saw the "spiritual principles in action" from the moment my term as Delegate started. The first thing that touched me was all the cards and notes I received to welcome me to the World Service Conference. It made me feel very loved and supported.

During one evening session, we were all tired and it had been a long day. We were discussing Spanish translation services and one member got up, gave his opinion, and then the session ended. The next morning before we started our work, that member got up and made amends to everyone for his remarks of the previous evening. That had a huge impact on me.

Presume goodwill are two words I heard a lot at Conference. They are so positive and I have adopted them as a slogan. Whenever I speak about service to groups, I always talk about "presume goodwill."

The Chairperson of the Board's letter, where she talked about flexibility, was another instance of the "spiritual principles in action." I just loved when she wrote about the Board of Trustees stopping to say the Serenity Prayer when they were having difficulty making a decision and the way that action got everyone back on track.

Conflict is something I wish to avoid, but after I stress about it for a while, I put the program into action and deal with the conflict. I was discussing a situation with a Delegate friend and he said he always reads Traditions One and Two and Concepts Four and Five at any Al-Anon event that he is chairing. That was the answer: I needed to take away my fear. One Al-Anon member helping another—our spiritual principles in action.

I am very grateful to have been part of worldwide Al-Anon for the past three years. As Lois W. said, "If we live spiritually in our daily life, then we find a deeper fulfillment for ourselves. I don't think there is a spiritual part of the program. I think Al-Anon is a spiritual program. Every activity can have a spiritual motive." *First Steps: Al-Anon 35 Years of Beginnings* (page 156)

Jack S., Maryland/DC

Dear Higher Power:

I wrote this letter to let you know how grateful I am for having you in my life. You allowed me to experience the frustrating, confusing, and depressing effects of the family disease of alcoholism in order to get me to this fellowship.

You allowed me to experience your grace when my wife, who was having an affair at the time, didn't come home that night. I was sitting in a chair for hours by the front window with a knife in my hand.

You gave me a sister who I hated as a teenager and wouldn't speak to for years, who ended up going to A.A. two weeks before she took my wife to her first meeting, and then you showed me there was a fellowship for me, too.

You gave me that one hour a week where my mind stopped racing, and I was somewhat at peace with those members who kept telling parts of my story. How did they know?

You gave me my Sponsor who was the first man I ever said "I love you" to.

You gave me courage, laughter, and fun in our Area convention activities that took me out of my stinking thinking and into the "we" of this program.

You gave me a spot in an on-line meeting, where a new member from the other side of the world said she had become someone she didn't like, and I identified with her.

You gave me service, love, and support in our Area convention when my wife and I had nine friends and relatives pass away in less than a year.

You gave me a Board of Trustees position so we could work on protecting the children who I love so much that I later changed careers to work with them.

In those Board meetings, you allowed me to claim those assets of mine that were so difficult for me to find in my Fourth Step, assets that you were then able to use for the benefit of worldwide Al-Anon.

You gave me loving support when my youngest sister died at age 39 during a World Service Conference and 100 people gave me a hug.

You gave me patience, willingness, and acceptance when my wife had long-term Lyme disease for five years, and we had to sell our home.

You gave me a pamphlet, that at first I didn't think would apply to me, to help me deal with my beloved nephew's suicide at age 29 from depression and alcoholism.

You gave me a new career, where I laugh and love so much more than my previous one, and I am making a difference in my community.

Thank you, Higher Power, for your love and grace.

Liz P., Michigan

Twenty years ago, when I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting, I didn't know what to expect, but I did know that my life needed to change. It wasn't easy. It's scary to try new behaviors, let go of old ideas, and let go of the old me that I was comfortable with.

The members of my home group offered support, gently listening even when what I shared didn't seem to make sense even to myself. With the help of a Sponsor, I began to grow. I developed a

deeper relationship with my Higher Power. With His help, I was able to face my fears and conquer a lot of my insecurities.

At the district meeting, I experienced service above the group level. It was suggested I run for Group Representative. I hesitated, because after years of being told I wasn't quite good enough, I believed it. Loving members assured me that I was good enough and they would be there to help.

I reached out to longtime service members to mentor me, studying the Traditions and the Concepts. Someone would always hand me a *Service Manual* and tell me, "The answer is in the book." I thank those leaders who took the time to guide me into various trusted servant positions. I prayed and mediated long before standing for the position of Delegate. When I was selected, I didn't know if I was ready or not. I did know I was willing and that God would prepare me.

When I arrived at my first World Service Conference, I was overwhelmed at the idea that someone who once considered she would never be good enough for anything was here representing her Area. Observing all the participants from the various backgrounds with differing opinions, I wondered how any decisions could be reached.

Throughout the week, I saw the Traditions and the Concepts come to life. Delegates were working alongside the Trustees, Executive Committee members, and World Service Office staff, showing mutual respect and an adherence to Tradition One. All of our spiritual principles were working together to support our primary purpose, to offer strength and hope for friends and families of problem drinkers.

I thank all my fellow Delegates for the examples of spiritual principles in action they have shown me. I trusted the process and saw daily demonstrations of principles being placed above personalities, acceptance of one another, and a Power greater than each of us serving as our guiding director.

Three years have gone swiftly. I shall never forget how each of you has enriched my life. The people I have met here, what I have learned here, and the love I have felt here is good enough to last me a lifetime.

Vicky A., Minnesota South

In my darkest days, while in Al-Anon, I told my divine Higher Power, "If you keep me alive through this, I will be an instrument of your peace wherever you put me." In response I heard, "Okay, sit down, strap in, and hold on."

My first Area Assembly was a painful experience. I sat in the back of the room and watched the attendees energetically disagree with enthusiasm. I couldn't stand it and promised myself I would never be one of those Group Representatives, they are crazy! The same night, I saw the same crazy people sitting in a hot tub laughing, hugging, and caring deeply about one another. I'd come to understand this was my first exposure to our "Spiritual Principles in Action" in service.

In the house I grew up in, the rule was, he who talked loudest won. Everybody was expected to have an opinion and support it. Of course, then we would not speak to one another for years.

I learned and stayed in service which resulted in me serving as Delegate. I could not have anticipated what I would learn in this position and was not prepared to discover the parts in my soul

that still needed healing. Nor did I consider that healing those deep wounds would come from serving as Delegate, but it did. I felt the overwhelming unconditional love and trust immediately upon being elected. Subsequently, I faced my deep-rooted beliefs that I was unlovable and not good enough.

As Delegate, I walked through experiences, faced fears, and learned that when I felt vulnerable, I did not have to flee. The problems were different, but the solutions were the same and were found in our spiritual principles. I saw this when there was contention over an issue. The Chair pushed the pause button, thereby protecting our group unity. I was reminded that we all come here for a very good reason and my only real job is to love and be loved. Unconditional love was present every day of every World Service Conference if my heart was open to it. As in every other Al-Anon service experience, I received so much more than I gave.

I came to my first World Service Conference to serve my Area Al-Anon family. I am leaving my final World Service Conference having served my worldwide Al-Anon family.

I'm proud of us. We did the Higher Power's work to keep our fellowship vital and present for others who have also been affected by the family disease of alcoholism. Thank you for sharing our spiritual journeys together. I hope our paths will continue to cross.

Ruth S., New York North

I came to my first Al-Anon meeting thinking that it would be my last Al-Anon meeting. I was not the one with the problem, the alcoholic was. I had been the one to hold everything together during all those drinking years. Now the alcoholic was sober, in A.A., and thought I needed to be going to Al-Anon.

My plan was to go, listen, and return home to tell the alcoholic I was not like the people at those meetings and to leave me alone. That is just what I did too. What I did not know at that time, but do know now, is that my Higher Power had a different idea about what would happen that night.

My life was a mess. All the plates I had juggled for so long came crashing down at the same time. I knew I didn't need Al-Anon, but I had to pick up all those pieces. While I was trying to put my life back together, I kept thinking about that Al-Anon meeting. I thought about how happy everyone was and how honest and open they were. They shared compassion, love, and trust.

I began to think that maybe if I went back and just listened, I could find out how to be happy again. It took me a month, but I did go back. I began to learn about and practice the principles embodied in the people at that meeting. I found that I could be happy no matter what was happening in my life.

I began my service journey when members said that they needed someone to take minutes and they just knew I would do a good job. They had me hooked because they needed me. Along the way, I have learned more principles: acknowledgement of my dependence on a Higher Power, love of my fellow man, an awareness of the need to improve myself, and a willingness to help others.

Over my years in Al-Anon, one truth I have held on to is that everything happens for a reason. I may not know what my Higher Power has in mind, but I know that what is happening at this moment is what is supposed to be.

Being the Area Delegate has been a gift to me. It has allowed me to put into action the principles of the Al-Anon program when I so sorely needed to. It also allowed me to focus on life outside of myself and helped me to grow. I am so very grateful.

Rex M., Ohio

During my years living in active alcoholism, there were a lot of confrontations. I was looking for answers. Before Al-Anon, I had lost any spiritual thinking I had. I thought I needed to take care of things myself. Then, after being in Al-Anon for a short time, I thought it was my job to rescue relationships. I tried, but without success. I had to figure out that it was not mine to do. The spiritual principles that the Twelve Traditions taught me helped me to know what was mine and what was not.

Relationships with my daughters became a major problem. It got to the point where we were not talking, I was yelling at them. This was the message my girls gave to me that led me to seek help. I needed professional help that got me to Al-Anon. Today, I feel we have built a spiritual connection.

Spiritual connections grew as my time in Al-Anon was longer. I found a Sponsor who helped me find direction. We had to rebuild our relationship; I attended A.A. and Al-Anon meetings. Meeting recovering A.A. members helped change my opinion of alcoholics. I made many new friends in both programs.

The Higher Power whom I choose to call God has become a spiritual "being" for me. Another spiritual thing for me is the Serenity Prayer. The slogans also give me spiritual direction.

When I see my children and grandchildren having problems, I pray for them and something good always comes from it. I see miracles happen in their lives, and all I had to do was to turn them over to God.

Another source of spiritual direction is the World Service Conference. What a spiritual program we have! There is so much sharing with so many special people.

We have come so far. Our granddaughter had a miscarriage, and I have had health problems over the years. These are spiritual directions that we have no control over. Another granddaughter reminded me of a spiritual principle when she said, "God makes no mistakes," and, "God has a plan for all of us."

I saw spiritual directions when I stood for Delegate. I ran two times. The first time, I was not elected. After that I came to some acceptance that I might not be a Delegate. The second time, I also lost. Afterwards, I felt complete acceptance that this was not going to happen. Then, the person who won the election resigned. I stood again and was elected. The experience taught me once again that I do not always know what direction my life will go in.

Jane H., Ontario South

"You need to say your truth." My Service Sponsor said these words to me just after I was elected Delegate. At that time, I had no idea of how important they would become.

Some of the spiritual principles that guide me in my recovery and my service are openness, courage, honesty, patience, acceptance, respect, trust, and willingness. Our Traditions and our Concepts ground me in my thoughts, words, and sharings.

At my first World Service Conference (WSC), I felt overwhelmed by the arrogance, control, dominance, and secrecy

that greeted me when I expressed my thoughts. I found myself in the position of expressing a minority opinion. Participation may be the key to harmony, but it seemed to me it applied only when an opinion was in agreement with the majority.

My e-mails that I have sent to my fellow Delegates was my way of encouraging a conversation among us to take a closer look at the way in which the actions and words we express at the WSC and the World Service Office are affecting the members of our programme—how do we truly reflect Concept One? How can the current roadblocks be replaced so that the voice of any Delegate is heard?

Saying my truth is often a frightening experience, and I found that this is the case for me in my journey as Delegate. It might be easier, less risky, to fit in. As always, with my Higher Power, strong sponsorship, support of Al-Anon friends, study and discussion of the Traditions and Concepts, I am able to move through the fear of being different. By ensuring that my concerns are framed in the light of our Traditions and Concepts, I am able to participate.

I have been given the great gift of growth over the last three years. My experiences have allowed me to become more mindful, thoughtful, and discerning. I believe that my responsibilities require me to listen with an open mind, to examine and study the information that I receive, to do my own investigation when required, and to evaluate.

As I continue to ask my Higher Power to guide my thoughts, I trust that what comes forth will be spiritually principled expressions of what I have found in our fellowship. “Let It Begin with Me.”

It is my prayer that the amazing legacy of our spiritual principles will continue to be practiced by all those who will come to have the privilege of guiding our fellowship.

Maria A., Pennsylvania

I am grateful and happy to have found Al-Anon so as to lead a life of joy and contentment. It wasn't until the third time of sporadically attending beginner's meetings over 30 years that I finally decided to stay. I'm slow! I reached my bottom 14 years ago. All the ways I tried to make my loved one stop drinking accomplished nothing but anger, frustration, hopelessness, and misery.

I got physically ill with throbbing debilitating migraine headaches on a daily basis. I had even asked God to let me die. I didn't want to live any more to witness the devastating effects of alcoholism in my family, especially on my three beautiful young grandchildren. It was horrific. I cried myself to sleep every night and the obsessive scenarios of doom and gloom were more than I could bear. My imagination proved to be a formidable and a persistent enemy to my serenity.

As soon as I decided to stay and work the Al-Anon program, I began to feel better and even my obsessive worries subsided. My black-and-white world slowly resumed to color and my migraines disappeared. After my first year in Al-Anon, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I couldn't believe it. I had contentment whether my alcoholic was still drinking or not. I had tools like my Sponsor, meetings, Conference Approved Literature, slogans, service, and a loving relationship with my Higher Power. I gave myself to service so as to keep busy and do things for people who truly appreciated me. My self-worth and self-

esteem were restored. So I got on my knees and told God I had changed my mind and I wanted to live. Be careful what you pray for—God let me live. I promised that I would continue to help people who had been affected by alcoholism.

Today my life is joyous. I enjoy my grandchildren: the twins are 18 and my oldest grandson is 25. Everybody is doing well. I can't change my loved ones, only God can and I will let Him. I strive to be the best I can be. That is in my power. The rest is not.

I keep the focus on myself and with the help of my Higher Power, I work the Al-Anon program daily. I seek to remain free of worry and stress. I recognize the joy of the program in others—it's better than plastic surgery. We are beautiful because we have Al-Anon and Alateen. We have God in our hearts. We look good, and we have fun. I do service because I want to keep the doors of Al-Anon and Alateen open. “Let It Begin with Me.”

Hélène D., Quebec West

For a long time, I asked myself if I was in the right place in Al-Anon. There was no problem of alcohol with my parents. I always found myself in helping relationships with my partners. After living with a friend who has a problem with alcohol, I realized I needed help. I lost my taste for life, and I had become very aggressive. It is through a friend who was an A.A. member that I heard about Al-Anon. I have thanked her greatly.

Al-Anon has allowed me to accept myself as I am. I learned to love myself and to better love others. In serving on various committees, I have learned to better respect the opinions of others and communicate better with them. During the most difficult moments, the literature and my Sponsor helped me to put things in perspective and to stop dramatizing the situation in which I found myself.

The years 2005 to 2011 have been the most emotionally difficult. It followed a series of losses. A separation, followed by the death of my sister—only 51 years old, and then her husband, two years later. I also lost four of my friends and the last one was my Sponsor. Al-Anon gave me the strength to pass through that hard time, but I also realized that God has given me the courage to be able to accompany these people.

In October 2010, I learned that I was losing my job. The first call I made was to the outgoing Chairperson of my Area advising him that I would accept the proposal he had made me to be the next Chairperson. I can say that on several occasions Al-Anon saved my life. At the same time, Al-Anon published two new books *Opening Our Hearts*, *Transforming Our Losses* (B-29) and *Discovering Choices* (B-30), which have been very helpful.

For the past two years, I can say that I get more that I could give. Today, I have a new group of friends, and I found the happiness that I had lost. The opportunity I have today to serve as a Delegate brings me so much. I feel all the love around me and sometimes I cry, but it is tears of joy. It's like too much, as if I had no right to it. But, I know that is wrong and the serenity that is inside me is thanks to all of you. It is with great gratitude that I will continue to serve Al-Anon. I am spiritually yours.

David G., Rhode Island

Delegates arriving at the World Service Conference are all different. We are different ages, sexes, sizes, sexual orientations,

skin colors, backgrounds, skills, education, countries, and even language. Yet we share one common feature: membership in Al-Anon due to a problem of alcoholism in a relative or a friend.

We Delegates also share two other common occurrences. First of all, at some point in each of our lives, someone told us about Al-Anon. Secondly, we each found something in Al-Anon that resonated with us, felt right for us, and we have stayed in the program.

As a result, we have changed in our shared, continuing journey of self-discovery. What better example exists of this power of change, possible through the program, than by seeing and hearing others here at Conference. Truly, “it works, if you work it.”

I feel very blessed having this opportunity to be a Delegate. I have learned so much, both about the program and about myself. I now know and see the wisdom in rotation of service.

I have acquired a general knowledge of what the World Service Office is and the scope of its function. I have learned about the history of the program and my Conference experience triggered a deep desire to learn more, satisfied in part by reading literature such as *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31) and *Lois Remembers* (B-7).

I had no idea that many of the people who work at the World Service Office would also be members. My first impressions from my first Conference were the attendees were so accomplished and skilled. I continue to see, through you all, that there can be healing, hope, and even joy.

When I first discussed the issue of Area service with my Sponsor, he said that service utilizes my skills, but will also magnify my defects. I have found this to be true.

I have used communication skills to hear of the best practices from other Areas. The Conference has empowered me to use my research and writing ability to work with other Area leaders and Assembly Task Forces to update and create new Area policies and procedures.

I have grown as a person, but I also continue to struggle in other ways. How to share this wealth of information without lecturing others? How not to micro-manage other Area or group leaders, nor point out to them how they could do their jobs better? How to sit silently when others do not accept my idea as being the right one? How to accept the seemingly slow speed with which new ideas are considered, both at Conference and at the Area?

Service as a Delegate has presented me the chance to work with these defects and therefore grow in humility, acceptance, and gratitude. Here I learned what “presume goodwill” and serenity bring.

Grace M., Tennessee

When I was seven years old in Sunday school, I heard the nun say, “God is everywhere.” I looked around and did not see anything. I raised my hand and asked questions and did not get answers that I could understand. That was my first experience trying to find God. I knew there was a God, and he lived in the church.

One day at work, I started crying and could not stop. I told my friend that I thought my husband was an alcoholic. My friend left the office, came back with some pamphlets, and said there were two women next door who wanted to see me right away.

I left the office and went through the parking lot to the building next door and walked up to the second floor to the Al-Anon Information Service/Literature Distribution Center office. They gave me a list of Al-Anon meetings. When I got back to my office, my friend told me to go to 90 meetings in 90 days and that I would find some answers. I did that and my world changed a little at a time. God knew that I needed Al-Anon, so He put a recovering alcoholic in my office and the Al-Anon Information Service right next door.

My home group needed someone to get literature, so I volunteered since the Literature Distribution Center was right next to my office. I did not know what service work was or how it would help me, but I did it anyway. Being of service to my group, district, and Area has helped me understand some things about others and myself. My character defects and assets were out there for everyone to see and for me to do my best to become the kind of person God wanted me to be.

I can see how my Higher Power was working in my life. I found hope in Al-Anon when others shared how they found serenity. I learned how to keep it by watching, listening, and learning how to practice the program. The hope I found helped me to trust others and then myself. From having trust, I found faith. My doubt and fear subsided, and I found a Higher Power. I made a commitment to be honest and truthful and found the willingness to reflect on the doubts and fears that lived in my heart. Making my amends removed the anchors that held me to the past. I have an awareness of a Higher Power that helps me know that God’s in charge. I know that when I am in fear, there is no room for faith. By using the spiritual principles of our program, I am becoming the kind of person I want to be.

Nancy M., Texas East

I came to the rooms of Al-Anon 31 years ago filled with fear, anxiety, anger, and a strong spirit of religion. I was filled with shame. I had not lived with active alcoholics for over 22 years. As I plummeted towards yet another emotional breakdown, I began a desperate search for the true meaning of spirituality—something I certainly did not expect to find in Al-Anon. I had exhausted every available conventional medical and psychological help to no avail. At the suggestion of many friends, I tried Al-Anon.

In my passion to find answers, I went to 90 meetings in 90 days. To my amazement, I began to feel some relief and found comfort in knowing that I was not crazy, and I did not have to do this alone anymore. I was off my medication after many years. I grew to understand that this was a spiritual program and, if I put it into action, I would recover.

What I discovered was that I began to experience spirituality in action before I ever had any idea of how it works. I first had to identify the principles before I could put them into action. The principles were honesty, hope, integrity, courage, willingness, humility, compassion, forgiveness, and acceptance of myself. Letting go and loving others was a process, not an event. I also have come to the realization that I alone must do it, but I cannot do it alone. This was a spiritual concept that began to put it all together for me.

Learning, practicing, and applying these principles has given me peace and serenity, which is now a part of my life from the

inside out. That is just the opposite of what I had learned before Al-Anon. I embraced a whole new concept of living.

Believing in and accepting myself as being an ordinary person who is *enough*, and believing that God can do extraordinary things through the ordinary are the concepts that gave me with the courage to stand for Alternate Delegate and then Delegate. I have been blessed in turn, to witness and experience true humility in action, which for me has been the ultimate act of spirituality. Thank you Al-Anon.

Debbe P., Texas West

Twenty years ago, my life took a dramatic turn when a member put the Twelfth Step into action and invited me to my first Al-Anon meeting. Devoid of spirit, I was desperate to apply the principles of this program to my life. The first three Steps offered me a spiritual foundation upon which I could rebuild my life. The principle of active listening gave me hope, courage, and understanding, and helped to quiet the conversations in my head. After six months in the program, I was elected Group Representative of my home group. I have been involved in a service position ever since.

My first Assembly was frightful. It took courage to have a voice, and I left with a deep respect for the process. I spiritually understood that I could not take the principles I had learned and thereby possess them as if I were taking a class or reading a book. I needed to live them, to absorb this program by participating with others who are on this journey.

As Area Treasurer, my understanding of Tradition Seven expanded from being all about money to the spiritual principle of being fully self-supporting in all areas of my life. I practiced how to communicate a need without feeling less than, to open my mind and heart to the ideas of others, and to always consider Al-Anon's primary purpose.

As District Representative, I sought to enhance mutual trust and respect for each other, behaviors not found in my alcoholic relationships. Exploration and application of the Traditions turned the "me" into "we." Accountability, responsibility, and reliance on others created a culture of trust.

The position of Area Chair required me to grow in ways I never expected. Mutual trust, compromise, humility, participation, and dedication became working character assets for me. I came to recognize that I was responsible only for the agenda, timeliness, keeping the Assembly on task, and giving voice to the minority opinion, not the outcome of decisions made at the Assembly. What a relief to know that the world didn't fall apart when the decisions and discussions were different than my plan.

As Delegate, the spiritual principles of the Conference have engaged the application of the Concepts in my program. What a gift it has been to meet with others to discuss our mutual love and vision for the Al-Anon program, to hear from so many who have gained their voice, to be able to agree to disagree and then laugh over a meal, trusting that our Higher Power is in charge. Opening my mind and heart to the worldwide fellowship has propelled me to a spiritual dimension that 20 years ago was not even a dream.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Catalina C., Mexico

Hello, my name is Catalina; I belong to Al-Anon groups for families of alcoholics. Today is very important for me because, in my life, I never imagined I would come to serve and be on this podium.

I was born in a little town called Tzintzuntzan. I was a little girl with lots of dreams, very poor economic conditions, and fortunately, I was given the opportunity to attend school and had a short career as a teacher.

I am grateful that my husband found sobriety in A.A. and told me one day that there was a program for me. He introduced me to an Al-Anon wife. After waging a struggle with pride, I attended my first meeting.

Since that first meeting, I told myself this was my place. I watched people smile and talk about a Higher Power with much peace. I felt a welcome in my heart. But more importantly, I was encouraged to give service. They told me I should not worry, they were here to support me.

I spent two years in that group. When I invited a friend, he said he did not have a ride, so I was given the task of seeking to open a home group, which is called Anne B., in the village where I live. This year we have been meeting for 16 years.

My service tour of the structure was given, first as Group Representative, then District Representative, Area Delegate,

and Area Coordinator. I have traveled in service as Chairman of the Conference, Trustee at Large Committee (CCT), and currently President of the Board of Trustees in the Office of General Services. It has not been easy when situations arise, but it is very clear that God always guides me and that the decisions made are simply to improve the functioning of the office and for the benefit of Al-Anon as a whole.

The Mexico General Service Office in Mexico is composed of 16 employees, including the manager. The visit by the WSO Executive Director and the Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee last year for our Conference Assembly was very helpful to improving the organization of the Conference that we held this year. The ideas that have guided people before me have also been very helpful.

Today, I am convinced that each country has its own problems, its own way of thinking, but with strategies to improve, we can serve everyone.

This is the last year of my service in the Office of General Services, so I will enjoy to the fullest all that God has prepared for me. I was very afraid to speak here because I do not speak good English, but the language of Al-Anon is love, and you understand that my limited experience is not unique and you will always be in my heart.

OPENING DINNER SPEAKER

Bev A., Conference Chairperson, Trustee

When I started thinking about what to share at the Opening Dinner, my mind went to all those responsible for getting me here. So many people who encouraged me in service and most of the service jobs I have held are because someone said to me, “I think you can submit your name and let God decide.” That one-on-one contact is something I have cherished and have encouraged others in the same way.

I was Panel 42 Delegate for Nebraska and my first Conference was in 2002. The theme was “Al-Anon’s Image in a Changing World: Anonymity—Not Invisibility.” The Chairperson of the Board asked us to examine our image of the fellowship, both inwardly and outwardly. This is something we are still doing today. I feel blessed to have been a part of that examination.

She also asked us to look at our understanding of the word anonymity. The longer I am in Al-Anon, the deeper my understanding of anonymity becomes. In particular, my time on the Board of Trustees has brought an understanding that has been good for my ego and my faith. I have learned that what I do for Al-Anon becomes Al-Anon’s. My name is not attached to it. It doesn’t really matter what committee I have served on or will serve on, it’s that my spiritual aim is to further visibility and awareness of Al-Anon Family Groups. The Chairperson of the Board finished that session in 2002 by assuring everyone that Conference would be a very spiritual and rewarding experience. It was, and I wish that for all of you.

In 2002, the Board added something new to the agenda. It was called, “Talking with the Delegates.” The Board wanted the Delegates to share about the topic, “What do you, as Delegates, think is the most important issue facing Al-Anon in the future?” Many of the subjects then are ones we still want to focus on today, such as:

- Adapting to a changing world, without altering our core values.
- Keeping up with technology, without losing the essence of our face-to-face fellowship.
- Reaching minorities.
- Maintaining Alateen safety.

The Board said it would use these responses in its conversations, long-range planning, and setting its goals and objectives. I know the Board did, because as a Board member now, I know we take seriously comments and concerns that come from Delegates.

During my three years as Delegate, I served on the Admissions/Handbook Committee and we began a review of the entire “World Service Handbook” section of the *Service Manual* for changes needed under the new World Service Office structure, which I believe began a year or two before I was elected. We also looked at ways of improving the usability and visibility of the “Handbook.” I have been pleased to see over the past few years the Thought and Task Forces on the use of the *Service Manual* as a whole; so good ideas do come back around.

The Directors at that time gave presentations to the Conference. It was something they believed—after working day-to-

day with the fellowship—was important enough to bring to the attention of the entire World Service Conference. The presentation that year was titled “Change.” The Directors shared how the World Service Office’s (WSO) reporting of information to the Conference has changed due to the complexity of business operations, including financial reporting and structural change at WSO.

Everyone was reassured that Al-Anon’s core values will never change. These values will be maintained by keeping activities based on spiritual principles and, as Al-Anon grows, some changes will be necessary and inevitable.

The Directors went on to share that there can also be conflict and that managing change is often like wrestling a gorilla. This is the famous presentation with one of the Directors dressed in a gorilla suit. The gorilla came into the Conference room and tried to distract, annoy, and fight with the speakers by swatting at the Directors, throwing objects at them, and causing as much discomfort as possible.

The final message was that change sometimes brings discontent and resistance, but as trusted servants, it is our job to recognize and engage in the changes; otherwise, we are taking Al-Anon back to a place that no longer fits in today’s society.

We gave conceptual approval for a revision to *Blueprint for Progress* (P-5), and when returning to the general session room one day, we were all given a copy of *Hope of Today* (B-27). I carry mine with me when I travel. Those pieces of literature we receive at Conference have an extra special meaning.

Sixteen motions were presented that year, two were withdrawn, several were Policy motions. This was before Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process to reach an informed group conscience decision.

We visited Stepping Stones and when we drove up the lane and I could see the house, I became emotional. Being there was like *Lois Remembers* (B-7) come to life, and I appreciated the opportunity to visit what was our first clearinghouse.

The 2003 theme was, “Change! Create New Possibilities.” The word “change” was presented in a positive perspective as the breakout sessions, presentations, and sharing’s seemed to impart a lot of enthusiasm. By the end of the week, the spiritual message was to view change as a useful tool to preserve the basic foundations of our program.

The Conference visited the World Service Office (WSO). When the bus arrived at the intersection just before arriving at the WSO, we could see the word “Al-Anon” in big letters on the side of the building. It was a magnificent feeling! I felt overwhelmed at times being there, it truly is a special place to experience. I have always liked our triangle logo, and so did the architect, there are unique ways that triangles were incorporated into the design of the building.

That year at Conference, there was a 2008 International Convention update. Little did I know when hearing the update, that the 2008 International would be my first duty as Trustee. So, when you hear a 2018 International Convention update, just

know that you may be there serving in a way that today you cannot imagine.

The Long Range Study Panel briefly shared the process of how the Board developed its vision statement and then Conference members gathered in small groups to share ideas on how to focus the energy of members in a single direction for the good of Al-Anon. From those ideas, we were asked to create a vision statement.

Everyone felt, having been through the process, that it would be helpful in sharing how to develop a vision statement for the Area. Giving Delegates the ability to carry back to their Areas strategies and ideas from discussions and decisions made at Conference is one of the Board's goals for the Conference.

In keeping with the change theme, the WSO reported that the requests for information via e-mail had increased and they had begun testing this form of communication by sending minutes and agendas electronically to the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees. The next level was to communicate with the Delegates. Delegates who had a computer would start to receive e-mail and attachments directly from the WSO. Those Delegates who did not have access would select an "e-buddy." This was someone who could receive e-mails and pass on the information to the Delegate. That shift in how we communicate with each other felt profound and was an action that showed we were moving forward.

The Board shared with the Conference that it had approved what it called a "Special Project," a one-time budget expense for outreach purposes. The ultimate goal of the project was to energize the Areas into service by asking them to create an Area-wide Public Outreach project. The WSO would contribute up to \$1,200 of existing literature to help carry out the project. Areas submitted their interest and then Area names were drawn out of a hat for this endeavor. Areas also would receive a visit from a WSO staff member and a Board or Executive Committee member, at no expense to the Area.

Nebraska was drawn to receive this special project and we sent literature via a mass mailing to religious entities. I would encourage you to invite WSO staff and volunteers to visit your Area. It really helps members see that we are Al-Anon members, just like they are, and it makes a spiritual connection to world services.

That year, the WSO staff discovered that certain typographical errors had occurred over the years in printing the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, and General Warranties of the Conference in our literature. No documentation was found to indicate that the Conference had approved any of these changes. The Board was informed of this discovery and after discussion, notified the Conference to ask for direction on the appropriate process for addressing this issue. After a presentation and discussion, a motion was recommended that the next printings of all of Al-Anon's literature revert to the text as it was originally printed and documented by research from the WSO. This motion passed and the Conference members received documentation so we could convey the correct message to the membership.

There were 15 motions that year, with one being withdrawn. Chosen Agenda Item topics were about diversity, group problems, and attracting newcomers.

The theme in 2004 was, "Dynamic Groups Today—Building Blocks for Tomorrow." The primary topic for discussion at that year's Conference was the Board's implementation of behavioral and safety requirements for Alateen. In the opening session, the Chairperson of the Board explained that the discussion would continue throughout the week, for as long as necessary. She gave an overview of the background to the Board's decision and said the Board had been looking at the issue of Alateen safety and discussing it with the Delegates for many years. She went on to say that as more Areas created their own Alateen requirements, it became obvious the WSO had nothing in place to support those Areas.

The Board, being charged with the responsibility to protect the legal rights of the organization, was united in beginning a process of creating basic requirements that would need to be adhered to by the fellowship as a whole in order to maintain the right to use the Al-Anon or Alateen name.

It was emphasized that the World Service Office wanted to be a partner with the Areas in implementing these new requirements. We were given a folder with information and the new Alateen forms and we were strongly encouraged to call the WSO with any questions throughout this process.

Almost all Delegates spoke to the issue and the majority expressed gratitude that the Board had exercised its authority in creating the minimum requirements. A Canadian Delegate shared that in Canada, groups that work with youth are required to have criminal background checks and without them were unable to rent facilities. Others stated that, while they understood the need for safety requirements, they did not agree with the approach taken by the Board. And there were some that felt these requirements were outside the goals and objectives of Al-Anon.

I was one of those Delegates who was relieved when the requirements came out. Alateen events and meetings had for some time seemed to leave all involved vulnerable to problematic behavior.

There was a motion to grant conceptual approval for a new daily reader focusing on parents and grandparents of alcoholics. Reaction was mixed. While some members saw a need for more literature to address parents, not all were convinced that a daily reader was the ideal format. The motion did not carry. But you know this topic has come around again to be addressed over the last few years and sometimes Al-Anon just needs time before making decisions.

Sixteen motions that year; two motions did not carry and two motions withdrawn. The Chosen Agenda Item topics were Alateen background checks, Concept One, and strengthening the groups.

During the Public Outreach presentation that year, it was said that every member of Al-Anon is a member of the Public Outreach Committee. That had an impact on me. I do not have to be on a committee to chat with my doctor or minister about how Al-Anon has helped me. I can keep copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* and extra copies of the soft cover *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32) with me, so when God presents me with an opportunity to share about Al-Anon, I will have some hope to leave with them.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Vicki A., Panel 52, Minnesota South

I am Vicky A., Panel 52 Delegate and more importantly, a member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon. I am very humbled to have this opportunity to share tonight. Just so you know, I am speaking tonight because my Higher Power has a sense of humor. One night, I had one of my great insights. I was pondering how I was not doing good enough in serving my Area as Delegate, so I should step down and ask my Alternate Delegate to attend the 2014 World Service Conference (WSC). The next day, before I could make the call, I got the invitation to speak tonight. Like many of you, I always say, “yes” to service. After I read the e-mail and quit shaking, I laughed, looked up, and told my Higher Power, “Okay, my thought was perhaps not spiritual and was more like, ‘stinking thinking.’”

By nature, I am an introvert. The chaos, violence, abuse, and emotional unavailability at the hands of adults and others in my life as a child resulted in a deep sense of inadequacy, feeling unlovable, isolation, creativity, integrity, strength, resiliency, shame, nearly a complete lack of trust in adults, a strong desire to please others, and a distorted sense of responsibility for others. The paradox is that on one level I thought I had my stuff together more than you, and then I joined Al-Anon and developed all of these character defects and also strengths.

As a child, I had a safe place to run to. It was an attic space accessed through my bedroom closet. I created a world where I had a loving gentle family with dolls and stuffed animals. I could go into this world where I no longer had to fear.

I sought to understand the world I lived in. It didn’t make sense. I have come to understand it was the world of the family disease of alcoholism. I studied, I read, and I took my search to the master’s level. But nowhere did I find the answers I sought until I walked into my first Al-Anon meeting.

For the first time in my life I experienced what I had been searching for all my life. In these rooms, I could speak from my heart without being spoken over, put down, or afraid that what I said would be used to harm me. Okay, these weren’t always my experiences, but I also learned that we all come here for a very good reason.

When I was told that getting a Sponsor was part of this program, it was my first critical decision point. I had to decide if what the program offered me was worth the emotional price that I anticipated I would pay to get a Sponsor. Before Al-Anon, I never knew that my lack of trust was a major barrier for me in relationships. When I arrived here, I trusted men very little because of what they had done to me, and I trusted women even less. This really limited who I could be in a relationship with. From that sponsor relationship, I learned how to trust, which grew into an ability to be in relationships.

Slowly the bricks in the wall that I built around my heart to keep you out and me safe began to come down.

My husband “Twelve Stepped” me into Al-Anon. I was married to my first husband for 18 years. I knew how to do active alcoholism. I only made it one year married to a man who worked a recovery program before I had to run to recovery or get a divorce. My second husband had simply lost all of his skills

to do the active family disease simply by working these spiritual principles. We worked the Traditions in our home. It was awkward at first for me to practice being a mother of three by being their trusted servant and not a beneficent monarch. By making Al-Anon principles the basis for my decisions and behaviors, I didn’t have to have all the answers. I could be a real partner and the mother I always wanted to be but didn’t know how to be.

And more bricks began to come down.

In service, I learned that the world will not collapse if I passionately believe something is right and you don’t agree. I was told by others in the program that maybe right now is not the time; more must need to be revealed; more than one person can passionately believe they are right; and all might have parts of truth or none. And it will be okay.

And more bricks came down.

In service, I learned that I did not need to be frozen in fear of committing to a position because I may not stay in the program for a *whole* three years. I may not like the people I have to do the service with, but I can still work with them. I may change my mind and so can others. Something in my life might happen, and I will have choices. I might not do it perfectly, and that is good enough. Others might get to know me and like me anyway. I learned to practice being willing, showing up, and doing what I say, and somehow, it all works out. In service, I have learned if something is really worth doing, it’s worth doing badly, so that perfectionism doesn’t keep me from stepping up.

And more bricks came down.

So, in contemplating how practicing our spiritual principles in service has changed me in my personal life, I would like to share two very intimate experiences that I have walked through.

During the last Panel, my husband and I learned that he had a very aggressive and terminal cancer. We were able to walk the journey through treatments for four years to the end of his time here, with dignity because of our spiritual principles. We spoke honestly about what was happening with us, utilizing our Sponsors during the toughest times. Once, my husband asked me how I felt about his leaving me. I was able to take a deep breath, ask for the courage to speak honestly, and tell him, “I am not afraid of you dying, I am afraid of living without you.” This simple honesty allowed us to remember we were both independent people, maintain a healthy intimacy right up until his last words, and be okay with going our separate ways for a while. His last words were to me, 24 hours before he passed over. He opened his eyes as I was washing him. I had not seen his eyes in a couple of days. He tried to speak, no sound came out, but he mouthed the words to me, “I love you.” I will forever be grateful that I had become able to be present in the moment, even under difficult circumstances. And our Higher Power was right there with us, so we both knew deep in our souls that everything would be okay.

My husband’s Celebration of Life was a powerful experience of our spiritual principles. In the planning of the Celebration, all of our children and older grandchildren had a voice and were heard. This is no minor feat when you understand we have eight children, three in-law children, and eight grandchildren.

I asked my Higher Power to be there, lead our Celebration, and make it a healing, loving, spiritual experience. All who spoke were in recovery, but not all present were aware of this. It really did not surprise me when nearly every single person not in recovery expressed awe, bewilderment, and a deep craving to learn more about how this Celebration became the most powerful, spiritual “funeral” they had ever been a part of. And I got to smile and just take in all the love, gratitude, and serenity that came with working the spiritual principles without needing to explain them to anybody.

Some people approached me during the Celebration and asked how I could be smiling and enjoying the Celebration when this was such a tragic loss. All I could say was that this was not a tragedy, it was just life and was a situation of acceptance and gratitude.

One very special part of my husband’s Celebration occurred after the ceremony when his great nephew approached me. This nephew is in his mid-20s and had struggled with alcoholism for years. On the day of the Celebration, he had a little over four years of sobriety. He told me that the Celebration was the most powerful experience he had in recovery. He said listening to the old-timers talk about the program by sharing their lives was something he never heard before that day. He asked me how many years his uncle had been sober. He was sober 35 and a half years. The nephew’s eyes glazed over. I told him there is a beautiful 35-year medallion in his uncle’s night stand that will remain there until I can personally give it to him on his 35th sobriety birthday. Later, just before the nephew left the gathering, he approached me in the kitchen. He said, “Aunt Vicky, hold onto that medallion, I want it.” His mother broke down in tears. She had never seen recovery mean that much to him.

Another astounding example of these spiritual principles in action, which I see as magic in my life, occurred recently. In November 2013, I was told that my mother was at the end of her life. My mother’s life and soul had also been damaged by this family disease. We never had the type of relationship I dreamed of in my childhood imaginings. In fact, she said several times during my lifetime that she never wanted me. I was a great disappointment to her. We became estranged six years ago when she moved with my sister to another state 1,200 miles away, without ever telling me or my other siblings.

When my mother got the news about her impending death, it was the first time she called and asked me to come and visit. It was a difficult decision. I was terrified of my sister as she had been very violent toward me all of my life. I reasoned it out with my Sponsor and other trusted people. I couldn’t tell if I was supposed to go to my mom or not, so I opened my *Courage to Change* (B-16) book. The page told me that if we practice these principles, they will become so much a part of us that we are safe wherever we go. Again, I prayed for courage to be honest in a kind and respectful way. I was able to tell my mom that I wanted to come, that I loved her, but that I did not feel safe coming to her house. For the first time in my life, my mother said she would protect me.

The magic of recovery once again healed what I could not have imagined could be healed. I gave, as I was given by all of you, to somebody who did not even know they needed it. I

could be there for her in a mutual relationship of kindness and respect. It was magic as I was leaving, believing that I would never see her again, and she told me she loved me and called me her little baby girl.

My mother is still with us. We have been given time to say things that might never have been said if I hadn’t learned to keep showing up and presume goodwill. These spiritual principles had metamorphosed a child, me, who lived in terror, to an adult who could love without fear, and be okay wherever I went.

Most all of the bricks around my heart are now gone.

Thank you, Al-Anon, for an unimaginably wonderful life—it’s magic.

Tom N., Panel 52, Hawaii

Even before I married a problem drinker, I had many characteristics that would be amplified by living with the disease of alcoholism. In elementary school, I was always interested in other people’s work. I was “helpful,” whether I was asked or not. I was even called “Mrs. Grundy” by my teacher, by which she meant a perfectionistic meddler (my Sponsor was later to say I was a “heavy meddler”). The entries in what I call my “user manual,” facilitated by my Germanic mother, included: Perfection is the goal, and I must be self-sufficient. In school, if I got all As and one B, the concentration would be on why I got that B. I’ve since learned that perfectionism is a disease itself. Now, if someone says they’re a perfectionist, my response is, “Oh, I’m sorry.” I also found ways to validate being self-sufficient by concentrating on times that people weren’t “there for me.” So you can see, I was set up to be a “perfect” candidate for Al-Anon.

I met my wife in college and on one of our first dates, she invited me to a “kegger” (should have been a clue), which I happily accepted. Alcohol played an important part in our lives. I would have a cocktail after work each day and usually wine with dinner. Eventually, I started to become worried about her drinking and discovered I was starting to look forward to cocktail hour. I asked my wife not to make me a drink automatically unless I asked for one and, by the way, she should consider cutting back as well. It was at that point that I gained a new title, “self-righteous.” The disease continued to progress. Her drinking increased, and I started reacting to it. My job was to “fix” the problem, and I couldn’t ask for help (self-sufficient). I engaged in what I later discovered were classic reactions. I searched for bottles, poured out liquor, and left the empties on display to prove I had found them. It didn’t have the least effect on her drinking—she just went out and bought more. I used logical arguments and anger to try to get her to stop drinking. I certainly got irritable and unreasonable without knowing it. Eventually, I thought, “Maybe it’s me. I didn’t show enough affection, didn’t finish the wallpaper in the bedroom, etc.” At first, I tried to hide the problem, made excuses, and covered up. Then the pendulum swung and I blabbed how horrible it was to anyone who would listen. It turns out my secretary at work had attended Al-Anon and she loaned me the book, *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6). Of course, I didn’t read it one day at a time, but read many pages at one sitting, trying to find answers. While talking to my secretary about how angry I was, she suggested that, “maybe Al-Anon could help you with that anger.”

I had heard of Al-Anon before, but wasn't sure I "qualified" since I couldn't "prove" that my wife was an alcoholic. I'm glad that the tagline now says, "For friends and families of problem drinkers." I went to my first meeting on February 20, 1996. It was comforting to hear that my reactions to the family disease were shared by many others, namely, obsession, anxiety, anger, denial, and feelings of guilt.

The first tools I was exposed to were detachment (not really with love at this point), recognition of alcoholism as a disease, and the 3 C's (can't cause, cure, or control). I had already suspected that I was powerless. It was a relief to know I wasn't alone and that since I was powerless over this disease, I could stop trying so hard to control it. These tools and the fellowship helped me get through the subsequent progression of the disease. In March, there was a driving under the influence charge and a hit-and-run in a parking lot. Facing court for that, my wife really drank heavily and got very sick. By April, she had reached the point that she wasn't eating and couldn't get up off the floor. I had heard in Al-Anon that we "reason things out with someone else." I called a longtime member and told her what was going on. She said, "Why don't you call 911?" I said that I knew 911 was for emergencies or life-or-death situations and I didn't want to abuse the system. She said, "Why don't you tell the operator what's going on and let the operator, who is trained to decide if emergency service is necessary, make the decision?" I told her that I was afraid that my wife would get really angry with me if I did that. "Well, how does she feel about you, now?" I had to admit, generally pretty angry. "So, what's the difference?" I called 911 on my cordless phone from the garage. First, fire engines showed up with lights flashing and sirens blaring. They had trouble getting a blood pressure reading from my wife, so they called the paramedics. When the paramedics came, they also had sirens and lights—in case the neighbors missed the first ones; so much for the "family secret." My wife ended up in the hospital for three weeks with acute pancreatitis, bleeding stomach, and liver inflammation.

I believe my spiritual journey is one of continual learning, then sharing what I have learned to benefit others. During this period, I learned some things I never thought I would. When my wife came home, I learned how to operate an IV to administer antibiotics and to run a feeding tube which was inserted to bypass her stomach. Eventually she went to court and completed her sentence.

I continued my program, got a Sponsor, and started working the Steps. In late summer, my wife started drinking again. I had purchased a legal plan at work, thinking I might have to use it for divorce. In September, I called a lawyer and asked how I could protect myself if my wife killed someone while driving drunk. He said that the only sure avenue was dissolution of the marriage. I told my wife that and she said, "Don't do that," and I said, "It's up to you." The next day, she got arrested for violating her probation by getting drunk and was sentenced to a 90-day rehab. After her rehab, she said she wasn't sure if she wanted to stay married to me. After six years of marriage counseling and years of working our respective programs, we're still married (45 years) and she remains sober and an active member of A.A.

I had started attending Al-Anon to learn how to survive liv-

ing with an alcoholic. What I received is beyond my wildest dreams. The slogans got me through the chaotic times. I especially used "Let Go and Let God." It was comforting to know that my wife had a Higher Power, and I was not it. I learned that I could not save our relationship alone. At best, I am responsible for my half. I got a "God box" and I only have one thing in it, "Our Marriage." If God wants it to continue, it will. I just have to supply the willingness. As a longtime member used to share, "God has two answers, 'yes,' and 'I have something better in mind.'" I finished working the Steps with my Sponsor and learned many spiritual principles including gratitude, that I have choices, I can rewrite my "user manual," and perfection doesn't work. I got the affection that I sought and learned to love myself and others. I can't give away what I don't have. I learned to forgive myself and others and that in order to get self-esteem, I do estimable things, such as service and sponsorship.

As I learned more about the Traditions and Concepts, I started applying them at my work. The people I supervised really liked being treated with respect and being given the authority to do their job. I became more like a "trusted servant," seeing my job as supplying them with the tools they needed and removing roadblocks. During my term as Delegate, I really got to see the spiritual principles in action, especially the Concepts of Service including the General Warranties of the Conference. Decisions are reached by loving interchange where people and ideas are respected. I saw the right of the minority to be heard. I learned that while I had the right for my minority opinion to be heard, it didn't necessarily include the right to prevail. The expression of a loving God through the group conscience is always the right answer and ensures unity.

Today, I try to use what my Sponsor suggested, "What's the loving thing to do?" As it turns out, the family disease is the "gift that keeps on giving." My younger daughter has never sought recovery that I know of. She has made some bad choices in her life. She's a single mom without any support from the father, she lost her job and made a bad loan to a boyfriend, now ex. Two of the principles in the Traditions are unity and autonomy. At times those seem contradictory to me. Personal autonomy means we get to make our own decisions. I told my daughter that I had faith that she could work out solutions to her own problems and I wouldn't bug her about her situation, but if she wanted to talk, I was there for her. In order to have unity, both parties have to want it. My daughter generally chooses to isolate and cut off communication. Sometimes "the loving thing to do" is just "Let Go and Let God."

In Dr. Bob's farewell talk, he noted that our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love" and "service." Being at Conference these past three years has really allowed me to experience both. I have never felt so loved and accepted, even when I expressed a different opinion or even challenged the Chair. This is a unique environment in my experience in which I feel safe enough to say what I really think and, at the same time, not have to "win." I am extremely grateful for this opportunity. I now have at least one friend in every state and province and Puerto Rico!

I love you all in a very special way. Mahalo nui loa.

CLOSING SESSION

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Bev A.
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

On the last afternoon of the Conference, the Chairperson of the Board shared some of the thoughts and observations that she had asked Board of Trustees and Executive Committee members to give her before the Closing Session.

The comments included:

- There were real actions and commitment to mutual respect and trust even when we didn't like what was said.
- We demonstrated the Al-Anon Declaration in action by giving conceptual approval to a new daily reader.
- What we do is less important than why we do it.
- The Warranties are our service "bill of rights." Some voices were heard more often; others were silent. Let us continue to strive for balance.
- I saw our spiritual principles in action by maintaining an open mind and personal dignity.
- We shared our thoughts and opinions honestly and continued to laugh together.
- We traveled the road of recovery, sharing love and courage just like the *Wizard of Oz*.
- There was a sense of being part of a continuous conversation that we are ready to carry into the future with experience, strength, and hope.
- I was impressed by the thoughtful participation.
- We treated one another with respect. We approved new Policy wording and moved the Conference into the 21st Century with our decision about electronic devices.
- We listened to laughter, felt the hugs, and came together to find solutions, while keeping in mind what is best for Al-Anon.
- Learning how to let go of the process happened during the Conference, which was a personal growing experience. What a privilege it is to be here.
- Holding the Conference in a virtual world using avatars might just keep principles before personalities!
- We were able to listen and value all opinions.
- Thank you for a wonderful Conference. We came together and put our spiritual principles into action.

The Conference Chairperson asked members to take a look at their Conference goal from the first day. Conference members were then asked to take a few minutes to think about, "What one session or activity that took place during the week fulfilled either the Conference theme or one of the Conference goals for you and why?"

Several Conference members shared their thoughts:

- I felt respected and felt no barriers even though there were differences of opinion among Conference members. Our spiritual principle of participation with mutual respect, leads to the process of discussion and then the willingness of Trustees and WSO to provide clarity. I am leaving here with a deeper understanding of the Legacies. I have had a paradigm shift since I came here.
- I am amazed at the ability and willingness of the Trustees and WSO staff to answer every question, every time it was asked, in every way.
- Many Trustees and members of my Panel probably thought of me as irritable and discontent. I have moved in a direction that I find encouraging in listening with an open mind and heart. I felt respected by the members of the WSO staff, Trustees, and Executive Committee. I felt that this will continue.
- I felt a Higher Power in the Conference, guiding us and inspiring us. This body exudes ultimate equality for me. It is in good hands; it will be here and will continue. It makes me so grateful, that I have all the literature I need and can go in safety to meetings.
- I enjoyed being a Mentor. It was an awesome experience seeing things through the eyes of the outgoing and incoming Delegate.
- I was overwhelmed by the palpable presence of a Higher Power at the Opening Session when we said the Serenity Prayer together. It allowed me to find my voice, and it defined a more

profound Conference than I had anticipated.

- The courage to be a leader grew by sharing at the microphone. There were no “Al-Anon police.” It is our responsibility to resolve conflict in the Area ourselves.
- I came here feeling like a stranger, and I leave tomorrow feeling like family.
- As a new Delegate, it helped to get to know other Conference members each time they began sharing at the microphone by identifying themselves.
- This experience taught me to trust the process. This week, I saw spiritual principles in action. I saw love and presuming goodwill.
- I was privileged to witness Goal Two. For the first time in my Al-Anon recovery, I got the idea of a worldwide fellowship.

Following the Closing Dinner, scroll presentations to Panel 52 Delegates, and the Spiritual Speakers, the Conference Chairperson, with a tap of her gavel, brought the 2014 World Service Conference to a close.

2014 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

MOTION #1 – CARRIED (BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2014 World Service Conference:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach

Director of Business Services

Non-Al-Anon Member

Catalina C.

International Representative—Mexico

Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) business, but no vote:

Carrie K.

Chairperson, ECRPM

Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to the Universal Understanding of Recovery discussion and the presentation of the results of the “Readiness for Step Twelve” survey, but no vote:

Pamela Walters

Marketing Information Analyst

Non-Al-Anon Member

That the following WSO staff member be seated as part of her ongoing training at the 2014 World Service Conference on Saturday, April 26, 2014, and Monday, April 28, 2014, **with no voice and no vote:**

Julie M.

Communications Manager

Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2 – CARRIED (71 yes, 22 no, 3 abstentions, 0 void)

That the 2014 WSC give conceptual approval to develop a new daily reader that reflects the diversity of the Al-Anon fellowship.

MOTION #3 – CARRIED (96 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2013 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #4 – CARRIED (96 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2014 Finance Committee Report.

MOTION #5 – CARRIED (95 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

To approve the 2013 Annual Report.

MOTION #6 – CARRIED

(88 yes, 8 no, 1 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend the text of the “Dual Membership in Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A.” subsection starting on page 82 and ending on page 83 in the “Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions” section of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* as follows:

(New text is underlined and bold; moved text is underlined. Strikethrough indicates deletion.)

Dual Membership in Al-Anon/Alateen and A.A.

Service Participation by Members of Al-Anon Family Groups Who Are also Members of Alcoholics Anonymous

Al-Anon/Alateen members who are also members of A.A. are eligible to hold office within their Al-Anon or Alateen groups. Active members of Al-Anon who are also A.A.s may serve as the Sponsor of Alateen groups by virtue of their Al-Anon membership. These are vital group services, and at all times emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program.

Al-Anon Family Groups and Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) share a common spiritual legacy in A.A.’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Before Al-Anon was founded, family groups met with and beside A.A. groups. In 1951 various family groups banded together and agreed to organize Al-Anon Family Groups, a program dedicated to helping the friends and families of alcoholics. Over the years, Al-Anon developed its own service structure, based on the model provided by A.A.’s experience and guided by the Twelve Traditions.

Because of the unique nature of both programs, Al-Anon/Alateen members who are also A.A. members do not hold office beyond the group level, as these positions could lead to membership in the World Service Conference (WSC). The need to focus on the Al-Anon program and the possibility of

Tradition Five defines Al-Anon’s single purpose. Tradition Six encourages cooperation with Alcoholics Anonymous, maintaining that Al-Anon is a separate entity that ought never affiliate or create the appearance of affiliation with any outside enterprise. Putting these principles into practice maintains a separation between the service structures of Al-Anon and A.A. This separation helps avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest at Assembly and world service levels led the WSC to its decision not to seat and safeguards Al-Anon’s singleness of purpose. Accordingly, Al-Anon’s policy is that members who are also members of A.A. For these reasons A.A. members do not serve as Group Representatives (GRs), District Representatives (DRs), Area Delegate, World Service Conference member, alternate to any of these service positions, or on any committee of the World Service Office. Area Coordinators, Newsletter Editors, Delegates and/or any of their alternates, nor do they sit on the WSO selected committees, whose Chairpersons can be Conference members.

Filling service positions is a matter of district and Area autonomy, within this policy and the spiritual principles that form its basis. Tradition Four grants autonomy to local service arms, except in matters affecting Al-Anon or A.A. as

a whole. Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. participate fully in all group activities, including group conscience decisions. However, they do not hold Al-Anon service positions that vote in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or A.A. as a whole.

Participating in Al-Anon service is integral to recovery for every member. Step Twelve, carrying our message to others, is a very important part of Al-Anon service. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of A.A. are often in a position to carry our message to those who are not aware of the benefits of attending Al-Anon Family Groups. Members of Al-Anon who are also members of A.A. may serve Al-Anon in ways that include being an Alateen Group Sponsor (see “Alateen Policy”) or they may be invited by local/Area service arms, the Board of Trustees, or the World Service Office to participate in projects, in keeping with the spirit of this policy.

This policy on service participation by members of Al-Anon who are also A.A. members protects Al-Anon’s viability as a program dedicated to helping the families and friends of alcoholics. It ensures that Al-Anon’s service structure represents the unique perspective of families and friends of alcoholics, recognizing that the alcoholic’s perspective is represented in A.A.’s service structure. Members honor this policy out of respect for Al-Anon unity and the group conscience process, in accordance with Tradition One and Tradition Two.

MOTION #7 – CARRIED

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

To authorize the use of electronic devices for note taking starting at the 2015 World Service Conference on a three-year trial basis.

2013
ANNUAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ADMINISTRATION

Ric B., Executive Director

OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) meets quarterly and is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the World Service Conference (WSC), establishing business policies of the World Service Office (WSO), estimating revenue, administering 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 45 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) oversees office-wide projects, reviews resource allocations, and serves 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 legal 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 changes to the Archives Oversight Guideline as amended.
- To approve translation services for the WSO representatives attending the Al-Anon Conference in Mexico City, Mexico at a proposed cost of \$2000 U.S.
- To approve the pricing to print *Reaching for Personal Freedom* (P-92) in soft cover, spiral bound, 8 1/2 X 11, 176 pages at an initial quantity of 50,000 for a cost of \$50,842, to be sold at a price of \$15 U.S.
- To provide Al-Anon service arms with a selection of 20 brief quotations from Conference Approved Literature, which they could select from for use in 2014 calendars without completing the currently required reprint permission request form.
- To conduct a survey in 2013 to measure non-members' awareness of Al-Anon Family Groups in the United States, at a cost not to exceed \$1,500 U.S.
- To provide a kiosk and sign for the Welcoming Newcomers blog in the hospitality room at the 2013 International Convention at a cost not to exceed \$725 U.S.
- To approve the recommendation of the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee to change the first sentence of *The Forum's* Statement of Purpose to "*The Forum* is an international monthly publication of Al-Anon Family Groups, a fellowship that offers strength and hope for the friends and families of problem drinkers." as amended.
- To approve time out of the office and possible supplemental travel costs for the Executive Director to visit the groups in Australia and New Zealand at a cost not to exceed \$2,000 U.S.
- To approve travel costs for a Board of Trustee member and staff to attend the European Zonal Meeting in Essen, Germany at a cost not to exceed \$5,000 U.S.
- To retain the current U.S. pricing structure of \$18 for 25 copies; \$25 for 50 copies; \$40 for 100 copies; \$75 for 200 copies; \$140 for 400 copies—for the first printing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2015*.
- To decide that the PDF of the *Group Inventory: Use of Conference Approved Literature* (S-62) should remain posted on the Members' Web site, be listed on the Al-Anon on-line store, the 2014 CAL Catalog (S-15), and the 2014 CAL Order Forum (S-16) under "Material for Download Only."
- To approve the guidelines for the Finance Committee, Nominating Committee, Conference Leadership Team, Conference Committee on Trustees, Audit Committee, Literature Committee, Forum Editorial Advisory Committee, Public Outreach Committee, and Policy Committee as currently written.
- To approve travel costs for a Board of Trustee member and staff member to attend the Central American Zonal

Meeting in San Pedro Sula Honduras, at a cost not to exceed \$7,000 U.S.

- To conduct a reworded survey in 2013 to measure non-members' awareness of Al-Anon Family Groups in the United States, at a cost not to exceed \$1,500 U.S.
- To approve the Treatment Facilities Outreach Project Workshop Resource Guide, pending corrections made by the Executive Committee and review of style and edit.

The Board, in its legal and financial capacity, took the following actions:

- At the Annual Meeting:
 - ✓ To approve the 2012 Annual Report.
 - ✓ To approve the 2012 Auditor's Report.
 - ✓ To elect three Trustee at Large (TAL) nominees, three 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 2013-2014.
 - ✓ To adopt the banking resolution for the Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc.
- To approve continuing the trial printing of *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) in soft cover, in English, for sale within the World Service structure, at a price of \$6 U.S. for an additional three years, to be reviewed annually.
- To approve the printing of 30,000 sets of UV-coated *Conflict Resolution Using Our Twelve Traditions* (S-72) cards at a cost not to exceed \$25,126, to be sold at \$4 U.S. per set.
- To offer the book *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) in English, French, and Spanish, electronically, in various formats, in conjunction with third-party vendors, at the price of \$14.99 U.S.
- To offer an audio version of the book *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) in English, as a downloadable audio file, in cooperation with third-party vendors, and to set the price at \$24.99 U.S.
- To approve the renewal of the software that will enable the Public Outreach section to engage more effectively with new media sources of news and information, at a cost not to exceed \$3,500 U.S.
- To grant permission to reprint Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature to Corporación Al-Anon/Alateen Ecuador, which is the registered Al-Anon Trial General Service Office located in Quito, Ecuador.
- To approve that the equalized expense for the 2014 World Service Conference be \$1,280 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the 2014 World Service Conference is \$1,907 U.S.
- To approve that the equalized expense for the 2014 IAGSM to be held in Virginia Beach, Virginia be \$1,816 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend is \$2,169 U.S.

- To approve the recommendation of the Audit Committee to accept the Dixon Hughes Goodman letter of engagement for audit services for the financial year ending December 31, 2013.

The Board, in its oversight capacity, took the following actions:

- To create a Task Force to revise the references to the Area name changing process in the Handbook section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), as well as review the entire Handbook section for possible updates.
- To accept the revised *2013 Conference Procedures* booklet, as corrected.
- To revise the suggested levels of skills on the Trustee résumé to the following: basic experience, working experience, expert.
- To adopt the proposal to remove a Trustee as Chairperson of the Literature and Public Outreach Committees, and replace the Trustee with an at-Large Committee Chairperson on a three-year trial basis.
- To place the Executive Committee for Real Property Management descriptive text under Concept Eight.
- To approve the International Coordination Committee "Criteria for Translation and Printing of Initial Literature for Evolving Structures" as presented.
- To extend the trial of distributing the consolidated version of the Board Profile to the CCT and the RCT for an additional year.
- To approve the 2014 World Service Conference theme as follows:

"World Service Conference:
Our Spiritual Principles in Action"
- To end the trial for TEAM events and to adopt them as a permanent part of the structure, replacing Regional Service Seminars.
- To communicate the Al-Anon book reading marathon challenge, on behalf of the General Service Office in Finland, to our structure as well as to other structures around the world.
- To accept the Investment Guidelines and Philosophy as amended.

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.

Strategic Plan:

A means for Al-Anon's Board of Trustees to build and expand on the initial big dream began by Lois and Anne. The big-thinking of this plan guides the Board of Trustees in decisions for serving and preserving Al-Anon Family Groups for those who come after us.

Why a Strategic Plan?

- A tool to think and plan for growth, before we can grow.
- A living document to be reviewed yearly and updated as necessary.
- A means of providing direction for goals for the World Service Office, the Committees, and the Board itself.
- A direction to follow, always being flexible to changing conditions, within and without.
- A means to carry out the Board of Trustees' Vision and Mission Statements.

Strategic planning is a relatively new and developing function for the Board of Trustees. Work through 2013 saw us take a look at trends and changes the future may hold in our evolving environment. The Board was keenly focused on reviewing our history of strategic planning and the present Strategic Plan for its usefulness going forward. The Board's Strategic Plan priorities currently read:

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.

After review, the Board determined that it would be useful to add the statement that all work on the Strategic Plan should ensure that technology and communication methods of today's world are taken into consideration. Also, that spiritual principles will continue to permeate everything we do, in policy and practice.

Terms describing the work of the Strategic Plan were agreed upon by the Board, to make communications more concise among the Board members themselves, the Board's various Committees, and the WSO staff, who help carry out the Strategic Plan.

The World Service Office staff continued to work on goals and objectives, which they formulated from the first two Strategic Plan priorities of the Board. 2013 did not see additional goals added, partly because of the ongoing work being done and partly because staff resources were directed towards the 2013 International Convention.

The WSO Director of Member Services and the Director of Communications continue to report to the Board on their progress with the current goals and objectives:

Member Services:

Goal 1: To support Al-Anon groups in welcoming and retaining new members.

Objectives to further this goal are ongoing and include the online blog and a blog kiosk at the 2013 International Convention to start the conversation and best determine ways and means of carrying out the second goal of Member Services.

Goal 2: To update WSO service tools to ensure they reflect a vibrant, inclusive, and flexible viewpoint and link service with our spiritual principles.

Objectives to carry out this goal will be planned and carried out in 2014.

Communications:

Goal 1: To increase members' *willingness* to participate in Twelfth Step work. Rationale: WSO has consistently encouraged members to participate in various projects that will carry our message, but there appears to be only a relatively small population that actively participates in Twelfth-Step work. Perhaps what is lacking is the *basic willingness*, due to various fears, lack of confidence, and a variety of cultural factors, including a confusion of anonymity for secrecy. Addressing these deeper issues on a long-term basis could increase the number of members who participate in Twelfth Step work over time, and encourage those who are now participating to do so at a higher level. A variety of objectives are planned to carry out this goal, starting with a survey to determine members' level of involvement in service and their motivations and fears participating.

The Board of Trustees is working on the third priority by setting up processes to monitor, for example, the effectiveness of Task Forces, Thought Forces, etc. and by looking at the skills of individuals in order to best utilize their talents. The Board will also revise forms and charges so as to raise awareness of the current Strategic Plan priorities. Committees, Thought Forces, Task Forces, and Work Groups will be asked to keep the Strategic Plan in mind while carrying out their work for Al-Anon.

Update: Universal Understanding of Recovery: Over the course of the past several years, the Task Force on Universal Understanding of Recovery has developed a definition of family recovery that has been tested at various times with members and professionals. This year, two near-final versions of this definition have been tested. The most recent survey asked members to choose between these two near-final versions. A report will be produced for Board approval and the next steps will be presented.

Refining the Strategic Plan and defining how the Strategic Plan is developed and monitored is always in progress as the Board works to ensure the ongoing growth and strength of Al-Anon Family Groups, worldwide.

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 updates from the Executive Director, 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 résumés 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 a short survey for the visitors of the WSO Facebook page.
- Approved an audio version of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) as a downloadable audio file in cooperation with third-party vendors, and to set the price at \$19.99 U.S.
- Approved the printing of the English 2014-2017 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P24/27) and the English *Groups at Work* (P-24).
- Authorized the Alateen Work Group to conduct a Thought Force via Survey Monkey, on the topic of "Teens and Technology."

POLICY COMMITTEE

Paula B., Chairperson
Harriet T., Co-Chairperson
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 Outreach

The 2010 WSC referred the "Public Relations" section, pages 107-109 in the 2010-2013 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, to the Policy Committee. The goal of reorganizing this section was to address the continuing emergence of new communication technologies and the spiritual basis for Al-Anon's public outreach activities, while leaving intact the 1966 World Service Conference's statement on "Attraction—Not promotion." The spiritual principles identified were:

- 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.

The title of this section was changed to "Public Outreach," to be consistent with current language in the fellowship. 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 interests them, rather than the entire section. At the 2013 WSC, members reviewed the Public Outreach Policy section by section, asked questions, and made modifications prior to approval.

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. Extensive research was completed on the policy of accepting family non-member donations that was in place from 1962 to 1984. This information was reviewed by the Policy Committee and presented to the 2013 World Service Conference. The conference members discussed: pros and cons of allowing memorial contributions from family members who are not members of Al-Anon; ways that a non-Al-Anon family member can show gratitude to the program other than a direct contribution; an expanded definition of family in light of diverse family structures; limited and unlimited contributions; and safeguards to ensure no influence on the fellowship. Based on the conversation, the WSC asked that this topic be discussed at the 2014 WSC and clarification on the terms "friend" and "family" and suggested safeguards, if this Policy were changed. A Thought Force has been working on a presentation for the 2014 WSC to address these issues.

Anonymity Within Al-Anon/Alateen

In October 2011, the Policy Committee began discussion about e-mail correspondence as a result of member communication on the use of the name "Al-Anon" in both e-mail address and subject line of the electronic newsletter. The Policy Committee reviewed the "Anonymity" section of "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" and provided clarification on the current mailing address (CMA) and trusted servant e-mail address, maintaining confidential mailing lists, publications within and

outside the fellowship, and anonymity on Area Web sites. The revised text was discussed at the 2013 WSC and, following some changes, was approved.

Policy on Collaboration With Researchers

The Policy Committee reviewed the policy on Collaboration with Researchers and reaffirmed that the current policy is within the Twelve Traditions.

Abundance and Reserve Funds

At the 2013 WSC, the Open Policy Committee Meeting discussed the spiritual and financial principles behind reserve funds within the context of Concept Twelve, Warranty One. A Policy Committee Thought Force was charged with researching the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” to identify the sections that could incorporate these spiritual and financial principles in relation to an ample reserve. Based on the multiple sections identified that would benefit from expansion on the spiritual principles of abundance, gratitude, unity, faith, and trust, the Policy Committee suggested a reorganization of the “Financial Matters” section of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.”

Contributions from Conferences, Conventions, Workshops, etc.,

During the Open Policy Committee Meeting at the 2013 WSC, the Committee discussed contributions from conferences, conventions, workshops, etc., that may or may not be tied to a service structure. After discussion, the Committee determined that our current policy of accepting contributions as acknowledgment of and in proportion to Al-Anon attendance, is aligned with the spiritual principles found in Tradition Seven.

ADMINISTRATION

The Human Resources Consultant facilitated a training session for the management staff as an introduction to the idea of appreciative inquiry, which was an introduction to a method of communication based on principle-based leadership strengths and a process to align strengths to the mission and vision of the organization.

The Human Resources Consultant completed the staff development training in February. This session introduced different approaches on how to be a supervisor, how to use appreciative inquiry, and supportive-type leadership and management oversight. The Administrative Team further recommended that the consultant be used on a per section basis for section-related training and other issues. It may require the Consultant in a more limited way, depending on their goals. Having the Human Resources Consultant has allowed us to have staff development and training, which never happened with the full-time Human Resources staff member.

Work on the Conflict Resolution Toolkit was near completion by the end of the year. The staff identified ideas including tips for using the toolkit at groups, district, AIS, and Area levels. The

staff has also considered developing some interactive workshops that would display the tools. The process reached the point where the Directors returned to direct oversight of the project, without becoming involved in developing the specific parts of the project. The staff operated with the idea that the final text was to be approved and ready by the March 2014 Executive Committee meeting. This will allow for the toolkit to be printed and ready in time for the 2014 World Service Conference (WSC).

At the beginning of the year, the Executive Director met with the Director of Member Services and the Associate Director of Member Services—Spanish about a new process to be implemented for production of the Steps podcasts in Spanish and French, in order to reduce the use of staff resources. This process was to draw members into the production process while giving them more ownership and interaction with each other. The English groups were also invited to use the same process starting with the production of Step Four. A similar process will be used for the “Best of Public Outreach” podcasts so that members will have access to audio as well as written personal sharings. The initial results were mixed. While the Spanish podcasts on the Steps were completed, we were unable to engage French members in order to complete them in French. There will not be any new Step podcasts in 2014.

The staff is proceeding with the options for production of e-books and on-line publishing. An on-line vendor was interviewed regarding a series of apps to sell *The Forum* on-line to be compatible with smart phones, Google, Nook, Kindle, and iTunes. This may have been resolved with the Nook app, which is free and permits access to Nook material.

The Executive Director and staff reviewed Apple, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble’s schedule of royalties to be paid to the WSO for electronic literature sold on their respective applications and Web sites. Some of the vendors have inflated royalty charges based on the price of a book. The Executive Director wrote to those vendors in an attempt to renegotiate royalties for the electronic version of *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics*. To date, no response has been received. As a result, some of our publications were not sold through these vendors.

Amazon’s magazine sales platform is currently in beta testing and not accepting new publications. The electronic version of *The Forum* has been posted on Nook. It was projected to be available to members in 2013; however, due to their delays, it was released in early 2014.

Two meetings were conducted with the operators of the WSO Toll Free Meeting Line, in order to review the scripts for the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system. This meeting gave the operators the opportunity to offer their input and suggestions for the script, and all agreed that the script needed to be consolidated. The Director of Communication Services and the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals decided that despite the implementation of the IVR, the WSO Toll Free Meeting Line will not be offering prompts for outside professionals to gain information about Al-Anon. Instead the script to the IVR will include a message advising the caller to contact the WSO for information.

The GSO Board of Trustees invited the Executive Director, who will be travelling with a member of the Board of Trustees,

to represent the WSO at the Al-Anon Conference in Mexico City, Mexico. They attended meetings with the various service arms and the Board on March 15-16, 2013, prior to the beginning of the Conference. The Conference was held March 17-22, 2013. The WSO representatives were invited to stay until March 23rd for additional meetings with the Board and Conference Committee.

The Executive Director participated in and presented a variety of workshops and discussions during service meetings and workshops in Australia and New Zealand August 20-September 20, 2013, as the guest of those structures. After the trip, several members wrote to their respective General Services Offices (GSOs) to express gratitude for the trip and many sent contributions to further express their gratitude. The Executive Director gave credit to their Board of Trustees for thinking out-of-the-box and investing in their futures. The Executive Director was able to clarify the lines of communication with the WSO for the New Zealand GSO, which recently had a staffing transition due to financial issues.

In October, the Executive Director traveled to Finland to attend their 60th Anniversary Celebration, October 6, 2013, in Kuopio. An ODAT reading marathon was also scheduled as part of the celebration. There were 75 to 100 members present. During the questions and answers portion of the event, it was discovered that Finland never translated *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24). As a result, the groups didn't necessarily know the range of topics that could be discussed at meetings. Whenever a newcomer came to a meeting, the group would spend the entire meeting going over the First Step. The Executive Director took this opportunity to coach the groups on ways to meet the needs of the newcomers, while still meeting those of the longtime members.

A member has contacted the Executive Director on several occasions in regard to a problem within her Area that led to her District being delisted from the Area meeting list and communication tree. The Executive Director, the Director of Member Services, and the Associate Director of Member Services were on a conference call with several members of the group, in order to answer their questions. The member was advised to work with the Area as it develops criteria for relisting and reminded that although the groups were not listed, they were still eligible to attend meetings and vote, provided they were not disruptive. By the end of the year, the Area drafted principle-based criteria for reinstatement, which will be confirmed in mid-2014. All of us learned the importance of having the criteria available from the beginning, so that groups knew what behaviors resulted in the delisting, and how they could comply in order to be relisted.

Several papers and publications were submitted by the researcher of the Family Health Survey. The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals, the Director of Communication, the Marketing Information Analyst, and the Executive Director reviewed each publication and made some comments for clarity in describing the program. An interesting fact from the survey indicated that more newcomers are attending Al-Anon meetings due to the symptoms of alcoholism in their loved ones, such as depression and lack of family interaction, rather than the drinking itself. The instructions of this survey asked that only members who have attended less than six meet-

ings fill out the survey. Over half of the members who filled out the survey were longtime members, which resulted in allowing the researcher the opportunity to compare and contrast the difference in attitude of newcomers versus longtime members about some of these topics.

One Area's Literature Distribution Center (LDC), with its own separate Board, did not understand the distinction between the legal aspect related to the corporation and the spiritual values of the fellowship. The Board often forgets to report to the Assembly. It was set up correctly, but does not report its actions correctly, and is under the impression that it is not required to do so. The Board removed a volunteer serving in the office, claiming that rotation of service required the removal. As a result, it had to consider closing down the LDC, as it was unable to find a replacement person. The Executive Director had a conference call with the Area Delegate to discuss the situation and to offer guidance as well as help her to stay within her role as Delegate.

At the end of September, the Executive Director worked with an AIS and two Areas regarding incorporation; all had the same misconceptions regarding the difference between the legal aspects of Al-Anon and Al-Anon the fellowship. Part of the difficulty was that Areas that have previously incorporated are sharing the process that they developed, which contains the wrong model in terms of Al-Anon's principles.

The Executive Director, the Director of Member Services, and the Associate Director of Member Services all worked with the volunteers to understand the principles as they revised the AIS By-Laws. The Area Delegate reported that the By-Laws were overwhelmingly passed and that the traditional arm will now be separate from the legal arm that will run the office. As there is currently no guideline or reference in the *Service Manual* regarding this topic, the Executive Director is considering creating a draft set of By-Laws and Incorporation guidelines to facilitate and clarify the process for those Areas and AIS/LDCs that may need them in the future.

The Executive Director received a phone call from a previous AIS staff member who learned that the AIS Treasurer had a criminal record. The AIS Board may be unaware of this and the member was concerned that the previous Treasurer had access to the AIS bank account information. The Executive Director advised the caller that it would be better if she stay uninvolved with the matter, as long as there would not be direct repercussions to her.

The publisher of a book using Al-Anon in the title was contacted about ceasing sale of the book. When no response was received, we reached out to his distribution partners to have them stop all sales of the book until reference to Al-Anon and use of our copyrights were amended.

The Executive Director also noted that a member sent the WSO an e-mail that she received from a therapist, who is using Al-Anon's name as well as the Steps to promote her group therapy. She was contacted and asked to stop doing so.

There continues to be problems with the use of Al-Anon's name on Facebook and Twitter. The Marketing Information Analyst sent the Executive Director information on many Facebook pages that were either using the Al-Anon name, logo, or combination of both. The Marketing Information Analyst sent

messages to the pages' administrators asking them to remove Al-Anon's trademarks from their pages. When they refused to comply, we wrote Facebook who agreed to take the sites down.

The Associate Director of Member Services—International discovered a company in Hong Kong that has registered a Web site similar to the Al-Anon on-line store, under the Web address www.al-anonstore.org. The Associate Director of Member Services notified the Web Architect, but due to time restraints, neither the Web Architect nor the Executive Director has been able to contact the Webmaster about the violation of the Al-Anon international trademark. The Executive Director noted that the WSO may have to purchase this Web address.

The Associate Director of Communications—Media has discovered that gobooke.org is advertising that anyone who provides credit card information can access Al-Anon literature for free through their Web site. Since the account was about to be closed, the staff used the credit card of the previous Associate Director of Member Services—Spanish, to test the ways this Web site works. The site's Webmaster was subsequently contacted and the site appears to have removed all copyrighted Al-Anon literature.

Permission has been granted to a new Twelve Step program for underearners to adapt our Steps.

Prior to the 2013 International Convention, Canada Revenue contacted the WSO regarding the \$50,000 limit required to register for GST, and had stated that it was going to require us to include onsite registration and badge charges. After the convention, Canada Revenue contacted the WSO again, but the representative on the call didn't understand why the WSO was choosing not to use its Canadian registered charity status. The Director of Business Services and the Executive Director participated in a conference call with the representative of Canada Revenue to discuss our revenues, including the charges for lost badges. At one point, the representative tried to count profits received from Canadian sales of *The Forum*, but it was explained to him that there are no profits due to the cost of postage and printing. The matter was finally resolved.

The production of the revamped Members' Web site is almost complete. Almost all of the text is now finalized. Once posted in 2014, the translators will begin work on the Spanish and French Web sites.

On October 15, 2013, the Executive Director, the Director of Communications, and the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals attended the Day of Sharing with Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) and the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (NCADD). During the discussion they learned that the General Service Conference voted against the General Service Office using social media because it is not consistent with their interpretation of the Traditions. There was also a discussion regarding whether or not Al-Anon accepting non-member contributions would adversely impact A.A. in any way. The Executive Director mentioned that Al-Anon had done it previously and is looking into doing it again. A.A. verified that it would not impact them at all.

The members are still having trouble transitioning to the new Communities. Several staff members have assisted some of the Trustees and Delegates in accessing their Communities and

its new functionality. There may be a need to re-send clearer instructions that will include the direct link to the Web site.

There was a discussion regarding the possibility of placing excerpts from the *Service Manual* (P-24/27) and the *Groups at Work* (P-24) in the *Group e-News*. The excerpts will be regarding anonymity and will let the readers know where they will be able to find the information in the *Service Manual*. A final decision has not been made, but there will be discussion about the goals of the publication and who the target audience is. The information would be sent to the Delegates first in order for them to reinforce it with the districts and groups in their Areas.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The Administrative Team is composed of the Director of Business Services, the Director of Communication Services, the Director of Member Services, and the WSO Controller. The Administrative Team was created to have oversight of certain office-wide projects assigned by the Executive Director, as well as provide leadership support to the office in the absence of the Executive Director. The Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Communication Services, has full authority to act on behalf of the Executive Director in his absence due to travel or illness.

Over the past several years, the Administrative Team has developed and continued to refine disaster recovery plans, so as to be able to restore services quickly, should any emergency affect daily office operations. In 2013, all of the electronic information that would be needed to restore the operations of AFG has been placed on the Internet and would be available by access to the Internet, in case of emergency. Several of the servers have undergone tests to ensure that the process does in fact work, and that the information provided is accurate. The system will be completely tested as soon as all of the issues with iMIS 20 have been resolved.

In 2013 we completed a hardware and software upgrade of iMIS, which is our association management system. The WSO staff uses iMIS to manage information about groups and meetings, product inventory and orders, contributions, subscriptions to *The Forum*, volunteer service positions, and so on. Members and others use the Web modules for on-line product orders, contributions, subscriptions to *The Forum*, and e-Communities. The upgrade included the integration of on-line contributions and subscriptions with literature orders. After an extensive testing period, the system upgrade was completed in November. The WSO continues to follow up with the vendor on a few remaining issues that have not yet been resolved since the upgrade.

The Administrative Team oversaw the development of the new Members' Web site, which will go live in early 2014, in English. The WSO Project Manager worked with the Web Consultant regarding the timeline for the project and the gathering of content.

Information on the new Members' Web site is categorized with the user in mind. The new navigation tabs identify these categories of users: Individual, Group, Service Structure, WSO, Public Outreach, and Alateen. In addition to the Web site's home

page, which will feature up to three items, each category has its own home page. A process is also being developed to ensure that materials on the Web site are updated and/or removed on a regular basis.

Also in 2013, a contract was executed by the Executive Director to implement an interactive voice recognition (IVR) software system, to provide meeting information to callers on the toll-free meeting line 24 hours daily, every day of the week. The Administrative Team oversaw the planning as well as the implementation of the system, which occurred in May of 2013. The service currently provides meeting information in English, French, and Spanish to individuals who are looking for a meeting in either the United States or Canada. On average, the

IVR System handles 2,000 calls per month. Approximately 20 percent of the calls, about 400 per month, are transferred to a live agent for further information. The Administrative Team has also managed the implementation of adjustments that were necessary, once the system was active.

In November, the Team took over direct oversight of the completion of the Conflict Resolution Tool Kit, ensuring that the various drafts were consistent and that deadlines were met. The plan and first drafts of some pieces will be submitted to the Executive Committee in January 2014 and the project will be presented to the Conference in April as planned. Spanish and French translations will be started as soon as final design drafts are approved for publication in English.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The Board's strategic priority. The Board's top strategic priority is "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." Increased visibility through repeated, multiple exposures is the primary tactic toward achieving the objective of wide public recognition of the Al-Anon name, which leads more people to learn more about Al-Anon and find their way to their first meetings. Visibility and name recognition are each measured in different ways.

In 2004, Al-Anon was already a "mature" organization that had been visible to the general public through a variety of means for nearly 55 years. Al-Anon's total awareness in 2004 was 63 percent. In 2013, total awareness was 68 percent, an increase of 5 points, which is a very significant gain. While a gap of nine years is a relatively long time span, this length of time is appropriate to the magnitude of the challenge of increasing Al-Anon's visibility with a total population of approximately 315 million Americans and 35 million Canadians. Changing perceptions in

an audience that large is like changing the direction of an aircraft carrier; it can't be done quickly.

The 26 percentage point gain in total awareness is the result of all of Al-Anon's communications efforts at every level in the service structure. In recent years, an increasing number of Al-Anon members have participated in outreach to their local TV and radio stations, which has resulted in broad visibility for the Al-Anon name.

In 2004, 26 percent of the survey respondents mentioned Al-Anon, without any clues or prompting, when they were asked if they could name an organization that provided support and help to the friends and families of alcoholics. This question measures "unaided awareness," which is important because top-of-mind awareness indicates an emotional connection and a deeper familiarity with the Al-Anon name. In 2013, 30 percent could name Al-Anon, without clues or prompting, an increase in unaided awareness of four percentage points.

Visibility is measured by counting the total number of times the Al-Anon message appears in public media. Visibility is important because repeated exposure leads to increased name recognition, which eventually leads to action.

Ranked by gross impressions, the annual results of our communications programs are:

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>IMPRESSIONS</u>	<u>COMPARISON TO 2012</u>
Television PSAs	991 million (U.S.)	502 million (U.S.)
Radio PSAs	187.7 million (U.S., ten months)	227 million
Facebook	44.5 million	9 million
Google ads	3.9 million	2.5 million
News releases	1 million	.5 million (8/12-12/12)
Twitter	1.2 million	.44 million
<i>Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism</i>	<u>.32 million</u>	<u>.36 million</u>
Total	1.2 billion	741.8 million

In addition to these impressions, in 2013, Al-Anon was prominently mentioned twice by the “Dear Abby” newspaper advice column, as well as by “Annie’s Mailbox,” which is the descendant of the Ann Landers column. These columnists are published by more than 2,000 newspapers, which generate millions of impressions that cannot be calculated for inclusion in this report.

Most of the growth in gross impressions this year is due to our success in getting airplay on major TV stations in top ten media markets, where Al-Anon PSAs had never gotten significant airtime previously. For example:

- In New York City, on WABC, the ABC affiliate: 75 airplays, 58 million impressions.
- In Dallas-Fort Worth, on KXKS, the NBC affiliate, 180 airplays, 27.7 million impressions.
- Houston, on KHOU, the CBS affiliate, 180 airplays, 29.7 million impressions.
- In Los Angeles, on KVEA, the Telemundo affiliate (Spanish), 240 airplays, 29 million impressions.

In all, 588 TV stations in the U.S. and Canada gave airplay to Al-Anon PSAs in 2012, compared to about 450 in 2011. There were about 56,000 TV airplays in 2013, about the same as in 2012. That total puts Al-Anon in the top 2 percent of the 1,600 organizations that distributed PSAs in 2013.

Outreach to professionals. Staff focused on completion of the *Presenter’s and Resources Guides* to accompany and enhance the four Treatment Facilities Outreach Project Workshop Power-Point modules. These materials are designed as aids to Al-Anon service arms to establish and revitalize cooperative relationships with treatment and mental health facilities that offer substance abuse services to alcoholics and their family members.

Staff was accompanied by the Virginia Delegate at a meeting with the Chief of the Department of Addiction Medicine for the behavioral health care and substance abuse program at the U.S. Department of Defense’s Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, Fort Belvoir, VA. This recently created program is for U.S. military personnel of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who have Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD), brain trauma injuries from improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and alcoholism. In addition to spouses, parents also participate in the family program because the average age of military personnel is 25. *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines and the *Al-Anon and Alateen’s Role in Family Recovery* DVD (AV-31) were provided to help introduce Al-Anon to the family members of the patients. The VA Delegate accompanied the Associate Director of Communications—Professionals to an appointment to explore the establishment of three weekly Al-Anon meetings for family members of alcoholics.

Updated Al-Anon information was provided to a psychologist in preparation for an interview about adult children of alcoholics. The interview is posted on WebMD, a Web site that is widely utilized as a resource for health and health care.

Clarification of the terms, “cooperation,” “attraction,” and “support” were provided to several Area trusted servants and local members involved in staffing Al-Anon information tables at conferences. Members staffing the Al-Anon information table at the Puerto Rico Addiction Research Foundation and the Los Angeles Times health fair reported that their display

booths attracted a large number of visitors. Puerto Rican members also enjoyed meeting and hearing a professional’s presentation of research findings about Al-Anon, which resulted from the WSO’s cooperation with the researcher.

Professionals contacted the WSO throughout the year to request additional copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazines. Although members often include their meeting schedules in the magazines, a local Al-Anon telephone contact number is also needed, so that professionals can ask members to replenish the supply of magazines left at their offices for patients and clients.

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Karen W-P. / Deborah C., 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, including an At-Large member Chairperson on a trial basis, a Trustee liaison to the Board of Trustees, and the WSO staff liaison. 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, and as needed.

During 2013, the WSO Public Outreach Committee provided guidance to staff for developing training modules to engage the fellowship in outreach to treatment facility professionals. The Committee also provided guidance and feedback for a resource guide and a presenter’s guide to introduce the training modules to the fellowship. The purpose of these service tools is to foster and sustain working relationships between local volunteers and staff members at treatment facilities. Treatment facilities’ staff is in an ideal position to refer more families and friends of alcoholics to Al-Anon and Alateen.

The WSO Public Outreach Committee reviewed and approved scripts for the 2014-2015 public service announcements (PSAs). The scripts followed the same formula that consistently placed Al-Anon in the top five percent of estimated audiences for all PSAs during recent years, according to the Nielsen rating service. Local Al-Anon members continue to play an important role in increasing Al-Anon’s visibility through the PSA program. By thanking stations for playing the PSAs and educating other stations about the value of Al-Anon and Alateen to local communities, Al-Anon members have helped the audience continue to expand.

The Public Outreach Committee has identified priority audiences for WSO staff to target in ongoing projects. Ongoing projects include all of the topics in “The Best of Public Outreach,” a collection of how-to-do-it suggestions on the Members’ Web site.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

Reaching for Personal Freedom. Order forms, articles, and other materials to help increase awareness of this new workbook were completed during the first half of 2013, while transla-

tions into French and Spanish were being completed. The workbook was introduced on July 4th at the Al-Anon International Convention in Vancouver, B.C.

Electronic publications. *The Forum* available on Nook

The electronic version of *The Forum* will be available on the Barnes & Noble Nook® electronic reader in January 2014. The magazine will sell for \$1.49 per issue or \$11 for a year's subscription, which will be a significant savings on mailing costs for Canada. As Nook® products are accessible with an app on other electronic platforms, people will be able to buy the electronic version for smart phones, tablets, and computers.

PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS OF YOUNG PROBLEM DRINKERS (working title). A guide to encourage members to submit writings for this pamphlet was developed, posted on the Members' Web site, and sent to all Literature Coordinators. In addition, articles and notices were included in *The Forum*, *Area Highlights*, and *Group e-News* to encourage writing. Very few submissions have been received so far.

INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title). The WSO has received over 1,000 sharings, but very few express the diversity that the discussion at the 2011 Conference envisioned this piece to include. Notices in WSO publications and requests to Literature Coordinators continued throughout the year.

Pamphlet revisions. The Literature Committee's revisions to *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (P-21) are now in print, as is a minor revision of *Facts about Alateen* (P-41). Minor revisions of the Concept Five descriptive text in *The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best Kept Secret?* (P-57), and the major revision of *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33) have been approved by the Literature Committee and are expected to be in print in early to mid-2014.

Literature Coordinators. Regular postings were made throughout the year to the Literature Coordinator e-Community. In addition, complementary copies of *Reaching for Personal Freedom* (P-92) were distributed to all Coordinators, so that they could adequately describe the workbook to Area members and encourage them to read it.

Coordinator Conference Calls. In March and September, the Associate Director of Communications—Literature hosted hour long conference calls with Area Literature Coordinators, to continue enhancing communication and cooperation regarding their role. Thirty-nine out of 67 Coordinators participated in the March call, with 36 included in the September call.

How Al-Anon Works (B-32). An "Inside Al-Anon Family Groups" article and several "CAL Corner" articles appeared throughout the year in *The Forum* to remind members that the intended purpose of the soft cover version of this book is to encourage members and groups to pay their gratitude forward by giving this book to newcomers. Notices were also included in other WSO newsletters and to all Literature Coordinators.

At-Large Committee Member Search. At the end of April 2014, three At-Large members of the Literature Committee will

be stepping down after serving the maximum of six years. An appeal was sent to Delegates in all eligible Regions to encourage interested members to apply for these openings.

"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.

FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Charles Y. / Evan J., Chairpersons

Robert S., Staff Liaison, Director of Communication Services

FEAC members reached the consensus that the word "international" should not be deleted from the magazine's statement of purpose. The Committee proposed a slight change, however, in that statement: "*The Forum* is **an** international monthly publication of Al-Anon Family Groups." Since the magazine is already read throughout the U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda, it is in fact an international publication, but not the only one. The previous statement described *The Forum* as "**the** international monthly publication of Al-Anon Family Groups...."

The Forum's 60th Anniversary in 2014

The Forum – 60 years sharing our experience, strength, and hope!

The Committee agreed to pay tribute to the past 60 years by reprinting sharings from past issues. Members are to be invited to suggest a favorite *Forum* sharing for possible reprint during the coming year. One or two archived sharings will be reprinted every month starting January through December 2014.

Creating a Forum book

The Committee is continuing to discuss the pros and cons of a suggestion to publish a book that would reprint some of the more significant stories published in past years in *The Forum*. FEAC members agreed to use the KBDM process to determine whether to proceed with the project.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Tina B. / Michael K., Chairpersons

Tom C., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Literature

One of the major accomplishments of the Literature Committee in 2013 was the implementation of a Board plan to replace the Trustee Chairperson with a Chairperson selected from the Committee's At-Large members. The reason for the change was so that the Board could concentrate on the bigger picture of Al-Anon as a whole, rather than be focused on the details of routine tasks. A Trustee Liaison attends meetings with voice but no vote, serving as a communication link between the Board and the Committee. This transition in structure occurred smoothly.

The Committee currently consists of ten Delegate members, five At-Large members (including the Chairperson), the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Trustee Liaison to the Board. It continues to meet via quarterly conference calls, with intermediate correspondence held through e-mails and the e-Community discussion boards.

In April, the Committee recommended to the World Service Conference that a pamphlet be developed for parents and grandparents of young problem drinkers. The Conference gave conceptual approval, and during the year, the Committee approved wording for a guideline to encourage members to submit writings for the pamphlet.

The Committee continued its discussion regarding whether or not to recommend a piece to the WSC on abuse in alcoholic relationships (including verbal abuse), using the KBDM process. Ultimately, members agreed that they were not comfort-

able at this time with recommending a piece on this subject to the next Conference.

Since March of 2012, the Literature Committee had been discussing the possibility of developing a new daily reader. This discussion continued, using the KBDM process, resulting in the decision to recommend to the 2014 WSC, the development of a daily reader that reflects the diversity of our fellowship.

Other actions of the Committee included approval of revisions to pamphlets mentioned earlier in this report and submitted a recommendation to the Policy Committee for a title or subtitle change for “Dear Mom & Dad” (P-67) to better reflect its content.

The Committee also reviewed seven other suggestions from the fellowship for new literature or revisions to existing literature, but no other recommendations have been made at this time.

MEMBER SERVICES

GROUP SERVICES

2014-2017 AL-ANON/ALATEEN SERVICE MANUAL

The new policy text on “Anonymity” and “Public Outreach,” approved by the 2013 World Service Conference, was incorporated into the *Manual*. Staff reviewed and updated the “Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work” section, including revisions for clarity to the sections on “Starting an Al-Anon Group,” “Starting an Alateen Group,” “Naming the Group,” “Starting an Electronic Meeting,” “Public Outreach in the Community,” and “Group Business.” New text was added on “Membership” and “Sharing in Al-Anon/Alateen Meetings.” The new *Manual* was posted to the Members’ Web site, and complimentary copies of the *Service Manual* (P-24/27) and *Groups at Work* (P-24) will be mailed to English, Spanish, and French groups early in 2014.

AL-ANON/ALATEEN GUIDELINES

All Al-Anon/Alateen Guidelines were reviewed in 2013 and scheduled for updating. As guidelines are now only available on-line, a new, printer-friendly design was adopted, and the date has been added to identify the year of revision. Those guidelines that are applicable to our Spanish and French groups have been prioritized for translation. Guideline revisions completed in English, Spanish, and French: *Members Interested in Speaking* (G-1), *Al-Anon Information Services (AIS)* (G-4), *Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention* (G-7), *Suggested Programs for Meetings* (G-13), *Starting an Alateen Group* (G-19), and *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34).

Guideline revision completed in English and Spanish (French translation in process): *Al-Anon/Alateen Public Outreach Service – Outreach to the Public/Media* (G-10).

Guideline revisions completed in English (French and Span-

ish translations in process): *Taking a Group Inventory* (G-8a/b) and *Starting an Al-Anon Group* (G-12).

Guideline revisions completed in English (will not be translated at this time): *Area Literature Coordinator* (G-6) and *Area Archives* (G-30)

BLOG ON WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

In support of the Member Services Section goal to support Al-Anon Groups in welcoming and retaining new members, a blog was posted to the Members’ Web site in April, asking members to share how their group welcomes new members. Additionally, a kiosk was provided in the hospitality room at the International Convention with direct access to the blog. A total of 66 comments were posted on the topic. The Member Services managers reviewed the responses, and determined that three key components practiced by many groups were:

- Offer a Newcomer Packet with a meeting list and/or other Conference Approved Literature.
- Spend meeting time to acknowledge and welcome the new member.
- Initiate one-on-one contact before or after the meeting.

With these results in mind, a discussion board was launched in October on the District Representative (DR) e-Community, asking DRs to provide input on what thriving groups do to welcome new members. At year end, 15 DRs had responded, many confirming the member responses. The DR discussion will continue into 2014.

“DO NOT REFER”

Several Areas are working on composing criteria for groups in their Area to be listed on Area meeting schedules. Areas, districts, and AISs are encouraged to be sure that such guidelines are principle-based and can be applied to all groups.

GROUP SERVICE CORRESPONDENCE

The most frequent inquiries to Group Services from members and groups were regarding the dual member policy, business meetings/group conscience, group job descriptions, “crosstalk,” where to find the meeting format, and budgeting. Additionally, there were several inquiries regarding meditation in both face-to-face and telephone Al-Anon meetings. The WSO does not register meetings for the purpose of meditation; such activities are not within the scope of sharing experience, strength, and hope with each other, and may be seen as affiliation or endorsement of outside therapies or religions. Group Services provided information to Area Delegates to help them respond to questions in their Areas about meditation meetings.

AL-ANON INFORMATION SERVICES (AISs)

The 2013 *Getting in Touch with Al-Anon/Alateen* (S-23) was completed on schedule and included with the mailing of the January issue of *The Forum*. The annual update for AISs and AIS/LDCs was completed, with a 49% response rate (98 returned out of 201). Updates to the WSO Web site listings are made throughout the year. We now have e-mail addresses for 80 percent of the AISs and AIS/LDCs (162 out of 201).

ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

The 2013 Electronic Meeting Update was sent to 81 CMAs (Current Mailing Addresses) in the WSO structure. Responses were received from 47 meetings (58%). Thirteen of the respondents (eight telephone meetings and five e-mail meetings) indicated increases in membership. The eight telephone meetings' total membership increased from 120 to 405 (237%), and the five e-mail meetings from 1,475 to 3,243 (120%). At year end there was a total of 127 registered electronic meetings, including 50 Internet-based meetings. In 2013, 12 new telephone meetings were registered. There are a total of 77 telephone meetings on five different phone lines (70 English, 7 Spanish).

ALATEEN CHAT MEETINGS

The only electronic meetings authorized to use the Alateen name are those using the chat rooms administered by the WSO. Two new Alateen chat rooms were added in 2013, bringing the total number of U.S./Canada Area chat rooms to 12. Attendance continues to build in the chat meetings, which now average three to four Alateens in attendance. Those Areas are using the chat meetings in their Alateen public outreach efforts continue to have the highest attendance. Poland has registered a weekly Alateen chat meeting, and France (which previously had scheduled one monthly meeting) has added a second meeting each month.

AREA ALATEEN COORDINATORS

Fifteen new Area Alateen Coordinators attended the new Coordinator conference call in January. Eighteen of the 22 new Panel Areas participated; in some cases another trusted servant attended the call. A call for all Coordinators in June on the topic of Alateen Public Outreach was attended by representatives from 35 Areas.

ALATEEN TRAINING MATERIALS

The WSO Alateen Training Modules (PowerPoint format) were updated to reflect references to the *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. Area Coordinators continue to adapt and use these materials in Alateen Group Sponsor training.

The new “Alateen Service e-Manual,” with information for all Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), was completed and posted to the new Members' Web site.

ALATEEN ANNUAL AMIAS RECERTIFICATION

The Alateen Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-3) and instructions were revised and posted on the AAPP e-Community. The format of the GR-3 form is similar to the WSO Online Group Records application. It is available in electronic format (PDF writable), so it can be completed and e-mailed. To support the Area process, the WSO does not post Alateen forms on the WSO Web sites or distribute them to members.

Starting this year, AAPPs had the option to complete their Annual Alateen Recertification on-line, which saves them time and significantly decreases the amount of paperwork required by the WSO, or to complete it manually and submit via postal mail. Fifty-nine Areas (88 percent) completed their 2013 AMIAS Recertification via the On-line Group Records application, exceeding the WSO's expectation.

The AAPPs' overall feedback was very positive throughout the recertification period. They look forward to processing Alateen group changes on-line in the next phase of the On-line Group Records.

GROUP RECORDS

The automated phone system, Interactive Voice Response (IVR), was launched in May 2013 providing callers with Al-Anon meeting information “on demand” 24 hour a day/seven days a week, on the WSO toll-free meeting information line. Callers have the option to use the automated phone system to locate a meeting or to speak to an operator during WSO business hours for Alateen meetings, special designation meetings, and other specific meeting information.

A monthly average of 1,950 English (1,150 calls during business hours and 800 after hours), 82 Spanish (50 calls during business hours and 32 after hours), and 26 French calls (20 calls during business hours and 6 after hours) have been handled by the Interactive Voice Response system (IVR) during the period of June to November, 2013. Several enhancements were made after the original launch of the IVR to improve the caller's experience on the automated system.

During the same period an average of English 390 callers (34%), 16 Spanish callers (33%), and four French callers (20%) requested to be transferred to a live phone operator after accessing the IVR system for additional information. This highlights the importance of continuing to provide live operators on the WSO toll-free meeting information line.

The total number of registered Al-Anon & Alateen groups

worldwide in 2013 is 25,647

- US/PR/BDA Al-Anon 13,237
- US/PR/BDA Alateen 968
- Canada Al-Anon 1,304
- Canada Alateen 88
- International Al-Anon 9,361
- International Alateen 689
- Electronic meetings 123

The Group Records Department started using an electronic report in early 2013 of “forwarded addresses” provided by our new mailer. The mailer updates the address labels prior to sending the mailing, and then provides a report of the affected addresses afterward to the WSO, so the information can be updated in the WSO database. This innovative process resulted in a 70 percent decrease of returned mail within the first few months.

A memorandum explaining Al-Anon group delisting versus inactivation was posted on the Area Group Records Coordinator e-Community when it was revealed through e-mails that an increasing number of Area Group Records Coordinators and DRs were inactivating Al-Anon groups as a result of the Area delisting. The WSO Group Records Department has tightened its verification process following the discussion about delisting at the WSC to ensure that groups changed to “inactive” status meet the criteria to be inactivated.

The annual group records purge completed in March removed 977 groups from the WSO database. The affected groups were in “inactive” status more than three years, prior to 2010, or inactive with financial information prior to 2006.

ON-LINE GROUP RECORDS

Sixty-six Areas are routinely using the WSO On-line Group Records application to process Al-Anon group changes and submit new group registrations.

Area Group Records Coordinators were impacted by the WSO database upgrade in mid-November, as a limited number of Coordinators were not able to access the WSO Online Group Records application for an extended period of time once the upgrade was completed.

GROUP E-NEWS

As of November 2013 the WSO has a total of 9,118 valid e-mail addresses in the WSO database, which increased by 7 percent (621) from 2012. The number of English speaking group e-mail addresses increased by 6 percent (571), French 23 percent (26) and Spanish 9 percent (26) during the year. It was noted that the number of valid e-mail address reported in 2012 only included the number of unique e-mail addresses. Duplicate e-mail addresses are excluded from the *Group e-News* mailing list by the vendor, so recipients don't receive multiple e-mails. Duplicate e-mail addresses occur when one e-mail address is used by several groups. New e-mail addresses were added by the Area Group Records Coordinators and from the Annual Update Sheets submitted to the WSO.

Some Areas encouraged their members to have a registered group e-mail, rather than submitting the Current Mail-

ing Addresses' (CMAs) personal e-mail address to protect the members' personal e-mail information.

GROUP RECORDS CONFERENCE CALLS

The annual Area Group Records Coordinator Conference call was held on January 26, 2013. Seventy-two percent of the panel 53 new Area Group Records Coordinators participated in the call. The focus of the call was to reinforce the importance of maintaining accurate group information, introduce the On-line Group Records application to the new Coordinators, and respond to concerns and questions members had about their new position. Fourteen Areas, eighty-seven percent of the new Area Group Records Coordinators who participated, used the WSO On-line Group Records Web application following the call compared to only fifty percent in 2012.

The conference call for the new Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) was also held on January 26th. The call was designed to review the Alateen forms and the certification process, highlight the benefits of using the newly released “read only” format of the On-line Group Records application extension, and to provide WSO staff with the opportunity to respond to questions. Twelve Areas participated in the call. Several Areas were not represented since their AAPPs were serving a second term. Fifty percent of the Panel 53 AAPPs accessed the On-line Group Records application following the call. An additional call was held in March to review the Annual Alateen Recertification process and introduce the On-line recertification. Area Delegates and Alateen Coordinators were invited to listen during the call. Five thousand four hundred ninety one Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) were certified in 2013.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH**WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE AND AREA DELEGATES**

The Panel 53 Delegates were given access to e-Communities, the on-line system the WSO uses to communicate with the Delegates.

Conference members submitted a total of 19 Chosen Agenda Items (CAIs) for possible discussion during the 2014 World Service Conference. The Conference Leadership Team created a Task Force, consisting of two Delegates and the Conference Chairperson, to combine similar CAI topics into one topic.

Ninety-eight voting members attended the 53rd World Service Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 14-18, 2013. This was the second year the Conference voted electronically, rather than by paper ballots. Mexico sent a General Service Office Representative to attend the 2013 Conference. The *2013 World Service Conference Summary* is posted on the Members' Web site.

DISCUSSION BOARDS

Delegates continue to share on a variety of discussion topics, including sharing their Area's experience with having liability insurance.

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

A special “Day of Connecting” was held on Thursday, July 4. The event included new, innovative workshops on topics typically available at TEAM events. TEAM events were not held during the year of the International Convention. Day of Connecting attendees were able to select from topics such as “Anonymity in Social Media;” “Abundance and Tradition Seven;” “Diversity,” and “Welcoming Newcomers” in 90-minute sessions; or attend a five-hour session, “Using the Concepts in Our Personal Lives.” The registration was 1,523.

The final registration for the Convention was 3,763, which included 51 Alateen members and 411 A.A. members. Also included in these numbers were 42 French-speaking and 117 Spanish-speaking members. The final registration included attendees from Canada—1,186; the U.S.—2,386; Bermuda—8; and Puerto Rico—5, as well as members from these countries outside of the World Service Conference Structure: Australia—42; Barbados—2; Belgium—3; Bolivia—1; Cayman Islands—5; Costa Rica—1; Denmark—2; Dominican Republic—1; England—13; Germany—2; Honduras—2; India—1; Ireland—2; Italy—3; Latvia—1; Mauritius—1; Mexico—7; New Zealand—7; Philippines—1; Scotland—7; Singapore—2; Slovenia—1; South Africa—7; South Korea—2; Spain—2; Sweden—6; Switzerland—5; and the United Kingdom—11. One hundred twenty-one members registered on site and nearly 90 percent of attendees registered on-line.

Program: The program was printed in English, French, and Spanish, and workshops took place in the three languages. French-speaking members had planned workshop topics for the first time. Spanish-speaking members had two meeting rooms for their workshops. More than 400 English-, French-, and Spanish-speaking members took part as speakers or moderators in the workshops and Big Meetings. Alcoholics Anonymous held daytime meetings at the Convention Centre. For this Convention, the Big Meetings were held in an Exhibit Hall at the Convention Centre. Since all seating was floor level, there were delay screens half way back, in addition to the screens on either side of the stage, so that all attendees were able to see the speakers. In addition to closed captioning for the hearing impaired, French- and Spanish-speaking members had access to simultaneous translation. Approximately 500 members marched in the Language of Love Parade before the Friday night International Big Meeting.

More than 150 members from the British Columbia/Yukon Area volunteered for the Host Committee. Among other tasks, Host Committee volunteers welcomed Convention attendees to Vancouver at the airport and on the sidewalks outside of the Convention Centre. Inside, volunteers manned an Information Booth, assisted with giving directions to workshop rooms, and

decorated and staffed the Hospitality Room. A dinner to thank the core members of the Host Committee was hosted by the World Service Office (WSO) on June 1, 2013, during the WSO Planning Committee’s final site visit.

Pioneer Luncheon: 1,548 participants attended, where nine luncheon attendees, each with more than 50 years in Al-Anon, were invited in advance, to share from the audience. In addition, two longtime members spoke about the World Service Conference and the World Service Office.

Alateen workshops: Over 40 Alateens were registered; five children aged nine to 11 also attended some of the Alateen workshops. Between 25 and 35 young people attended each of the six Alateen workshops. Several of them had never attended Alateen before, but by the end of the first meeting, they had made friends with others. The majority of the teens were from BC and AB; other Areas represented were CA-N, CA-S, CO, IA, MB, NC, NM, ON-S, OR, PA, PR, QC-E, SC, SK, TX, and WA. Several Alateens who did not have Alateen meetings in their cities were encouraged to participate in the Alateen chat meetings.

Evaluations: An electronic survey was sent to English-, French-, and Spanish-speaking Al-Anon attendees via e-mail. Al-Anon attendees who did not provide an e-mail address received a hard copy evaluation by mail. Preliminary responses indicate that the Convention was an overall success and the majority of those responding would be inclined to encourage others to attend Al-Anon’s Sixth International Convention in Baltimore, Maryland in July 2018.

TEAM EVENTS

Due to the 2013 International Convention TEAM Events were not scheduled for 2013. However, during the year, nine Areas submitted bids to host a TEAM event in 2014. They are: California South (January 18, 2014), Alabama/Northwest Florida (March 9, 2014), Pennsylvania (March 22, 2014), Florida South (April 5-6, 2014), Missouri (June 7, 2014), Mississippi (June 21, 2014), California North (September 6, 2014), Nebraska (October 10-11, 2014), and New Mexico (November 15-16, 2014).

TRANSLATION DEPARTMENT

The following projects were translated into Spanish and French in 2013:

- Treatment Facilities Modules one, two, and three
- 2013 International Convention Web site
- 2013 International Convention Survey
- 2014-2017 *Service Manual*
- *Reaching for Personal Freedom* Workbook (P-92)
- *In All Our Affairs* update (B-15)
- *How Al-Anon Works* (e-B-22) [Electronic version only]
- Readiness for Step Twelve Survey
- *Best of Public Outreach* (P-90)
- *AFA 2014*

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Bev A., Chairperson

Connie H. / Karen W.-P., Co-Chairperson

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference

During initial planning for the 2014 WSC, the Conference Leadership Team unanimously agreed on (and the Board approved) the 2014 Conference theme: “World Service Conference: Our Spiritual Principles in Action.” The full cost to attend the 2014 World Service Conference was set at \$1,907 and the Equalized Expense at \$1,280.

Staff has finalized a fully executed contract for the 2014 WSC, which will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 25-29, 2014. The following sessions will take place on Friday, April 25: The New Member Orientation Session, Committees/Task Forces/Thought Forces, Sharing Area Highlights, and the Opening Dinner. The Conference will begin Saturday, April 26, and the Closing Dinner will be held Tuesday, April 29.

TRIAL ALATEEN WORK GROUP

Carol V. / Judy K., Chairperson

Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services

The Alateen Work Group (AWG) completed its 2012-2013 evaluation and submitted a detailed report to the June Executive Committee meeting. We will continue the AWG trial for 2013-2014 using the established process, but focus on new ways to find Alateen members willing to submit résumés. Teen participation through the trial has been minimal and disappointing. Areas were invited to identify events that might host a Thought or Task Force and to encourage Alateen submission of résumés for Thought/Task Forces. No events or résumés were submitted in 2013.

The AWG held one Thought Force meeting via conference call in March with Alateen members on the topic of “Teens and Technology.” The participating teens had submitted résumés in 2012. The Work Group submitted a query to the September Executive Committee, asking if consideration could be given to changing the current process regarding teen résumés. The Executive Committee’s response was to keep the process as currently established; however, the suggestion was made that the Work Group could consider using an electronic survey to gather résumé information or to solicit input on a particular topic.

After discussion, AWG members brainstormed ideas to discern a clear purpose and goal of such a survey, which was considered to be an exciting new strategy to reach teens. As a follow up to the previous conference call meeting, a survey is planned, to be posted on the Members’ Web site during the first quarter of 2014, to find out from additional Alateens how they use technology, and how technology might be used to attract more teens to Alateen.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Roger C. / Connie H. Chairperson

J.P.M. / Jennie M. Co-Chairperson

Marsha W. Associate Director of Membership Outreach – International

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) started preliminary planning for the 2014 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) that takes place October 15-19, 2014 in Virginia Beach. The 2014 IAGSM theme, selected by the Committee with input from the General Service Offices (GSO), is “Living Our Spiritual Principles.”

AL-ANON/ALATEEN INTERNATIONAL

Africa

South Africa: A contact on behalf of the Board of Trustees for South Africa advised that holding an Alateen Sponsor training workshop during their annual Conference was helpful. They used the World Service Office (WSO) Alateen Training Modules to assist them with facilitation.

Tanzania: A group registered by the WSO has four members. In addition to sending service materials, WSO advised the contact that there is a General Service Office (GSO) located in Cape Town, South Africa that would be a valuable resource for service.

Europe

Belgium/French: The GSO advised that they are financially sound, which gave them the opportunity to initiate more service projects. The GSO also advised that their Board of Trustees has agreed to submit a bid to host the European Zonal Meeting in 2015.

Belgium /Flemish: A contact for the Board of Trustees advised that they plan to send a representative to the 2014 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in Virginia Beach.

Denmark: A Literature Committee member advised that they are translating the publications *Living Today in Alateen* (B-26) and *This is Al-Anon* (P-32). Plans include having both projects available in 2014.

Finland: The service structure celebrated its 60 years of Al-Anon in that country, on October 5th. The WSO Executive Director attended the event. In addition to the celebration, during a scheduled meeting, the Executive Director met with members involved in service to discuss questions.

France: The GSO decided to include the bookmark *When you don't know where to turn...because someone drinks too much* (FM-76) in public outreach activities.

Germany: The General Secretary advised that their annual conference voted to have *Many Voices, One Journey—Al-Anon Family Groups* (B-31) as their next literature project. Plans include having this literature available in 2014. The GSO hosted the European Zonal Meeting.

Greece: A contact on behalf of the Al-Anon Information Service advised that members have decided to start an Alateen meeting. Plans include adapting the *Alateen Safety Guidelines* (G-34) before the group starts.

Iceland: A representative on behalf of the Literature Committee advised that its structure will translate and print *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24) as its next project.

Hungary: The contact on behalf of the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) advised that they are working on translations of *Alcoholism, A Merry-Go-Round-Named Denial* (P-3), *What Do You Do about the Alcoholics Drinking?* (P-19), *Understanding Ourselves & Alcoholism* (P-48), *Troubled by Someone's Drinking?* (S-17) and *Did You Grow Up with a Problem Drinker?* (S-25).

Italy: A contact on behalf of the Literature Committee said they completed the translation for the book *Many Voices, One Journey—Al-Anon Family Groups*, (B-31). The publication should be available in 2014.

Lithuania: A contact for the group in Vilnius advised it began the steps of legally registering the Al-Anon name as a non-profit entity through the local government.

Malta: A contact from the AIS advised that there are currently two Maltese-speaking meetings and one English-speaking meeting. All three increased their membership.

Netherlands: A decision was made to translate the book *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon's Steps, Traditions and Concepts* (B-24). The goal is to print this book in 2014.

Norway: The GSO re-designed its Public Outreach Web site. The office hyperlinked its site to the WSO Public Outreach Web site, specifically to the categories "For Professionals" and "Media." The goal is to educate the Norwegian professional community about the benefits of Al-Anon.

Poland: The GSO registered an Alateen chat meeting with the WSO. The Sponsors are excited that this project is complete and look forward to Alateens in Poland participating in this meeting.

Russia: A Literature Committee contact advised they are working on translations of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). There are expectations to complete the project in 2014.

Serbia: The contact advised the only Al-Anon group in the country continues to grow and has a diverse membership of men and women of all ages. The group now meets twice weekly.

Slovenia: The AIS printed *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This is Al-Anon* (P-32), and did a reprinting, as these sold quicker than expected! The contact advised that members continue to financially support the AIS.

Slovakia: There are currently three Al-Anon groups and an AIS.

Spain: The WSO was notified by the Chairperson of the Board that its General Secretary, who has been the head of their office for over 25 years, died on June 30. The WSO sent condolences to the office on behalf of the WSO Volunteers and staff.

Sweden: The contact for the GSO advised that the theme for its service meeting, "Outreach Work," was inspired by the attendance of its representative at the 2012 IAGSM held in Cape Town, South Africa. The Board of Trustees has appointed a General Secretary for the office, which is now open daily.

UK & Eire: The General Secretary advised that the GSO moved into their new office space. Using the WSO as its model, the Conference approved the purchase of property in 2012.

The Scottish Parliament debated, through a discussion that took place during their fall session, the benefits of Al-Anon Family Groups within their community. Al-Anon members from Scotland were present during the discussion in the public gallery. WSO sent congratulations to the GSO for the public outreach work that has brought Al-Anon this level of recognition within the UK and Eire.

Ukraine: A city-wide public outreach event took place in Kiev. This Al-Anon open meeting included members from Russia, Belorussia, Poland, Moldova, and Ukraine sharing their experience.

A service meeting, hosted by the AIS, is scheduled for March 29-30, 2014 in Lutsk, Ukraine. The theme of the meeting is "Service is Gratitude in Action."

Asia

India: A contact for the GSO advised that it is, for the first time, reprinting the booklet *Sexual Intimacy and the Alcoholic Relationship* (P-77). (Although this publication is no longer printed by the WSO, the WSO has given permission to reprint a discontinued piece).

The GSO received a monetary award and a certificate of recognition from its government for its public outreach work on behalf of Al-Anon Family Groups in India. The GSO contacted the WSO for assistance about how they could accept the monetary reward without breaking the Traditions. WSO advised that, although the money could not be deposited in their general fund, they could use the money to buy Al-Anon/Alateen literature and then donate the literature on behalf of the government to public libraries. WSO congratulated the GSO for this recognition.

Iran: A contact living in the United States called the WSO in June and advised that the members in Iran are experiencing problems, specifically as a result of decisions made to translate and print parts of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) without permission from the WSO. Members were scheduled to meet with the Executive Director during the WSO visit to Turkey in 2012, to discuss this problem. However, the contact advised they were not able to come and, problems still persist. At the request of the WSO, the contact was asked to schedule a phone meeting with WSO, and to have the members' written questions sent to the WSO before the meeting.

Japan: The General Secretary advised its meetings have declined from 104 in 2012 to 87 in 2013. The structure currently has no Alateen meetings.

Singapore: An English-speaking Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) registered with the WSO. The AIS is currently supported by four meetings.

United Arab Emirate: There are currently four English-speaking meetings registered with the WSO. WSO received notification that a new meeting that has been in existence for almost one year needed registration materials, as the members discovered the meeting had never registered with the WSO. The contact advised that the members of the group, which is simply called “Al-Anon,” wanted to be sure that it was registered before it reaches its one year anniversary.

Australia/New Zealand

Australia: The General Secretary advised that the Board of Trustees agreed its structure would start the WSO process for registering an Alateen chat meeting. This decision was made as it now has the commitment from Alateen Sponsors to support a meeting.

By invitation, the Executive Director visited Australia and New Zealand. Each structure covered their respective costs for this trip. In Australia, there were question-and-answer sessions and various service events that covered a wide range of topics, including how to deal with dual members, why is the WSO Conference called the “World Service Conference,” etc. A letter of appreciation was sent to the WSO Board of Trustees on behalf of the Australian service structure, expressing their gratitude for the visit.

New Zealand: A contact on behalf of the GSO advised it will celebrate 60 years of Al-Anon Family Groups in New Zealand in 2014.

Letters of acknowledgement were sent from members to the WSO Board of Trustees expressing their thanks for the WSO Executive Director’s visit.

North and Central America

Costa Rica: The contact for the GSO advised that it determined that reprinting literature in their country was more cost-effective than buying directly from the WSO. As a result of this decision, it reprinted *Reaching for Personal Freedom—Living the Legacies* (SP-92), *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (SB-6) and *Courage to Change—One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II* (SB-16).

El Salvador: The GSO had not operated as a national service structure since 2005. A new Service Board was elected. Three representatives attended the Central American Zonal Meeting (RECACSA) on behalf of the new structure.

Guatemala: The GSO now has a paid General Secretary. The Board of Trustees is discussing the financial benefits of printing service materials in Guatemala instead of buying directly from the WSO, since shipping and importing costs have increased.

Honduras: The Central American Zonal Meeting was hosted in Siguatepeque, Honduras, November 11-13. The WSO sent two representatives. GSO representation to this meeting

included Costa Rica, El Salvador, and Guatemala; evolving structures represented were Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

Nicaragua: The AIS continues to do well and receive financial and volunteer support from the groups. The service structure agreed to host the 2015 Central American Zonal Meeting.

Panama: Panama sent two representatives to the Central American Zonal Meeting in Honduras. The contact advised the groups are experiencing a high turnover of members involved in service, and continue to discuss how to solve this problem.

Trinidad and Tobago: Groups there are continuing to grow and two new groups were added, bringing the total number of groups to 23. Members are discussing ways to evolve their current service structure to better serve the needs of the groups.

South America

Argentina: A contact for the GSO advised that, since its Delegate reported there was such value in her attendance to the 2012 IAGSM, its service conference elected a second Delegate for the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). Plans include sending two Delegates to the 2014 meeting.

Brazil: The General Secretary advised that, for the first time, its conference did not elect IAGSM Delegates. It was decided that the General Secretary, who is a past IAGSM Delegate, will attend the 2014 meeting.

The GSO launched two books at their conference, *Courage to Be Me—Living with Alcoholism* (B-23), and *Discovering Choices* (B-30).

Colombia: The General Secretary advised that the GSO is reprinting *Al-Anon Family Groups* (SB-5), and *Three Views of Al-Anon—Alcoholics Speak to the Family* (SP-15).

Ecuador: The contact advised that Ecuador has been able to stabilize its service structure and now has the volunteer base to function as a trial GSO. There are currently nine members on the Board of Trustees. The trial GSO was granted reprint permission from the WSO Board of Trustees in 2013.

Paraguay: The contact from Paraguay advised that the structure launched its new Public Outreach Web site.

Peru: The contact for the GSO advised that, due to high shipping costs, it is seeking bids to reprint literature in their country. It expects to reprint *Opening our Hearts, Transforming our Losses* (SB-29).

Uruguay: There are currently 84 Al-Anon groups. The service structure hosted an Ibero-American planning meeting. Representatives who attended were from three GSOs: Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Discussions about the future of this zonal meeting are ongoing.

ZONAL MEETINGS

European Zonal Meeting (EZM)

The fifth EZM took place August 23-25 and was hosted by the GSO in Essen, Germany. The Zonal meeting is an informational service meeting held every two years, for countries with General Service Offices or evolving service structures. In addition to participation by representatives from the U.S. and Canada, the GSOs that sent representatives were Belgium/Flemish, Belgium/French, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland/French, Switzerland/German, UK and Eire. The evolving structures attending were Russia, Slovenia, and Ukraine.

Topics discussed included who would host the 2015 meeting, social networking, availability of public service announcements and the EZM framework document. The discussion about this document is significant as ultimately, the framework will become the EZM guideline and it will help with planning future meetings. As a result of the discussions about the framework at this meeting, it was agreed that the WSO e-Communities would become the communication vehicle for all future correspondence.

Central American Zonal Meeting (RECACSA)

The WSO participated in the ninth Central American Zonal Meeting that was hosted by Honduras. The meeting took place November 11-13 with six additional countries participating: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala were the GSOs and Honduras, Panama, and Nicaragua were the evolving structures. With the use of the services of a paid simultaneous translator, WSO representatives and the participants were fully able to communicate effectively during the meeting.

Each representative gave a report about the service and public outreach activities in their respective structures. After each report there was time allotted for at least a 30 minute discussion. Most structures indicated they are experiencing growth, however, El Salvador advised it is experiencing a “re-birth.” Their representatives explained that its previous Board of Trustees resigned and all new Board of Trustee members were elected.

BUSINESS SERVICES

In December, the WSO upgraded the iMIS program to the current version. This included eCommunities and the shopping cart. We now have *Forum* subscriptions and contributions, as well as literature sales on the same shopping cart.

We have begun backing up most of our information into the “cloud.” After we have used the new iMIS system for a few months, we will test our process of resuming operations in case of a major disaster.

We installed a voice response system in September. This enabled us to have meeting information available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. During working hours callers are given the option to use the voice response system or talk to a staff member.

To further safeguard our information, we have encrypted all of the management staff’s laptops as well as the Executive Committee’s and the Board of Trustees’.

The U.S. Post Office began offering a tracking service in the middle of the year. Since its prices are less than UPS, we began using them to ship our smaller packages.

In March of 2013 we released *Having Had A Spiritual Awakening* (eB-25) in English only on Apple, Amazon, and Barnes & Nobles’ electronic book platforms. Through November 30, 2013 we have sold 1,991 copies of the book worldwide.

In October we released our second electronic book, *How Al-Anon Works* (eB-22), in English, only on the Apple iTunes store. In November of this year we released the French and Spanish versions of *How Al-Anon Works* (S/F eB-22), on iTunes. Through November 30 we have sold 126 copies of the English version and one copy of the Spanish.

Through November, electronic literature sales have generated an additional \$11,707.90 of revenue.

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.

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 2014 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January.
- Recommendation to the Board of Trustees that the Preliminary Budget be sent to World Service Conference members after the auditors have completed their field work.
- Review of Investment Philosophy.
- Review of Finance Committee Goals and Objectives.
- Review of the investments in the Reserve Fund
- Meeting with the Investment Manager twice a year.

Other non-routine actions included:

- Revisited the WSO policy for reimbursing Delegates and WSO Volunteers for travel expenses.
- Recommended continuing the trial period of the soft-cover version of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22)
- Recommended increasing the price of literature effective May 2013.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Bev A.
Tina B.
Char G.F.
Vicki H.
Connie H.
Judy K.
Jennie McC.
Harriet T.
Karen W-P.

Regional Trustees

Paula B., US Southeast
Ann C., Canada East
Sandie D., Canada Central
Joan S., US Northeast
Marilyn M., Canada West
Penny R., US Northwest
Karen R., US Southwest
Annette T., US South Central
Debbie G., 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
Roger C., Member at Large
Judy P., Member at Large
Robert S., Staff member

Non-Trustee Committee Chairpersons

Carrie K., Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson**

International Representative

Catalina C., 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
Julie M., Communications Manager**
Marsha W., Associate Director of Member Services—International
Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services
Pamela Walters, Marketing Information Analyst*
Pat Q., Associate Director of Communications—Media
Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference
Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—Literature

*Non-member, non-voting

**Non-voting

AREA DELEGATES

Darcy N., Alabama/Northwest
Florida

Liesel B., Alaska

Maryon K., Alberta/Northwest
Territories

Vali F., Arizona

Jinkie R., Arkansas

Janis A., British Columbia/Yukon
Alternate

Patrick B., California North

Jayme C., California South

Eloy M., Colorado Area Chair

Ann B., Connecticut

Judith S., Delaware

Terry K., Florida North

Jennifer D., Florida South

Cathy O'D., Georgia

Tom N., Hawaii

Nancy Jo W., Idaho

Gene W., Illinois North

Lyri M., Illinois South

Brenda L., Indiana

Virginia B., Iowa

Judy W., Kansas

Jo Etta M., Kentucky

Angela A., Louisiana

Sandy F., 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

Karen L., Missouri

Connie W., Montana

Jan R., Nebraska

Janice B., Nevada

Maxine D., Newfoundland/
Labrador

Patricia W., New Hampshire

Rich M., New Jersey

Jud L., New Mexico/El Paso

Ruth S., New York North

Michele R., New York South

Woody M., North Carolina/
Bermuda

Donna J., North Dakota

Ginny C., Ohio Alternate

Lisa B-C., Oklahoma

Diane B., Ontario North

Jane H., Ontario South

Colleen G., Oregon

Maria A., Pennsylvania

Betty A., Puerto Rico

Solange R., Quebec East

Hélène D., Quebec West

David G., Rhode Island

Jennifer B., Saskatchewan

Joyce H., South Carolina

Kathleen A., South Dakota

Grace M., Tennessee

Nancy M., Texas East

Debbe P., Texas West

Patrick M., Utah

Bud S., Vermont

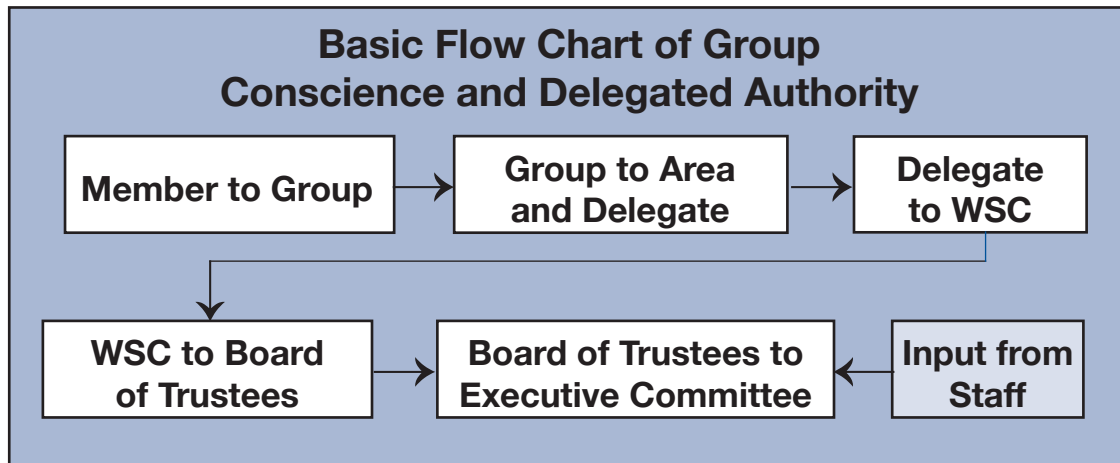
Beverly W., Virginia

Sue C., Washington

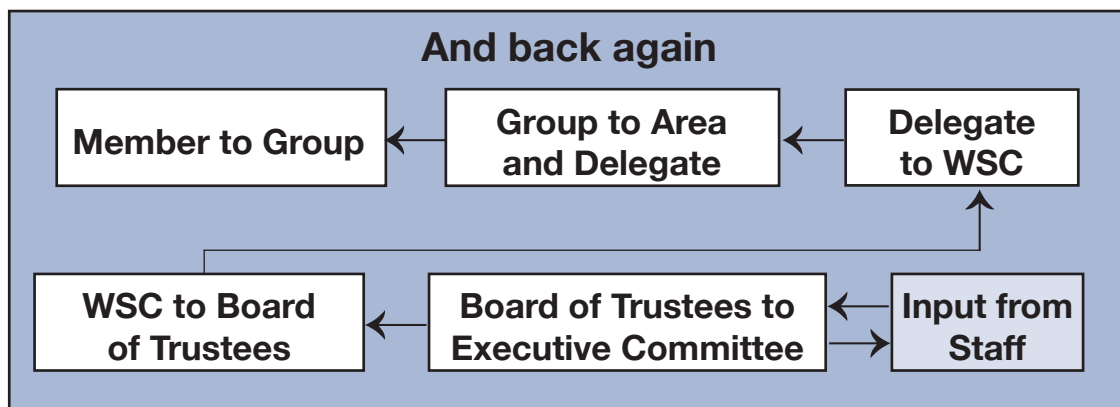
Christine S., West Virginia

Cathy T., Wisconsin and the Upper
Peninsula of Michigan

Sherry H., 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.