

Our Spiritual Journey—

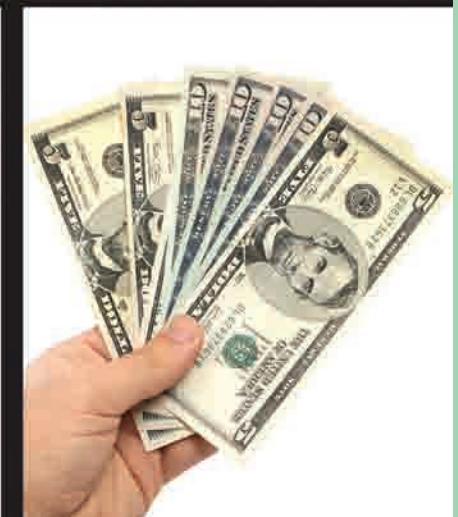
*we get
as we give*



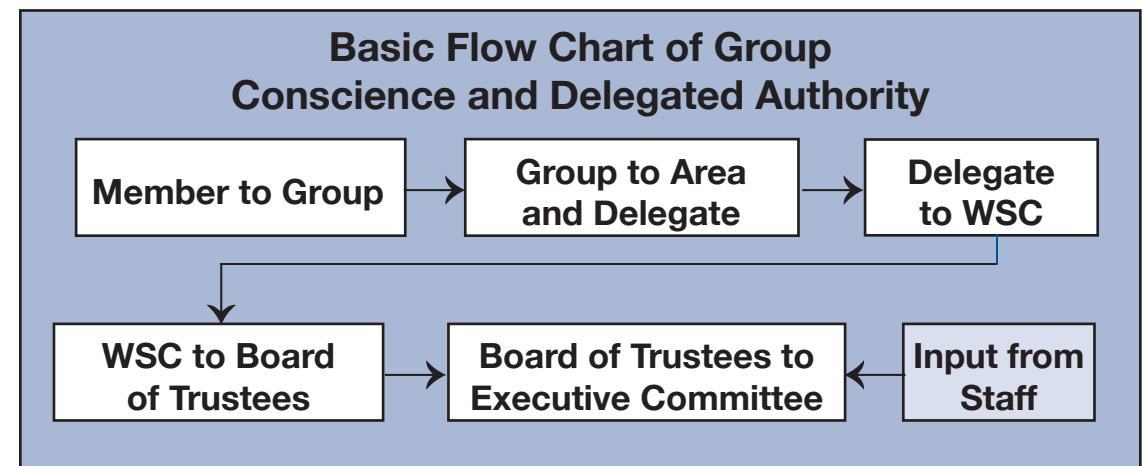
Nuestro viaje espiritual—
es al dar que recibimos

Notre cheminement spirituel—
c'est en donnant que nous
recevons

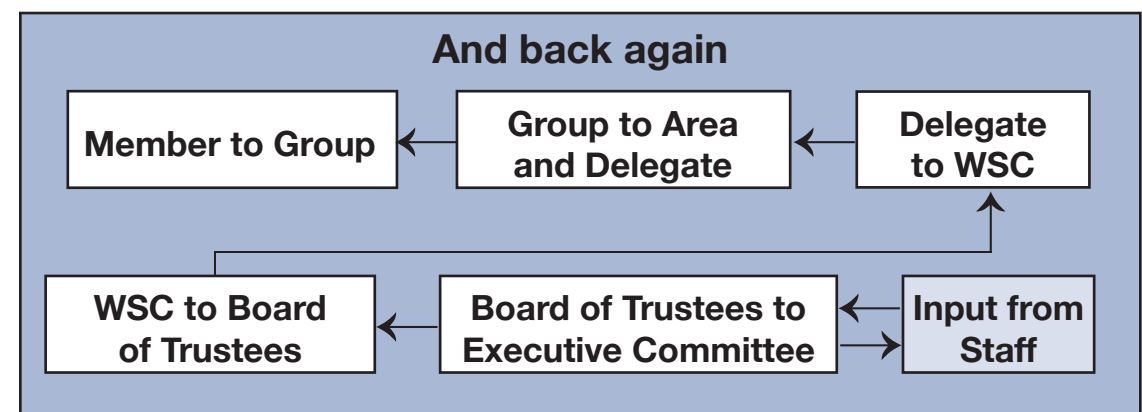
World Service Conference
2012



2012 World Service Conference Summary



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.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2012 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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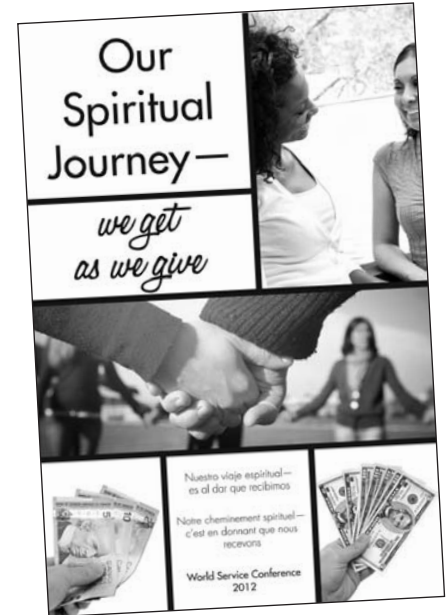
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**“Our World
Service
Conference (WSC)
is the active voice
and the effective
group conscience
of our society in
world affairs.”**

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

©Al-Anon Family Group
Headquarters, Inc. 2012

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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Our Spiritual Journey—
we get as we give

Nuestro viaje espiritual—
es al dar que recibimos

Notre cheminement spirituel—
c'est en donnant que nous recevons

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

The day before the 2012 Conference convened, the Chairperson of the Board reviewed the roles of the members of Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, and Task Forces with all Conference members. The intent of the session was to clarify the role of Conference members as it pertains to participation in these groups.

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

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

- A WSO 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 has 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; components of a guideline; or adding text to a portion of the *Service Manual* to clarify. The objective is to identify the potential idea not to write the actual text itself. The Thought Force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions. If there are facts that are unknown, they can be flagged in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions under “Things we don’t know but wish we did.” A Thought Force may lay the foundation for the work of a Task Force. Sometimes they offer recommendations resulting from their findings. A Thought Force presents its information to the originating body to move forward. “They are thinkers not doers.”
- A Task Force is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single defined task or activity. They use the resources available such as members of the Task Force and knowledge from the staff. For example, a task could be to choose one of the suggested strategies from the Thought Force. If they chose writing job descriptions, then the Task Force writes the job descriptions. The objective is to complete the job description and present it to the originating body to move forward. A Task Force may fulfill the recommendations made by a Thought Force. Task Forces are the “doers.”

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



The Chairperson of the Board then described the roles:

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

The Chairperson of the Board continued by noting the responsibilities:

- Be sure that you all understand the assignment or charge:
 - ⇒ Why has this task been assigned?
 - ⇒ What are we meant to accomplish?
 - ⇒ What information do we need?
- Ask questions and get clarity in the beginning.
- Do brainstorming.
- At any time if you don't understand something, ask for clarity.
- Stay on course and do not put your own interpretation on the charge, in other words, "what you think it should be."
- If the conversation gets off track, simply say; "I think we're off track."
- Be prepared to work on your charge from the moment it is assigned.
- Be willing to volunteer for specific activities related to the fulfillment of the charge.
- Respond to the Chairperson in a timely manner and if unable to complete a task or to be available on a given date, let the Chairperson know.
- Be able to accept constructive criticism when the project is up for review.
- Share your work with each other.

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

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

2012 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES, THOUGHT FORCES, AND WORK GROUPS

Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and World Service Conference staff members comprise the Selected Committees, Task Forces, Thought Forces, and Work Groups. Below are the Delegate assignments for this year's Conference. Delegates were given the option not to be assigned to a Committee, Task Force, or Thought Force.

Assignment	Panel 50 (2010-2012)	Panel 51 (2011-2013)	Panel 52 (2012-2014)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Patsy A., NC/BDA, Chair Cindy C., MT John P., MA Vicki L., GA	Petra L., NY(S) Rhonda P., SD, Chair Elect Denise S., NV	Kerry L., MB Vicky A., MN(S)
Literature Committee	Connie B., ND Daphne F., MS	Linda B., SK Kathy B., ID Craig M., NE	Patrick B., CA(N) Terry K., FL(N) Ruth S., NY(N)
Public Outreach Committee	Cheryl A., WI Elaine L., MN(N) Shirley T., BC/YK	Rita C., ME Margaret R., ON(N)	Jennifer D., FL(S) Debbe P., TX(W) Eugene W., IL(N)
Task Force: Piece with Criteria to Help Service Arms Identify Service Jobs for Dual Members	Paul G., NJ Jane S., OK	Geneva D., MO, Chair Mary Y., UT	Hélène D., QC(W) David G., RI Tom N., HI
Task Force: Tool Kit on Service and Personal Growth	Magdalena E., WA Anne S., VT	Shirley R., AR, Chair Rita C., CT	Jane H., ON(S) Grace M., TN Jo Etta M., KY
Task Force: Workshop on Importance of CAL in Meetings	Teri M., CO Marti S., WV	Norm W., NM, Chair Maddie P., IA	Jayme C., CA(S)
Thought Force: Strategies to Strengthen Personal Connections	Jocelyn L. QC(E) Jeannette, M., MP	Kathleen B., AK, Chair Nancy P., NH Jan R., SC	Liz P., MI Judith S., DE Judy W., KS
Thought Force: Use of Computers at WSC	Vickie C., AL	Bette R., OR, Chair Cathy B., IL(S) Pauline M., NF/LAB	Maria A., PA Roberta H., IN Jack S., MD/DC

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to the opening of the World Service Conference (WSC), a session was held for the Delegates to discuss successes and challenges in their Areas. All other Conference members were invited to attend as guests, with no voice. During this session, the Chairperson, Cheryl A., Panel 50, Wisconsin, asked each Delegate to share for one minute on their Area's successes and challenges. The Delegates had submitted their written summary to the recorder, Vicki L., Panel 50, Georgia, 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:

- Using/practicing Knowledge-Based Decision-Making
- Creating guidelines for Area positions
- Using technology as a communication tool
- Transitioning from one panel to the next

Area concerns included:

- Filling service positions
- Increasing costs of background checks for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service
- Addressing groups that operate outside the Traditions
- Serving remote areas

Before the session ended, Linda B., Panel 51, Saskatchewan, was elected to serve as the Chairperson for Sharing Area Highlights in 2013, and Denise S., Panel 51, Nevada, was elected to serve as the Recorder for the 2013 session.



OPENING DINNER

Prior to the official opening of the Conference, Conference members and International Representatives attended the Opening Dinner. The Co-Chairperson of the Conference opened with the theme: “Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give.”

The Co-Chairperson continued: “Our journey this week starts with this dinner which is a time for us to socialize with one another, renew old friendships, and make new ones. It is also a time to start thinking about what the week ahead will hold for all of us. It is a time to envision how we will grow as we give of ourselves in service and how blessed we will be as we receive knowledge, information, and confidence.

“Before we think ahead, let’s remember our pioneers who took their own journey and found ways of strengthening our guiding principles so we could be here tonight, celebrating 52 years of the World Service Conference.

“Lois saw herself and others struggling everyday with the effects of alcoholism and realized that we too needed a program of recovery. So she took Bill W., cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous, up on his suggestion of opening a service office to unify the family groups that were forming. That journey brought about the need for a larger group conscience and the opportunity for members to gain spiritual growth, bringing us here tonight and to the week ahead.

“Most of us can only experience Lois and Anne’s spiritual excursion toward developing this World Service Conference through reading our literature. But this week you will be a physical part of that experience.”

During dinner, all attendees were asked to select an index card from the center of the table and to write two truths and a dream on the card before returning the cards to the center of the table. Then each member selected a card and guessed whose it was. Each table shared one member’s truths and a dream with the entire WSC.

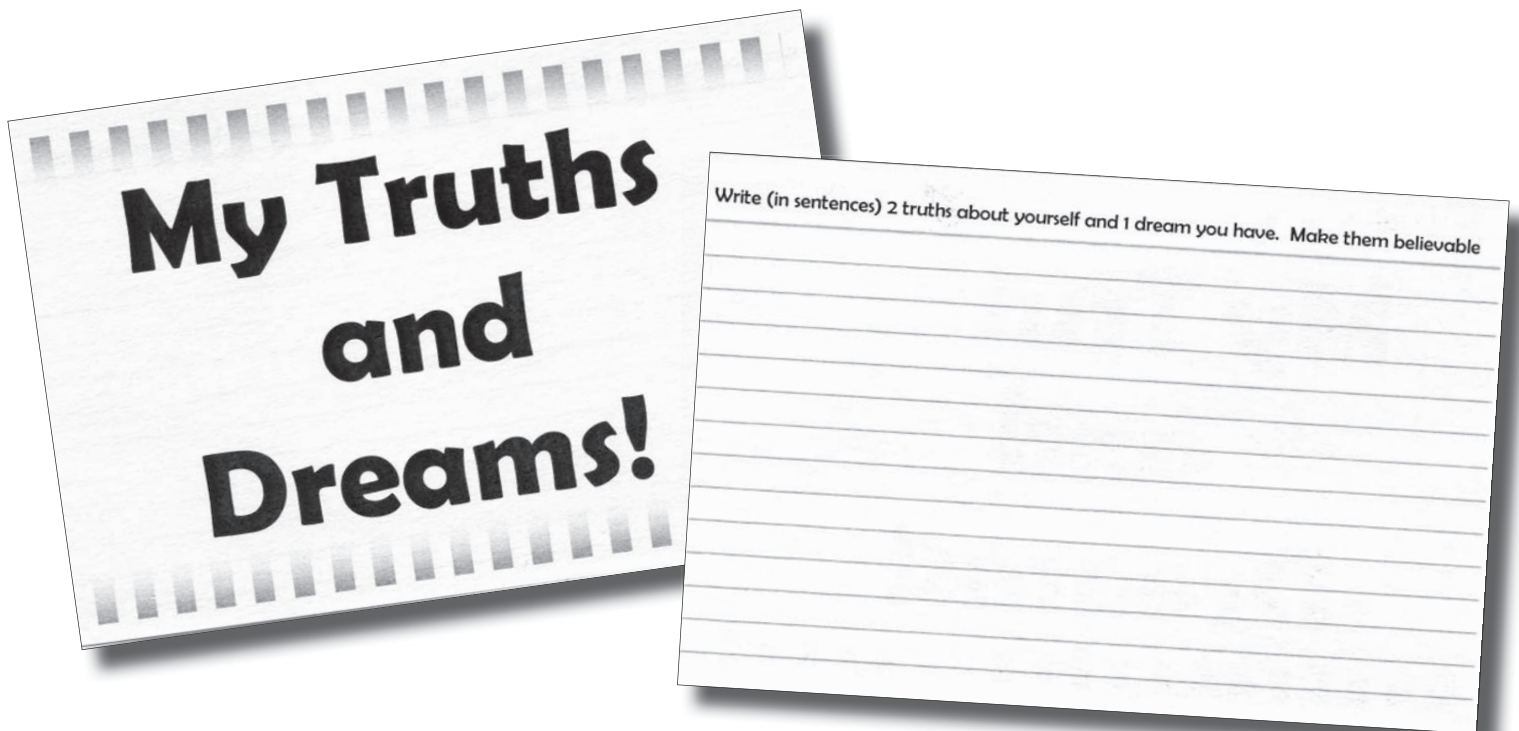
Following dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 52 Delegates. Each first-time Conference attendee received a 2012 WSC pin.

Liz W.S., Executive Committee member, was the opening dinner speaker. Liz shared her memories of attending 12 World Service Conferences. (See page 80 for her talk.)

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

Connie H.

Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee



CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Bev A.
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Connie H.
Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee

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

The 2012 Conference theme, “Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give,” laid the foundation for the spiritual tone of this year’s World Service Conference (WSC). The ideas in this year’s theme led to thoughtful discussion, creative thinking, and focused decision-making throughout the 52nd WSC, held at the Stamford Marriott Hotel & Spa in Stamford, Connecticut, April 15-19.

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

“When we reflect on the spiritual journey of the World Service Conference, we look first to the courageous acts of giving by our pioneers who understood the importance of Al-Anon to never stand still and who knew one of the greatest forces for growth would be the World Service Conference to meet the future needs of Al-Anon. Our pioneers had emphasized the importance of awareness, prudence, and responsibility in keeping our structure strong and healthy. In turn, the World Service Conference has received the ability to meet adversity, developed its own identity, and celebrated the joys of new understanding.

“This spiritual journey will continue to unfold this week as we—together with open minds and hearts—discuss, build, and examine the many new possibilities that our Higher Power will present to us at this 52nd World Service Conference.

“Your active participation is needed for this abundant action. This week, I ask you to give generously your resources of enthusiasm, wisdom, knowledge, and energy. The life of the Conference simply works better when there is harmony among those in attendance; so I also ask of you to be willing to let your ideas and opinions be challenged. When we let go of expectations, we are free to give without restraints, we gain strength in our ability to listen without thinking how we will respond, and we become able to exercise spiritual reasoning, all the while being guided by our Legacies and knowing our Higher Power is in control.

“By contributing to the democratic actions of Al-Anon worldwide, you will receive the spiritual benefit of creating a strong, positive, beneficial, reflective action back into your own life that you will take with you when this Conference is over.

“This week will be a very rewarding experience, and as we act courageously and boldly, our vision for Al-Anon’s future will be illuminated as never before because we will have believed in the power of the group conscience and placed ourselves and this World Service Conference in the hands of a loving God whose timing is beyond our human understanding.

With a rap of a gavel, the Conference Chairperson announced, “I now formally open the 2012 World Service Conference!”

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

The following persons were seated:

With voice, but no vote:

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

María Evangelina de León G.
*International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon Member*

Peter A.
*International Representative—New Zealand
Al-Anon Member*

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

Debbie G.
*Chairman, Executive Committee for
Real Property Management
Al-Anon Member*

With no voice and no vote:

Teresa A.
*Associate Director of
Member Services—Spanish (in training),
Al-Anon Member*

The motion carried by consensus. (See WSC Motion #1, page 91)



WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Chairperson of the Board welcomed Conference members by saying, “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 52nd World Service Conference. ‘Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give’ is our theme this year. It is much shorter than recent past themes, but still bursts with significance.

“In the late 1950s, when Anne and Lois asked the groups how they felt about having a Conference—a place where all members’ voices would be heard through their Delegates—the answer was a resounding ‘yes’ to beginning the process. As the Conference became a reality and the work began to unify the fellowship, there were many challenges and much discussion on the spiritual principles embedded in the Traditions and Concepts.

“As the years passed, Delegates, acting in behalf of their Areas and groups, found their voice in discussing controversial topics, which allowed the Conference to stretch its thinking and to explore and expand upon its understanding of our spiritual principles. The Conference’s spiritual journey continued as we recognized the depth of our experiences and the importance of the spiritual principle of anonymity, which is the acceptance that each one of us has the same spiritual potential.

“The last ten years or so have seen a growth in the Conference and its relationship with the fellowship because of the willingness of all parties to not only get, but to give. Conversations, such as the Alateen Requirements and the process for electing Trustees, caused the Conference members to discuss issues that were difficult, as well as painful. Transparency and honesty were shared by Conference members while the fellowship offered trust in its trusted servants. The spiritual journey of the Conference grew exponentially as we all focused on the principles in our Legacies.

“No matter the issue that comes before the Conference, and as long as everyone is willing to give of his or her experience and get from others’ experience, our spiritual journey will continue. To paraphrase a quotation on page 391 of *Many Voices, One Journey*: Our history has also taught *the Conference* that change need not be painful, and that as long as *we* hold on to those spiritual principles that are most clearly part of *our* essential identity, the Conference can continue to change, grow, and transform without fear of losing *itself* or *its* way.

“This week let us remember that we are here to lead the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups as we give of ourselves and get from others. It is not about our individual agendas; it is about the group conscience as guided by our Higher Power.”

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

Karen R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

TWELVE TRADITIONS

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

ORIENTATION

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Chairperson of the Board began the session by talking about the Conference Goals. Conference members gathered in small groups to discuss what Goal #1 meant to them.

Goal #1

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

Members shared:

- The idea of respect is important and allows us to presume goodwill.
- Goodwill and respect.
- We might not agree with others, we all understand and love Al-Anon, and we share as equals.

Then, Conference members gathered to answer these questions regarding Goal #2. What is the purpose of the Conference? What perspective do the different members of the Conference bring to each discussion/presentation (Delegate, Trustee, Executive Committee member, staff, and visitor)?

Goal #2

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

Members shared:

- Purpose—primarily communication, discussion, and deliberation to bring us to a full group conscience. To get every voice heard, come together and move forward as a whole.
- Delegate—is the voice and conscience of the groups through the Areas.
- Trustee—brings broad experience of the fellowship back to the Conference.
- Executive Committee member—brings the perspective of monthly business affairs.
- Staff—give us information that they get from our members in the day-to-day contact at the office. They are the resources to implement the decisions of the Conference.
- Visitor—here to observe and to bring another voice.

Goal #3

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

Finally, Conference members met in small groups to answer: What does it mean when it says that you will be able to support and communicate Conference decisions?

Members shared:

- Support the group conscience without bringing our own opinions in and sharing in a positive way.
- Present information and decisions as they were brought forth without bias and omission.
- Have an understanding and present the decisions.

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

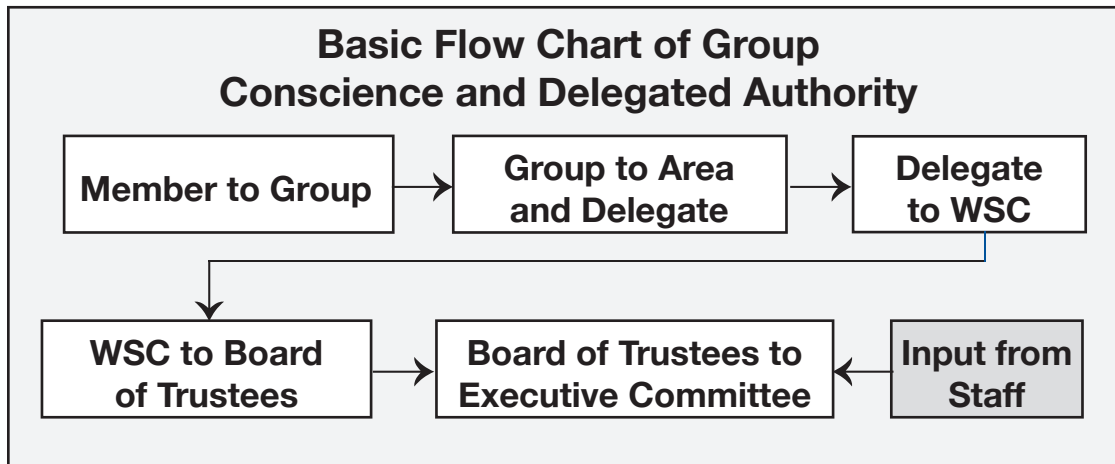
The first step to a group conscience is the member participating in the group. Each group member shares their thoughts and opinions in the business meeting, or as some groups call it, a group conscience meeting. The meeting discusses each issue put before them and reaches a group conscience decision.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

Next, is the groups to the Area and ultimately to the Delegate. Each GR goes to Area Assembly with the group's information, listens to opinions, and makes decisions for Area Al-Anon as a whole. The GRs go back to their group and report back the discussions while supporting the Area decision. The Delegate is then the delegated authority that gathers concerns, questions, and experience from all of the GRs in that Area.

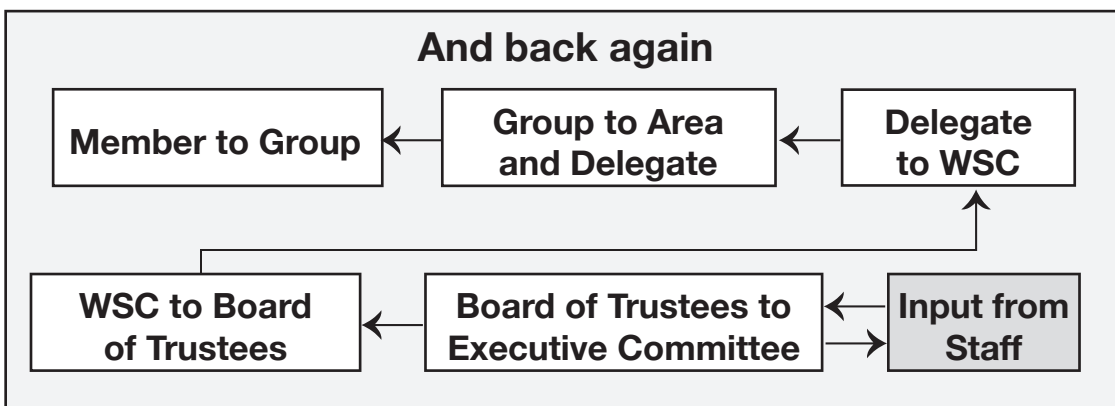
The Delegates come to Conference from the Areas with all of the Areas' concerns, questions, and experience. As this information is shared at the Conference, the Delegates also listen to the ideas and opinions of other Delegates and Conference members and an informed group conscience decision is made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

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

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



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



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

There are five elements to Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process to reach an informed group conscience. Conference members were asked to gather in small groups to reword each element.

- Open communication between leadership and membership
 - ✓ Flow of information goes all ways
- Dialogue before deliberation
 - ✓ Talk to each other, reason things out
- Common access to full information for all decision makers
 - ✓ Information is not used as a tool to forward our personal agenda
- Existence in a culture of trust
 - ✓ Presume goodwill. Don't question people's motives
- Confidence in the competency of our partners
 - ✓ I am not the ultimate authority

Following the Orientation, the Chairperson of the Board and another Trustee presented a small skit about the fellowship and the organization.

AFG, Inc. vs. AFG the Fellowship

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Carol V.
Trustee

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

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

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

Al-Anon Family Groups, the fellowship

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

APPROVALS

2011 Auditor's Report

Penny R.
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach
Director of Business Services
(non-member)

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

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

Conference members had the following questions:

- On page 4, should the total functional expenses of the Reserve Fund—\$48,091—be a negative number?

No, a number is negative when it is opposite from the normal balance of the other listed numbers. The normal balance shown in the expense section of the statement of Income and Expense is an expense, a negative number would indicate income. In 2011, post retirement health care was an expense.

- On page 16, it appears that the softcover edition of *How Al-Anon Works* made a profit. Did we make a profit? I thought we weren't supposed to make a profit on the softcover edition.

The Executive Director explained that there never was a statement that the softcover book wasn't supposed to make a profit. The price was reduced to encourage current Al-Anon members to pay their recovery forward by buying the book and giving it to a newcomer. All of the proceeds from our literature go to support the other services necessary to create, update, and warehouse literature and to provide other services necessary to support the groups as our direct contributions only pay 25% of our costs. Warranty One reminds us that the additional funds generated from the sale of literature are also contributions.

- Regarding the Comparative Salary Range handout, is the comparison between not-for-profits?

The comparison is with for profits and not-for-profits.

A motion to approve the 2011 Audited Financial Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #2, page 91.)

2012 Budget

The 2012 Budget was presented to Conference members by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2012 Budget shows that we expect expenses to be \$216,000 more than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,273,000 and revenues to be \$5,057,000. We made two adjustments from the Preliminary Budget. Instead of hiring new staff, we will use a consultant to fill the open Personnel/Training Manager position. The Membership Survey was omitted from the Preliminary Budget.

Penny R.
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach
Director of Business Services
(non-member)

PROJECTED EXPENSES

Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$340,000 from last year's actual expenses. Labor costs are expected to increase \$124,000 due to additional staff becoming eligible for the retirement plan and cost of living and merit increases effective June 1, 2012.

ESTIMATED INCOME

We are estimating income from literature sales to be about \$214,000 less than last year and *Forum* subscription income to be less. We are budgeting contributions to be \$1.5 million, which is about \$204,000 more than last year's actual contributions. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer to the General Fund up to 4 percent annually of the averaged fair value of the Reserve Fund over the preceding 36 months. Since the average value dropped for the 36 months ending December 31, 2011, we are budgeting investment income to be about \$21,000 less than last year.

There were questions from the floor:

- What is the Membership Survey, and why is there an expense?
We use an outside vendor to compile the responses, in order for survey results to have credibility. We take that report and provide a presentation for use by the membership. We were able to reduce the costs of the Membership Survey by having an Information Analyst in house.
- Referring to the Equalized Expenses for the World Service Conference, does this reflect the actual expense that some Areas sent?
This reflects both the Equalized Expense and the actual expense.
- Why was a consultant chosen instead of hiring someone for personnel?
The WSO is a small sized non-profit compared to most incorporations. We never actually had a Human Resource person, but, instead, we had people who thought they were Human Resource and they would recommend job creation. Thoughtful consideration has redirected our thinking and instead of continuing to scramble the wrong egg, we chose to bring someone in to give us an analysis. Every time someone leaves the WSO, we start from scratch to determine if we need that position or not. We're continually retooling the staff to meet the needs of the fellowship in a changing world.
- What services are available for the WSO staff? Is there still an Employment Assistance Program (EAP)?
Pension and health benefits, including EAP, are all being provided for the staff. Staff members are not seeing any change in what they need.
- Did the Conference expense for last year include sending the Panel 49 Delegates to Stepping Stones?
Yes.
- In her report, our Treasurer said that if each group contributes just \$13.00 more in 2012 than last year, we would meet our budgeted contributions. If each group contributes \$26.00 more in 2012 than last year, our revenues would be sufficient to meet our budgeted expenses for the year. Would that be from all of the groups, or just the groups that are currently contributing?
It would be from all of the existing groups.
- In regards to the WSO salary range, these seem low compared to the comparative salaries. Can someone speak to the rationale behind that?
We have upgraded the scale over the past year as the result of recommendations from a consultant. This will provide more accurate comparisons. It will be a three-year process.

A motion to approve the 2012 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #3, page 91.)

SCHEDULE 1

AI-Anon FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

	2012 Budget	2012 Preliminary Budget	2011 Actual
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries	2,553,000	2,618,000	2,488,163
Payroll Taxes	197,000	202,000	192,526
Employee Benefits	<u>611,000</u>	<u>617,000</u>	<u>556,810</u>
Total Labor Costs	3,361,000	3,437,000	3,237,499
Building Occupancy	341,000	341,000	265,298
Packing & Shipping (Net)	50,000	50,000	43,921
Postage	260,000	260,000	255,183
Telephone	56,000	56,000	43,727
Stationery & Office Supplies	116,000	116,000	97,537
Outreach Activities	37,000	37,000	1,266
Office Services & Expenses	241,000	176,000	166,384
Repairs & Maintenance	13,000	9,000	10,436
Travel & Meetings	181,000	181,000	199,543
Direct Conference Costs (Net) Schedule 2	109,000	109,000	67,593
Legal & Audit	45,000	45,000	57,633
Printing	158,000	158,000	181,988
Canadian Office	4,000	4,000	13,537
General Service Meeting	20,000	20,000	2,979
In-Office Volunteers	4,000	4,000	2,790
Outreach Media			25,000
PSA Campaign	144,000	144,000	131,065
Miscellaneous	33,000	33,000	47,184
Total Operating Expense	5,173,000	5,180,000	4,850,563
Membership Survey	20,000		
Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)	80,000	80,000	82,381
Total Expense	\$5,273,000	\$5,260,000	\$4,932,944
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>			
Literature Sales less cost of printing	3,140,000	3,140,000	3,354,087
Contributions	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,296,073
Forum Subscriptions	225,000	225,000	273,653
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	<u>192,000</u>	<u>192,000</u>	<u>212,865</u>
Total Estimated Revenue	5,057,000	5,057,000	\$5,136,678

2011 Annual Report

The 2011 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; however, the WSO did not receive any questions.

Before opening the floor for questions and comments, the Executive Director made amends for the miscommunication regarding the Family Health survey. He noted that the spirit and the intent of the policy was followed, but not the letter of the policy.

Once it's determined that a survey is one that we can participate in, a Task Force comprised of two staff members and two volunteers is appointed by the Policy Chairperson to determine if the survey meets our needs and serves the fellowship as a whole. The Family Health survey was reviewed and approved by the Executive Committee, but there was no appointment of a Task Force. This was an oversight, a portion of the policy that staff and volunteers forgot existed. The policy will be followed strictly in the future.

Before opening the floor up to questions, the Executive Director also stated that the WSO is in the interview process to hire a Marketing Information Analyst to replace the Information Analyst who resigned in January. Meanwhile, the former Information Analyst is currently working as a consultant to keep the Member Survey moving until the new employee is hired.

- Who would comprise the Task Force, if it had been done correctly?

Two Policy Committee members who are volunteers and two Policy Committee members who are staff. Eight people made the decision for the WSO to participate in the Family Health survey; four people reviewed the questions of the survey and gave their approval.

- In light of this additional information, will there be an addendum to the 2011 Annual Report?

No, it will be in next year's report because it was discovered after the end of the year. There will be a mention of this in the Conference Summary.

- Thank you for making amends and displaying good leadership.

- On the bottom of page 95, regarding electronic posting of *The Forum* and *Having Had a Spiritual Awakening*—has this been done already?

*No. Also note that the book is out of print and *The Forum* is only sold by WSO, so posting electronically would not impact the LDCs.*

- Under the section on Strategic Planning, the use of the acronym SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is jolting. I am also uncomfortable with the use of the acronym KBDM as a description for group conscience. The language may have been given to us by consultants, but our use of this language could move us from our spiritual principles.
- As a Trustee at Large, I am a member of the business piece of what we do. Although the Board of Trustees is going through a strategic planning process and experimenting with new ideas and more forward thinking, we use different processes. This was an amazing spiritual process that we experienced, and the reporting of this can't possibly reflect that spiritual process.
- I would like to share a story. At the West Virginia Regional Service Seminar, I stood up and protested the use of the KBDM terminology and I left. A few years later, I considered standing as the Southwest Regional Trustee and at a Regional Delegates' Meeting, I expressed my dissatisfaction with the Regional Trustee process. I submitted my résumé to prove that I would not get on the Board.

Ric B.
Executive Director

What I really needed was to talk to people who had more information. I hadn't realized that Roberts' Rules of Order isn't Al-Anon either. KBDM allows us to come to an informed decision. Sometimes business language does come into the process, but we are a business, so we need to recognize that side of the organization. We need to become a more forward thinking, strategic Board to make sure we are staying current. This allows us to provide the services that are being asked for. I encourage you to come and talk to us. We want to be successful as a Board and we want the fellowship to be successful.

- I feel it is perfectly appropriate for the organization to use this wording; I'm concerned about the language of love in Al-Anon. The language that we choose to move down to the fellowship is very detrimental.
- When the Delegate introduced KBDM to our Area Assembly, I reacted to it. What I've seen is using KBDM as a tool has allowed people in my Area to come to a true group conscience before we make decisions. KBDM is simply a tool that gives us the steps to go through before making a decision. The change in my Area has been very positive. I do not use KBDM in my group. The Board is very aware of its responsibility to defend our spiritual principles. We're not changing the language of the fellowship, we are using tools.
- As I complete my first year on the Board of Trustees, the level of spirituality has struck me the most. I am also struck by the model that the Trustees are using, modeling our cofounders Lois and Anne. The balance between strategic planning and forward thinking is demonstrated.
- On page 95, please clarify the discussion of strategies "to host a blog on how service contributes to recovery" on a bulletin board instead of creating a Thought Force.

We're still discussing the idea of a blog.

- I came from an Area that had implemented KBDM and went to an Area that did not have it. I was horrified. Having the information helps the spiritual principle of love and tolerance. I understand the difference between the business aspect of Al-Anon and my home group.
- Regarding a dual member in service—there was a Thought Force and then a Task Force focused on language to clarify the spiritual principles that support the Policy. Where are we with it now?

The Policy Committee is still working on this.

- I have a question about the one-year trial period of the printing of *How Al-Anon Works* to be sold for \$5. Will this trial period be extended?

The Finance Committee discussed this and chose to extend the trial for an additional year under the conditions of the original trial: English only and sold only within the Conference Structure.

- On page 97, regarding the Group e-mail address, how often will the CMA electronic newsletter be sent out? Do Delegates receive a copy of all communications sent to groups in our Area?

The CMA electronic newsletter will be sent monthly. The letter is sent to the CMAs through a vendor. The Current and Past Conferences Members, Area Chairs, Area Coordinators, and DRs receive an e-mail notification that a link to the newsletter is available on the District Representative e-Communities. Delegates receive copies of all communications sent to groups. The communications to Delegates are usually sent through e-Communities. Groups receive information by postal mail as well as electronic mailings.

- What is the progress of appointing a project manager to oversee the audio-taping of *How Al-Anon Works*?

The recording has been completed. We are currently looking for a sound manager to engineer the editing process.

- It was noted that the Area Alateen Process People will be able to make changes in the online Group Records in the future. The Group Records Coordinator in my Area is pleased that District Representatives will have "view only" access, but the Coordinator is alarmed that someone else will be able to make changes.

We don't have the access to Alateen records all planned out.

- Is it possible to have a detached card insert with *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* to track who reads this in the professional community so that we would have some way of continued communication?

We could think about that, but we don't consider that the magazine itself is an outreach to professionals as much as the professional being a vehicle to reach the potential member.

- When I give my Delegate's report, I pull some quotes from CAL and from the Legacies for my PowerPoint presentation. Do I need to request permission from the WSO to do this?

No, for use within the fellowship, you don't need to unless it is being printed and distributed.

- We take meetings to the jail and are not allowed to bring the books, so we copy pages. Is that okay?

It is okay if it is just for the meeting's use (or for a workshop), you copy just the material needed for that meeting to get things started, and you include "Reprinted by permission from AFG, Inc." on the bottom of the page.

The Executive Director announced that there is a new look for service, recovery and outreach material. The WSO will distribute the pamphlets that are in stock, so there will be some lag time before you see the new look in the groups.

- People get confused between what is the Conference Approved Literature (CAL) process and what is CAL?

On the top of page 99 in the Service Manual, the WSC gives approval to the conceptual idea and the Literature Committee, as a part of that idea, gives their input. The Policy Committee and the Executive Director also review any change before it goes in effect. The tagline can be revised, and this does not need to go through the CAL process. The primary idea of the tagline is not for the membership, but for the newcomer and the outside world—to explain who we are.

- I like the way the service pamphlet design is not neat. It comes at you in all directions, just like service.

The Executive Director continued his update. The Conflict Resolution Card (S-71) will be available in Spanish and French by the third week in April. The *Parents of Alcoholics* timely reprint (R-18) and the Public Outreach Web site will also be available in Spanish and French. The production of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Family in Recovery* DVD (AV-31) in Spanish and French is 90 percent complete.

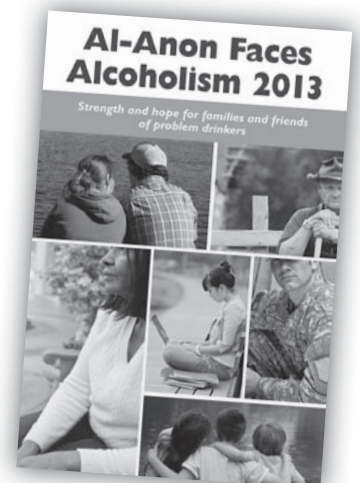
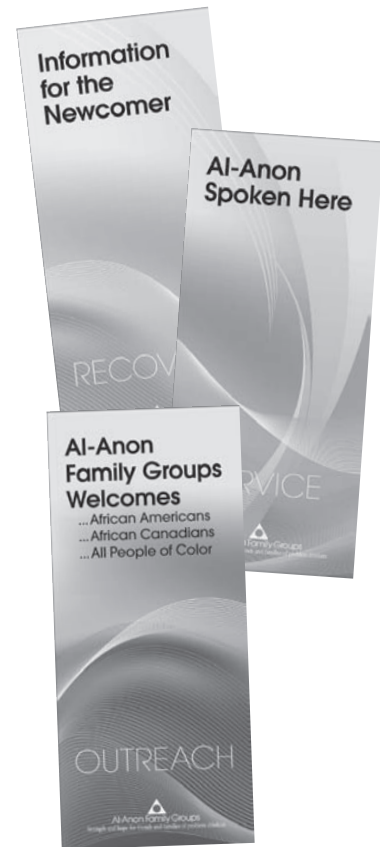
The Finance Committee approved an increase in shipping charges. Shipping costs have escalated, so there is a need to increase the shipping charges. Effective July 1, 2012, the increased shipping costs will be: U.S./Puerto Rico, a minimum of \$10 or 10 percent; Canada, a minimum of \$20 or 20 percent; and international will be a minimum of \$20 or 50 percent charge.

We will have a poster campaign. The theme: "Is someone else's drinking tearing you apart?" We hope Conference members will go home and energize the fellowship to produce a multitude of posters using that tagline. The WSO will pick multiple choices of posters, which will be posted in the Public Outreach portion of our Members' Web site. The posters will be available in multiple colors and variations. Members will be able to download the posters your Area likes and use them in your Area as you wish. Areas can sell the posters, or give them away for free. The idea is to empower the fellowship to print its own posters. The WSO is going out of the poster printing business. We'll give you the material needed, you can type in your local information, download, and print.

A note on TEAM events—no TEAM events will be held from January to the fall of 2013, due to the International Convention. If you request a date for a TEAM event in 2013, please submit a second choice for 2014.

The Director of Communication Services spoke of participation as the essential element of Al-Anon unity. He noted several opportunities for member participation in outreach and fellowship communications projects:

- *The Forum* offers an opportunity for members to share recovery with the fellowship as a whole. The magazine shows the diversity and creativity of Al-Anon members today. It's an excellent way to introduce Al-Anon to newcomers. Members at all stages of recovery are encouraged to send their sharings to the WSO.
- *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, our annual public outreach magazine, is now open to member sharings throughout the entire year. This magazine needs members to explain how they first found their way to Al-Anon—how they overcame their anxieties about attending their first meeting, and how Al-Anon helped them. Again, please send your stories to the WSO.



- INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title) is a new piece of Conference Approved Literature, currently under development. Last year's Conference voted to give conceptual approval to this piece. The Literature Committee has approved a "sharing sheet" that describes the type of sharings needed. If this piece is to express the diversity of our fellowship and its experiences, we need many more sharings. Please send us your story and encourage others to write. The sharing sheet is available on the Members' Web site.

The Associate Director of Communications—Media appealed to the Delegates to ask their Areas to encourage Al-Anon members to participate in outreach to TV stations.

He told the Conference that Al-Anon's public service announcements (PSAs) for TV and radio have played to a combined audience of one billion people throughout the U.S. and Canada in the past two years. But he said Al-Anon members have an opportunity to help the PSAs to reach an even larger audience this year, because there were many cities where no stations played the PSAs, or where they were broadcast only a few times.

Al-Anon could reach many more families and friends of alcoholics throughout the U.S. and Canada if local members thanked the stations that played the PSAs, and if they told the other stations a little bit about Al-Anon and asked them to play the PSAs. One phone call, e-mail, letter, or personal visit from a local Al-Anon member to a TV or radio station could make a significant difference, he said.

To participate in this project, members should contact their Area's Public Outreach Coordinators, who are organizing this effort.

All Area Public Outreach Coordinators have a list of the stations that received a TV or radio PSA from the WSO. All Area Public Outreach Coordinators also have an airplay report that shows which stations have already played the PSAs.

In working with Public Outreach Coordinators, members also have the benefit of a revised service tool, *The Best of Public Outreach*, which is now posted on the Members' Web site and available for download. *The Best of Public Outreach* contains how-to-do-it suggestions, sample scripts, letters, and reports to make it easier for Area Public Outreach Coordinators and local members to launch and conduct successful PSA campaigns, he said.

The Director of Member Services reported that the 2012 Al-Anon Annual Update Sheet has been revised. The format of the form, which is similar to the Al-Anon Registration Group Records Change Form (GR-1), will be double-sided and include more group information. The form is also being translated into Spanish and French. The US Northeast and US Southeast Regions will be the first ones to receive the updated form in late April. The schedule for sending the update form remains the same as prior years for all Regions. The only change is that the French and Spanish versions will be sent to all of the groups in December instead of with their Region.

Forty Areas (59 percent) participated in a Group Records Conference Call in March. One topic on the call was the release of the next WSO Online Group Records upgrade which gives DRs access to the group records information and reports for their districts. The WSO Group Records Department has responded daily to an average of five DRs written or phone inquiries for assistance in accessing the application since over 800 DRs were notified that they have read-only access. Group Records Coordinators stated that they are looking forward to using the additional Group in "No Mail" notice and report that is now available to them.

Group Records Coordinators were also advised that the WSO is giving Areas the option to have one additional person accessing the WSO Online Group Records application to assist the Area Group Records Coordinator with the data entry. The applicant will have to be a current AWSC member and access will be concurrent with the Area Group Records Coordinator's term. The Area Group Records Coordinator will oversee the WSO Online Group Records application training, provide instructions, and update the Area Group Records process. Areas that would like to have an additional person access the application are asked to complete the WSO Online Group Records Access Form which has to be submitted by the Area Delegate or Chair. One Area has submitted a request to have their Area Chair have access to their records.

The new Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1) has been posted on the Members' Web site. Positive feedback has been received from members and Area Group Records Coordinators. The number of GR-1 forms e-mailed to the WSO has doubled from five to ten daily since the form was released; faxes have drastically reduced. The Spanish and French forms will be posted soon.

The image shows the Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1). The form is titled "Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1)" and includes instructions: "Please send this form through your Area Process or the WSO". It is divided into several sections:

- 1. Group Record:** Fields for WSO ID Number, District Number, and Area Name (Abbreviation).
- 2. Status:** Checkboxes for New, Change, Inactive, and Not Sure if Registered.
- 3. Changes Check all that apply!:** Checkboxes for Group Name, Current Mailing Address (CMA), Mgt Place, Mgt Day, Mgt Time, Contact, and Sign Language.
- 4. Group Registration Overview:** Fields for Group Name, Mailing Language, Location: Meeting Place, Meeting Address, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code, Country, City, Contact First Name, Phone Number, and Current First Name.
- 5. Meeting Details:** Fields for Day, Time, AM/PM, Type (Open/Closed), Member Count, and various accessibility options like Sign Language, Baby-sitting, Fragrance Free, etc.
- 6. Current Mailing Address (CMA) for the group is sent to the CMA postal and e-mail address:** Fields for First Name, Last Name, Street/PO Box, City, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code, Country, Phone Number, and E-mail.
- 7. For Area Use:** Fields for First Name, Last Name, City, State/Province, Zip/Postal Code, Country, Phone Number, and E-mail.

 At the bottom, there is a "Submitted by:" field with Date and Phone fields, and a footer with Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. contact information.

The Associate Director of Member Services reported that this year, the WSO made modifications to assist the Areas' process for recertification:

- The recertification packets were sent earlier, in February or March.
- Additional reports included were a list of all Alateen groups and the associated Alateen Group Sponsors and CMAs.
- A checklist to help AAPPs return all the required paperwork was included.
- The Group Records Department requested that the recertification packet be submitted to WSO by June 15th. This will give the department time to review the packet and if needed, to contact the Area for additional forms, so that the Area can meet the deadline of submitting a complete recertification packet by July 1st.

It is important to note that no extension will be granted to the July 1st deadline. Any Area whose recertification is not submitted by July 1st will be considered to have no certified AMIAS, and Alateen groups cannot meet in that Area. Areas that submit recertification packets with changes that result in an Alateen Group not having the required number of certified Alateen Group Sponsors need to notify the Alateen Group that it cannot meet until Area-certified Alateen Group Sponsors are assigned through the Area process.

The Annual Recertification is a simple matter if the Area records are kept up-to-date throughout the year. In order to assist the Areas, the WSO Online Group Records, which currently allows Area Group Records Coordinators to view and edit Al-Anon Group records in the WSO database, will be extended to the AAPPs for Alateen later this year so AAPPs will be able to:

- Compare Area records with the WSO records.
- Check when a new group has been registered or a change has been processed by WSO staff.
- Run reports on demand such as the current Alateen Group Printout.

Alateen records are a bit more complicated than Al-Anon group records, due to the certification process for AMIAS, and the requirement that certified AMIAS be affiliated with every group. In order to be able to include electronic processing of AMIAS records, WSO will need more information on every aspect of your Area certification process, including record storage and record retention. We will be asking the AAPPs and Area Alateen Coordinators to provide your updated Area Alateen Requirements, certification process, and record retention policy.

The Associate Director of Member Services—International reported on the CMA Newsletter: The initial newsletter sent via e-mail in July 2011. We sent 6,558 e-mails. The number of undeliverable e-mails was 1,083. The bad e-mail addresses had to be deleted. The WSO worked with the Group Records Coordinators to get assistance with obtaining valid e-mail addresses. A conference call with the Coordinators was held. The Coordinators were enthusiastic about using the District Representatives as a resource to resolve the issues. In addition, an article was published in October 2011 issue of *The Forum*.

The second newsletter was sent in March 2012. We sent 6,583 e-mails and received only 52 undeliverable e-mails. It was a totally difference experience due to the accuracy of the e-mail addresses. Most of the questions we received were general in nature. Some were technical, such as how to download or I wasn't able to download.

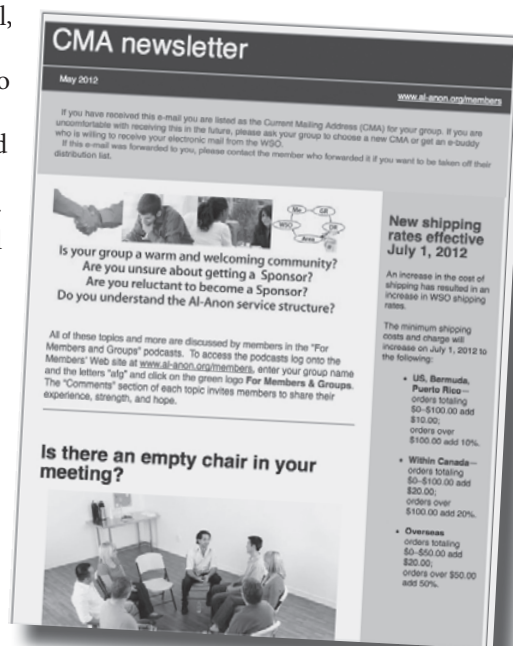
We received 33 requests to be unsubscribed after the March mailing. We would prefer to receive a replacement e-mail address in order to keep the communication open.

We are asking help to come up with a name for the CMA newsletter. The name selected will be incorporated into the banner and will be announced in August.

We have begun the process of CMA e-mail addresses for the Spanish- and French-speaking groups. We currently we have 791 Spanish groups and 260 Spanish CMA e-mail addresses. We currently have 271 French groups and 80 French CMA e-mail addresses. The target date for launching the CMA newsletter in Spanish and French is 2013.

The Associate Director of Member Services—Conference reported that during the last year, Area Coordinators were added to e-Communities, as well as most recently, the DRs, Area Chairs, and the newly formed Web Coordinators and the Past and Current WSC members. Many of the Communities have Discussion Boards where members of the Communities can post topics of interest and ask questions of other members in their Community. Some examples of the ways the various service positions are using e-Communities follow.

The Alateen Coordinators and Area Alateen Process Persons are discussing the Alateen recertification process, as well as sharing information, problem-solving, and coaching each other.



The Group Records Coordinators are discussing Area processes, the WSO Online Group Records Web Application, and giving each other tips on how to use the various reports now available to them.

The District Representatives (DRs) e-Community is the largest. All Delegates, Area Chairs, Coordinators, and Past Conference members also have access to this community in order to streamline the announcements of posting *Area Highlights*, the Appeal Letter, and the CMA newsletter. The DRs are also the most reluctant to use this communication tool. Delegates were asked to please encourage DRs to make use of e-Communities.

The WSO is continuously looking for ways to improve this communication vehicle.

The Associate Director of Communications—Literature told the Conference that the WSO has a new program in place to assist the many Areas, Al-Anon Information Services, and districts that develop fundraising calendars to help support their services.

Often, these calendars include quotations for each month from Conference Approved Literature (CAL). The process of requesting permission to reprint 12 or more quotations for each calendar can be a very work-intensive and time-consuming process for both the service arm and the WSO. In an effort to “Keep It Simple,” for a trial period, the WSO is providing 20 CAL quotations that can be used by Al-Anon service arms for 2013. The quotations are provided in English, French, and Spanish. It is not necessary to request reprint permission for use of these quotations.

For those who want their calendar to focus on the “Step of the month,” 12 of the quotations are on the Steps. For those who wish to mix and match, the remaining eight quotations are on a variety of topics.

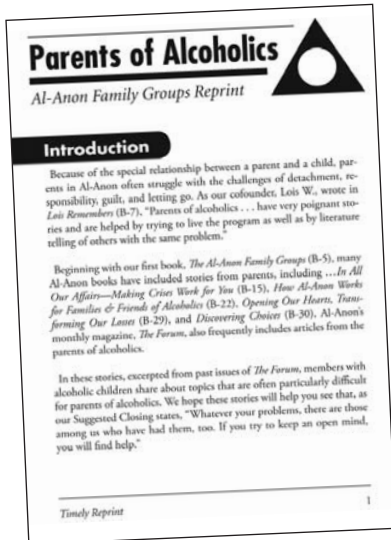
The quotations have been posted on the Area Chairperson e-Community, to which Conference members also have access. Service arms that submit reprint permission requests in the coming year for use in calendars will be asked to select from the 20 quotations instead.

In response to numerous requests for more material for parents of alcoholics, and in an effort to determine how widespread the need is, the Literature Committee developed a “timely reprint,” *Parents of Alcoholics* (R-18), using articles from recent issues of *The Forum*. Timely reprints, as the name implies, serve what is perceived as a timely, immediate need, and are printed for only a two-year period. If demand warrants it, after the two-year period is up, the Literature Committee can recommend that a reprint become CAL. This black-and-white, 5” X 7” leaflet is not to be confused with the 3½” X 8½” white-and-green pamphlet, *To Parents of Alcoholics* (P-16), which was formerly titled *To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic*.

The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals reported that work on the 2012 Al-Anon Membership Survey has begun. This will be our tenth Conference Approved study. The demographics and other findings are very important in our outreach efforts to increase professional referrals to Al-Anon. Having a research study in essence strengthens Al-Anon’s credibility.

Participation in the online 2012 Al-Anon Membership Survey is open to any Al-Anon member in our service structure (U.S., Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda). The questionnaire will be posted online for a limited period of time. Information will be provided in *The Forum*, as well in the new electronic newsletter that is sent by e-mail to all groups.

A motion to approve the 2011 Annual Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #4, page 91. The complete report can be found on pages 93-109.)



VISIT TO STEPPING STONES

All Conference members visited Stepping Stones, which is the birthplace of the Al-Anon Clearing House as we know it today and the home of Lois and Bill W., cofounders of Al-Anon and A.A. respectively.

The Executive Director of Stepping Stones shared some of the history about the home. It was noted that the house has been left in its original condition as much as possible, with mementos, photos, and trinkets throughout the house. Stepping Stones’ Executive Director further explained that there has been some modernization done to the house to preserve it. Visitors were permitted to take pictures at certain places on the property including behind Lois’s desk.

BY-LAWS

Prior to the World Service Conference, the members were provided with an amendment to the By-Laws passed at the January 2012 Board Meeting. This amendment establishes the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). The amendment follows closely the trial By-Laws amendment presented to the 1995 World Service Conference to create the ECRPM for a 15-year trial period. Now that the trial period has elapsed, the Board has amended the By-Laws to add the ECRPM.

Karen R.
Chairperson of the Board

In accordance with Article 10 d of the "Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter":

The Bylaws [sic] of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc, and any amendments thereto are subject to recall by the Conference by a two-thirds vote of all its members. All Bylaw amendments will be presented to the first Conference to be held after their adoption by the Board of Trustees.

Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, "Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter," p.166

Conference members had no questions and did not recall this By-Law Amendment.

TRIALS TO DISBAND ADMISSIONS/HANDBOOK WORK GROUP AND GROUP SERVICES COMMITTEE

The three-year trials for the Admissions/Handbook Work Group and Group Services Committee, approved in 2009, have expired and the Work Group and Committee were dissolved at the April 2012 Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees.

Thought and Task Forces are more productive. Thought and Task Forces are appointed as needed and the members work nimbly. The Forces are discharged when the charge is completed.

Trial to Disband the Admissions/Handbook Work Group

Al-Anon has always demonstrated its ability to be a progressive, forward-thinking fellowship, unafraid of change as we know our Legacies guide us in sound business practice. Over the past few years, Conference members' ability to participate has changed with the introduction of Thought and Task Forces performing specific duties. This has made possible the restructuring of many Committees to meet the dynamic needs of our fellowship.

Bev A.
*Immediate Past Chairperson of
Admissions/Handbook Work Group*

The year 2009 brought a three-year trial to disband the Admissions/Handbook Work Group. This sub-committee of the Conference Leadership Team reviewed and recommended requests for seating of non-voting participants at the World Service Conference (WSC); determined if an Area met the criteria for seating at the WSC; reviewed requests for an Area name change; and made recommendations for changes in the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

A defined task, such as the seating of non-voting participants, has been handled with ease by the Conference Leadership Team.

If a comprehensive review of the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P24-27) is needed, or when changes are necessary, the Chairperson of the Board may appoint a Task Force to perform those duties.

Petitions from Areas to divide and requests for an Area name change are initially reviewed by the Conference Leadership Team and then the Board of Trustees.

By means of the Conference Leadership Team and Task Forces, duties of the Admissions/Handbook Work Group are successfully being managed.

Trial to Disband the Group Services Committee

In 2009, the Groups Services Committee brought a motion to the World Service Conference to disband the Committee on a three-year trial basis. At that time, the World Service Office and members of several Committees had been looking at better ways to do the work, including the use of Thought and Task Forces. Members of this Committee at that time expressed the opinion that the Committee was doing very little; those among them who had participated on Thought or Task Forces had found those work groups more dynamic and more effective.

Laurie K.
*Immediate Past Chairperson of
Group Services Committee*

Prior to 1996, there was no Group Services Committee; group problems came to the staff which came up with solutions and reported to the World Service Conference. When Committees were reorganized and this Committee created, the hope was that Delegate members of the Group Services Committee would bring issues, problems, concerns, and ideas from the groups which the Committee would then address. Instead, Al-Anon and Alateen members more often contacted the WSO directly and received a quicker response so the Committee was relegated to creating bookmarks.

A Conference member questioned who would provide services to the groups if this Committee didn't exist. The answer was that the whole World Service Office is dedicated to providing services to the groups.

The realignment of Delegates from the Group Services Committee to Thought and Task Forces has freed up former Committee members to use their time and talents more effectively.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR REAL PROPERTY MANAGEMENT—TRIENNIAL REPORT

Penny R.
Treasurer, Board of Trustees

In 1994, the World Service Conference passed Motion #12, which empowered the Board of Trustees to purchase property for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This purchase of real property was for a trial period of 15 years and contingent on several conditions.

In 2011, the World Service Conference passed Motion #6, which ended the 15-year trial period and empowered the Board of Trustees to continue to own the current or subsequent property in the name of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The ownership of property is contingent on conditions enumerated in Motion #6.

One condition set forth in the 1994 Motion #12 and the 2011 Motion #6 was that the Board of Trustees “establish a separate Executive Committee for Real Property Management in order to ensure that the management of the real property be done in a prudent manner and not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the spiritual parts of the program, i.e., service to the groups, individuals, or Al-Anon as a whole.”

To fulfill that condition, a motion to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was approved by the WSC in 1995. The ByLaws were amended in January 2012 to include the Executive Committee for Real Property Management and the Amendment will be presented to the Conference this year. The separate Executive Committee was preferred for its simplicity and the fact that it would cut down on additional forms needed to be filed annually with the Internal Revenue Service. The Committee consists of three at Large Al-Anon members, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and the Director of Business Services. The Committee first met June 15, 1996, and has met twice a year since then.

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

The Board of Trustees reports the following:

1. Has ownership of property been financially feasible?

The Board of Trustees reports that ownership of property has been a very good step financially. Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters, Inc. received tax-exempt financing and thus a lower rate of interest due to non-profit status. A savings of at least \$550,000 a year has been realized by owning property in Virginia vs. leasing it in New York. The gap between ownership and leasing is expected to widen as costs of ownership decrease and costs of leasing increase.

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

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

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

After reviewing the last 15 years of real property ownership, the Board of Trustees has no negative impact to report. A small minority of groups attempted to tie the Alateen requirements established by the Board of Trustees to the ownership of property in 2004. The Board of Trustees clarified that the only assets it was protecting were our name and our children. The ECRPM is a Committee separate from all other committees. It operates separately from the work and business of the World Service Office, allowing the WSO to focus on the primary spiritual aim of the fellowship. This real separation is what allows ownership of property to function as well as it does.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATE

2013 Al-Anon International Convention

Al-Anon's Fifth International Convention will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, July 5-7, 2013. Plans are underway for this festive event. Registration information will be available in the fall of 2012. After registering for the International, members will be able to reserve a hotel room in Al-Anon's Room Block.

The World Service Office will hold a special, separate day celebrating service on Thursday, July 4th, before the Convention begins on Friday, July 5th. What a wonderful way to kick off the weekend!

Members who live outside of Canada will need to have a passport in order to enter Canada. Some members who live outside the U.S. and Canada may also need a visa.

Members were encouraged to allow enough time to process passport applications.

"Celebrating Worldwide Unity" with more than 4,500 Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. members and their guests will be a great experience to meet old friends and make new ones.



Ric B.
2013 Chairperson

Suzanne M.
2013 Coordinator

Barbara O.
2013 Co-Coordinator

NORTHERN EUROPE AND PANAMA TRIPS

In the summer of 2011, three Trustees and the Executive Director went to Northern Europe. Each Trustee joined the Executive Director for a portion of the trip, which included: Iceland, England, Turkey, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Austria, and Italy. In the fall of 2011, a Trustee and staff member went to Panama for the Central American Zonal Meeting.

These trips demonstrated how Al-Anon's message of hope transcends language and culture for people who are looking for some resolution to their pain. The trips further illustrated how face-to-face conversations can often bring clarity and insight to difficult topics that words on a page don't always offer.

Northern Europe

Iceland



The GSO had requested a visit from the WSO to help with various problems within the fellowship. Dual members distorting the Al-Anon program was cited as one of the main concerns.

There are 43 Al-Anon and three Alateen groups. Al-Anon is celebrating 40 years in Iceland later in 2012. There are only two Al-Anon books available in Icelandic, *One Day at a Time* and *The Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage*. Approval to print *How Al-Anon Works* was finalized during the visit.

Roger C.
Trustee

Karen R.
Chairperson of the Board

Bev A.
Trustee

Ric B.
Executive Director

The WSO staff member and Trustee met with the General Service Board, of which only five out of a possible ten members were present. This was partially due to vacant positions; in addition, two members were not available for the meeting. During the discussion, it became clear that the fellowship had problems of trust and control with the Board. The WSO members discussed ways they could get more volunteers and pointed out that the Board needed to lead the changes it sought in the fellowship and suggested the possibility of using an outside facilitator to identify behavior necessary to address problems and bring about change.

The WSO staff member and Trustee met with a member who is doing a research project involving interviewing longtime members and shared how the WSO works with researchers and what resources the WSO could provide to Iceland.

England

England was selected as part of the trip because the third European Zonal Meeting (EZM) was being held in Leeds. All European structures are invited to attend this meeting, which is held every two years (in the year when there is no International Al-Anon General Services Meeting). Fourteen structures were represented: UK & Eire, Austria, Belgium (French), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland (French), and Switzerland (German).

As the Zonal meeting is still evolving, there was discussion about the framework document for the meeting and a possible European Zonal Meeting Web site. There was confusion about what had been agreed to at the last meeting regarding the Web site. A member had put a lot of effort into developing a model Web site and there were conflicting opinions about the purpose of the Web site. In the end, the members agreed not to proceed with a Web site and accepted the WSO's offer to add EZM Representatives to e-Communities.

The staff member and Trustee gave a Conflict Resolution presentation. One member noted that the presentation had taken some of the steam out of the Web site discussion.

There was a discussion about Alateen in Europe. No one was very upbeat about Alateen, and there was a comment that we should consider absorbing Alateen into Al-Anon.

There were workshops on finances. Some of the larger structures have financial challenges due to a reduction in the number of groups, fewer members, and an aging membership.

Turkey

The members in Turkey asked questions about sponsorship, group business meetings, and what to do about dominant members. They had questions about literature. There is very limited Al-Anon literature in Turkish. The WSO staff member and the Trustee reviewed the criteria for translating and printing literature in Turkey. The members have an understanding that Al-Anon can be so much more than what they currently experience and they are eager to get there. They also talked about the criteria for translating and printing literature. The WSO staff member and Trustee left with the commitment to continue supporting them.

Slovenia

The staff member and Trustee met with members three different times during the trip to Slovenia. The WSO was successful in strengthening the links of communication and clarifying the policies.

The WSO answered questions about the process of translating literature and suggested they create a translation committee that could assist the AIS in deciding what pieces of literature they should consider as their next project. It was noted that they can use the guidelines on the Members' Web site and how they can use *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) as outreach tool to professionals in Slovenia and the process of getting AFA to Slovenia members for translation.

The members had questions regarding how to motivate groups and members to be of service; how to attract new Alateen members; and what is required of an Alateen Group Sponsor. There were also questions about Al-Anon Adult Children meetings.

One session was on the benefits of service. Members shared how service has been a strong tool in their personal recovery and how they felt more a part of the group once they became involved and have learned to live joyfully.

Hungary

The members in Hungary had many questions for the WSO staff member and Trustee. Do we have to have an alcoholic in our life to be in Al-Anon? May we continue to come to Al-Anon, if we have chosen to leave the alcoholic or if the alcoholic has passed away? Do we have to give our names? How does a meeting run? How long is it? Do we have to give our phone number or e-mail address? Do we have to pray with the other members? How much should we give as a voluntary contribution? What is the Birthday Plan? Can A.A. members attend Al-Anon meetings? What do we say to members who bring in outside literature? How do we know if an Al-Anon member is appropriate as an Alateen Group Sponsor? (There are no Alateen meetings in Hungary.)

There was also a question regarding whether the cover of the book needed to be the same as the original when publishing *In All Our Affairs*. The WSO responded by saying that they may choose to make the cover different, but a benefit to having it look similar is that when members visit other structures they will recognize the book, even if they do not speak the local language.

Poland

The staff member and Trustee attended the Polish Policy Meeting. The agenda included decisions taken at the previous meeting, brief reports from Committees, a general report from the Management Board, discussion on current matters, and a brief report from the Zonal Meeting held in Leeds.

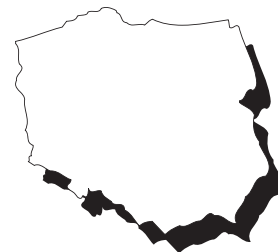
Poland has had a Conference for 14 years. It is held annually and is chaired by a Trustee. The members asked what topics the World Service Conference discusses, how those topics chosen, and who presents the topics?

The members discussed what their role as Delegate is and the importance of taking the views, spirit, and decisions of the Conference back to their Areas. Some Delegates give reports at Area meetings, while others send a written report to groups. The Delegates shared their frustrations of not always knowing how to report on Conference, how much information is too much, and when to share more.

The WSO staff member and Trustee also attended a meeting of the Board of Trustees. Their Chairperson of the Board shared the importance of learning the role of your current service job, which not only helps you grow personally, but also strengthens the Polish structure. She also shared the importance of representing Al-Anon well to the public, newcomers, to A.A., and to each other.

Poland has been holding Regional Service Seminars (RSS) since 2007. Members realize after attending an RSS that Trustees are regular Al-Anon members. The RSSs have been successful in building relationships and understanding of the Al-Anon structure.

The WSO staff member showed clips of the *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31) DVD and explained how to use this service tool depending upon your audience and the length of your presentation. There was a discussion regarding using subtitles or a voice over in Polish.



Austria

The new General Service Office (GSO) is located in Reutte. There are six members on the Board. Five members from each region and the six Trustees make the decisions as the Conference. The Board only meets once a year. The WSO staff member and Trustee suggested that the Board may want to meet more often to deal with legal issues and oversee the office's support for the groups.

Austria follows Germany's structure due to the common language. Members in Austria work with the Literature Committee in Germany to translate literature into German. While Germany prints all of the literature, Austria makes money on literature because it buys the literature at a discount.

Board members expressed concerns about the GSO being supported. There was a discussion about money and how to explain to members to let go of hoarding.

A suggestion was made to review the Concepts and to utilize more delegated authority. It was noted that the quality of a decision is more important than who makes the decision. Other topics discussed included: rotation of service, service sponsorship, and creating a Policy Committee.



Italy

The staff member and Trustee met with the Board of Trustees in Rimini. Al-Anon was celebrating its 35th Anniversary in Italy at a Convention held in conjunction with A.A.

There was a discussion regarding the relationship between the Board and the Areas regarding autonomy. It was suggested that the answer is: there is only one authority, which is a Higher Power. We must talk to each other to find an answer.

They were interested in conflict resolution discussions and tools. Topics discussed include: Regional Trustee vs Trustee at Large; Board speaks through motions not discussion, so legality is in the organization protecting Al-Anon, not the Areas; the difference between "traditional vs legal"; the Charter; Serenity Prayer, whether the use of Signore was a correct translation for God; and pyramid groups.

The staff member and Trustee attended a meeting with a panel of professionals who talked about the reality of alcoholism, why the family needs help, and the benefits of Alateen to teens.

In meeting with the GSO's Executive Director, the staff member and Trustee were informed that there is no Finance Committee. The members of the WSO explained the responsibilities of the WSO's Finance Committee and its responsibilities and the reason the Chairperson of the Board attends the Executive Committee meetings. A suggestion was made to consider hiring a part-time staff member to assist with financial issues.

Other topics discussed included: interest in the WSO Group Records database, Alateen protections; spiritual principles behind the Concepts; finances, donations, abundance, and updating their Web site.



Panama

Vicki H.

Trustee

Marsha W.

Associate Director of

Member Services—International



The WSO staff member and Trustee attended the RECACSA Central American Zonal Meeting hosted by Panama as a support and resource, as well as to strengthen communication in a face-to-face setting. The primary focus of the meeting was to review, discuss, and edit guidelines drafted for the meeting.

Five countries participated in the meeting: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Panama. Of these, only Costa Rica and Guatemala have national service offices. The Dominican Republic and El Salvador were unable to send representatives as planned.

The primary topic discussed was the purpose and intent of the licensing agreement for a General Service Office to sell Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature to an evolving service structure.

Highlights of reports regarding service growth, successes, and projects planned in the five countries included the following:

Nicaragua advised that they have 15 Al-Anon groups. An Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) was registered with the World Service Office last year. The AIS trusted servants have participated in public outreach activities, such as sharing the benefits of Al-Anon with the professional community.

Honduras has 11 Al-Anon groups. They are in the process of forming an AIS. They expressed concerns about feeling isolated from the other Central American countries. There is a small pool of members who are willing to do service work; they are seeking ways to motivate others to become involved in service.

Guatemala has 28 Al-Anon groups and three Alateen groups. Their General Service Office has existed in different formats for more than 25 years. Although they have an office and one staff person, they are struggling financially. Service by members hasn't been consistent due to the circumstances within the country.

Costa Rica has 168 Al-Anon and five Alateen groups. They had been experiencing some financial difficulties, but after making the groups aware of the need, contributions have increased. The representatives advised they have been very active doing public outreach to include radio interviews, visits to schools, and holding Regional Service Seminars.

Panama has 27 Al-Anon groups. A second AIS registration form was sent to the WSO in November. They cooperated with A.A. on a one hour radio show last year. Their ultimate goal is to form a national service structure for Panama.

R= ramas de servicio (branches of services)

E= estructuras (structures)

C= comunicación (communication)

A= apoyo (support)

C= conceptos (concepts)

S= servicio (service)

A= Alateen

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

2012 Regional Trustee Nominating Process

Sandie D.

Trustee

The Trustee explained the Regional Trustee Nomination Process and deadlines. Each Regional Committee on Trustees consists of the current Delegates serving the Areas of the Region, as well as Out-of-Region Delegates, drawn by lot.

The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE
US Northeast	Jane S., Panel 50, OK Bette R., Panel 50, OR Kerry L., Panel 52, MB	Linda B., Panel 51, SK
US Southeast	Patrick B., Panel 52, CA(N) Denise S., Panel 51, NV Pauline M., Panel 51, NF/LAB	Jane H., Panel 50, AB/NWT
US North Central	Cindy C., Panel 50, MT Cecilia K., Panel 50, AZ Teri M., Panel 50, CO	Jeannette M., Panel 50, MP

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

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

REGION	CHAIRPERSON	ALTERNATE
US Northeast	Jack S., Panel 52, MD/DC	Ruth S., Panel 52, NY(N)
US Southeast	Grace M., Panel 52, TN	Jan R., Panel 51, SC
US North Central	Maddie P., Panel 51, IA	Elaine L., Panel 50, MN(N)

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

The CCT Chair opened her report by saying, "In looking at the 'Opportunities to Serve Form' my first year as Delegate, I studied all of the wonderful ways in which I could participate and serve at Conference. The *Service Manual* was instrumental in helping me decide that I would really like to serve on the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT). I am fascinated by what Trustees do, what the qualifications are, and, most of all, the specific elements of the decision-making process. The CCT was my first choice, but I thought I wouldn't be selected, because traditionally Delegates from my Area have served on the Literature or Group Services Committee. When I received my assignment I couldn't believe it. I had been selected to serve on the CCT—what a surprise and a gift!

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

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

"My experience on this Committee has been rewarding and fulfilling. In working with other CCT members, it became clear that all of us were striving toward the same goal—to have only the **most qualified members** serve our worldwide fellowship. Trustees work tirelessly to carry the message of help and hope to places where we cannot travel.

"Scoring résumés of fellow members is a unique experience. I heard other CCT members share about the spiritual nature of this process. I couldn't imagine what they were talking about until I went through it for the first time. What I discovered was that the spiritual part for me occurred between the action of reading the qualifications of each candidate and scoring of each part of the résumé simply by inviting my Higher Power to participate with me step-by-step. What an experience--one I will always be grateful to have had.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed being on the CCT serving our fellowship in such a profound way."

Patsy A.
Chairperson, Panel 50,
North Carolina/Bermuda

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

Anne F.
Chairperson, Trustee

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

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

The Nominating Committee Chairperson then thanked the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), the Nominating Committee, and the Regional Committees on Trustees for their hard work over the last year. “Using the résumés and additional question responses, they worked conscientiously to grade the candidates and return the information to the WSO in time for the October Board meeting. We have fielded another excellent slate of candidates to serve the fellowship as Trustee at Large. The Nominating Committee has also proposed an excellent slate of Board Officers.

“Currently, candidates for Regional Trustee (RT) are selected by their Areas who then forward their résumés to the WSO via the Delegate. This year, the Canada East, Canada West, and Canada Central Regional Committees on Trustees each consisted of the Regions’ Delegates and one Delegate chosen by lot for Canadian RCTs, and the South Central Regional Committee on Trustees consisted of the Regions’ Delegates and three Delegates chosen by lot. The Regional Committees on Trustees independently reviewed résumés and an additional written question that has been added as part of the process. The comments and feedback from Delegates serving on these Regional Committees were submitted to the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee, with its own independent review of the résumés and considering the input from the Regional Committees on Trustees, selected up to two nominees per Region for presentation to the Board. For a trial period, the Board voted to meet with Regional Trustee candidates over dinner prior to nomination, using a process identical to that used for Trustee at Large candidates. The Board then nominated one candidate for the Canada East, Canada West, Canada Central, and US South Central Regions. These proposed nominees will be given traditional approval by the Conference as a whole, and then elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting.

“Trustee at Large résumés are solicited from the fellowship after the World Service Conference. 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 are submitted to the WSO by August 15th of the year prior to possible election. Résumés are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. The CCT chair tallies scores and rankings from the CCT and sends a report to the WSO.

“At its October meeting, the Nominating Committee uses the CCT input and its own rankings to select a slate of up to six people to be invited to the January Board dinner for introduction to the Board. Each candidate gives a ten-minute talk about their Al-Anon recovery and service experience, followed by further questions 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 four proposed nominees which includes the three nominees for a three year term and a nominee to fill the remaining two years of a three year term not filled last year. All of the nominees receiving traditional approval will be elected at the Board’s Annual Meeting.

“The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was created by Motion Five of the 1995 WSC in a trial amendment to the By-Laws – Article XII which was finalized as an amendment to the By-Laws—Article 12 by the Board in January and will be presented to the Conference on Thursday. This Committee, consisting of the Treasurer, the Director of Business Services, and three at-large members, is designed to keep management of our headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of Al-Anon. Each at-large member serves a three-year term, and the Chairperson is seated at

the WSC with voice only. The nominating process is the same as that for Trustee at Large. Résumés are due by August 15th and sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking.

“Conference members are being asked to give traditional approval or affirmation for the nominees for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management, and the Board’s Officers. Each Conference member has the responsibility to ask questions or state any facts relevant to the candidacy of the person under consideration. Affirmation under the Right of Decision requires that each voting Conference member take this 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 2012 WSC:

Trustees at Large:

Tina B., 1st three-year term
Harriet T., 2nd three-year term
Karen W-P., 1st three-year term
Charlyn G.F., Two years of 1st three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Ann C., Canada East, 2nd three-year term
Sandie D., Canada Central: 2nd three-year term
Marilyn M., Canada West, 1st three-year term
Annette T., US South Central, Two years of 1st three-year term

Board Officers:

Karen R., Chairperson
Connie H., Vice Chairperson
Penny R., Treasurer

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

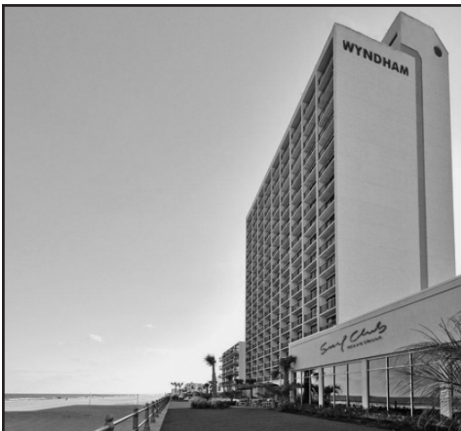
Cindy M., three-year term

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2012-2013:

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

The Board announced the appointment of Beverly S. as the ECRPM Chairperson.

2013 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE



The dates selected for the 2013 World Service Conference are Sunday, April 14 through Thursday, April 18, 2013. The Conference will be held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia. In searching for a site to hold the Conference, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, meal costs, and dates of religious holidays were factors in the selection of the dates and location.

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

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

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

Before the Conference, the submitted topics were combined into a single document by a Thought Force of two Delegates and one member of the Conference Leadership Team and sent back to the members. From this list, each Conference member was asked to select two topics for 60-minute discussions. The two topics receiving the most votes were placed on the agenda. A Conference member was invited to give a brief presentation of each topic, followed by open discussion.

Chosen Agenda Item #1

Bette R.
Panel 50, Oregon

Topic:

How do we empower the average Al-Anon member to speak up at meetings when someone else's sharing is not Al-Anon?

Topic:

Tradition Five states that "Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose: to help families of alcoholics." However, many newcomers to Al-Anon have family members with multiple addictions and/or mental disorders. This is not a new issue; however, the percentage of multiple addictions seems to be increasing each year.

Topic:

How do we ensure the Al-Anon message remains clear as we continue to expand our membership both within our Conference structure and within other service structures as well? How do we lovingly encourage members to only use our Al-Anon language when sharing their Al-Anon spiritual journey?

The Delegate opened her presentation by saying, "Today we have people coming to Al-Anon who are speaking about things other than Al-Anon. Some individuals are coming in from treatment centers and others are family members of individuals with multiple addictions or disorders. The reality of newcomers coming into the program includes dealing with multiple addictions. A 2005 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services found that 47 percent of clients in treatment were addicted to both alcohol and illicit drugs. A 2011 SAMHSA report shows that "alcohol dependence is four times as likely to occur among adults with mental illness than adults with no mental illness and that the rate of alcohol dependence increases as the severity of mental illness increases."

"Treatment jargon is usually fresh in the minds of those who join an Al-Anon meeting in the same facility or who were referred to a meeting from a treatment facility. There are differences between the treatment center approach and the Al-Anon philosophy of recovery. Clarity about those differences upholds our Twelve Traditions. The *Service Manual* indicates that occasional discussion of drug abuse by family members 'is acceptable at an Al-Anon or Alateen meeting as it may be one of the results of living with alcoholism.'

"Some members of other Twelve Step organizations tend to bring their other programs into the meeting. Others want to change the language of our Legacies to fit their background. As our cofounder Lois W. once said, "We realized if the Steps were altered once, they could be altered again and again. Their meaning and power might be lost."

"Newcomers often do not understand the Al-Anon focus and want to share the details of their current situation and particularly the specifics about their family members' treatment or current situation. A recent speaker meeting featured a relatively new Alateen who was excited about finding the Alateen program, but was only beginning to experience recovery. His sharing was focused on the current horrific conditions in his family and although there were several AMIAS present in the room, no one stepped forward to assist and support him, even though the contents of his lengthy sharing were specific enough to have possibly engendered a report to authorities by a mandated reporter. How can we support Al-Anon and Alateen newcomers and help them to understand the Al-Anon focus as they enter our culture and begin to learn the language of Al-Anon recovery?

At the 2011 WSC, we heard from Dr. Vivian Jackson that each culture has its own language and as newcomers come in, learning the language is what makes them part of the group. Al-Anon does

speak a different language and we have reasons for that. The language of Al-Anon is the language of our three Legacies and CAL, not outside literature or terms used in counseling or other outside treatment discussions. Treatment centers and the mental health community also have their own language that reflects their approach to recovery that is often focused more on the alcoholic or person directly receiving treatment as opposed to the Al-Anon approach to recovery for families that is focused on the recovery of the family member affected by the disease of alcoholism.

“Members want to support newcomers and encourage them to keep coming back but at times, we are so “nice” that the entire meeting or event loses the Al-Anon focus. Other times members are so abrupt in attempting to correct those who do not use our language that newcomers do not return. How do we find a balance where we are unafraid to speak clearly about the Al-Anon focus to newcomers while at the same time providing a warm and safe atmosphere for newcomers in pain?

“The fact that variations on the theme of outside topics and/or language at meetings was discussed at the 2001, 2007, and 2008 WSC suggests that keeping the Al-Anon focus in meetings and avoiding dilution of the program continues to be an issue for members.”

The floor was opened for discussion on the following questions:

How do we empower the average Al-Anon member to speak up at meetings when someone else's sharing is not Al-Anon?

- “Let It Begin with Me.” Many times modeling is the best way.
- Have a meeting on the topic of the need to use Conference Approved Literature, not just during a business meeting. Draw on longtime members to discuss the advantages. Include reminders at the beginning of the meetings. At business meetings, discuss or use role-play to act out how to respond. It's the job of the Chairperson to bring the meeting back to Al-Anon.
- One-on-one approach is the best. I have done damage control in the parking lot after the meeting, in hopes that the member will come back after being corrected during the meeting. We can be too rigid.
- My home group is a strong Tradition-based group and we practice the Traditions in every aspect of our group. We hold a group conscience using Tradition One as guidance to know how to respond to this situation. We have to consider the common welfare of the group. It's not one member's responsibility to keep the meeting Al-Anon, but that of the entire group.
- A group was changing the words of the Legacies, and the WSO directed me to the Reoccurring Questions on e-Communities. I think the reoccurring questions should be available to the membership at large.

Conference members are asked to use the Reoccurring Questions on e-Communities as guidance to help answer questions and concerns. Conference members are asked not to hand out these documents as sometimes new information or insight evolves that can revise or change an answer, in which case, we could have incorrect information out in the fellowship.

- Talk about it, and work it out within the group. Have the *Service Manual* handy and when something comes up, look it up in the *Manual*, which helps to maintain principles above personalities.
- We had a workshop called “Bad Meeting and What to Do.” We began by having members at tables doing all the things that divert the focus of the meeting, followed by a discussion on how to handle these problems.
- Follow the same format by asking members to leave outside issues outside. We had a good discussion at our last Assembly about the need to approach in a sensitive way. One way is to use the pamphlet, *Al-Anon Spoken Here*. Remind members to keep other affiliations outside, including other addictions. Suggest that we keep the focus on Al-Anon. When I first came to Al-Anon, people kept using the word “spouse” and it was my parents, so I had to change the terminology in my mind.
- We have solved these problems by having a Beginners' Meeting before our regular meeting and all of this is mentioned there. When someone jumped on something I said as a newcomer, I was too embarrassed to walk out. Thankfully that person stayed after the meeting and I was able to express that she had hurt my feelings.
- I have been taught to use the literature and not make it personal. I approach the person after the meeting and share the *Hope for Today* August 16th page. Some people ignore me and begin by saying, “I know I'm not supposed to say it, but . . .”

How do we ensure the Al-Anon message remains clear as we continue to expand our membership both within our Conference structure and within other service structures as well?

- I hear, “He’s my qualifier, you know,” regularly at meetings. I used “what is Al-Anon and what isn’t” as a meeting topic.
- We use the *Groups at Work* booklet and that helps to change the entire dynamics of the meeting. We read the paragraph at the end of the Opening that includes asking members of other anonymous fellowships to remain anonymous and focus on the Al-Anon program. I get worried when we’re trying to be “language police” because the language is not as important as the Al-Anon message. It’s one thing to talk spirituality and another thing to live spiritually. We need to model the program with our behavior.
- My home group has a Beginners’ meeting and we use the Beginners’ Meeting guideline (G-2). This has really helped. We talk about CAL and sponsorship.
- We have so much already. The Board’s Mission and Vision, the Traditions, and the Concepts. If we stay focused on these things, we’ll remain clear.
- When I first came into Al-Anon, my home group did not pay much attention to the Traditions. As we have studied the Traditions as a group, we are more aware of what is the Al-Anon message and what isn’t.
- Language is a virus—it’s always changing. For me to try to pin down what is “good” today may not be so tomorrow. Nowhere is there a list of words we can and cannot use, and I would hate to see that. If we would just follow the Traditions, we don’t really need to do much more.
- Many social issues and outside issues are about language and how it influences us. I am concerned about the language that we use at WSC and in our groups. It has great potential to change the spiritual structure of our meetings. We fully inform the members that each one has the responsibility and we would never embarrass them during the meeting, but should lovingly approach them after the meeting. We could be a bit more patient with newcomers and just let them go for a couple of weeks.

How do we lovingly encourage members to only use our Al-Anon language when sharing their Al-Anon spiritual journey?

- I said, “You can’t say that,” and she said, “I just did, and I can.” I got good at Step Ten—making a lot of amends. I have learned how to say something gently after the meeting. I know when to keep my mouth shut and give the person a little leeway. Read the body language and wait until after the meeting.
- In open discussion meetings, we get more treatment talk. After I had been at my home group for some time, I suggested a group conscience and asked that we have a topic meeting each week. That has removed most of the other language. I am very aware when I speak of how to keep the focus on me. I give the newcomer a bit of a respite, a little bit of time to understand what we are doing.
- A member was using non-CAL, and I sat down next to him before the meeting and said, “We only use CAL at an Al-Anon meeting. You are welcome to use it in your personal recovery, but not at the meeting.” I suggest using a gentle, sit-next-to-the-person approach.
- As a new Group Representative, someone was talking about religion so I had a meeting on Tradition One. That member didn’t show up for the education I was going to give. When I have knowledge, I have responsibility. Sometimes I just say it in a proactive way, “I am so grateful that when I come to this meeting, I only hear Al-Anon.”
- The language is not as important as the Al-Anon message. We had a gentleman who didn’t speak for the first eight weeks or so. When he did speak, he thanked us for not pushing or preaching—we just used Al-Anon.
- I’m bothered by the last question because I feel like there is an agenda about this question. It takes time to learn our language and you can’t possibly know it coming into Al-Anon as a newcomer. I never saw anyone telling people what sort of language they could use. I love and appreciate the patience and love of the members.
- I was intrigued by this question. When we were in Iceland, one of the members asked if there was a specific language we use in Al-Anon meetings. The answer is no, the object is to com-

municate. Part of using plain language is to avoid using treatment terminology.

- Sometimes it just takes time. The language just starts to come. Encourage sponsorship. By watching and observing my Sponsor, I learned a lot of things I needed to know. Be knowledgeable about speakers chosen for Conventions. In my Area, we no longer invite speakers unless we've heard their tapes. Do your homework.
- My home group had a member who changed the wording in the Steps. After the second time, I connected with him after the meeting and told him it was important to read the words that are written. He said, "I'm dyslexic and I didn't know that I did that." I'm so glad I had spoken to him privately. He did keep coming back and we have a special bond. I model behavior when I share in a meeting—speaking in principles and not detail. It's much easier for the listener to apply this to their life. I share details with my Sponsor. I serve as an answering service volunteer, and that helps.

A Delegate summarized the discussion:

- Approach members after the meeting in a gentle, loving way.
- Allow newcomers time to learn the program.
- Use Conference Approved Literature and study the Legacies.
- Model the behavior—"Let It Begin with Me."
- Hold business meetings.
- Have Beginners' meetings.
- Encourage sponsorship.

Chosen Agenda Item #2

Topic:

How does WSO see social networks, such as Facebook and YouTube, as a way to attract and retain new members to our fellowship?

Topic:

After 60 years of Al-Anon, we are still not well known. How can we get Al-Anon and Alateen "out of the closet"?

The two Conference members opened their presentation by saying, "At the end of 1951, Bill W., the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, said that he expected that Al-Anon would someday grow to be as large as A.A. At Al-Anon's first World Service Conference, Bill reiterated his expectation that Al-Anon would grow larger than A.A., a statement that he frequently repeated. Nevertheless, despite Bill's optimism and enthusiasm, Al-Anon is still a fraction of the size of A.A.

"Why has Al-Anon *not* grown larger and why aren't more people aware of our program? This broader question encompasses the chosen agenda item questions: How does the WSO see social networks, such as Facebook and YouTube, as a way to attract and retain new members to our fellowship? After 60 years of Al-Anon, we are still not well-known. How can we get Al-Anon and Alateen "out of the closet"?"

"This is a *déjà vu* of Al-Anon's sixth World Service Conference held in 1966. A Conference Approved Public Relations statement appears on page 107 of *the 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The statement was so important that it was reaffirmed by the 1971 WSC. The statement describes our Public Relations policy, our continued existence, and our future growth as being reliant upon attraction without promotion and cooperation without affiliation. It defines these terms and warns us that 'There can be no standing still without retrogression.' Here we are, 46 World Service Conferences later having a similar conversation as to how we can attract more newcomers, inform the general public, and increase professional referrals to our program.

"Our pioneers saw media solely as a tool to help us fulfill our primary purpose—attract newcomers, offer hope, and to comfort the relatives and friends of alcoholics.

"Lack of awareness of Al-Anon is only one of the many reasons why friends and families of alcoholics have not joined Al-Anon in greater numbers. The family's denial is also a powerful obstacle to family recovery and the need for our program. An online survey of non-members conducted by the WSO in 2009 shows that aided awareness of Al-Anon appears to have increased to 45 percent, which

Craig M.

Panel 51, Nebraska

Claire R.

*Associate Director of
Communications—Professionals*

is a substantial increase in only four years. Since 2009, Al-Anon's TV and radio PSAs have reached a combined audience of about 1 billion. The "Dear Abby" advice column recommended Al-Anon and included our contact information on April 5. The column also included a letter from a member, telling how much Al-Anon helped her. "Dear Abby" is carried by 1,400 newspapers with a combined circulation of 110 million readers. Since 2007, more than 2 million Web surfers have seen our online Public Service Announcements (PSAs) on Google search, with more than 100,000 clicking through to our Public Outreach Web site, which attracts more than 800,000 visitors per year.

"Since 1952, the Al-Anon Family Groups have entrusted all matters pertaining to national publicity to the WSO. The WSO as the group conscience of the fellowship wants the WSO to do what the groups cannot do for themselves. The World Service Conference has approved the Policy Committee's recommendation to designate the Internet and the World Wide Web as public media, in the same category with press, radio, TV, and films. This is why the WSO has been entrusted with sharing Al-Anon's message on YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook.

"Our WSO pioneers saw media as a tool to help us fulfill our primary purpose—attract newcomers and offer hope and comfort to the relatives and friends of alcoholics. They made every possible effort to utilize press, radio, film, and TV to reach family members. They would marvel at the opportunities the Internet and other electronic communication tools provide to us today. The WSO's use of electronic media for national Public Outreach activities gives us the ability to 'reach anyone, anywhere' 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

"In 1986, Lois W. visited the WSO in its new location at 1372 Broadway. She commented about the secretaries who had TVs on their desks. The following year, she learned how to use a computer to catalog her memorabilia at Stepping Stones. Instead of being afraid of technology, she embraced it to accomplish her purpose of making information to present and future Al-Anon and A.A. visitors.

"In 2007, WSO posted video clips from the discontinued *Al-Anon Speaks for Itself* movie and our PSAs on YouTube. More than 33,000 viewers have watched Part One of this 1985 video. This past year, the WSO ventured into social media for the first time, with pages on Twitter and Facebook. With an eye toward safeguarding the Traditions and protecting the anonymity of members, the WSO Policy Committee specified that our involvement in social media needs to be oriented toward sharing information about Al-Anon with members and the general public, without engaging with members in a way that would encourage them to violate their anonymity at the public level.

"Our challenge on Facebook is that Facebook is driven by faces—personalities—while Al-Anon is based on the spiritual principle of anonymity, putting principles above personalities. Nevertheless, the WSO is exploring ways to utilize social media for the purpose of sharing family recovery with as wide an audience as possible.

"The WSO's use of social media has expanded use of the Internet once again. New features were added to the WSO Public Outreach and Members' Web sites including the addition of Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service and "First Steps to Recovery" podcasts and blogs. The fellowship has the opportunity to carry Al-Anon's message to others by participating in podcasts and posting their responses to each of the Legacy posts and podcast topics.

"The responsibility for all of Al-Anon's Public Outreach activities does not fall totally upon the WSO. Now, it is time for the 2012 Conference members to continue the conversation that began at the 1966 World Service Conference."

The Conference members responded:

- I see my grandchildren getting into the technical aspects of all of our electronics. The Facebook aspect could become an important part of our fellowship, but I am concerned about anonymity.
- You can have a private group on Facebook, by invitation only. Only members of the group see the sharings. This has been a successful way to use this aspect of Facebook to serve our small group. This is a way of using Facebook that is less scary, and I trust that my anonymity will not be broken because those who we invite are quite aware of our Traditions. The younger community will want this. I would like to see our PSA run as a commercial on YouTube.
- I am so happy that we are on these social networks. I know I never watch television commercials anymore. I think the Internet is the place to go to get our message out there. I reposted a *Forum* posting on Facebook and I got a message from a cousin who had never heard of Al-Anon and now goes to meetings.
- Sometimes, as an icebreaker at Beginners' meetings, we'll ask newcomers, "How did you find

us?” A common response is “on the Web.” Hardly anyone is using our phones now. There are some cautions: there is no privacy on the Internet and there isn’t anonymity. Companies, such as Facebook and Twitter, capture information and sell it. Be careful. Whatever our strategies are, there is no anonymity on the Internet. I want to see Al-Anon grow, and I want everyone to know that we are here and that they understand about the family disease but not just to fill chairs at a meeting. Sometimes we end up bringing in people who have outside issues.

- Some members in my Area are having issues with our Web Coordinator, who posts on her personal Facebook account that the Area Al-Anon Web site has been updated. She is breaking her own anonymity and this is making some members uncomfortable. I did sign up for AFG Twitter to see how that worked. I just didn’t get it, so I unsubscribed to them both. My personal one with my family is easy, but I was getting all kinds of things I wasn’t looking for from the AFG Twitter account.
- I resisted Twitter. At our Regional Delegates Meeting, someone said we are responsible to sign up so we know what members are talking about and experiencing.
- I did feel it is important because if I’m going to promote getting on Facebook to the membership, I need to know what I’m promoting. I would like more detailed direction and guidance about Twitter, particularly about anonymity. Followers listed all the full names and I didn’t realize that was going to be there.
- The media is not the message; it’s just a method to deliver the message. Companies like AOL were huge ten years ago, but not so much today. Facebook is a social network where you talk to people you aren’t social with. It’s a way to be social, but not necessarily a way to carry the message. We are supposed to carry the message, not a social network.
- The basic way to handle anonymity in the public is the same way as on the Internet. If my face appears or my full name is listed, I can talk about Al-Anon but not say that I am a member. I can say I’ve heard this helps people, but not state my membership.
- Yesterday we told you that the *Service Manual* is a PDF that can be downloaded to an electronic reader; so is our publication, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*.
- You can download and put *The Best of Public Outreach* on your electronic reader.
- In the African-American communities, we probably would never go on a social network to interact about Al-Anon because of trust issues. Within the African-American community, I have asked my hair stylist to display literature, because of the close relationship and trust. I have also had success with this in the churches. Some pastors don’t want you to come in because it’s kind of competition for them.
- Is there a way we can get more clarity about what it is we are, like A.A. does? I think our message could be clearer.
- I was a doubter when the Policy Committee decided “liking” something was different than saying “I am a member” because I was familiar with Facebook and the use of your name and picture. Overall, when we’re on one of these social media sites, we have to conform to their requirements and procedures. How do you juggle this, reaching others but maintaining anonymity? This is just a beginning. I also think the fellowship is somewhat confused about why the WSO is on Facebook. It’s not to socialize with the people already familiar with Al-Anon Family Groups, but to attract people to Al-Anon Family Groups.
- The video segments you see on YouTube are paid advertisements. The WSO does not pay for any ads at all. We spend our money on production and then distribute them as PSAs. We believe those radio/television stations playing our PSAs know who we are and what we are. We are known some places better than others. I am comfortable with our place on Twitter. We’re just putting information out there and receiving the information does not imply membership. It is a passive Web site.
- We can make sure that the common phrases that people use on a Google search return the user to Al-Anon Family Groups. We can make it easier to find a meeting using the Google maps Web application so there is a map with a pin of where our meetings are on the Web sites. Once they get to the meeting, we talked about the poster we could now make and I think these would be great on the doors of the meeting place.

- Can we get a list of where the PSAs are playing?

The information is available and has been sent to the Area Public Outreach Coordinator.

- The expectation is that the WSO is going to provide and be the avenue that we use to get the message out there. For me, I practice anonymity, not invisibility. I'm anonymous within my own community, but only at the level of press, television, radio, and films. Public Outreach is not the sole responsibility of WSO.
- I am a member of Al-Anon because I am a helper and I'm also a hairdresser and one of my clients calls me a "hairapist" because I help my clients. I have no problem re-posting something that I think someone else might find interesting. It does not imply that I belong to a particular organization.
- The interaction amongst members on these social Web sites is something many are not aware of. There are a lot of good tools already out there, and we should use the public outreach tools what we have.
- An easier way to say what we do: we started a survey to define what family recovery is and we are still trying to come up with what it is we do. This is a collaborative effort. It's not up to the WSO. We'd love to hear your ideas. I was thrilled to see in my local newspaper a crossword puzzle that defined Al-Anon and Alateen.
- I hope you take this back to your Areas because a lot of members do not get the multiple levels of anonymity. Public Outreach tools, which have been in the making for 20 years, will be coming out soon.
- We began referring to Bill W. and his desire that Al-Anon be more well-known. In communities, there are many A.A. groups and one Al-Anon group and sometimes the A.A. meeting doesn't know we exist. Carry the message to A.A. I just recently had conversations with newcomers who had relatives in A.A. for years and had never heard of Al-Anon.
- The WSO is doing a great job. I am thrilled about the new *The Best of Public Outreach* on the Members' Web site. Last year we received information about stations contacted and I included that in my Delegate's report. I'm asking for help in teaching and guiding our Public Outreach Coordinators in how to find this stuff and how to use it.
- I think of attraction and how our pamphlets are getting more colorful. I can go to Facebook, and if it's not attractive, I don't keep coming back. We have been out of the closet for the longest time, but some people still don't know what we are about. I need to get my thinking out of the closet about my own anonymity. What does the meeting room look like?
- We can all tell people what Al-Anon is and what it isn't when we speak. I share our Four Primary Ideas from the *Service Manual*. I think we still have a bad reputation with A.A. Some members in A.A. think that if their spouse goes to Al-Anon, their marriage will end in divorce.
- There is a PowerPoint presentation on the Members' Web site that discusses the three different approaches to anonymity.

A Delegate synthesized the discussion:

- If Lois could learn new technology, we can too.
- Don't forget about anonymity—nothing is private on the Internet.
- Need detailed information on how to use Twitter and Facebook to carry the message.
- Collaborate to carry the message.
- Inform A.A. of our meeting locations.

Impact of sale of electronic literature on Al-Anon Information Services (AISs)/ Literature Distribution Centers (LDCs)

Mary Lou M.
Associate Director of
Member Services

The staff member began the presentation by noting some general statistics on literature sales to our LDCs.

There are currently:

- 102 registered LDCs.
- 101 registered AIS/LDCs.
- 100 AISs.

LDCs and AIS/LDCs placed 4,276 literature orders in 2011.

The staff member continued by saying, “The structure of our AISs and LDCs varies greatly. A good number of LDCs are very simple, with members holding inventory in their home, and transporting it for pickup at district or Area meetings. Such LDCs have minimum overhead, and may not be dependent on maintaining a certain level of sales to survive.

“Other LDCs may maintain office and/or storage space, as well as other business expenses. Their expenses are generally covered by the profit from literature sales, and they may experience hardship with a decrease in book sales.

“Some LDCs are integrated with an AIS, and the AIS may be dependent on the LDC income to subsidize expenses, which could include rent, phone service, Web site, etc. If the AIS has no other income sources, a drop in book sales could have adverse financial effects.

“For the calendar year 2011, LDCs (including AIS/LDCs) ordered more than \$2,635,000 in literature from the WSO. Of these sales, more than \$1,911,000 (72.5 percent) was from sales of books.

“Close to three-quarters of LDC sales are from books, which could be impacted by the sale of electronic books. We guess that fewer books will be sold when electronic versions become available, but we don’t know. It probably won’t be possible for the WSO to license or sublicense AISs or LDCs to sell electronic books; we don’t yet know what those costs might be or what the required software, licensing, and computer needs will be. If licensing is financially feasible, the WSO would need to monitor sales more strictly; LDCs would not be licensed to sell outside of their geographic area, for example. In addition, accepting credit cards would likely be required to sell electronic literature.

“The January 2012 Chairperson of the Board letter reminded Conference members to gather information regarding the following questions.

1. What is the level of interest in electronic literature?
2. What percentage of AIS, AIS/LDC, or LDC revenue is from book sales?
3. What are other revenue sources?
4. What additional roles do/could LDCs/AISs provide in the Areas?
5. Does your AIS, AIS/LDC, or LDC currently sell online? Do they accept credit cards? Do they restrict sales to the geographic area of the groups that support them?

Before opening the floor up for discussion, Conference members were reminded that the questions of “how will this be done” and “in what formats” are not part of this discussion. We want to focus on what impact these sales will have on the various service entities, and then, how we can address those issues.

It was also noted that the Conference is not working toward making a WSC decision. This is a legal/copyright matter, and the Board of Trustees will set the policy.

Conference members responded:

- The LDCs and AISs in my Area do a lot of public outreach and help support the Area with large donations. The sale of electronic literature will cut into their profits, unless the model presented would include and allow them to also sell the electronic literature.
- The selling of electronic literature is inevitable, but there will always be a need for hard copies. We ask for ongoing communication between WSO and LDCs. LDCs could expand their services.
- There is a lot of interest in electronic literature, especially with younger people and people who already own all the hard copies. We could do fund-raisers to promote specific pieces of literature. Maybe a percentage of literature sales could go to AIS/LDCs if the buyer ordered through the AIS/LDC Web site.
- One AIS operates out of someone’s home. We have two LDCs. My Area has little to no interest in electronic literature.
- The LDCs and AISs could not stay open if book sales were decreased. One member had the idea to have a luxury tax on electronic literature that would go to the LDC based on the zip code. The interest in electronic literature was high among older members. My son said it would be cool to have an app that showed the three daily readers. He also commented, “Kids my age are used to getting things for free, they don’t want to pay for it.”
- The LDCs and AISs provide additional roles in my Area. All public outreach is done through the LDCs and most of that literature used in public outreach is paid for by the district, so there is no income in that.

- The AISs expect electronic literature and are concerned about what that will do to their intergroup offices. Membership seems enthused but unaware of the consequences.
- The visually impaired and older members have a great deal of interest in electronic literature. The percentage of revenue from book sales at my Area's LDCs is 58 percent and 28 percent. Other revenue sources include 10 percent from fund-raisers, and 55 percent from group contributions. One LDC receives income from groups that rent meeting space. These LDCs also store files and archival material. None sell online nor do they accept credit cards. They don't restrict sales to the geographic area, but rarely have any requests outside of the Area.
- We could write an app for the Android and Apple devices, and for the Web, that would allow someone to buy either one book or a set of books. This app would also let them purchase the ability to read those books for a given period of time, or forever. The app could allow the member to search for any keyword or phrase in the set of books that they've purchased, thus enabling them to search for all occurrences of a word in those books.
- The idea of electronic literature was met with enthusiasm. Most members would like both formats. Electronic literature would make large print accessible, and reach teens. Electronic literature can only serve to make Al-Anon more accessible to more people. Electronic literature would fundamentally change our structure.
- Looking at the roles the LDCs and AISs provide in the Area—accessing CAL easily, receiving calls for meeting information, and maintaining group records for the Area—they do a lot, and the effects could be serious. The LDCs and AISs also provide monthly newsletters and an immediate response to phone inquiries. Losing this income would impact these very important local services.
- There is a very low interest in electronic literature in my Area. There is a lot of fear because the members see this as an either/or option. The major source of revenue is literature sales. Our offices will close and we don't see a lot of alternatives.
- Our LDCs and AISs are all self-supporting through group and district contributions. The literature sales do not contribute to their success.
- Literature is the primary source of income. We know we have to change with the times. I personally do want electronic literature.
- The interest is high. Our LDCs offer Beginners' meetings, meeting lists, and receive phone calls. Older members already have e-readers and are interested in Al-Anon CAL being available as electronic literature. Ninety-five percent said they'd also buy a hard copy of the literature.
- I found a split in our Area—about 50-50. To try to make the transition easier, I recommend we attempt to lessen the reliance on the sale of literature to fund our budgets and increase voluntary contributions.
- We do have one LDC that takes credit cards, but no online sales. There is a general feeling that this is inevitable, but not an immediate possibility.
- Sixty-five percent of the revenue comes from literature sales, but the paid worker at the LDC was very interested and said that there have been a lot of requests for electronic literature.
- I found a high level of interest. One hundred percent of revenue is from literature sales. There are no other roles.
- There is a high interest in the idea of having electronic literature. About 30 percent of revenue is from literature sales. The remaining revenue is primarily from donations. The LDCs maintain a Web site and keep accurate meeting information.
- Neither LDC expressed interest in electronic literature, but there is interest at the Area level.
- One LDC is out of a trunk of a car. An AIS/LDC has had financial difficulties for years and is open very limited hours.
- The percentage of revenue depends on location, some LDCs rely 100 percent on book sales. Sales are conducted at conventions, as well. The membership is interested, but not at the expense of hard copy books. We've tried to encourage our membership to support our LDCs and if they were to go online to order electronic literature, they would buy hard copies online, too.

- One hundred percent of the revenue is from literature sales. Other services provided include maintaining of a Web site and storing archives.
- The interest in electronic literature is mainly with the younger members. At one LDC, 50 percent of the revenue is from book sales and the remainder percentage of revenue is a result of group donations. This LDC accepts online orders, but does not accept credit cards.
- I asked the members at Assembly how many would purchase an electronic copy of all of the hard copy books they already own. Eighty-five percent said they would.
- One hundred percent of sales goes to support our Assembly. Our LDC operates out of a member's home. I found two camps on the level of interest, those interested and those concerned about revenue taken that supports Assembly.
- Book sales account for 74 percent of our revenue. AISs are floundering though, so maybe this would generate excitement. Our AISs also provide consignment orders to functions as a big part of income.
- My Area doesn't have an LDC, so the members are highly interested and willing to pay the regular price of hard copy literature.
- Are we considering adding electronic literature without eliminating printed literature?
Yes. We will continue to do what the fellowship needs, but if the fellowship stops buying printed literature, we'll quit printing it. We asked the Conference to tell the Board of Trustees what to consider as the Board develops the policy for electronic literature.
- What was the original purpose of establishing Literature Distribution Centers (LDCs)?
All of our service structure evolved from a need. Somebody said, "Wouldn't it be better to buy in bulk and resell in our local community so that members could get the literature more quickly?" The WSO supported that because it was easier to send literature in bulk. This saved the fellowship money and gave better service to the locale. Over time, each Area has developed different ways of interacting with the LDC. The WSO used to hold AIS/LDC workshops, but we stopped doing them because there was no new information to share. We do send a newsletter to the LDCs to keep them advised and up to date. In order to get the discount that LDCs get, the LDCs agree to abide by the guidelines. One of the guidelines is that they not sell outside of the groups that they serve. The purpose is not to create another entity to take the money of the fellowship. A few LDCs have gotten confused and have become self-perpetuating, but that was not the purpose. The same principle applies to countries outside of the U.S.
- Would the WSO share revenue of sales that came to the AIS/LDCs?
We don't know the answer to this question at this time.

Impact of sale of electronic literature on the WSO

The staff member began the presentation by saying, "Electronic literature offers a range of opportunities for AI-Anon. However, from a long-term perspective, the trend to electronic literature could have significant implications for the business model that has sustained the World Service Office (WSO) for more than 60 years. It could also alter long-established practices that have shaped the relationship between the WSO and the various service arms in the U.S., Canada, and worldwide.

"At the current time, electronic literature is still a relatively small segment of the book publishing industry. It is growing rapidly, however, and is the only growth segment in book publishing. At Hazelden Publishing, for example, electronic books currently represent about 10 percent of revenues. Hazelden believes that electronic books make up the difference for what could otherwise have been a 10 percent decline in sales. Generally, new media is displacing old, whether the old media is newspapers, network television, the landline telephone, or printed books.

"On one hand, publishing books electronically could make AI-Anon recovery literature more widely available than ever before. AI-Anon literature is currently sold to AI-Anon members through the AI-Anon service structure (including LDCs and AISs), but electronic book sales could largely bypass the service structure and could possibly reach a wider audience of non-members, possibly attracting newcomers to AI-Anon in a way that AI-Anon literature does not do today. Growth in electronic publishing could also have the effect of decreasing some of the WSO's overhead costs for paper and print, warehouse storage, shipping and handling.

Bob S.
Director of
Communication Services

“On the other hand, if the price points on electronic literature are far lower than for printed literature, it could have an adverse effect on the WSO’s ability to provide services essential to the functioning of Al-Anon as a whole. Daily readers in hardcover, for example, are sold at \$10 or \$12 per copy, a price that compares favorably with the cost of other hardcover and soft cover books, while also producing an income stream that subsidizes a wide range of WSO services that are essential to the functioning of Al-Anon as a whole. Price points in the market for electronic literature, however, could be 30 to 50 percent lower than for printed books. The shift to electronic literature could therefore greatly reduce the income stream from literature, which for more than 60 years has made it possible for the WSO to be self-supporting in a manner compatible with the Traditions.

“Some members are surprised to learn that the sale of literature generates more funds for WSO services than contributions, but that balance has been a fact of life for nearly 60 years. It could be very easy to say that Al-Anon *should* be supported by member contributions instead of the sales of literature. But one of Al-Anon’s fundamental lessons in acceptance is that people don’t always do what *we* think they *should* do. The last time income from contributions was greater than income from literature sales was in 1954. In 2011, about two-thirds of the WSO’s revenues came from the sale of literature.

Electronic literature could cut costs for readers in the short-term, but over the long-term those cuts could also reduce the financial support necessary to maintain WSO services, including support for the World Service Conference, the Board of Trustees, and a range of service tools and outreach tools, such as the *Service Manual*, *The Forum*, public service announcements (PSAs) and *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. It is impossible to predict whether the lower prices and greater availability of electronic books could ever generate an increase in sales large enough to offset the drop in revenues generated by print book sales. In general, lower prices increase demand, but no one buys a book that they don’t know anything about, no matter how low the price might be.

“Selling books electronically could have the effect of flattening the distribution chain, which is another way of saying that LDCs and AISs could be cut out of the distribution chain. Members could buy books online, directly from the WSO. The service arms could lose a revenue stream that supports their efforts to market Al-Anon literature locally, as well as their ability to support other local Al-Anon services. Electronic publishing could also change the role of the Literature Coordinator, and decrease the sale of books at the group level.

“With the reduction of local marketing services delivered by the LDCs and AISs, the WSO would need to take greater responsibility for marketing the literature. It would need the financial resources to invest in as yet untried 'new media' marketing approaches, including phone apps and other outreach to new media. It would also need to make a greater financial investment in the technology and skills needed to prepare books for publication electronically and to sell them online in a way that does not 'affiliate' Al-Anon with outside entities, such as Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com.

“In 2011, Al-Anon saw an increase in the sales of printed books. In that respect, we saw growth in old media, counter to the trend that brought decreased sales to the publishing industry generally. The increased sale of Al-Anon books, however, had less to do with the books themselves than with an increase in Al-Anon membership, which seems likely. Longtime members already own daily readers, and have no need to buy more copies. It is important to remember that for Al-Anon, book sales are a means to an end, not a goal in themselves. The WSO’s primary purpose is to provide services that help the families and friends of alcoholics. The sale of literature has made those services possible for 60 years.

“As electronic literature becomes increasingly important to the fellowship of Al-Anon, the fellowship’s ability to support Al-Anon services through literature sales might become problematic.”

Conference members discussed the following questions:

1. How would the WSO handle licensing of digital rights management if other entities, GSOs, AIS/LDCs, or bookstores also wanted to sell digital versions?
2. How would the fellowship maintain services if digital sales adversely impact the WSO’s revenue stream? What other issues should the Board of Trustees consider in reaching these decisions?

Conference members responded:

- We all seem to agree that there is a future in electronic literature. My Area’s research has found Amazon to be the primary resource. Now there is a lawsuit between Amazon and Apple, which will give us more information regarding distribution.

- I am concerned about newcomers looking for Al-Anon information on Web sites and being directed to non-Conference Approved Literature. What is the trend with our literature sales the last five years?

The trend is positive. Our sales have actually exceeded other fellowships. Almost every month we are still selling what attracts newcomers, which emphasizes the need to buy the softcover How Al-Anon Works for the newcomers.

- It is possible to bypass Amazon. There are certain companies where you go to the Web site and download the app and have access to purchase literature.
- Have we talked to A.A. about what their process was?

With any new direction or new possibility we look at, we cast a wide net to gather information. We continue to go through processes to find the best for us. We have an annual meeting with A.A. We know what the problems are and what they spent to do what they have and they are trying to produce a Droid app. It costs about \$35,000 to buy software to digitally protect our literature. It's a very complex discussion. To answer the app issue, the Service Manual is available on the Members' Web site as a PDF and you can download that onto your electronic reader but you have to have a PDF reader. The Service Manual is set up so you can search and you don't have to deal with the index, with the search feature of PDF you can find anything. It's free, and we encourage everyone to use it.

- I don't know the difference between licensing and copyright, but don't we decide who could and should? It appears that most LDCs don't have credit card sales availability.
- If a large number of LDCs close, how will this impact the WSO in terms of processing sales and shipments?
- I am an old techie, I remember punch cards. My point is, it's going to change—we don't know what it's going to look like in ten years. The life span of most equipment is three years, meaning equipment is out of date after three years. We are going to have to keep an open mind on this. We are going to be forced to go to some form of electronic literature, and we are going to be impacted by this. I caution us not to go off in a specific direction, because in three years, that may be a dead end.
- Sixty-five percent of our income comes from literature sales. We have increased our minimum charge for shipping orders. We get complaints from people who want to buy one book and don't want to pay the shipping charge. We want people to go through their LDC to buy their literature. Is this the business model we want to take into the future? Are we willing to step up to the plate and take on the responsibility of higher donations to WSO?
- Copyright is part of my business, it indicates ownership. Licensing is agreeing that another person can use it. On page 60 of the *Service Manual*, it reads that LDCs should stay within the area that it serves. I would question if we used an outside entity, how this would fit with our Legacies? There is also an equal opportunity that there might be more income. All you would need for electronic literature is an Internet connection, you wouldn't have to be near a group.
- If our books are easily available to the outside world, it will increase our visibility. But this may keep people from meetings, thinking they have all the answers. If the *Service Manual* is available as a PDF, can we not have other literature available that way?
- Our Members' Web site also has a PDF of *WSC Summary*. You can copy and paste portions you are referencing in your communications. These are downloaded on my phone.
- The LDC in my Area stresses the importance of the element of human contact. This is unique literature produced by our fellowship. There's not a big market for this. Our Area doesn't do the best, but we do make contributions to the WSO, which might be diverted to our Area if the LDCs fail. I don't want to go back to selling from the trunk of a car. We do support services, outreach, and we support areas outside our Area who are unable to have an LDC.
- I have discussed this with our LDCs, and they do provide all these services. Fifty-one percent of the revenue comes from literature. With another LDC, 95 percent of the revenue comes from literature. If these LDCs close, these services won't be available anymore. To make up for those services, these contributions would go in a different direction. I agree we need to keep up with what is available to us to attract new members. I am concerned about losing that face-to-face contact with the member. There may be a shift in the contributions coming

from the Areas to the WSO if we have to implement the services the LDCs are providing in some other way.

- Let's put our whole business model on the table and get outside help. It seems many LDCs have operated outside of their service structure already. The business model is old and tired; it needs to be renewed and refreshed.
- This isn't an either/or question, both will exist. Keep an open mind. I think people will still want our books.
- I would still want us to have the books in our meetings to show the newcomers and not tell them to go to a Web site to download something.
- I was appalled when I realized we are a publishing house because our contributions do not support us. When we started throwing a dollar in the basket, it meant something. Today it would have to be \$8.00 to equal what that dollar was 60 years ago. We're not supporting ourselves through contributions, but as a publishing house.
- In response to the second question, funds will be available when they are needed. If we're asked, we seem to give. I do have a concern that a member would search the Internet, buy a book, and never come to a meeting.
- Regarding the second question, our Area does outreach to prisons and they won't allow electronic literature in the prisons, so that needs to be considered.
- When I came in the fellowship, we did not have LDCs. It is not the job of WSO to make sure our groups support the LDCs, they'll figure it out. The bigger question is, "Do we need to make this move for the right reason?"
- This is going to be a slow process with losing the other services offered by the LDCs. I believe we will be resourceful and find other means to offer these services to our members.
- I'm struck by the uniqueness of all of our Areas. We purchase books and give them to the newcomers. Through the literature, we are funneling our donations to WSO. I see this as a chance to increase our strength.
- The whole idea of spirituality goes out the window and we forget that we have unlimited resources available to us. The program gives us the freedom to look in every direction to find what we need. I don't want people to think of literature as an end—it is a tool. Money is a tool, not an end. We don't need to stockpile, we only need enough. We need to not hold on to money because when we hold on to money, it doesn't flow, it stops growing.

Impact of sale of electronic literature on structures outside the WSC structure

Marsha W.
Associate Director
Member Services—International

The staff member began the presentation, "Let's look at the possible impact selling electronic literature might have on the international community.

"When a decision is made by members in a country to form a service structure, the administrative work, in many instances, is done solely by volunteers. The reason members decide to start a General Service Office (GSO) or evolving structure is to unify Al-Anon and spread the Al-Anon message within that service structure. Once a GSO or evolving structure forms in a country, that service structure takes on the role of providing services such as:

- Conference.
- Public Service Announcements.
- Group Services.
- Public Outreach.
- Providing Al-Anon/Alateen literature for members.

"In spotlighting our international service partners that have the responsibility of providing Al-Anon/Alateen literature for the members within their service structure, there are currently 33 countries with General Service Offices and eight countries with evolving service structures (which could be a single group or an Al-Anon Information Service) that have received authorization to translate, and print or reprint Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL). We'll consider three factors today.

“First, when the WSO licenses a country to translate and print or reprint CAL, the license does not give ownership of the literature to the country; the WSO owns the copyright. In addition:

- The WSO licensing agreement, which is a legal document, does not allow countries to distribute literature outside of their borders.
- The WSO will need to consult with legal counsel to determine how this license would need to be adapted for electronic literature sales.

“Second, because the WSO service structure—which is the United States, Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico—is trilingual, the WSO publishes CAL in English, and translates and publishes CAL in Spanish and French. There are 18 GSOs and additional countries with evolving structures that are directly affected by our decisions concerning literature in these languages. A decision about whether to have books available as electronic literature could affect these structures by:

- Losing revenue, if they are not prepared to provide these services.
- Limiting a stream of income that supports the GSO services.
- Pushing their Board of Trustees or service boards to provide services that their structure may not be financially prepared to consider.
- Deterring evolving structures from providing literature services if they believe they have to provide costly electronic literature too.

“Third, the countries that are licensed to translate and print CAL in their respective languages are often driven by the membership in that country to produce literature in their language that is available at the WSO. For the 15 structures that have received permission to translate and print literature in other languages, in addition to what was mentioned previously, their experience could entail:

- A demand for electronic books by the members in these countries.
- A loss of literature stock currently available in print. The WSO, as well as other service structures, try to print enough quantities for the cost of printing to be financially feasible.
- An increased expense to the GSO for licensing terms and other required procedures for that country, including accepting credit cards.

“Countries that are evolving structures would also be affected by many of the issues raised for the GSOs as they move forward.”

Conference members discussed the following question: **What protections or safeguards does the Conference want the Board of Trustees to consider as the Board develops the electronic literature policy, as it relates to the structures outside the WSC structure?**

Conference members responded:

- Members are requesting translation so they can use it, not so there is a profit. We want to make the literature available to people. It's not to limit the licensing, but to make the literature available to everyone. Consider the fact that you might want the GSOs to use the services you create to distribute this literature, if it's on the Web, it's available to everyone.
- The representative from New Zealand commented. We don't print or translate literature because English is our language—we import from the WSO. We are in a lucky situation, 80% of revenue is from contributions, 20% from literature. So financially, this is no problem for us. We are very eager for electronic literature to become available and there is no hesitation in supporting that and no financial consequences. We see no need to license us to sell the electronic literature. Our primary purpose is still our main focus.
- I heard a concern in the presentation that making electronic literature might slow down sales of books. I'm not sure that will happen. The GSOs know their situation best. It's hard for me to even begin to think what protections or safeguards that the Board of Trustees would want to put on them.
- Does the United Kingdom order directly from the WSO? As well as Spanish- and French-speaking countries?

The United Kingdom does purchase some literature from WSO, but they do print on their own. The Spanish/French countries are “married” to the WSO. No structures create their own literature, they merely translate it. All Conference Approved Literature originates from the WSO.

- I heard these words in the presentation: losing, limiting, pushing, and deterring—it seems there is an undertone of fear. I encourage us to look at this through the lens of unlimited possibilities. We need to put this out to the GSOs and let them answer the question.

- What countries have printing and do not rely solely on WSO?
There are 18 countries and these countries use the sale of literature to support the services they provide. They use a stream of income to support the services across their country.
- If it is electronic, wouldn't we sell more because it would be cheaper than shipping?
We can't predict this because electronic is so global, the licensing would most likely be at the WSO so the profits of the sale would come to WSO. How would you divide that? It puts a whole new layer on who gets the money.
- Whoever is incurring the expense to produce the literature should get any profit. What type of safeguards do we currently use in selling literature to GSOs?
Each time a country is printing a piece of literature for the first time, they complete a permission to print form, which is a license to translate and print. They do not own the literature; they are licensed to use it.
- I understood that we were going to ask the GSOs what affect this would have. Did we get a response yet?
We've had feedback over time about the different ways they use literature in their country, but to the specific question, no.
- This discussion seems to be about protecting the stream of revenue for English/Spanish/French, so would the Japanese have to set up their own equipment to provide translation of literature?
This is hard to absorb because it's not what we (the Conference) deal with—the Conference is the traditional arm of the fellowship. This discussion is about business. It's not a conversation the Conference is often invited to be in because it's not the role of the WSC.
When Lois was creating all of this, she knew the groups needed to focus on what they do in their meetings. The Board of Trustees (incorporated in 1954) was created to cover the business. This is really not about protecting a revenue stream as much as it is about protecting the literature, not only from which we get recovery, but from which the fellowship supports itself.
The reality is, it is about the money. The WSC structure (15,000 groups) is the main support for all the groups around the world. It was never envisioned that the WSO would be the printing arm of the world, the WSO was only supposed to be the printing arm of our service structure.
It has been easier for the other structures to buy from us than to print themselves. They don't have to warehouse excess literature or mark-up literature to be able to print again. That was not the model that Lois created. We give the right to print and translate literature freely. We receive no revenue, we take no royalties, we give them the text, the power to translate, print, and they are able to set the price as they choose. Unfortunately, most choose not to set the price sufficiently high enough to support their services. This is a struggle that all countries face; we've been in 35 or 40 countries over the past years. Everyone wants books, but World Service Conference structure didn't start with books, we started with pamphlets. But because members see that someone else has books they want to have them too.
So if we have electronic literature, will that impact their ability to make good choices? It might be better for some of these countries, if some of these structures only had electronic literature. Where would the money come from to do both? Our research indicates that it's going to be \$35,000-\$100,000 to get this up and running. The WSO can do that and even if it fails, we can live with it, but for a structure like New Zealand, it's not feasible and the WSO can't pay that for each structure. We are trying to look at all the things we need to look at for our structures to prosper. The hope comes from the meetings, not just the literature.
- It seems we need not be concerned about the loss of literature revenue for the GSOs. Don't these translations already exist electronically? Couldn't they use what's available instead of producing (and buying) their own method of translation?
Anything is possible. We're learning as much from this conversation as all of you are, which is why the Board wanted to have it. The Board wants to look at all the pieces before moving forward. Our concern is that the WSO would become more of a central authority in the life of Al-Anon around the world than we think it's supposed to be.

Lois said there is no spiritual part of the program—it's all spiritual. Good spiritual practice and good business practice in Al-Anon are the same. The woman just never looked back; she just looked forward. Lois was never held back by anything. I don't think she would be worried about any of this, she'd just say "let's just do it and it'll all work out and we'll all figure it out." The WSO would probably do English first, learn from that, and then move on to Spanish and French before adding other languages/countries. We may have to buy digital rights management licensing for each language, but we would have to see if that is correct or not.

- We have to protect our Al-Anon program, our literature, and serve our membership. As long as we do that, we'll be doing what we're supposed to do. I'd like to see us look at this as an opportunity to get away from the model we've been practicing for the last 60 years. If we give free electronic literature, members might give larger donations to the WSO. And maybe someday, we will be self-supporting through our own contributions.

- What percentage of our current Al-Anon literature is already translated into Spanish and French? My understanding is that a lot of our literature is not yet translated. If this is a resource problem, maybe we could trade translation resources for electronic literature.

When a piece of literature does not sell well in English, we do not translate it into other languages. We're tied to the GSOs, and we consider what their needs are and how they will be impacted. It takes up to five years to translate a book from conception in English to final product. Things must be prioritized according to what the needs are.

- I'm speaking from extensive experience in trying to control the outcome of any project and trying to be responsible for others—it is a disaster. The GSOs will have to learn what we have to learn. We can't give them our experience; they will have to gain their own. We need to protect our copyrights and then go forward as rapidly as we can.
- I served as the Co-Chair of the International Coordination Committee and attended the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting. I participated in a workshop on translation. The countries use a committee of volunteers to translate and then make sure it has the Al-Anon tone. This may be an opportunity to look at how we've been doing it and how we might need to change in the future. We could start small and see what happens.
- With all the electronic abilities and the Internet, what prevents a country from doing this now?

On page 15 of the Service Manual, Tradition Two addresses this. The worldwide fellowship abides by that decision. On page 103-104 is the legal discussion about copyright and printing. If a structure didn't abide by the group conscience we refer them back to page 15, Tradition Four, and we will pull their license if they proceed. Many structures can't afford to print once translated and even if they have the resources, they don't have the membership to buy and support the product.

- For those countries that are translating, what safeguards do we have in place to make sure the translation is accurate?

An example is Germany. Germany sends the translation to us and we have people in the U.S. who have agreed to be reviewers. We offer suggestions, if needed.

- I heard there would be a pilot.

There's been no progress. I was hoping to come to Conference with experience and get out of the "what if" and into the "how." I hired an outside consultant for this. It's cheaper and faster in the long run. He has brought four different suggestions and each time we've realized there are problems. The fight between Amazon and Apple about digital rights has our attention. It's exploding around us. I'm not asking you to get involved in that, I just want you to be aware that we are looking at this from all sides.

- There is production and distribution. Is there a problem with producing privately and distributing privately without giving money to someone else?

The production is essentially what we send to the printer. The production of creating an electronic file is what we are already doing. The production is what we do in-house. The issue is the distribution. The protection of the copyright is a concern. We know what some members do at conventions—they buy one CD, make multiple copies, and give a copy to people they know. That's a copyright violation. It is the responsibility of the organization to protect the copyright and to protect from someone else making a profit from our literature.

- The technical problems will be overcome. The revenue problems will have to be dealt with. Whatever happens, the work is still there to do. We still have to carry the message. Money is just a tool for us. We are the people who carry the message.
- The subscription price of *The Forum* is about the cost of printing and shipping. So couldn't *The Forum* be available at no charge as electronic literature?

Yes, it's possible that someday The Forum will be free. Would we do it now? No. The subscription price covers the cost of the printing and the shipping. There are other expenses, such as, staff time in assembling, editing, and designing the magazine. There is also an issue of fairness. If we give it away electronically, but we charge the people who don't have a computer, in my mind that is a fairness issue.

The Forum is a little bit different because the LDCs do not sell The Forum.

- If we are publishing *The Forum* online, it could possibly decrease our paper subscriptions, which would make the cost of production go up.
- The spiritual principle of the Seventh Tradition has not been discussed. My experience is that people value what they pay for and what they earn. I am in my disease if I try to make someone's learning easier.

FINANCE COMMITTEE SKITS

Following the Budget Report, the Treasurer of AFG, Inc. introduced a series of vignettes by stating, "The primary function of the Finance Committee is to see that our World Service Office (WSO) operation remains financially sound, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program.

"This Committee conservatively estimates each year's income. It develops plans for increasing our revenues and keeps a watchful eye on expenditures. It scrutinizes the annual budgets of estimated income and expense submitted by the WSO, and makes revisions when necessary.

"In 1951, Lois W. suggested that each member contribute \$1.00 twice a year to the WSO. In 1954, the WSO received contributions of about \$3,500. Gross profit from literature sales was about \$1,700. That was the last year that contributions exceeded literature sales. Since 1955, we have relied on gross profits from literature sales for the majority of our income.

"In 2011, gross profit from literature sales was 65 percent of our income. Contributions were 25 percent of our income, of which 42 percent was from groups, 42 percent from the Appeal Letter, and the balance from birthday, memorial, individual, and other contributions, and from bequests.

"This week, one of our agenda items is a discussion on the financial impacts of electronic literature. If we want to rely less on literature sales, we have to rely more on contributions from our membership.

"The Finance Committee discussed ways of increasing our revenues. We realized that many individual Al-Anon members are not aware that they can contribute directly to the World Service Office. Many who contribute to the Quarterly Appeal still put only a dollar or two in the envelope.

"With inflation, that \$2.00 yearly contribution per member that Lois suggested in 1951 would now be the equivalent of almost \$17.00 annually. Would you believe that if each of our members contributed \$17.00 per year, we would have annual contributions of over \$3,000,000? Just think of the outreach we could do with contributions like that!"

During the week, the Finance Committee presented a series of vignettes on giving financially to the WSO.

In the first vignette, a member showed the new Birthday Envelope during announcements, which sparked a brief discussion regarding celebrating our Al-Anon birthdays by making a contribution to the WSO.

In the second vignette, members of a group were sharing their memories of a fellow group member who passed away. One of the members pulls out a new Memorial Envelope that she received after hearing her Delegate's report.



The third vignette is a scene at an Al-Anon meeting. The Group Representative announces that she picked up the group's mail and the group received the Appeal Letter. The members discussed the intent of the Appeal Letter and took turns reading parts of the Letter.

In the fourth vignette, a member is at her tax preparer's office and discovers that a contribution to the WSO is tax deductible. It is also noted that members can set up an automatic monthly contribution online from their bank account.

At the end of the week, the Treasurer of AFG, Inc., closed the session by asking the following questions.

How will you introduce the new envelopes and monthly authorization form to your Area?

How will you use our 2012 theme, "Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give," to encourage individual member contributions to the WSO?

Conference members responded:

- I'm going to check the percentage of groups in my Area that contributed. I might show them a partial *Service Manual* that is missing pages to illustrate the percentage of the groups in my Area that contribute.
- In lieu of sending love gifts to Conference, my Area gives a monetary love gift to the WSO.
- One of my moments of clarity here was during the discussion of electronic literature and how heavily we rely on the sale of literature. My Area is clamoring for electronic literature and I can stress the need to contribute more to the WSO. If every group gave \$26.00 more in 2012 than last year, our revenues would be sufficient to meet our budgeted expenses for the year.
- During the financial presentation at a TEAM event, I realized I had used two of the tools—memorial contributions and monthly deductions—in my presentation. It is gratifying to make a memorial donation. Can the deduction form be bilingual?

The envelopes are trilingual. We'll look into translating the deduction form.

- I would like to suggest to the membership to think of the co-pay amount we pay for a doctor's appointment and contribute that amount in meetings.
- This year I asked my Area to give a memorial contribution in the name of a Panel 2 Past Delegate instead of love gifts.
- A member made amends to a group when she realized she had a quarterly Appeal Letter that she had overlooked. She didn't know if she should pass it around because she thought that the group was passing around too many envelopes. We gently reminded her that it wasn't her decision. I think there is a misconception that since we have purchased our building, our occupancy costs have gone down and the WSO no longer needs donations, when the occupancy costs have actually gone up.

Occupancy costs are the costs of maintaining and having the building such as utility costs, including repairs. Even though the mortgage has been paid off, there are ongoing costs we budget for each year.

- I'm going to do a PowerPoint presentation and talk about how the electronic literature discussion relates to giving. We're not going to be able to continue with the same business model.
- Do we have an investment policy for our ample reserve?

We do have an investment policy. We have a policy that our Reserve Fund does not exceed one year's operating budget because we don't want to hoard money.

- A monthly deduction affirms my ongoing commitment to Al-Anon. How much has Al-Anon given me? I wouldn't have any money in my pocket if it weren't for Al-Anon.
- I will introduce Memorial Envelopes by sharing that I will make a memorial contribution in the name of my granddaughter on the anniversary of her death each year. I can give that gift, in a spiritual way, to another little girl.
- I'm going to try to change the culture in my Area about giving to the WSO. That is going to be one of my goals as a Delegate. I want to be a part of that change.
- When we talk about money, we tend to approach it in an apologetic manner. I don't want to do that. I want to remind members this is us. This is what we do.
- I would like a clarification between donating to Stepping Stones and donating to the WSO.

Stepping Stones is an outside organization. Groups and other service arms do not donate to Stepping Stones, but individuals can.

- We have a memorial record of those who are near and dear to us available in our archives and we are encouraged to write about them. I'm going to encourage members to also make a donation in their name. That heart-to-heart part can really make a connection and allow us to continue to remember them in a really tangible way.
- Do we have an online equivalent of the birthday/memorial envelopes?
Yes, we do have a virtual envelope on the Members' Web site where you can make a contribution online by credit card or through Paypal.
- I need a large supply of the envelopes. How do I get those?
They are on the order form.
- One member wrote to the WSO stating that he wanted his group to contribute 100 percent. He said it wasn't about the amount of the contribution, but about the 100 percent participation, even if someone only had a penny to donate. He said that if someone couldn't give a penny, to let him know and he would cover their penny. If a group informs the WSO that their group gave with 100 percent participation, we'll send a certificate of appreciation to that group for their full Seventh Tradition participation.
- When I was an Area Treasurer, the most meaningful contribution I received was a \$1.00 contribution from an Alateen meeting.

POLICY DISCUSSION—DO NOT REFER

Paula B.
Chairperson

The Policy Committee Chairperson opened the session by stating, "At the 2011 World Service Conference, Delegates shared their Areas' experiences with, and concerns about groups that the Areas believe are operating outside of the Legacies. This discussion was about groups that do not use Conference Approved Literature, high pressure groups, groups with only dual members, etc. Some Areas have addressed their concerns about these groups and the potential impact on newcomers by delisting them from Area, Al-Anon Information Service, or district meeting schedules. As a result of the delisting, some Areas have requested that the World Service Office support their decision by applying a code so that callers to the toll free meeting line would not be referred to these groups. This topic is designated as 'Do Not Refer.'

"It is important that Area policies concerning these groups are based on the Al-Anon principles, the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service. This is best accomplished through a group conscience with the input of the groups, districts, and Assemblies. Through this dialogue we allow a Higher Power into our deliberations by listening to everyone's viewpoints. We are all important voices when it comes to participating in the decision-making process.

"Today, we will have a discussion on some of the principles that can be utilized by Areas developing policies (now or in the future) related to groups they believe are operating outside of our Legacies. Once Areas have developed a principle-based policy, they will be better prepared to offer suggestions to the World Service Office on ways to support the Area's decision.

"On your worksheet, identify some principles that you believe are important for an Area to consider when developing a policy for dealing with groups that are believed to be operating outside of the Legacies. For example, based on the principle in Tradition One, the focus of the discussion should be on the 'common welfare' or on how all parties involved—the groups, Areas, and Al-Anon as a whole—are best served. Our links of service between Areas and groups can help ensure that the voices of all members, groups, and service arms are heard. Explain your rationale for choosing each principle.

"Then identify some principles that you believe are important for the Area to use as they encourage, support, and educate the groups to return to operating in a manner that the Area believes is within the Legacies. Again, as an example, in using Tradition One, the Area would continue communicating with the groups and have open dialogue with them as to what the group may need to change to be relisted on the meeting schedule. The emphasis would be on unity within Al-Anon and the common welfare. The Area could inform groups of the resources and links of service that are available to support the groups' return to operating within the Legacies."

Conference members focused on these topics from the worksheet:

The principles Areas can use to discuss and develop policies for groups not adhering to the Legacies.

The principles the Area can use to support groups to successfully follow the Legacies.

- Principles above personalities. Groups that set themselves above the group conscience of Al-Anon Family Groups as a whole are acting as a personality rather than abiding by the principles. There's an ego factor when a groups says, "We can do whatever we want."
- There needs to be a neutral, clear guideline so there isn't a subjective method of making such decisions. Example: you have to use CAL. Once you're in grey areas of interpretation, you have opened the door to people to impose their personal views and personalities get involved.
- Presume goodwill. Use dialogue; we're not the Al-Anon police.
- Tradition Four allows a group to continue to operate outside of the Traditions as long as they are not using the Al-Anon name.
- While it's important to presume goodwill, groups in our Area have been given the option of registering with the WSO within six months. We need to educate the groups about our policies and Traditions.
- We struggle with dual members and sponsorship. We had some groups delisted. Our solution is to look at cooperation with A.A.
- It would be very difficult to define what affects Al-Anon as a whole. Look at the Three Obstacles to Success and study the Four Primary Ideas. I need to change my attitude, my actions. We keep gifts by sharing them with others.
- Tradition Ten suggests that A.A. is an outside issue at Al-Anon meetings. When our singleness of purpose is compromised, this creates a lack of unity and dilutes my program, it erodes my spiritual base. Always remain democratic in thought and action, unless effecting Al-Anon as a whole.
- I refer to Concept Four. I began attending an Al-Anon Adult Children meeting and got to know the members of this very weak group. We held a business meeting because people were changing the words when reading the Steps. I became a part of the meeting before suggesting changes. I like the word "inform" rather than "educate."
- I use Warranty Three, Warranty Four, and Tradition Five. Whenever a group problem appears, it should not be one person who takes a look at that and throws it out. Those of separate opinions should review the actions. We do not set ourselves up as judge/punisher.
- I use Concept Four. I would recommend not cutting off these groups but continue to communicate with and visit the groups. Otherwise, we'll never know if they changed.
- An Area needs to be careful how it approaches a meeting that is breaking a Tradition. If the Area is laying down a law and trying to control, the Area may come off as being something the members of the meeting do not want to be a part of.
- Our district is in the process of doing an inventory because of the use of outside literature in meetings. Using A.A. literature is really an endorsement of A.A. in our meetings. I need to be willing to be uncomfortable.
- I visit the meeting and attempt to reason things out with one another. I may say, "What you're doing is lovely, just don't call it Al-Anon." I try to provide a clear, concise, and kind explanation on what I perceive as the problem and I let them know what they need to do in order to be relisted.
- Warranty Five states that no member can be expelled from our fellowship.
- The spiritual principle that comes to mind is the sharing as equals. I didn't know how to be an equal. The act of dominance is what strikes me. People find their voice in service, some more than others. Combining that with the responsibility of being a trusted servant reminds me it is sharing as equals.
- I need to use all the Traditions, and all of each Tradition. Anything that the group does that affects one or more member, affects Al-Anon as a whole. If I use the Tradition to judge them, I need to also use the Traditions to judge my response.
- The Group Services Department hears about the groups' problems. We need to consider all of our Legacies. We need to not be personally punitive as stated in Warranty Four. We need to remember anonymity. There was a problem with an Alateen Group Sponsor and there

were members who wanted the WSO to ban that Alateen Group Sponsor from ever being allowed to sponsor an Alateen group again. The WSO suggested those members share the name of the Alateen Group Sponsor with the Area, so that the decision could be made locally, and not by the WSO.

- Are we supposed to be creating a “Do Not Refer” policy in our Area?

That is up to your Area’s autonomy to decide.

- Weren’t there talking points in the works for Delegates to take to their Area?

Yes, that’s what this discussion is about. We jumped ahead of ourselves last year and realized we needed to look at the principles of the policy before composing talking points. This discussion will help us to look at what those should be to help the Areas.

- It is important to avoid public controversy. Don’t get so focused on correcting the bad meetings. Remember our Higher Power and have faith that even the bad meetings can’t ruin Al-Anon and even bad meetings have a Higher Power.
- The Policy Committee is asking you to take this discussion back to your Area and have a discussion on how to handle groups operating outside of the Legacies. To clarify for those who weren’t here the last few years, this is a topic that came from the Delegates, not the WSO. We asked what practices did the Area have in place to delist the groups and what the groups need to do to be relisted. If the Areas have a process in place and the WSO sees it as fair and balanced, then the Policy Committee would discuss whether they would have a “Do Not Refer” policy. We may consider not referring, but not delist. The WSO was trying to get the talking points for the Areas that need help to develop a policy, but the WSO is certainly not demanding anything. At this point, the WSO does not have a policy in place. The WSO continues to serve all groups.
- How does the WSO find out when a group is not registered?

The Area notifies the WSO. Some Areas have a policy that the meeting won’t be put on a meeting schedule until they are registered. This is a question of local autonomy.

The WSO Policy Committee will continue to discuss this issue and may seek further input.

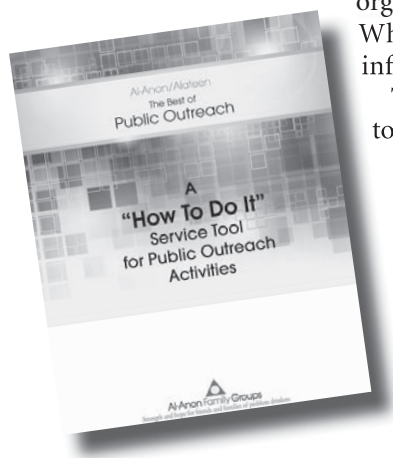
PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Judy A.
Chairperson, Trustee

The Public Outreach Committee introduced the new *The Best of Public Outreach* online service tool, a how-to-do-it guide, which has all the information members need to participate in public outreach activities in their own communities.

The newly revised *The Best of Public Outreach* is available on the Members’ Web site, www.al-anon.org/members. Having it on the Internet saves the cost of printing and makes it available to everyone. When updates are required, they can be done quickly so everyone will always have the most current information.

This new format makes it easy for members to click on a title in the Table of Contents and go right to the page they want.



PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAs)

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

Patrick Q.
Associate Director of
Communications—Media



SKILL-BUILDING, SHARED LEADERSHIP SESSIONS

Skill-Building, Shared Leadership Sessions were offered on two separate days in one-hour sessions. Conference members selected two of the three sessions according to their interests. A Delegate and a WSO volunteer together presented each skill-building session.

Communication—How to deal with difficult situations

Delegates are often asked to help deal with difficult situations. Many members do not like confrontation as it frequently brings back memories of life before Al-Anon. However, in accepting a leadership role, the option to run away is not available. Leaders need to confront themselves, and others, to help resolve issues that affect our Areas, districts, and groups. In addition, leaders need to help others in the service structure develop skills to help them deal with difficult situations, too.

During the session, a difficult situation was introduced: a potential District Representative (DR) was unsure of taking on the position; another member stepped up and was elected DR; that member was not a successful DR and ended up resigning. The original potential DR now is unwilling to serve now because of hurt feelings and no one has volunteered for the position. The groups in the district were asked to come up with a resolution, but the problem has not been resolved.

Members in the session divided into four groups and identified the communication tools that are available to help with difficult situations.

- The three Legacies
 - ↳ District Inventory
 - ↳ A Group Representative or even the Area Chair can step in by:
 - Explaining the need to be self-supporting in terms of service (Tradition Seven) and that our primary purpose is to help families and friends of alcoholics (Tradition Five), not for personal acknowledgment
 - Call a District Meeting and talk about Al-Anon principles
 - ↳ Area Chairman could:
 - Call a meeting of all the GRs within the district to lead a discussion on unity (Tradition One)
- Slogans and attitude
 - ↳ Presume goodwill
 - ↳ Principles before personalities
 - ↳ Acceptance (of the situation), Awareness (of the problem), and Action (need a DR)
- Listening
 - ↳ Have a district inventory
 - ↳ Clarify communications
 - ↳ Review the duties of the DR from the *Service Manual*
 - ↳ Use the new “Conflict Resolution Wallet Card” (S-71)
- *Service Manual*
 - ↳ DR election procedures (page 140)
 - ↳ Service Sponsor (page 47)

Loving Interchange to Resolve Conflict
AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

S-71

CONFLICT: a disagreement where parties perceive a threat to their needs, interests, or concerns

RESOLUTION: a solution to a disagreement

• Is there an unresolved conflict in my life that I could be working on?

Conflict is part of every relationship

• Do I usually share my opinion with others even when I know it will not be received well?

For more information see *How Al-Anon Works* (B-22) page 98

Ways people try to deal with conflict

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

• How do I usually deal with conflict? Is it successful?
• What could I be doing differently?

Preparing for discussion

- What do I/we know?
- What don't I/we know?
- What would I/we like to know?
- How can I/we reach a decision that is consistent with my/our spiritual principles?

• Am I willing to participate in an informed discussion?

- ⇒ Read “Group Problems and Solutions” (page 51)
- ⇒ Try to select an alternate DR at the same time to spread the work

Communication—How to engage audiences using multiple strategies and techniques

Conference members are often invited to give presentations at Assemblies, Area World Service Committees, and various other functions. It can be a challenge to prepare and give a presentation that engages the audience. The purpose of the session was to consider what skills and techniques could increase a trusted servant’s level of confidence, engage the audience, and deliver a memorable presentation.

During the session, Conference members met in small groups to prepare and then demonstrate one of the following strategies/techniques that could be used when giving a presentation:

- Prepare a joke, short story, shocking statistic, or take the audience on an imaginary journey using the World Service Conference Theme
- Write a vignette (short skit) utilizing the World Service Conference Theme
- Develop a short PowerPoint Presentation or create an outline for a presentation on the World Service Conference Theme
- Create a gallery walk with stations and questions to be answered regarding the World Service Conference Theme
- Write the words to the tune of a “well known” song using the World Service Conference Theme and its meaning as the main words
- Come up with an action plan, problem to be solved, or a challenge to get the audience to do something after presentation is over utilizing the World Service Conference Theme

Communication—How to overcome fear and build self-confidence empowering oneself to be a success as a leader/trusted servant

Members discover in their study of the Twelve Traditions and Concepts of Service how important good personal leadership is to their personal recovery and the growth of Al-Anon as a whole. Tradition Two is a reminder that trusted servants do not govern; however, trusted servants are asked to step forward as leaders. Concept Nine emphasizes that good personal leadership is a necessity at all service levels.

During the session, a situation was introduced: a prospective District Representative is unwilling to take the position because he doesn’t know all the responsibilities, is scared to go to meetings where he doesn’t know anyone, is unsure about the time commitment, isn’t sure where to hold district meetings; has never been in charge of anything; and doesn’t always have transportation.

Following the introduction of the situation, members divided into four groups to identify why members might be reluctant to become involved in service and to identify tools on how to encourage members into service. Each group answered a question on chart paper that was posted on the wall. After a few minutes, the groups moved to the next question until each group answered all four questions.

What is a successful leader/trusted servant?

- Inspires others
- Has vision
- Delegates responsibility
- Admits mistakes
- Presents new ideas, but isn’t married to them
- Is enthusiastic
- Utilizes resources

What fears may impede our self-confidence?

- Expecting perfection
- Knowing the size of the audience
- Pleasing people
- Fearing success
- Receiving criticism
- Being misunderstood

What program tools help us build self-confidence?

- Use the *Service Manual*
- Participate
- Presume goodwill
- Read the Concept Nine leadership essay
- Share leadership
- Practice

How we can empower ourselves to be successful leaders/trusted servants?

- Use shared leadership
- Know and use *Service Manual*
- Use a Service Sponsor
- Accept constructive criticism
- Ask someone to share what they see as your talents

TASK AND THOUGHT FORCE PRESENTATIONS

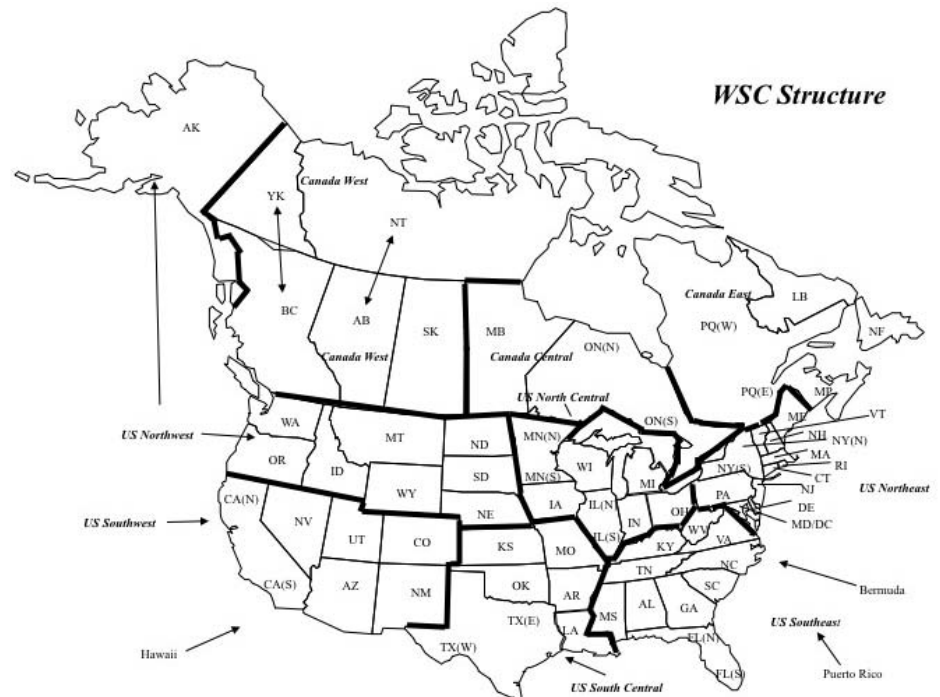
WSO Committee structures have always changed. Sometimes, there was reluctance to change, but when the benefits became apparent during three-year trial periods, there was a positive response to the change.

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

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

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

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



Task Force on the Conference Structure

Vicki H.
Chairperson, Trustee

Conference members listened to an audio clip from the 1968 World Service Conference. The topic of this discussion was Regional Trustees, which was a new idea at the time. Members of the Conference were debating whether to have Areas, perhaps multiple Areas in a state or province, each bring forward a Regional Trustee candidate or whether the candidates would somehow be chosen by an entire state or province.

In 1968, Conference members anticipated a continuing process of change in regards to the number of Delegates from an Area, number of total Delegates at the Conference, and general Conference composition. In the sound bite, Delegates talked of multiple Areas within a state or province, perhaps using boundaries other than state or provincial boundaries for Areas.

The first states to talk about the large number of groups in their Areas were California and Texas. That discussion began in 1962 and each state brought two Delegates to the Conference in 1964. Two hundred groups in an Area was the criteria for petitioning to divide until 1980 when the Admissions/ Handbook Committee recommended an increase to 400 groups. The reason given was that the Conference not become too large. Concerns voiced were that the “balance” might tip to a specific Region and that the ratio of Delegates to other Conference members would be affected.

The number of groups has generally been the basis for division, but in 1978, an exception was made when the Atlantic Provinces divided because of geography. At that time, the suggestion was made again that Area boundaries might be realigned since state or provincial boundaries might be too strict or unrealistic.

Nevertheless, the statement in the *Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual* has remained the same since then: “A state, province, or territory having more than 400 groups may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference (see Article 6 b. of the Conference Charter.) A state, province, or territory may divide only once, as reaffirmed at the 1982 WSC.”

Divisions of Areas with more than 400 groups continued until 1987; but some Areas have had more than 400 groups and have not asked to divide.

The discussion was reintroduced in 2004 when an Area Delegate asked in a letter to the WSO if an Area that has already divided could divide again. Subsequent Conferences have discussed both division of larger Areas and consolidation of smaller Areas. The 2008 Conference looked at the issue in the light of effects on the World Service Conference, finances, innovative approaches to the links of service, growth of the fellowship, and diversity of the fellowship.

The 2009 Conference looked at division/consolidation of Areas using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process. One question asked in the final part of the KBDM was “Is our current structure limiting the size of our fellowship?” The presenter read from the *Service Manual*, p. 172, in the introduction to the text about the Concepts, “Each new generation of world servants quite rightly will be eager to make operational improvements. Unforeseen flaws in the present structure will perhaps show up in time. New service needs and problems will arise that may make structural changes necessary. These contingencies should be squarely met, and suitable alteration effected. When structural change does seem advisable, its advocates need only present a strong case for such a change to both the Trustees and the World Service Conference for consideration.”

The question asked at the 2009 WSC was: “*Is the current WSC model providing the spiritual bridge we need to expand into the future in order to meet the needs of the fellowship?*” In discussion, Delegates cited Lois’ criteria—is it simple, is it inexpensive, and would it give equal representation? Another Delegate quoted Lois as believing in the greatest good for the greatest number. The 2009 discussion continued for five and a half pages of the *Conference Summary*.

In 2010, a Thought Force named the three key issues as communication, participation, and representation and led the Conference to prioritize its suggestions:

- Plotting all groups in our service structure on a map.
- Allowing Areas with more than 400 groups to split.
- Allowing smaller Areas to combine.

This year, following years of the Board of Trustees and the Conference trying to come up with a plan that might work for everyone and coming up with very little, Conference members were asked to think “outside of the box.”

- **Freedom**—The Board challenges Areas and *fre*es Areas to experiment with what might work for that specific Area.

- **Vision**—Where do you see your Area and the needs of your Area 5, 10, 15, 50 years from now?
- **No Holds Barred**—If every Area could do anything it wanted in its own Area, or with another Area, to better service those affected by someone else's drinking; to make this program available to everyone who wants it; to ensure that Al-Anon is known and can be found by every household, what might that look like?

The Board offered every Area this plan:

Formulate and implement a structure in your geographical Area or combination of geographical Areas for a trial period that would enable your groups to have full communication, participation, and representation.

Criteria:

- ✓ “Outside of the box” strategies are welcome.
- ✓ No structure change is off-limits provided it does not affect Policy (pages 75 - 121 of the *2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*) or our Legacies.
- ✓ Though the Board does not need to approve the strategy, if the strategy in some way affects the Conference, the Area will need to present its idea to the Board to review. Requests need to be addressed to the Chairperson of the Board and turned in by December 15th, in order to be heard at the following January Board meeting.
- ✓ The financial aspects of trial implementation would be the responsibility of the Areas involved, and not the Conference or the WSO as a whole.

Conference members were given some examples.

- Freedom: Perhaps your Area is having trouble getting GRs to serve—could you change the length of the term? Yes. This does not change Policy. Could your Area use dual members to fill these positions? No. This would change Policy.
- Vision: An Area would grow and need to split, or maybe serve districts differently, or maybe you are so small you want to do away with districts altogether.
- No Holds Barred: Suspend Alateen Safety Requirements? No. This would change Policy.

It was noted that the session was designed to demonstrate how Delegates might take this conversation, this brainstorming session, back to their Area. It was further noted that Areas that are completely satisfied with what they have now, don't *have* to do anything. This is for those Areas who feel they need to make some changes to be more effective.

Conference members responded to these questions:

- **What is the most audacious plan you can think of?**
- **Envision a structure that supports, strengthens, and grows Al-Anon Family Groups—What does it look like?**
- **Starting from scratch, what would our cofounders do today?**
 - One Area could merge with another.
 - I would like to see us do away with the boundaries between the Areas.
 - I would recommend adopting an inactive district and role-modeling how to serve. Also changing the length of service time.
 - The west part of our Area could join another. The east part could join the Area on that side. We're going to lose the western side because we keep meeting on the eastern side of the state.
 - My Area is like two planets, mainly due to geography. We should divide into two Areas.
 - I would like to see my Area split three ways.
 - I would like to see us totally disregard state boundaries and do Area lines according to ease of transportation to a central meeting place.
 - Is this something the current panel people would decide? Succession was not successful once before.
 - Go home and talk with your members and come up with ideas/plans.*
 - My Area has had successful cross borders meetings with another Area, but when we began doing this with Alateen, we realized Alateen Group Sponsors were not certified in the Area where they were serving.
 - My Area is split up by time zones.

- Envision a structure that would support and grow Al-Anon Family Groups.
- If we could drop term limits of Group Representative to one year, it might help those who are reluctant to serve.
- I would not have used state, provincial, or territory boundaries instead, I would have given the Areas numbers.
- We should also take another look at the regional structure.
- My Area only has three districts and 50 meetings; we should join another Area.
- I suggest we plot out all the meetings on a map and divide that way, allowing outside meetings to decide which Area they want to join.
- My Area had some meetings that tried to join another Area, but the members didn't feel included in the other Area, so they came back. We have no centers of population. We wouldn't know where to go.
- I didn't realize that our WSC structure was broken. I understand that driving distances are burdensome.

If it's working for you, you don't have to do anything. There is no one solution that will work for everyone.

- If we're going to eliminate state/provincial boundaries, could we also eliminate national boundaries?
- An Area could also have multiple service positions; maybe just have one Delegate, but have three Alternate Delegates who would attend the Conference and report back in the Area.
- Would additional Delegates pay the Equalized Expense, or the actual expense?

During the trial period, the Area would pay the full expense.

- If an Area chose to use an Assistant Delegate, would they have the same access to e-communities?

We don't have e-Communities for Alternate Delegates yet, so we wouldn't create one for Assistants. Delegates can share the information with everyone/anyone, unless the information is marked confidential.

- Won't this affect our incorporation? I wouldn't suggest changing that for a trial period.
- Being in the same Region as two large Areas, I am amazed by their size. This is a wonderful idea.
- I would personally be more comfortable with forming a Thought Force than doing this trial. We are bypassing the Thought Force process and going right to the Task Force. How long is the trial for?

The trial length would be six or more years. Individual Areas would create the Thought and Task Forces necessary to move each Area forward. It would take some time for things to get off the ground. It may take a few years to figure out the trial plan and then another few years to implement the trial plan. The trial would need to be at least two rotations of panels.

- I'm excited but concerned. The timeline of December 15th is a challenge. What will this do to our bottom line? Our Area relies on certain contributions. We need to move a bit more slowly.

You don't have to present your plan by December 15th of this year, that's why the trial would last six or seven years.

You only need to let the WSO know if it affects the Conference.

- We have merged districts and have one District Representative and two alternates and that works well.
- Since we aren't considering states as boundaries anymore, does that mean online meetings can become an Area?

No. That is addressed in the Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies. Be sure that when you go back to your Area that you read the paragraphs on page 172 of the Service Manual, which reflects the words and wishes of Lois.

- Would it be possible to take all of the isolated locales in the WSC structure and combine them to become a virtual Area that would meet online?

Why wouldn't they just attend the Assemblies they are already near? When you put all this on paper and work out the kinks, we may be able to consider this.

- I've heard complaints from online meetings that they want to have representation at the WSC? Could they send a representation with no voice and no vote?

No. Online members are represented in the structure in which they live. They're already represented. No one should be represented twice. We encourage members of online meetings to write to their Delegates.

- If we have multiple Delegates, can multiple Group Records Coordinators access the Area records?

We're not going to be creating dual listings since this is on a trial basis. We did recently offer the Areas an opportunity to have a second person to update the records.

- If my Area wants three separate Delegates, and only one is recognized, would that be approved first at the Board of Trustees meeting? We could have six or more people sitting in the Conference with no voice and no vote.

Yes, that's how that would be.

- When we talked about the service structure trial and thinking outside of the box, if we had more than one Delegate, would they have voice and vote?

They would have no voice and no vote and your Area would cover their expense.

- Why would an Area pay for someone to come to the Conference if all he or she was going to do was sit?

There would be an additional person to carry the message back to the Area and that person could share the duties of the Delegate outside of the Conference. It would be like forming an Area within an Area.

- But how would those people in that newly created Area have representation at the Conference?

They still would be represented by the existing Delegate. The trial will last six years or longer.

- So the "no voice/no vote Delegate" would be included in the Seating Motion?

Yes, which is the reason the Board would need to know by December 15th of each calendar year.

- Page 135 of the *Service Manual* discusses a non-panel Area. Is this what we would have?

No. That applies to an Area that exists but has not yet sent a Delegate to Conference. An example of this is Nunavut, Canada.

- My Area made a request to split and was told that there was a moratorium on an Area splitting. Is that still in place?

Yes.

- We're not increasing or decreasing the number of voting members at Conference. We're doing this to see what works for our Area, on a trial basis, and then if it works, we may make changes in the Conference structure—is that correct?

Yes.

- Why would we need the approval of the Board of Trustees in order to make a change during the trial?

You don't need Board approval, but the Board would review the plan in order to approve the Seating Motion. The Board would also review to determine if the plan violates any policy.

Task Force to Develop a Presentation that Will Help to Strengthen the Communications between the AIS, Areas, and Districts

The Chairperson of the Task Force began, "There are many forms of communication available to us today, yet why is it that in some Areas there is still a weak communication system between the AISs, districts, and Areas? Through the years there have been attempts to rectify the problem by having AIS/LDC workshops in conjunction with one Regional Service Seminar per year in the early 90s, but the problems that occurred then, still occur today. For this reason, the 'How to Strengthen an AIS' Thought Force was formed.

Cecilia K., Chair
Panel 50
Arizona

The Thought Force presented four strategies at the 2010 Conference (see pages 45 and 46 in the *2010 Conference Summary*) and allowed Conference members time for discussion after each strategy. Strategy One was to promote workshops, fund-raisers, etc. to promote camaraderie; Strategy Two was to develop presentations for Delegates to take to Areas and districts; Strategy Three was for the AISs to cooperate and coordinate with Area and district Internet sites so there would be simultaneous communication for news and updates; Strategy Four was to encourage AIS liaisons to attend and participate in Area World Service Committee Meetings. Both the Thought Force findings and the discussion from the Conference members indicated that there were varied degrees of communication and cooperation between the three entities. Therefore, in view of the Thought Force strategies and the ensuing discussion, the Thought Force recommended the formation of a Task Force to develop a presentation to strengthen the communication system between the three links of service as identified by the Thought Force.

In the development of the Task Force presentation, it was concluded by the Task Force members that the concept of the presentation would be to build trust, cooperation, and most importantly, respect among the three entities; the Legacies would be the impetus for conversation and direction. The belief being, if the three entities were encouraged to sit down together and start conversing with each other, they would begin to talk about the various ways that they can communicate utilizing the many resources we have available to us today, thus improving communication and reducing conflict among the three entities.

Following a skit presented by members of the Task Force, Conference members were asked,

“What can I, as an Area Delegate, bring back to my AWSC and Assembly to support all of our service arms in an effort to improve the links of communication among AISs, districts and Areas?”

The floor was opened for discussion:

- We could do what has been displayed at this Conference—make amends.
- I can bring back the report. Sometimes I feel like I’m the “Inc.” part of AI-Anon and there can be hostility. We do our best to keep the communication open. I believe in a strongly organized structure for the Area.
- We require all members of the AWSC to submit an article for the Area Newsletter that goes out three times a year. We held orientation for Officers and Coordinators at the beginning of each panel, and we have a District Representative orientation. We now have a “cloud” presence on our Web site, which allows AWSC members to post things.
- Our AISs invite the Delegate to attend their AIS meetings. The Area Chair usually attends as well. We bring an organizational chart showing the links of service, the Delegate gives a report, and then we have questions and answers. This allows intergroup representatives to see the links of service. We’ve received positive feedback about this. Each Intergroup invites everyone to this. One intergroup is having a strategic planning session for the next five years.
- I heard in the Sharing Area Highlights session that we have a lot of problems filling service positions. If the “past” members can step up and serve for a time being, that would be a great start on an interim basis.
- Our Web site has helped our AWSC to communicate. We have trouble with our AIS/LDC office. The paid employee seems to take ownership of the office. I live nearby so I’ve been able to go there and be visible.
- We’ve had an Area office for many years. Twelve years ago, we opened another office in the middle of the Area, which has not been well received. We use the liaison position that is available and that helps with the communication and collaboration.
- On our Area Web site, all Coordinators have their own page and they are encouraged to keep this updated. We also have links to our two AISs. From an Area level, I don’t know much about what the AISs are doing, so this challenges me to find out.
- We had a hard time getting started with this Task Force because all the Areas are so varied. We wanted to just open the door and offer a beginning for the Areas that have broken communication.
- I didn’t think we had any problems until I got involved in this Task Force. I found out the information wasn’t flowing between the Area and AISs. Our Area Secretary is now sending information.

Task Force to Develop Presentations for Areas on How to Reach Out to Minority Groups

The Chairperson of the Task Force began, “The dictionary defines diversity as, ‘The condition of being diverse, differing from one another; the inclusion of diverse people (people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization.’

“Al-Anon’s membership consists of people from all walks of life. The disease of alcoholism is not confined to any profession, race, culture, or economic or social status.

“This graph is based on the 2009 Membership Survey which compares Al-Anon to the U.S. population as a whole. The columns on the right represent the U.S. population and the columns on the left represent Al-Anon.

“Based on our survey Al-Anon members are:

- 84 percent female, 16 percent male
- The average age of members is 56 in the U.S., 58 in Canada
- 93 percent are white, 3 percent Latino, 4 percent other
- The average Al-Anon member is a 57-year-old, white, middle-class female.

“Does the membership of our Al-Anon groups reflect the diversity of our communities?”

“There are many things to consider as we explore diversity in Al-Anon. The Twelfth Step calls us to carry the message to all who have been affected by the family disease of alcoholism.

“Our Traditions remind us of our primary purpose, to help families of alcoholics, as we focus on what brings us together. Together the groups share the responsibility for the survival of Al-Anon. Before taking action there are a few things to consider.

“Each person may have their own fears when reaching out to someone different from themselves. People may feel vulnerable; afraid of looking awkward, or saying something wrong, or unsure of what to say. We worry about not fitting in or being misunderstood. Change is usually difficult because we often get comfortable with how things are. Some members may be concerned that their group may not be helpful to them anymore if it changes too much as new members join.

“Things that we in Al-Anon may take for granted may actually present barriers to family members who are searching for help. A simple thing, such as meeting in a location other than a church, or ensuring the meeting site is accessible to those with disabilities, may make Al-Anon more inclusive. Using acronyms and other Al-Anon lingo or using religious prayers or other references to religion may present a barrier to newcomers, but especially to those from an under-represented population. People coming from diverse backgrounds may feel uncomfortable as a minority in the group, at first, if their primary language is not that of the group.

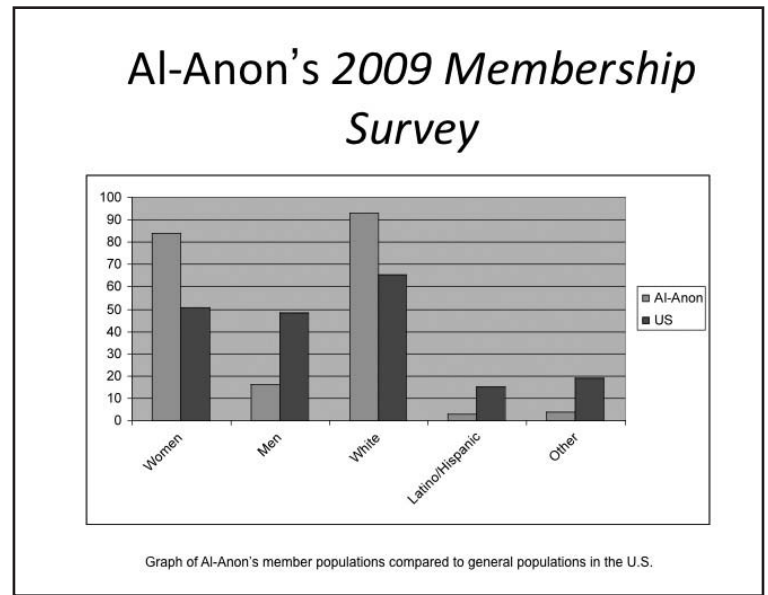
“Everyone affected by the family disease has fears when thinking about going to their first Al-Anon meeting. Those who are different than our average member may have additional fears.

“Every culture has unique values, customs, and concerns. What feels welcoming for one culture or individual may be a barrier to another. It is also important to remember many individuals and subgroups exist within cultural groups. For example, the Hispanic/Latino culture includes Mexican, Cuban, Puerto Rican, etc. There is diversity within diversity and each individual may identify themselves with several different cultures such as age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, or religion. Just knowing someone’s culture doesn’t mean we know who they are.

“There are many people who can aid us in carrying the message to families of alcoholics, including our own members. We can also reach out to A.A. groups or professionals, such as treatment centers and community leaders serving groups that are under-represented in our fellowship. These may include religious leaders, Council of Elders, health care providers, community centers, social workers, and alcohol counselors.

“A momentary pause from the routine business may be all that is needed to start the process. Take a look around you. As you go through your everyday life, notice who is at the local mall or theater. Visit specialized businesses, such as Asian markets or kosher delis. There may be many diverse populations

Cheryl A., Chair
Panel 50
Wisconsin



in the local schools, unions, prisons, military bases, hospitals, homeless shelters, impoverished areas, anywhere another language is spoken or a culture is served or celebrated. Search the Internet for census statistics to determine the demographics of your city, district, or Area.

“We need to listen. We can’t possibly know what people are feeling unless we hear what they are saying. This is a process. We need to build trust. When starting a new meeting, consider if the space is accessible to members with physical limitations. Use alternatives to religious facilities for new meetings, or when moving an existing meeting.

“Visit an existing meeting serving under-served populations (example: different language, Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender (LGBT), men’s, different social-economic or ethnic background). Ask members who speak another language to say the Serenity Prayer, or teach you to say it in their language. Consider translating your newsletter and/or Web site into another language. Have a few pieces of Spanish and French literature, including the *Service Manual*, in your group’s lending library. Know where meetings in other languages are held. Stock pamphlets offering welcome to under-served population, such as the ones listed for newcomers and existing members.

“Here are some suggested steps to carry the message to under-represented populations.

“**Identify under-represented groups within your group, district, or Area.** The first step needs to be realizing who is missing. Identify professionals, faith communities, and community gathering facilities that serve under-represented groups, and find the appropriate contact person. This step is figuring out where to go to get help in reaching out to the specific populations that have been identified as under-represented. Some suggestions are Social Services, Treatment Centers, and Public Health Centers, to name a few.

“**Select Conference Approved outreach items to create visibility within the facility.** There are many public outreach tools available; choose the ones that would work best for that facility. Some suggestions are the *Al-Anon and Alateen’s Role in Family Recovery* DVD (AV-31), the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine, the Al-Anon Poster (M-79) and *What Happens After Treatment* (P-81 EF or P-81 ES).

“We have suggested a tool kit to help you attract more diversity to an Area, district, or meeting. A cultural diversity resource kit could provide the Area with the needed tools to help your members extend the hand of Al-Anon to diverse family members still in need.”

The resource kit includes the following:

- A personal cultural self-awareness inventory.
- A list of suggested Conference Approved Literature to display at meetings.
- A Public Outreach worksheet to help you identify the under-represented populations in your community and how to reach them.
- A way to utilize existing diverse members.

Conference members discussed the following questions.

- **What barriers do you believe exist that have prevented the under-represented communities from participating more fully in Al-Anon, in your Area?**
- **What resources can the Area access to assist members as they reach out to under-represented communities?**
- **In what ways do I think I can use a cultural diversity resource kit as a springboard for outreach to under-represented populations in my Area?**

Following the presentation, Conference members shared:

- I like the use of the word “differences” and the recognition that we all bring these differences. I might take on my “polite society” mode instead of having a spiritual connection with that member who looks different. My wish is that we can begin to understand how the differences prevent us from having that honest conversation. You have to reach in, in order to reach out.
- Barriers are not always obvious. Our meeting had grown and we added a semi-circle of chairs around tables. Some thought the tables were for the seasoned members only. We had a group conscience and removed the tables.
- We should strive to find diverse members to serve in conventions and fundraisers so others see the diversity is present and participating. We should be more sensitive about diversity and try to attract all kinds of people; we will be that much richer.
- There is an Arabic population in my Area, but we can’t find any translation for this population. Maybe there could be a worldwide translated phone group.

- We have vast diversity in the Area, and we are not attracting these potential members. We are under-represented by our Asian population because culturally they do not seek outside help. I will ask for a Thought Force in my Area to reach these members.
- My home group meets in a geriatric center and I expected members to all be elderly, but they weren't. We can make it as inviting and welcoming as we want, but other things might keep people from going.
- In order to get our phone meeting going, we took a "Meeting on Wheels" to each one of our tribal council meetings. Taking "Meetings on Wheels" to the police and military helps attract diversity.
- Our complacency is fueled by our lack of motivation and our fear.
- When I was a District Representative, I recognized we had a large Spanish-speaking population that was not represented at our district meetings, mainly because there was not much overall participation. I moved the district meeting around the district and would ask the various meetings to set up and host the district meeting. Participation grew.
- The diverse groups in my district folded because of lack of participation. Sometimes things just don't work. Reading the Steps and Traditions in different languages at Assembly might help. At Beginners' Meetings, we ask, "How did you find us?" and the response is usually, "the Internet." Our Web page is only in English, so we could begin there.
- Check with the WSO for translated materials. Diversity was discussed last year and the Areas felt there was a need to have material to present to their Areas, thus the appointment of the Task Force.
- One Task Force member had Delegate lunches where she arrived with sandwiches and dined with members in different locales. We have been successful attracting the Spanish population. The fear ran both ways. But by making the effort, we found the same basic need to belong and if we "Let It Begin with Me," it's an honest effort to show we care and that we want their participation.
- We have tried to reach out to the aboriginal population and the biggest problem is trust, they don't trust us. We are encouraging them to start their own groups and hopefully their strength and trust will grow.
- "Hidden diversity" exists in my small town. If it's not average, it's diverse. I fit the survey of the average member, but when I stepped into an Alateen group, I was the diversity. Teens opened up with unconditional love and welcomed me. They made a special effort to explain their slang terms. They commented on my two piercings when they had ten. They opened my awareness to start looking and seeing the diversity and how I could approach it.
- I suggest trying to make sure that at least one person talks to the diverse member, but not overwhelm the member. Make us feel like we are one of the members in the circle, without too much special attention.
- We don't know what we don't know. I looked at life through my own eyes and experience and think everyone else sees it the way I do. This has really opened my eyes and my awareness. I looked at the census in my locale and that's not what we have in our meetings.
- My home group is a very diverse meeting. We have an Alateen meeting and an Alateen meeting for younger members at the same time, which brings the diversity to our meeting. There are a lot of grandparents there, bringing their grandchildren to the Alateen meetings.
- Focus on our similarities and not our differences. Keep the focus on our primary purpose. I should feel welcome at all meetings.
- When I moved from Nevada to Texas, I was the diverse person—that was a real barrier for me. I had to just keep coming back, and thankfully I had strong Al-Anon to support me. I've reached out to the Spanish AIS and we are starting to have a dialogue.
- Encourage all to stop, look, and listen. Diversity is all around us. We find what we look for, and if we aren't going to look for it, we're not going to see it. One of the barriers is an unwillingness to be uncomfortable. I reached out to a diverse group, and they wanted me to just sit down, mind my own business, and listen. Sit where they meet and let them see you so they can begin that process of trust.

Thought Force on How Changes to the Environment Outside Al-Anon May Affect Our Meetings and the Fellowship as a Whole

Charlie S./Vickie C., Chair
Panel 49/Panel 50
Maryland/DC/Alabama

The Delegate began, “Any set of predictions about coming changes is going to have omissions, overestimations, and underestimations. The following list is non-exhaustive; rather it contains representative examples of the changes Al-Anon may be facing in the next decade or so.”

Technology—Communication

Change: New communication methods may change how potential members are introduced to Al-Anon.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- Potential to attract socially isolated individuals to Al-Anon.
- Perception of increased anonymity may encourage people with concerns about their safety and privacy to participate in Al-Anon.
- Members who joined Al-Anon via computer may not understand and appreciate the value of face-to-face meetings.

Technology—Al-Anon member contact

Change: Primary contact between Al-Anon members may no longer be face-to-face.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- Loss of intimate relationships and sharing between members.
- Greater access to Al-Anon for members in remote localities.
- Greater access to Al-Anon for members who can no longer drive to meetings.
- Greater access to Al-Anon for members who are living in dangerous situations.
- Opportunity for members with hectic or irregular schedules to stay involved with Al-Anon.
- Potential decline in financial support to Al-Anon service structure due to lack of “passing the basket.”

Family structure and life styles—Less time

Change: People, particularly parents, may have less time. They may be working more, going back to school, taking care of family obligations, etc.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- Al-Anon members may be attending fewer meetings.
- Al-Anon members may be even more reluctant to take on service positions which require a commitment of time.
- Consequently, our service structure at all levels may consist primarily of older, retired members.

Family structure and life styles—Non-traditional families

Change: Types and occurrences of non-traditional families may increase.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- Some members may experience discomfort with members who are part of a non-traditional family.
- Danger of disunity if members focus on differences rather than our single purpose.
- The close bond between A.A. and Al-Anon may weaken as spousal pairs (A.A. and Al-Anon) become less common.

Culture/Diversity/Economics—Demographics

Change: Current demographic changes may continue with increased numbers of cultures, not just ethnic/linguistic, but generational, sexual, religious/antireligious, etc.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- Some members may have real difficulty accepting some of these cultures.
- There may be an increase in meetings, which concentrate on the needs of Al-Anon members in similar life situations.
- Special needs or special agendas may threaten Al-Anon unity.
- Some members may be offended by the appearance, attitude, and foul language of some individuals.

Culture/Diversity/Economics—Faster pace

Change: Trend toward faster pace; demand for “quick fix.”

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- More newcomers likely to “drop out” after a few meetings.
- Some Al-Anon members may try to provide a “quick fix” by giving advice.
- Al-Anon could benefit if there is a backlash reaction where people want a slower, simpler, more personal, way of life.

Culture/Diversity/Economics—Perceived “Christian atmosphere”

Change: More members and potential members (increasing populations of non-Christian religions; those who have very negative experiences with Christianity, atheists, and agnostics) may be upset by the perceived “Christian atmosphere” of Al-Anon. Meeting in Christian churches, use of the Lord’s Prayer, vestiges of church services such as ritual readings, passing the basket, etc., could influence that perception.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- The current simmering conflict between “let’s try to make everyone comfortable” and “they’re trying to take God out of Al-Anon” may intensify.
- Electronic meetings may be a partial solution.

Culture/Diversity/Economics—Printed material

Change: Members’ reading styles may continue to evolve as they have less time for reading and move away from traditional print media.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- Members may read only short excerpts (such as the page of the day in our daily readers) and miss out on the wealth of recovery available in our other literature.
- Book sales may decline, affecting the finances not only of the WSO, but also of other service arms that derive income from Literature Distribution Centers.

Alcoholism and other addictions/illnesses—Multiple addictions

Change: For many Al-Anon members, and for the majority of newcomers, the alcoholic in their lives has multiple addictions. Often they consider the other addiction (usually drugs) to be the more acute problem.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- Members whose alcoholic has multiple addictions may want to share about what is affecting them most, often the other addiction.
- Some Al-Anon members, concentrating solely on Al-Anon’s singleness of purpose, may react in a negative manner to any reference to other addictions.
- Such behavior may result in discord and divisiveness in groups
- The increase of A.A. members attending Al-Anon meetings may be confusing when the anonymity of outside membership isn’t maintained.

Alcoholism and other addictions/illnesses—Referrals

Change: Counselors and well-meaning Al-Anon members are recommending Al-Anon to troubled people even when there is no apparent alcoholism present.

Impacts on Al-Anon:

- Potential for dilution of the Al-Anon program.
- Opportunity to make more people familiar with Al-Anon, and frequently these “no alcoholism” members discover that they indeed have been affected by somebody’s alcoholism.
- Occasionally a troubled person has severe mental/emotional problems and may be disruptive during group meetings.

Members of the Thought Force presented strategies to address changes to the environment outside Al-Anon that may affect our meetings and the fellowship as a whole.

Strategy One

Develop scripts, skits, workshops, etc. to encourage discussions at all service levels about the difference between principles and procedures in Al-Anon.

Pros:

- Demonstrate a willingness to accept change in order to fulfill our mission.

- Better informed membership may be more willing to make changes when necessary.

Cons:

- Some members see any idea of change as “destroying Al-Anon.”
- Discussions could be confusing and divisive if not moderated by a member with a good grasp of Al-Anon principles.

Strategy Two

Encourage members to become more comfortable with technology by encouraging Group Representatives to use technical resources at the group level. Examples: sending flyers by e-mail, texting group questions to the District Representative, giving a short PowerPoint presentation instead of handouts, connecting with the Delegate or Area Chair by speakerphone during a group business meeting.

Pros:

- The way to learn technology is to use it.
- Seeing technology in use makes it less scary.

Cons:

- Members may feel they are being forced into technology.
- Members may have increased reluctance to undertake service because of the “new requirement” to be technically savvy.
- Some members will need education/training to take advantage of technology. Al-Anon service arms could provide some introductory training such as “how to” sheets.

Strategy Three

At Area Assemblies and Al-Anon Information Service meetings give presentations on how to use the Al-Anon Web site and local Web sites in order to encourage members to use these Web sites.

Pros:

- These presentations may be a relatively painless way for members to get started in technology.
- In addition, they’ll find a lot of good information on these Web sites.

Cons:

- A certain percentage of our membership does not have computers or they use them only for e-mail.
- Some Web sites are not easy to navigate and may scare off “technophobes.”

Strategy Four

The local Al-Anon Information Service Office or district could sponsor a Beginners’ Meeting in a non-church environment.

Pros:

- This neutral environment may be more attractive to newcomers than meeting in a religious facility.
- Affords the groups in the district the opportunity to work together to host the meeting.
- Newcomers may be more willing to transition to meetings at a religious facility when they know more about Al-Anon and have made contact with group members.

Cons:

- Rents of non-church facilities are very high in some localities. This may be financially difficult or impossible for some AISs or districts.
- Possible confusion about type of meeting (actual group, institutions meeting, etc.)

Strategy Five

Develop a list of ways members can provide service to their groups without undertaking a long-term/ongoing commitment; for example, Group Representative for one year, Group Treasurer for six months.

Pros:

- Allows members who are employed an opportunity to serve without having a significant impact on their work schedules.
- May encourage members to “try out” service to determine whether they are willing to take on a longer commitment.

Cons:

- Continuity decreases.
- Members barely learn a service position before they rotate.
- Makes logistics more complicated. Examples: (1) the WSO, the Area, and the district all need to maintain up-to-date information for each Group Representative. (2) Groups with bank accounts will have to go through the hassle of changing signature cards more often.
- Some members may perceive the shortening of the GR's term as diminishing the importance of this vital trusted servant.

At the end of the presentation, it was noted that the presentation is a powerful tool that Delegates can take back to their Areas. It was further noted that the list of strategies would be a great topic to post to e-Communities asking Conference members which ones they liked, with the possibility of creating a Task Force to look into what interests Conference members the most.

Thought Force on Members Involved in Service Work Who Are Unable to Effectively Fulfill the Responsibility of the Position

The Chairperson of the Thought Force began, "The Thought Force's charge was to 'identify the issues that may result in members being unable to fulfill the responsibilities of their service positions' and 'develop a variety of strategies that will assist the Areas in dealing with these in a positive and productive manner.'

"The issues identified range from the obstacles experienced by trusted servants who lack necessary information and/or skills, to those who are unable or unwilling to fulfill the responsibilities of their service position.

"The fellowship's primary purpose is to help friends and family members of alcoholics. Every member of an Area is hampered to some extent in fulfilling our primary purpose when the links of service are weak or non-existent. The challenge is in using the principles of our program to effectively address these situations, not only when they have developed to the point at which they are doing harm, but also before the situations arise, as well.

"We have often heard that we need only be willing to serve. However, many positions increasingly require a set of skills that willingness alone cannot fulfill. Bill W.'s leadership essay in the Concept Nine descriptive text states, 'As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God has endowed human beings with considerable capability for foresight and evidently expects us to use it. Therefore, we must distinguish between wishful fantasy and thoughtful estimate. This can spell the difference between future progress and unforeseen woe.' It urges our fellowship to be proactive.

"The principles of our program guide us in such a way that we can develop a structure that enhances our trusted servants' likelihood of success as opposed to 'unforeseen woe.' When we take the initiative to educate our trusted servants and develop guidelines for addressing challenging issues, then members have direction that is principle-based when non-performance is of concern.

"**Education**—one's own and that of other members—is fundamental to promote understanding before issues arise. Familiarity with the *Service Manual* is key to develop strategies to address non-performance. The descriptive text of the Concepts of Service provides a wealth of information and examples to assist in such an endeavor. The Concepts serve as the essential framework for members of a Task Force who may be charged with developing guidelines.

"**Communication** is a second fundamental. There is sometimes a hesitancy to take action because there is concern that the member who does so is putting him or herself in 'unqualified authority' over the member who is not fulfilling his or her responsibilities. Ours is a spiritual fellowship that challenges us to grow from challenging experiences. Members in service are entrusted to serve as leaders and to use the spiritual principles as a foundation for their actions.

"There will be those among us who do attempt to place themselves in unqualified authority over others, thereby ineffectively fulfilling the responsibility of their position. Such a situation is a learning opportunity for the members involved as well as the wider fellowship. The lessons learned may very well be the impetus for instituting some of the strategies suggested in this presentation."

Members of the Thought Force identified the following issues.

A member:

- Believes that being willing is sufficient for standing for a position.
- Is not well-informed about the requirements of a position before appointed or elected.

Vicki L., Chair
Panel 50
Georgia

- Is willing to serve, but doesn't have the skills needed or the time available to meet the requirements.
- May be unable or unwilling to acquire necessary skills.
- Does not have enough time in the program and experience with the Legacies to effectively apply the principles of recovery.
- Is unable or unwilling to work as a member of a team and share leadership when appropriate.
- Works ineffectively or in isolation and does not use a Service Sponsor.
- Loses interest or motivation, but does not resign.
- Relinquishes responsibility to others who dominate and control, sometimes leading to double-headed management.
- Does not have transitional documentation from the previous trusted servant.
- Loses confidence after experiencing gossip or criticism of his/her performance.
- Uses other members to complete tasks or meet deadlines that are his/her responsibility and may be re-elected to positions because members are unaware of his/her poor skills.
- Believes he/she is entitled to stay in the position regardless of performance.
- Believes he/she is entitled to stay in the position because it is one for which he/she volunteered and is not paid a salary.
- Has a hidden agenda about accepting the role (e.g., reimbursement of expenses).
- Has a personality that adversely affects other members' willingness to cooperate that would help him/her succeed.
- Experiences changes with work or family commitments during the term and no longer has the time required for the position.
- Will not step down if it appears that the position will be vacant.

Members of the Thought Force developed strategies to assist the Areas in dealing with the issues in a positive and productive manner.

Short-term strategy

- Have a Policy Committee or Area Officers (at a minimum the Area Delegate and Chair) develop an emergency process that would:
 - Incorporate open communication between the members involved;
 - Designate oversight and short-term mentoring;
 - Specify goals to be reached within a specific time frame;
 - Be impartial and fair;
 - Make use of resources available, e.g., the results of the "Active Listening Workshop" conducted at the 2010 WSC.

Long-term strategies

- Provide job descriptions that are thorough and updated by every panel well in advance of elections. Consider posting them on a secure page of the Area Web site.

A job description may include:

- A minimum time in the program;
 - The role of temporary Service Sponsor to one's replacement;
 - Maintaining and providing transitional documentation;
 - An outline of skills needed;
 - Participation in an orientation for incoming trusted servants;
 - Regular opportunities to offer and receive feedback.
- Request that candidates for Area offices submit résumés outlining their qualifications for the position that they wish to stand for.
 - Develop written strategies that address procedures for non-performance, using the descriptive text in the Concepts of Service found in the *Service Manual*. Specifically useful is the text found in Concepts Three, Five, Nine, Ten, and Eleven. The guideline may include designating which members are responsible for communicating with the trusted servant who is not fulfilling his or her duties. One example is that concerns of non-performance by Area Officers or Coordinators are directed to the Area Chairperson. If the Coordinators are appointed by the Delegate, the Delegate may be the initial contact with the Coordinator who does not fulfill his/her responsibility. Concerns about the non-performance

of the Area Chairperson are directed to the Delegate. If removal is ultimately deemed necessary, the designated member would act at the direction of the AWSC Officers. Reasons for removal from office may include:

- Failure to attend a set number of meetings without advance notice and a replacement or report;
 - Failure to carry out the responsibilities of the position;
 - Creation of a public controversy;
 - Malfeasance or misuse of funds.
- Conduct an orientation for new trusted servants. It may include: Discussion of guidelines for performance evaluation; or written consequences for not meeting their commitment.
 - Hold a service position fair or roving workshop on “What is my job, and how do I do it?” before elections are held. One possible resource could be the “Responsibility” PowerPoint from the 2009 World Service Conference.
 - Encourage service sponsorship. Give first-time Assembly attendees the opportunity to sign up for a temporary Service Sponsor from among a list of experienced and willing Assembly members.
 - Consider all possible avenues to engage past Trustees and Delegates, such as:
 - Mentor, serving as a designated link of communication with a member who is not fulfilling his/her duties.
 - Organize and conduct workshops suggested above.
 - Actively participate in an orientation for incoming trusted servants.
 - Include an interview with Area Officers as part of the process of appointing Area Coordinators as a mean of giving more insight into a candidate’s ability to fulfill his/her responsibilities.
 - Take an Area Inventory by the mid-term of every panel.

Conference members were asked to respond to the following questions.

- **Which strategies presented do you believe can be effective?**
- **Which strategies presented do you believe may not be effective?**
- **Are there any other possible strategies that are missing?**
 - We had this problem in our Area, it involved the Area Chairperson. We didn’t have a policy in place. We did a lot of soul searching and sought guidance from the WSO. While we were grappling with this problem, there was a lot of division in our Area. We’ve intensified our orientation, and now we have a policy in place.
 - One strategy that might be added is making sure that we have a critical mass of people to draw upon. We did some re-districting, so that each district had at least 20 meetings. The same thing might be applied to the Area. You need a large inventory of people to fill positions with competent people.
 - We have a guideline for everything. We do an Area inventory in the second year of every Panel term. We encourage service sponsorship. We changed the word “job” to “service position description.” We are currently working on a document to address the need to have a process to remove someone who is not fulfilling their position.
 - What we have discovered at our most recent Assembly was that even some members of the AWSC don’t know how to give a report. Some begin with, “This is going to be boring . . .” Okay, people have stopped listening already. We now have a session on how to give a good report. We call them “service roles,” not “jobs.” We do have in our guidelines how to dismiss someone, and they are given two strikes before they are out.
 - An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In order to be kind, our Assembly gave a position to someone who was unable to fulfill the demands of the position because of a physical illness. But this originated from there not being enough résumés submitted. Follow your procedures and plan ahead.
 - We don’t have guidelines for anything. We have a Coordinator who is not responding to any of the attempts to reach her. One member suggested we send a registered letter stating that we assume the member has stepped down. Sometimes people appear very qualified on paper, but in reality, they are not. Perhaps we could have interviews as well as résumés as the WSO does for Trustees.

- We did see an improvement in participation when we were very detailed in our job description. I encourage the person to check in sporadically with the person who had been serving in the position previously. I try to be a partner even though I have moved on into a new position. Ask them to add a personal touch.
- Our Area could have used this sooner. The current person holding the position writes the job description. We had a job fair and presented that information to people with written copies of what the jobs are. In our Area, before a member can submit his/her name, he/she has to be approved by their District Representative.
- The commonality of our problems jumps out at me, no matter the size of the Area. The functionality is crippled when members do not fulfill their roles. It would be nice if Areas, who have established policies, could share with others on e-Communities.
- I'm excited to see this as something the Delegates can take back. The WSO gets correspondence all the time regarding this issue. Areas often don't realize they need a process until a problem arises. It happens a lot with Alateen, frequently regarding Alateen Group Sponsors. Maybe the person was the only one who volunteered and the Area didn't have any choices.
- We want to trust our trusted servants. Presume goodwill should be "trust, but verify." We need to be willing to take a look at this and open communication. Any Officer can audit the Area Alateen Process Person's file at any time, because this is a legal issue. Auditing is a particular guideline that would be helpful to make sure the communications are being done in accordance with the Area's and the WSO's requirements.
- We had this issue before a policy was in place. My concern as Area Chair in handling this was Warrantly Four. I wanted to presume goodwill and I didn't want that member to leave Al-Anon, but it takes a lot of courage. I went and talked one-on-one with the person and this allowed the person the dignity to say, "I can't do it" and to own the need to step down. I hate to see policies jump to legalistic type of things. I've done some of the things, but because people who practice the program helped, I was able to walk through this.
- We had a workshop introducing all the members to the positions available, including acceptable reimbursements. We modeled this after North Carolina. Thank you for having it on your Web site. We did have a process in place for removing an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service.
- I was told to listen to the similarities, not the differences. It seems like these strategies could also be used for groups not following the Traditions. One year, we tried offering a Mentor to each new Group Representative and it did not work out, but we kept suggesting members get a Service Sponsor. We have a District Representative forum where they can talk about their issues and hear what is working in other districts.
- We are going to implement mentorship in our Area, so we'll see how that works out. We did an inventory one year and the responses were so negative, it was never shared with the Assembly. Hopefully, positive changes will be made with our new Panel. I'm not sure it's always the answer to have a warm body fill an empty service position; maybe the position should just be empty while we look at this again.

Thought Force—Utilization of the *Service Manual*

Jane H., Chair
Panel 50
Alberta/NWT

The Chairperson began the presentation by saying, "We would like to bring to your attention one of our most important resources along with sharing what we have discovered by participating in this Thought Force on How to Utilize the *Service Manual*—A Guide to Recovery and Letting Go of Control.

"Even though a copy of the current *Service Manual* is sent to every registered group in the United States and Canada, many of the books are hidden away in boxes and closets, and are under-used as a result. The group copy is intended to be on display at the group meetings.

"The *Service Manual* is five different pieces with five different audiences in mind.

"Most of us are familiar with the sections of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

- "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work"
- "Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies"
- "World Service Handbook"
- "Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter"
- "Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service"

“When people think about it, many see it as ‘rules handed down from the WSO’ without realizing it is a compilation of the decisions of every World Service Conference and reflects group experience over 60 years. It is not a list of musts.

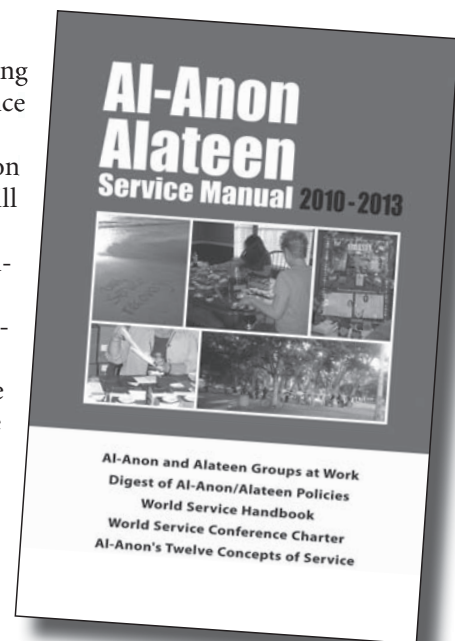
“The *Service Manual* will provide the information necessary to generate meaningful discussion and conversation in the groups in order to come to an informed group conscience. Its use will serve to encourage unity among members.

“Our charge was to brainstorm ways that groups, districts, and Areas can demonstrate to members the value of becoming familiar with and using the *Service Manual* as a valuable reference.

“Also to develop a variety of strategies that will help the groups, districts, and Areas communicate this message to the membership.

“We have come to the conclusion that we, the members of the World Service Conference, are the best suited to be cheerleaders for this book. We are the ones who actively participate in the decisions that are reflected in the *Service Manual*. We are the ones who have read and come to value this collection of decisions.

“It would be a waste and a shame to have all of these copies just grow dust in the bottom of a group box or closet. So, our Thought Force came up with five strategies that we would like to share with you in hopes that you will take them back to your Areas and create some excitement around the use of our *Service Manual*.”



Strategy One:

- Create a workshop that would use the *Service Manual* as a tool to gain information regarding subjects that are in question such as anonymity, election procedures, composition of the Conference, the purpose of the Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter, or Concept Nine.
- Contrive an activity like a scavenger hunt that uses the *Service Manual* to find the answers to some frequently asked questions.
- Invent a game that entails using the *Service Manual* following a format such as “Trivial Pursuit” or “Jeopardy.”

Strategy Two:

- Develop a skit that would show how to utilize the *Service Manual* in the form of a mock Al-Anon business meeting or discussion between Al-Anon members. We could create fun characters and use real Area challenges offering where in the *Service Manual* the information may be found to answer a question or help solve a problem.

Strategy Three:

- Create a letter or document that includes “talking points,” reminding members of the benefits and importance of using the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*.

For example:

- It is a resource to help resolve group problems and maintain unity. Learn about the “Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon” on page 24.
- Under the duties of a “Group Representative” on page 147 of the *Service Manual*, allow regular time at group meetings to convey information concerning Al-Anon world service affairs.
- Discover how Alateen came to be part of the Al-Anon Family Groups on page 29.

Strategy Four:

- Develop a leaflet, brochure, bookmark, or table card for distribution to the groups in our Areas.

These could include the most commonly asked questions regarding Dual Membership, Group Conscience, Finances, Anonymity, Earmarking Funds, Sponsorship, as well as where the answers can be found in the *Service Manual*.

Leaflets and brochures developed by the Area should only use titles of sectors with page numbers but not actual quotes from the *Service Manual*.

Strategy Five:

Demonstrate the online *Service Manual* in order to would relay the message of its ease of use. We could also:

- Pull questions out of a basket and have the online *Service Manual* projected on a screen to find the answers.
- Incorporate the demonstration into the Strategy Two skit.
- Show how key words can be searched.
- Suggest that the entire *Service Manual* can be downloaded to an e-reader.
- Point out that the thumbnails on the side make for quick reference.

Following the presentation, Conference members commented:

- We created and played a game we called “Singo” (like Bingo). The answers had to be found in the *Service Manual*.
- I love the search option with the online *Service Manual* on the Members’ Web site. Train the trainer—District Representatives can take this back to the Group Representatives, and the GRs can train the members in their groups.
- I will develop a Jeopardy game using the *Service Manual*.
- At our “District Day of Service,” I do a game show. We used to play games with the *Service Manual* at the Regional Service Seminars. It was fun to look for things in the *Service Manual*. This gave me the courage to go look for it, when asked a question, and not to have to know the answer without looking.

DELEGATES (PANEL 50)

Vickie C., Alabama

Growing up in an alcoholic home, I wasn't sure what my part in the family was so I was concerned with everything and everyone around me. My parents were both alcoholics. I have been married three times to two alcoholics. Two marriages ended in divorce and one in death.

I am a survivor. I heard that at my first Al-Anon meeting, I received comforting hugs at that meeting—something that was foreign to me but kept me coming back. My spiritual journey had begun. Little did I know what lay ahead. "One Day at a Time" I learned about myself, and in turn I began to understand what life was about. I started giving by getting to the meetings early to set up. I had a Sponsor who always told me "I could do it" when the group was looking for a service position to be filled. I said "yes" many times. With each service opportunity I accepted, my life gained strength. The courage to take a risk and step up gave me confidence in all that I attempted. Whether it turned out like I wanted it to or not, I grew with each experience.

Working the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service has become a way of life for me today. Serenity is the benefit of working the Al-Anon program. One moment, one step, and "One Day at a Time," I am living the life my Higher Power intended.

Jane H., Alberta/NWT

My spiritual journey began in Eastern Canada where I was raised by a family that practised the principle of giving first in order to set a law in motion that would provide them with security, respect, and a sense of belonging in our community. Both of my parents were active on boards and committees, and I certainly didn't know at the time that I was being prepared to give back to Al-Anon at some future date. Because of the example that was set for me by my family, mentors, and my Al-Anon Sponsors, I willingly began to serve at the group level and continued to grow and learn. Each job was a stepping stone for the next, and all of the skills that I have learned will benefit me for the rest of my life.

I am grateful to have gained a working knowledge of an accounting program while serving as Chairperson of our LDC. That skill later enabled me to set up a bookkeeping system for my husband when he decided to form his own company. Being taught how to use PowerPoint by another Al-Anon member made my presentations at Assembly a bit more interesting. These were committed to memory in an environment of love and understanding for the good of Al-Anon.

I was also taught as a child to financially support the spiritual organizations that were helping me on the path to peace, serenity, and joy. The law of reciprocity is constantly in motion in our lives, and I am in awe of its reliability. When I give without expectation, it has been proven to me that I will receive far more than I could have imagined.

Even more important than the knowledge of systems and material abundance is the love, understanding, patience, nurtur-

ing, and even forgiveness that has brought me to this place in my consciousness. When I arrived at Al-Anon's doorstep emotionally bruised from years of living in the disease of alcoholism, members encouraged me to help myself by helping others and doing what was best for Al-Anon. Sometimes I was afraid that I could not complete the task that was given me, but I soon learned if I "Let Go" that God would provide the resources and the answers and whatever I needed to succeed with the job at hand. These past two and a half years have been some of the most gratifying and rewarding years since I arrived on earth as I have been surrounded with love, acceptance, and encouragement. I plan to continue to give back to those I meet on this journey with the same feeling and consideration that you have provided for me. Thank you so much for the opportunity to serve.

Cecilia K., Arizona

As I serve my last year as Delegate and reflect back on my spiritual journey, I see that when I opened the door to the possibility of a loving Higher Power, I started a process that has been life-changing. The spiritual principles that I've learned along the way are giving me the freedom to live and enjoy life more fully.

When I came to Al-Anon, I was spiritually and emotionally bankrupt and didn't even know it. Little did I know that I would be on a spiritual journey that would transform my life and heal my spirit.

In the beginning when I heard members share, I wanted to soak in everything because they were talking about things I had never heard said out loud and describing feelings that I had felt, but had never been able to put into words.

I was in Al-Anon for two years before my head cleared enough to think seriously about asking someone to be my Sponsor. Up until then, I was living on the Serenity Prayer, slogans, literature, and the sharings of others in meetings. When I did ask someone to sponsor me, she started me on the study and application of the Twelve Steps. I began attending her home group; I was encouraged to share with newcomers, volunteer to lead meetings, and be the Literature person for the group. Gradually, I started to give back what had been so freely given to me.

I continued to do what my Sponsor suggested because I wanted what she and other members had that were practicing a program of recovery. They laughed freely, were enjoying life, and seemed to have a freedom to do things I'd never had.

As I started to do service outside of my group, I was asked to do things that I didn't feel like I could do and I'd be terrified, but because of the encouragement of a Sponsor and the reliance on a Higher Power, I would somehow get the courage to do what I was asked. The more I gave of myself, the more my spiritual foundation deepened. I began to feel a newfound courage and self-confidence that I hadn't had before. I began to notice that I, too, was starting to laugh more freely and enjoy life more.

As I pass on my recovery to those I sponsor, I can see them transforming their lives and sharing the miracles of the program with still others.

Al-Anon has been a gift. The spiritual journey I've been on has been full of highs, lows, and in-betweens, but the blessings I'm reaping today are overflowing.

Shirley T., BC/Yukon

When I first came into the program, I was broken and full of anger and resentment. It took me a while to understand the program and learn to let go of my obsession about the alcoholic. I have been a slow learner, but you were patient with me and allowed me to grow at my own pace. I became involved in service slowly, first by helping to set up at my meeting, followed by chairing the meeting. I began to grow in confidence. I became the Group Treasurer, Alternate Group Representative, and so on. My journey in service has been incredible and has allowed me to experience trust in myself and others. I found the confidence to continue to take on service roles. There have been times that a service position was challenging and frustrating, but this is a "we" program and so I always felt supported in resolving issues and conflict.

I've been honoured to have had the opportunity to travel throughout my Area and share the joys of service with members from many communities. Al-Anon has allowed me to further grow spiritually, develop a relationship with the God of my understanding, and come to realize how important that relationship is in my life. I never dreamed my journey in service would lead me to become Delegate, and the past few years have been life-altering. I recall arriving at the airport for my first Conference and being excited and anxious at the same time. I met two other Delegates at the airport and immediately felt right at home. I have learned so much about this wonderful program and myself during this time and have done my best to share what this experience has given me with my Area. And, I have learned to live in the present, let go of the past, and forgive.

I feel I have received so much more than I have given through service and during my term as Delegate. I will never forget the people I have met and what I've learned about this wonderful, worldwide fellowship.

I know my spiritual journey will continue, and I will always be involved in service in some way. I believe it is important to give back and to be there for newcomers who are seeking to find the help Al-Anon can provide, just as others were there for me at the beginning of my recovery.

Thank you for allowing me to be of service and for so richly blessing my life.

Teri M., Colorado

I have always known that Al-Anon and I were a good fit. The connection was something I yearned for from the very beginning. I attached myself to the service part of this program early, simply because someone told me to. I watched people at the very first Assembly doing things I could only imagine. They were reporting in front of a large group, laughing at themselves, organizing, disagreeing, and at the end they were holding hands in prayer. I was energized in a way I never had been. Isolation from the disease of alcoholism along with communication that was passive and indirect had taken its toll on my self-confidence

and self-esteem.

I began my spiritual journey in Al-Anon doing service work so that I could fill that need to be connected. I read the literature and tried to stay informed. As my personal life seemed to be spiraling out of control, I found a safe place in the rooms. The more I showed up for service in Al-Anon, the happier I became. Life wasn't changing, but I was. My perception of the people around me was beginning to shift. I no longer felt alone as I had for most of my life. It is the one place I feel grounded. I knew that I could get through the challenges that might be in store for me because the program had never let me down. I just needed to stay connected. So I did.

My first Conference, I learned that Al-Anon is so much bigger than I ever imagined. At my home group, I was given time to give a short summary and mentioned that we print literature in 40 languages. A member's look and comment, "wow," is one I will never forget! Given this "opportunity" of a lifetime, as so commonly noted by fellow Delegates, I realize how important it is to continue to give back to the fellowship. The truth be told, it does not feel like giving any more. It is a way of life. The position of Delegate has challenged me to find and speak my voice. What comes natural to me is to be the observer and avoid controversy. My Mentor at Conference was a wise woman. I will never forget what she said to me, "Yes, I have learned a lot about myself, and it wasn't all pretty." I have learned I do have opinions. They are not always right, but they are not always wrong. The privilege of doing service in Al-Anon keeps giving back in ways I would not have expected.

The paradox of feeling like I need to be connected is that I no longer feel the need to be connected—I just am.

Vicki L., Georgia

I am filled with gratitude for this moment. For this day, this week, these past two years, and the one before me as I complete my term as Georgia's Panel 50 Delegate. It has been an honor to have had this remarkable opportunity to serve as a Delegate in our worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon and Alateen.

From the very beginning of my journey along this spiritual path, I have experienced first-hand an abundance of gifts that members have so generously offered to me. As a mother of young children who was bewildered by the effects of alcoholism in my life, I was uncertain as to what I had to offer to the members of my Tuesday morning group. What I did know was that I was warmly welcomed, my need for a daytime meeting that offered childcare was met with a willingness by the group to provide that service, and the experience, strength, and hope that was shared nudged me closer, "One Day at a Time," toward a new way of living. Because of their example, I eagerly greet newcomers who walk through our doors, and I am reminded once again of the gifts I've received when I hear myself describing their influence in my life.

Because of my group's willingness to navigate the sometimes challenging details over the years, young mothers who could not otherwise attend a daytime meeting continue to benefit from the childcare service that has come full circle: my little girl has grown up and filled the role of caregiver at times. Because of the recovery that I found in that room, I ventured further afield

to serve beyond the group level and realized the truth behind one of my favorite quotes from our literature: “Whenever we participate, we expand our own recovery.”

I have come to appreciate that an attitude of willingness is fundamental to any gift that I have given or received in this fellowship. The willingness of members to walk beside me through challenging service roles has been instrumental to the gratitude I have for those learning moments, because it has often been in the midst of difficult experiences that my spiritual recovery has expanded most deeply. My own willingness to be of service has been nurtured all along the way by the trust that I have in the guidance of a Higher Power. I’ll never be able to give as much as I have received in this fellowship, but I will always be willing to share any gifts I have to offer because I have come to know the spiritual truth in the saying, “To keep it, you have to give it away.”

Jeannette M., Maritime Provinces

Several months ago, my mother gave me a picture from my childhood that I happened to come across recently. It was a picture of me as an eight-year-old taken in September 1951 on the day I was enrolled as a Brownie. That same year Al-Anon became a reality. I realize now that I was beginning my spiritual journey of getting as I gave. I remember well the Brownie motto that I had learned. It was “lend a hand.” Little did I know then that I would be spending the next 60 years doing just that—lending a hand. I completed the Brownie program, became a Girl Guide, and eventually became both a Brownie leader and a Girl Guide leader. I was giving as I had been given, hoping that others would benefit as I had.

What does any of this have to do with Al-Anon? All of this prepared me for my spiritual journey of the past 21 years in Al-Anon. My very first foray into service took place at the second Al-Anon meeting I attended. At the end of the meeting, I was standing near the storage cupboard where members were putting things away. I happened to look in and exclaimed in my then very outspoken way, “My, what a mess!” Needless to say I was politely told by my Sponsor that I was more than welcome to straighten it out. That was the beginning.

My spiritual journey has taken me to places I never dreamed would be possible. I have thrown myself into service at every opportunity, and I have gained ten-fold. Many times I have faced challenges as I have discovered that not everyone shares my enthusiasm. However, I have also discovered that some of it has rubbed off on others and influenced them to serve.

Probably the many changes that I have recognized in myself have been as a direct result of my present role as Delegate. I have given of myself and in return have been given the gifts of patience, tolerance, discernment, tact, compassion, empathy, peace, serenity, and the one I needed most, the ability to listen. As I reflect on the past 60 years, especially the last two and a half, I recognize that I have not journeyed alone. I have done so accompanied by everyone I have come in contact with, especially you, my fellow Al-Anon members. You have been my greatest influence. I was told three years ago that I was in for an awesome journey. No truer words were ever spoken. As

my term as Delegate comes to an end, I have no idea where my spiritual journey will take me next. However, I do know that I will get as I give, wherever I go.

John P., Massachusetts

“All people affected by someone else’s drinking will find help and recovery in every community.” The vision statement of Al-Anon’s Board of Trustees certainly provides ample opportunity to give and receive.

I am grateful to the women and men who gave of themselves so that Al-Anon was there when I arrived at my first meeting. I began giving through service early in my Al-Anon experience. I wanted to give back because I was grateful to have been guided to a fellowship of those who had been there and understood. In Al-Anon, I’ve found friends.

The man who became my personal Sponsor and gave of himself so unselfishly was the key to my early years in Al-Anon. Through his dedicated sponsorship, I found my spiritual way of life. He had planted the seed: giving time to another member and to Al-Anon were part of the basics. As I continue to recover from the traumatic effects of the family disease of alcoholism that occurred during my childhood, I look for ways to give back, particularly by reaching out to newcomers.

In fits and starts, I became involved in service beyond the group level that eventually led to serving as Delegate, which I’ve occasionally found challenging and daunting. Practicing a daily discipline of reading Conference Approved Literature, I was reminded that no one is obliged to give back when I read the December 13th and December 20th pages in the ODAT book. I am the one who benefits when I decide to become involved and stay involved no matter how unsure of myself I may feel at times. If I want continued growth that will soften my character defects and survival traits, I find I benefit when I give as I have received.

I love Al-Anon and the people known and unknown who make up the worldwide membership, particularly those I have met in service. I’ve gotten more from Al-Anon than I’ll ever be able to give back. It’s another paradox that recovery has brought to my attention: the more I give, the more I get—even when I don’t feel up to the task.

I was reminded of being willing to serve when I had the recent opportunity to travel overseas. After failing to find an Al-Anon meeting in Venice or Florence, I found one in Rome. Only three of us were there: two tourists and the member who lived in Italy. A candle was kept in the window by that member, and that is the mental image I have of service. I’ve got a long way to grow, but I can rely on God. Thank you, God, for Al-Anon, and thank you, Al-Anon, for God.

Elaine L., Minnesota North

I was destined to find Al-Anon, and when I did, I had no idea who I really was. I fought the drinking with a vengeance, tried to manage everything alone, and juggled work and two kids. I had no joy, hope, or serenity, and I was emotionally and spiritually bankrupt. You might say life prepared me for Al-Anon. I say service in Al-Anon prepared me for life.

I've tried to think of what my life would be like without service, and I can't. From my first weeks in the program, I was encouraged to participate. I took my turn at the Al-Anon orientation at the treatment center and local college and helped lead beginners' meetings, though I was just a beginner myself. I did this selfishly, having no concept of giving unconditionally, and I sure didn't think I had anything to offer. I just desperately wanted to be important to someone, to belong, and to get what the others in my group seemed to have.

In service, I learned to make and keep a commitment, which expanded my confidence and trust in myself. I learned to lead meetings and share ideas, to delegate, to listen and keep confidences, and to trust others—all qualities that prepared me for a supervisory position at work. By sponsoring, I learned about compassion, hope, acceptance, and unconditional love; qualities that led me to a new job I love—working with crime victims.

I've come to believe that every happening in my life is spiritual. I have only to look for God in each situation and be willing to do whatever is put in front of me. After experiencing the death last year of my daughter-in-law and granddaughter in childbirth, I received the love and support of a whole family of Al-Anon members who said it was okay not to do anything but take care of myself. However, God saw fit to have me sponsor a pregnant woman who gave birth a month after my granddaughter's birth. Loving and supporting her has somehow helped me grieve and to accept that life is just as it should be. I experience joy in watching her grow and am filled with hope. I see myself in her and am thankful for how far I've come in my journey.

Whenever I have actively made myself available for what God has in mind, I've been given more than I would have dreamed to ask for. By simply giving of myself, I have found myself, and for that I am truly grateful.

Daphne F., Mississippi

Having been told to go to Al-Anon, I walked into these rooms on March 21, 1983, to change my husband's life. In a short time, I realized I needed to put the focus on me. After years of searching, I started getting answers to my questions—the ones I did not know I had.

A few months into Al-Anon, I started attending district meetings and learned about the fellowship of which I was a member. Over time, I heard people talking about being a child of an alcoholic, and I identified with what they were saying although I came to Al-Anon because of my ex-husband.

When I was about to move cross country, I asked my counselor, "What if there are no meetings?" She responded, "Then start one." With this thought, little experience, and two members, we started an Al-Anon Adult Children meeting.

At times overwhelmed with the challenges, I recall leaving a controversial district meeting where some members were vocalizing their opinions. With thoughts of giving up, I talked to God and remembered I was doing this for *me*.

I moved to Hawaii and continued my involvement in Al-Anon and Al-Anon Adult Children meetings. We were without Conference Approved Literature that included a focus on Al-Anon Adult Children, which was not yet available from the WSO. So,

to the WSO and the Conference, I apologize for any inappropriate thoughts I had at that time.

The booklet, *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (P-78), so applies to me. My continued involvement in service has allowed me to build my self-esteem and to realize I have something to contribute to this fellowship and the world. Service allowed me to mature. The little girl, who saw herself as not fitting in, belonged.

In my last year as Delegate, I have no clue what the next step of my journey in service will be. I do know I will rely on the God of my understanding to guide me as He has always done.

Thank you for giving me the time and opportunity to grow and to enjoy life.

Cindy C., Montana

My spiritual journey began long before I entered the healing rooms of Al-Anon. I knew I was seeking "something" to help with the feelings of emptiness, loneliness, helplessness, inadequacy, anger, and frustration. I thought those feelings were being caused by what was being done "to me." I sought escape from those feelings in many ways; I sought answers in many places. Of course, I didn't know what I was searching for until I was introduced to Al-Anon, a Sponsor, and the Twelve Steps.

I told my husband early on when he found help at his first Twelve Step program, "I wish there was a place for me to go." I tried church, but was unable to get relief from the constant questions running through my head. I tried counseling, but found it "too hard," and I couldn't follow through with what was required of me. I tried praying, but was praying for what I thought I needed, and the result was that I thought God was punishing me.

It wasn't until I did my First Step that I realized that I wasn't alone. My Higher Power had been there all along, every step of my journey. I had been "guided" into the doors of Al-Anon. Once I entered those doors, I was introduced to the idea of finding out about me, how I contributed to the disease of alcoholism, and how to pass on this program.

As I continued on my spiritual journey, I found that I gave with "strings attached." No matter what I did, I always did so with an expectation of getting something back. In Al-Anon as I worked the Steps, I studied and watched others who were walking this path. I wanted what they were getting. If I wasn't getting that particular result, then I wasn't doing it "right." I had attached "strings" to my efforts in this program. When I recognized this and was able to give it to my Higher Power, the strings started to fray. Sometimes today, the fiber re-attaches itself and it has to be clipped again. I feel best when I can just be of service to others.

When feelings of loneliness, emptiness, or inadequacy return, I know to turn to my Higher Power and ask Him to remove the obstacle that is standing between us. The answers to my problems do not lie with someone else, they are within me.

The more I practice Step Eleven, the better able I am to do this. When I am not in the Eleventh Step, I begin to run on empty and my giving becomes full of expectations, intolerance, and judging. I become angry, frustrated, and fatigued.

This program has changed my life; thank you, God, for new beginnings.

Paul G., New Jersey

Dear God,

It has been a long time since we met again on that commuter train. That was no chance encounter. I heard you were around, and I had been looking for you for some time. Who knew that you were there all along, I just needed to open my mind and heart to see you. It has been great to get to know you again and rebuild our friendship.

We sure have been to a lot of places together. You seemed to know the places I would like, even when I thought they wouldn't be any fun. Remember how we went to the convention and I sat next to all those people involved in service—not like there were any other empty seats in the room. You're funny sometimes. Then there were all those committee meetings we attended. It's true they weren't always happy places though. There was the rehab where we spoke together. How about that time that we met those Latino guys. That was something, wasn't it? When we opened that new meeting, I thought no one would show up. I never much liked county courthouses, but we went there too. I was really scared when we went to the psychiatric ward in New York City to visit a friend. We were in a pretty tough neighborhood, and I was glad for the company. I cried all the way to Virginia Beach that first trip.

I sure do have a lot of good stories to share now and fond memories of our travels together. My heart was always joyful when a newcomer found a meeting through the Web site I managed for our Area. I will never forget the hug I got from that old woman with a walker after we spoke at the rehab. I cried when I heard my Spanish-speaking friend held onto my photo of him while he was in a shelter because it told him he was important and valuable. When I saw the Alateens begin to help each other, I knew I had done something worthwhile because of it. When my sponsee asked me to be a character witness for him in court, I believed I was a man of character. The tears we cried together when he was granted custody of his adopted son are precious to me. I knew when I hugged my friend in the psychiatric ward that day, I would have a friend for life because of it. You told me I was good enough that whole ride down to Virginia Beach, you said you would help me all along the way—and you did.

Patsy A., North Carolina/Bermuda

After coming into Al-Anon, I heard the phrase, “You can't keep it unless you give it away.” I didn't have anything to give away—especially not anything of a spiritual nature. Growing up, I was involved in church youth activities. I rarely remember hearing the word spiritual, *only* the word “religious.” My ambitions were framed as goals to be achieved, with little or no thought as to the rich benefits that might be attained on the journey to these goals. Actively participating in Al-Anon, first in my home group and later in all areas of the service structure, I cultivated a wonderful spiritual relationship with the God of my understanding. This broadened my perspective to know that living is more than just attaining goals. Today, thanks to God's grace and the program, I also know there is a difference—a huge difference—between traveling a spiritual life and a religious one.

Initially, I had little in my “spiritual bank” to share because I charged through life using my will without understanding or tapping into God's will. Developing my spiritual assets took time, work, and the help of a loving Sponsor and many Al-Anons who shared their experiences with me. When I was working the Third Step and searching for God's will in my life, I talked with members, spoke with several ministers, and was on this spiritual quest for quite a while. Then one day at an Al-Anon meeting I was sitting on the front row (because *I want to get the message before you do!*) and the speaker said that to distinguish between her will and God's, was simple. “My will hurts; God's doesn't!” Bingo—that's the answer. If I go barreling through life having a Higher Power but not asking for guidance from that Power, my “spiritual bank” will be drained, and I won't have anything of value to share.

The theme of this year's Conference, “Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give,” will be a continuous reminder that life is a journey that can be a rewarding spiritual one, thank goodness. Just when I think things are good, they get better. Then, when I think things are better, they get even better. This will continue if I remember several things: continue to deposit in my “spiritual bank account” on a daily basis and share from my “spiritual reserve,” so I can keep building “spiritual interest” using the Al-Anon principles I have learned. Today, looking in my rearview mirror with God's help, I am so humbly grateful that I can see all of the miracles that have happened in my life—being elected Delegate is at the top of that list! I always get much, much more than I can ever repay.

Connie B., North Dakota

The last three years have been very stressful in my personal life, but so rewarding in the aspect of getting back what I give to the program.

The first year of Conference was a complete new experience for me. I had not traveled outside of North Dakota and Minnesota and had not flown in over 40 years. How times have changed! I was very grateful that a girlfriend of mine was able to fly to Virginia to visit her daughter at the same time I was to be at the Conference. She helped to keep me grounded in the now and not the future.

I met my Mentor for the first time the first day of Conference. She helped me get organized and was ready to answer all the questions that I had throughout the first two days. On the third day, I received a phone call that my mother had passed away. What a blessing and support to be surrounded by Al-Anon during that time. This will never be forgotten.

The second year, I felt I was back home with all the caring from the time I arrived at Conference until the day I left. It was so great to attend the full week and be able to take back to my Area everything I had learned.

As for this year's theme, “Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give,” I have a greater appreciation for the program and know that everything I give to my spiritual journey, I will receive back many times over. I am so glad to be there for the newcomers and welcome them to the Al-Anon family, as I was welcomed.

I've discovered that the saying, “when one door closes, another opens,” is very true. This is my last year as Delegate,

and I know that there will be many challenges ahead. One recent challenge was moving into a new apartment just before leaving for Conference.

Al-Anon is a family that I am so thankful for every day of my life.

Jane S., Oklahoma

I was excited when I read the theme for this year's Conference. It was short, simple, and so true.

Service work enhanced my recovery. Each service position gave me more confidence and self-esteem. I became more flexible, learned to set boundaries, speak up, and have relationships. I started out saying, "I could never do that," referring to chairing a meeting; sharing my experience, strength, and hope; serving as chairperson of the annual convention, etc. Low and behold, I am here, because I was taught to be willing and apparently my Higher Power knew something that I did not—thank God. The best benefit was being able to use all that I learned in Al-Anon in my professional and personal life.

My professional life changed drastically because I learned how to be a team player and team leader. I used Traditions One and Twelve every day. I learned how to let go and let them do it themselves, not be a micro-manager. In 1997, I was able to say no to moving to Houston, knowing I would never be able to make the same salary, and everyone around me kept reminding me that things would be okay. Then I was able to work for three more years and retire early after 22 and a half years with the same company.

My personal life—wow—I could never have imagined having the life I do. There is my wonderful supportive husband of almost 14 years who is also involved in Al-Anon and Alateen service. We have five grandchildren and for a year and a half I have been babysitting our granddaughters, ages one and a half and four, who always want to go to Grandma's house. I have a great group of girlfriends, most whom I would never have known if I was not involved in service. We play bunko, go to plays, go out to eat, talk, and laugh at ourselves.

I have realized that I am much better when I surround myself with those who have this common bond of recovery and service work. I am not sure what is in store for me next. Whatever it is, I will be willing and open-minded so that I will not miss that next best thing.

Bette R., Oregon

I came into the program angry and bitter because I didn't get anything I wanted out of life. I asked God to give me a better family than the alcoholism-riddled one I can from, one where everyone loved each other and everything worked out beautifully. In other words, a fantasy. My resentment about the hand I was dealt in life was deep. When I reached the end of my journey of self-will, I found Al-Anon. There was hope and support from my first meeting, but I didn't want to hear anything about your business meetings. You told me that if I got busy, I would get better. I had tried staying busy to avoid my feelings so that didn't seem like the solution.

In Al-Anon, the group conscience makes things happen in

ways that I could never figure out on my own. Whether it's an anniversary meeting, an Assembly, or a TEAM event, people come together and contribute their efforts. There is discussion and sometimes controversy as we reason things out with one another. Our Higher Power shows up in the group conscience, which is a compilation of ideas and efforts. As I contribute my part and act as one member of a group making my contribution and allowing others to make theirs, I learn what it means to work together with others who want the best outcome. I experience trust that my Higher Power has a superior plan, just like my Higher Power has a superior plan for my life.

As Group Representative, I got more than I gave. The unity and camaraderie at Assemblies was overwhelming, and I started to leave behind some of my perpetual negativity. As District Representative, I began to feel a part of Al-Anon and I watched some of my defects begin to turn into assets. Instead of bossing everyone around, I learned how to communicate clearly and run a business meeting that stayed on topic. As Area Chair, I learned to keep my opinions to myself while providing a structure for Area meetings to function. As Delegate, I am learning how to open my heart and to speak carefully when it matters and allow others to do the same. Service is a key to my spiritual journey that moves me out of my comfort zone into places of growth where I am challenged to grow beyond my current limits.

I'm learning to accept myself, my family, and friends exactly as we are and trust that a Higher Power is working in their lives just as in mine. I focus on myself rather than focusing on others and offer unconditional love to my family. I get as I give to myself and to those around me.

Jocelyne L., Québec East

Wow, it is difficult to believe that my term as Delegate is almost over. Looking back, I remember very well my first Conference. Oh boy, I was nervous! I did not know what to expect, even though our previous Delegate explained it all to me. I was feeling very insecure about myself. As I sat there listening to what was going on, all I could think about was asking myself "What are you doing here?" I knew I spoke and understood English, but "Al-Anon words" that I did not know were the difficult part of the first year. Yet I was so afraid to miss out on certain information that I took notes on all that was said. You should have seen the thickness of my first report—amazing.

I can honestly say to you that last year's Conference was a lot easier for me regarding the language. I made sure that I took notes on what I thought was important to me and to my Area. Compared to last year, my report has been reduced in size by at least half and I was very proud to submit it to the Assembly last September. But the irony of fate had decided differently. Due to a full agenda and some sessions that lasted longer than expected, I did not have time to give my report.

And now, here I am sharing with you. This has been a great experience. It allowed me to discover certain values that I did not believe I had and to keep on working on myself. This experience has also allowed me to confront my fears and most of all you gave me the desire to apply myself even more in the service of public information. It was an incredible spiritual journey and

exceptional meetings with extraordinary people who, like me, work on themselves to make their life better while living with the disease of alcoholism in someone we love. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work at this level, I had a great time.

Anne S., Vermont

“Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give.” I love this statement of reciprocity. Al-Anon service is a win-win situation. As we get involved and learn to give of ourselves, we are strengthened spiritually in ways we could not imagine. Whatever we give away in service comes back to us multiplied. I know this because I have experienced it. When I began my journey in Al-Anon, I never would have guessed that it would lead me to serving Vermont as Area Delegate and attending the World Service Conference.

I arrived at my first meeting in Scotland after a conversation with a work colleague where I spoke about my distress over my mother’s drinking. She suggested it might help me. She was so right! I recognized quickly that I was where I needed to be, for me. I left every meeting, even if I had not spoken, with my overwhelming sense of hopelessness and burden lightened and eased. I have gone on feeling better by showing up at meetings; listening, sharing, and getting involved. The key to getting is giving. This is the heart of a well-known prayer.

I recognized that the members who had what I wanted were involved in service and I became willing to serve. I said “yes” to opportunities for service, beginning as my home group’s treasurer, then literature person, Group Representative, and then District Representative. Service helped me to truly get out of my own way, to stop standing in my own light.

Shortly before becoming Delegate, I made a decision to take my foot off the “fear-brake” of my life. In the next six months, I was accepted into the masters program of my dreams, inspired to give a home to an unconditionally loving dog, asked to serve on the National Board of my professional organization, and elected as Vermont Delegate. This was the magic carpet of recovery! By being truly willing to do my Higher Power’s will and to stop holding back from life, my dreams began to come true. Serving on my professional board, I had the opportunity to re-meet and thank the person who first introduced me to Al-Anon.

On my journey, I have learned there is no part of my life where the program does not support me. Service took me out of myself and my self-limitations, but also gave me myself back, more deeply, more fully than I could have imagined.

Phyllis M., Virginia

I would like to share with you my revelation that the ultimate goal of recovery in Al-Anon is the restoration or development of two values: character and integrity, both of which have been guardians to my spiritual journey.

Character begins with honest self-evaluation and acceptance, to say what I mean and mean what I say, and a willingness to stand alone on principle when necessary. Character has fostered within me the courage to set personal boundaries where there

is unacceptable behavior and an understanding of the many benefits afforded by practicing Al-Anon’s message of “Let It Begin with Me.” From my perspective, character should have a healthy sense of humility, a willingness to listen and learn, the ability to change my mind when more is revealed, and a belief and trust in a Power greater than me.

My interpretation of integrity includes taking a fearless and moral inventory on a daily basis, making amends whenever warranted, and recognizing the intentions of my actions. I have come to understand that integrity includes the ability to give credit to others when their ideas are better than mine, to find opportunities to give honest compliments and motivation, to admit denial, to face controversy without fear, and to pray for solutions to situations diverting me from my primary purpose.

In 1975, one of my early promises to myself was that I would do anything for Al-Anon with one exception: Alateen. In the past three years, I have spent more time and energy on Alateen to learn every facet of this most complicated mosaic of principles, concerns, legalities, personalities, and policies than I thought was possible—a baptism by fire for my character and integrity! Another example that man plans and God laughs.

I do not pretend to have perfectly implemented these values in my recovery. I fail frequently, and when I do, my spiritual recovery suffers. My frailties remind me on a daily basis that I am just a work in progress. My Higher Power asks me to do my best each day. That could be as simple as brushing my teeth or as exemplary as not criticizing one bit.

In closing I would like to share with you what a longtime member told me about Lois: She shared that “Lois did not preach the program, she lived it”

I would like to express my thanks to all of you, my Sponsors, and the Virginia Area for allowing me to be the recipient of your personal decisions to live the program and for providing me with the necessary tools to define who I want to be. Through your hugs, laughter, wisdom, and warm wishes, I have come to believe that you love me in a special way, the same way I already love you.

Magdalena E., Washington

Prior to coming to Al-Anon, I was morally and emotionally destroyed. There was no place to run to and suicide was no longer an option. A counselor handed me a meeting schedule, but all the meetings were in English, and I didn’t speak English. I was so scared of an unknown world. I knew how to live with active alcoholism, but ignored how to live with myself.

In my first meeting, I heard that to keep the program, I had to give it away. I volunteered to make coffee and later started Al-Anon and Alateen meetings in Spanish. I volunteered for whatever position was available and enjoyed every step of the way. I didn’t know that by making coffee, my world would open up to an unknown wonderful life. When I was elected Delegate, I had a hard time breathing. Multiple emotions were boiling in my heart. I went for a walk, and found a group of Alateens running. It was a cold autumn night. The Alateens asked me if I wanted to join them, and I agreed. I changed into my bathing suit and followed them. It was so much fun running around

the hotel in our bathing suits with multiple adults wondering what we were doing. I was able to breathe better. Swimming and playing with the Alateens was what I needed to celebrate a new chapter in my life.

Today, as I watch my granddaughter get ready for her dance class, I realize I have a life I never dreamed existed. My children's lives are much richer because of Al-Anon. I no longer wonder how I got here or why I am so fortunate. I know God has been my partner in my spiritual journey to recovery. He has been with me every time I gave a report, a presentation, or raised my hand and made myself available for service. I know that as I continue to give, I will continue to get.

During these three years as a Delegate, I experienced many personalities attempting to get involved with the principles of the program. I also felt the energy of God flowing in the rooms of our Assemblies and at the WSC—especially last year when we voted on Motion 6, the Motion to Authorize Ownership of Real Property. I saw that in difficult situations the group conscience prevailed and God was in the group conscience.

As I reach the end of my three-year term, my heart is still full of gratitude. Today I can breathe much easier, because I know God will continue to put people in my life to help me breathe and guide me through this spiritual journey, even if it takes me to the swimming pool.

Marti S., West Virginia

As I wrote my thoughts about “What I have given Al-Anon” and “What Al-Anon has given me,” I was sitting along the Rio Dulce river in Guatemala at the home and business of my partner's son. My partner was so excited to finally be there after having postponed the trip for over a year due to cancer treatments. I, on the other hand, was having one anxious minute after another. I had had anxiety about the trip bubbling under the surface for months. Traveling into Central America with limited Spanish, across Guatemala by bus and boat, and staying in an area of large lakes and swamps was an exciting idea, yet I knew that every muscle in my body was stressed and fear was my only feeling. The fear, once named, was entrapment. There was no way to leave their home without assistance and accompaniment. Suddenly, I realized that the powerlessness of my childhood was alive and well. Now that the fear had a name, the tools of Al-Anon came alive. Literature, meetings, member support, and offers of prayers were all there for me. With all of that support, I addressed my fears before they evolved into anger toward my loved ones. This is only the latest instance of the gifts of Al-Anon for me.

Stressed tight muscles have always been part of facing uncomfortable situations, but my Al-Anon service work has given me many opportunities to address and overcome uncomfortable situations. With each report, my voice is stronger and thoughts are clearer. Service positions are where life skills and personal Al-Anon growth have improved on a daily basis.

Service to Al-Anon is also stepping aside to allow others to

strengthen their voices, to improve their confidence, and to know the gifts of giving as the tools of Al-Anon have come alive for them.

The principles of Al-Anon have become so much a part of my daily life that I can't clearly remember the person who I was when I first came into the rooms, but I can remember the relief that I felt.

What have I given to Al-Anon? I have given time, energy, member support, and financial support. At times I could give in abundance; at other times I struggled with finding time or energy.

I have never and will never give Al-Anon as much as I have gotten—for I have gotten life itself.

Cheryl A., Wisconsin

I did not plan on having a spiritual journey when I came crawling into my first Al-Anon meeting. My husband of a very short time was still an alcoholic, even after I married him! I was hoping that would change him! I got the guts to leave him from the knowledge I was not alone, then I promptly left Al-Anon too!

I did not plan on having a spiritual journey the second time I came to Al-Anon. I had a different husband with the same problem, but this time I knew I couldn't change him. I came looking for peace and the strength to live with the disease of alcoholism in my home. I had small children and wasn't ready to throw in the towel regarding my marriage yet.

Before Al-Anon, and when I was new, we argued a lot. I always had to be right and I took everything he said personally. I was lonely because nobody could have understood what I was going through. I looked great on the outside but was dying on the inside.

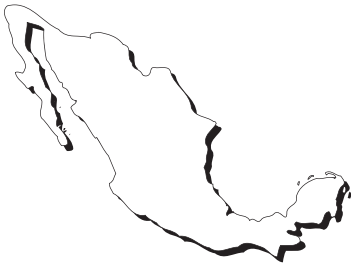
As I attended meetings and worked the Steps with my Sponsor, I made friends and figured out who I was. I became a better partner by being a good example and I got back what I gave. I came to realize if I treated people the way I wanted to be treated I became a better wife, mother, co-worker, employer, and friend.

One day I realized I was so busy giving; sponsoring women and being of service in my meetings and at the district and Area level. I recognized that I had a life, a very wonderful fulfilling life with lots of friends that love me for who I am and I love them too. Once I got out of my own way, and was of service to the people around me, I healed and grew. My relationships healed and grew too. I was able to see my alcoholic husband the way God saw him; scared, tired, and sick. I could finally love him the way he was, not the way I wanted him to be. Our relationship became more than I ever dreamed!

I did not come to Al-Anon for a spiritual journey but that is exactly what I got! I get to share with others what was given to me and because of that, I receive many gifts. I get to see what God sees, and grow into the person God wants me to be, one day at a time, with His help and yours.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

María Evangelina de León G., Mexico



I am pleased to be here again with you at this Conference. My name is Evangelina. I belong to an alcoholic family, and that's why I am an Al-Anon member. I consider myself very brave.

My life has changed a lot. From being a fearful, inse-

ecure, and dependent person to traveling from my country, Mexico, accompanied only by my Higher Power to be here with you. I am so confident and happy about everything that has happened in my life through the practice of the program. I am privileged to taste the honey that the service through Al-Anon has given me.

I'm in the third-year of my second term as a Regional Trustee. I have been progressing a lot in my recovery and in service. Right now, I'm in my last year as Chairperson of the Board of Trustees—I was elected last year.

I like the progress I've been climbing through in service. I was President of the Committee of Public Relations, Chairperson of the Executive Committee, and I am now about to end with the last level of responsibility as Chairperson, Board of Trustees.

I've learned to enjoy the accomplishments, and despite the problems, I am happy in my family and with my fellow Trustees.

Our administration is integrated by five Regional Trustees and five Trustees, without geographic limit. We have a great team that works in unity. Although we have different characters and different ways of thinking, we try to keep ourselves together guided by our Higher Power.

We had a difficult year in 2011, just passed by the Assembly Conference in February this year.

This year, in the month of July, the National Convention will be held at the city of Puebla, which is approximately two hours from Mexico City. We are organizing the event with great enthusiasm. My job is to coordinate the program that will be about recovery and topics in which the pioneer members of Al-Anon are going to participate. We'll begin with a gala dinner celebrating the 60th anniversary of Al-Anon worldwide. There, the Past Trustees, who worked in the General Service Office, will be invited to participate with the theme, "As we did in organizing a National Convention," because of the challenges we face. The theme of the 2012 Convention is "Put your heart in it, not your hands."

On this occasion, in order to elect the speakers, we did it by random at the Conference of Delegates in February where the Delegates would support each of the 37 Areas that are involved.

I give thanks to my Higher Power and my country, Mexico, for giving me the opportunity to share with you, who are wonderful people. I want to tell you that last year, I almost did not attend our 51st World Service Conference because the General Service Office was going through difficult economic situations, but I finally came. The fact that I shared with you made me

feel well strengthened by everything I saw here. Thanks to the World Service Office, and thanks to the Delegates. Even though we do not speak the same language, we all love each other and that makes us come together closer. You are very nice people who are always in my daily life and in my sharings with my fellows in other Areas.

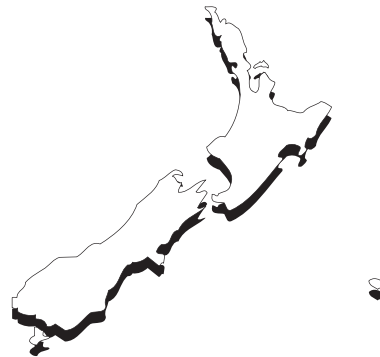
I can tell you with great joy and enthusiasm that I was at Stepping Stones, the place where this program began and I want to tell to those people who were the pioneers of this beautiful program that has changed my life, wherever they would be, they are blessed.

I take you in my heart, and this week of work, joy, love, and understanding will come with me to share it in my country, Mexico, to the Delegates at the Conference, and to all the Areas.

By practicing this program, I learned to be brave and to enjoy how beautiful life is, and I thank God for the fact of being the daughter, the wife, the mother, the sister, and the aunt of alcoholics.

Let's go to our countries, Areas, and zones to enjoy the love that is no consolation, but light. Today I'll try to remember that there is enough love for everyone.

Peter A., New Zealand



Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa. I bring greetings from Al-Anon Family Groups in New Zealand.

It is a great pleasure to be here for a second time as the Representative of Al-Anon in New Zealand.

New Zealand is a small nation in the South Pacific, with about four million people, and about 100 Al-Anon groups. We have a General Service Office (GSO) with a Board of eight members and an annual Service Conference.

I am pleased to report that we are in good heart. The Board and Conference are working together constructively for Al-Anon in New Zealand to help families and friends of alcoholics. We are grateful for the continuing leadership and support given by the World Service Office and World Service Conference, which have been the source of many of the new ideas we are putting into practice.

Over the last year the Board has adopted a Strategic Plan, produced a new Seventh Tradition pamphlet, continued work on our financial plan, adopted the use of Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), decided to set up an Alateen Chat meeting, and made major upgrades to our Web site. We are sending representatives to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM), and to the Australian General Service Conference.

Our Conference continues to use the Conference Goals and

it has the same atmosphere of mutual support and respect and an exciting agenda.

While these changes are coming through at Board and Conference, we are noticing they are slow to reach the individual groups and members, who can often find the changes strange and threatening. We recognize that one of our present challenges is to see what we can do to help this process and support the work of the Delegates who are at the forefront of this link of service to the groups. As part of this program we recently had our first TEAM event.

As Treasurer of the Board, I have been amazed at the amount of spirituality there is in finances. The current focus of the financial plan is on encouraging groups to have a budget for donations to the Area and the GSO as well as the direct group expenses. We are giving them the information to help make a budget, including how much a per member donation would be to support the annual GSO expenditure (budget). I am enthusiastic about this. For the first time, members and groups who want to be self-supporting have the information to do this, and Delegates at our Conference have the information to know when they are voting for the annual budget what the financial implications are for the members and groups they represent. It may interest you to know that our calculations give an amount of \$1.30 to support the GSO budget for every member attending a meeting each week. With right understanding, comes right action.

Reflecting on my personal recovery, I am also particularly grateful for the understanding the program has given me. When I came to Al-Anon, things weren't working, and that was

painful, but sometimes I think it was even worse being in the confusion and hopelessness of not knowing what was wrong, why it wasn't working, and not having any way out. In my family, others were affected. I saw my father tortured by this disease and defeated by the hopelessness into taking his life.

You have given me understanding and hope. Today my recovery continues to be full of promise. Some days are still painful, but it is not hopeless and having an understanding and knowing the way out gives me the power to do something to make it better. The program works just as well for me now as it did in the beginning.

I am finding present challenges in coping with criticism and loss of support, and trying to practice the principles unconditionally without resorting to behaving in kind. It seems so unfair!

As I try to apply the Steps in my life, I am learning to let go of self and find humility or my Higher Power's will. As I do this, my great burden, which is fear, decreases. It is certainly a gradual process, and some days, I am still captured by the self and the fear. Although the giving up of self seems like an unbearable loss at times, the rewards I do find from doing so are greater than I imagined. We get as we give, and I am finding I have to give up myself in order to get what I want.

I have become convinced of the importance of putting the common welfare first and of service. For me, it is the way out of my loneliness and fear. I experience the connectedness and peace of being part of the unity. Being here is part of that.

He iwi tahi tātou. We are one.

OPENING DINNER SPEAKER

Liz W.S., Executive Committee Member

I am a grateful member of Al-Anon Family Groups. My home group is a Conference Approved Literature study group. I was the Panel 25 Delegate for Minnesota South, and I am an at Large member of the Executive Committee. I could not have been more surprised, or shocked, to receive the letter from the Conference Leadership Team inviting me to share my experiences as a member of 12 World Service Conferences (WSCs). These are things I remember and experienced!

All three of the Conferences I attended as Delegate were held in Tarrytown, New York, and were what I expected from reading past editions of the *World Service Conference Summary*. Isn't it exciting that all editions of the *Summary* are now available on our Members' Web site? Most of our meals were not together. We could eat at the hotel restaurant, across the street at a restaurant, or pick up sandwiches at the deli in the strip mall up the street.

1985—Al-Anon Comes of Age

After an orientation brunch, where we received our WSC pins, we departed to the main session room. There was one seating chart posted on the door to the main session room, and I could

not find my seat! We did not sit with our Conference Mentors, but were seated with second- and third-year Delegates surrounding us. At our seats was the silver logo pin, a souvenir of the 25th WSC. "Serena T." was introduced to the Conference. On Wednesday, we traveled by bus to the WSO for a tour and visit. I attended a Broadway show. Saturday we went to Stepping Stones, and what an emotional experience that was! Lois was ill and was not visiting with Conference members, although she did lean over the balcony to greet us.

1986—35 Years of Beginnings

I was chosen to be one of the Many Faces of Alcoholism speakers, and I shared the significant faces in my life. Our visit to the WSO was at the new space at 1372 Broadway. What a beautiful office, and to find the slogan pictures hung through the office was a moving experience. *Al-Anon Speaks for Itself* was introduced. This is a beautiful film. When it ended, there was silence and then a standing ovation. *First Steps* was also introduced, and we could stamp Lois's signature in our copy of the book when we visited the WSO.

1987—Unity Our Strength

I was part of the Alateen presentation on safety and was dis-

appointed there wasn't more discussion and/or a motion. Panel 25 presented a goofy skit, and at the conclusion, we presented the WSO with a money gift in the amount of Panel 25's collective time in Al-Anon. It was a moving experience to receive my scroll. There was a lot of anxiety preparing my 3-minute talk on Unity Our Strength. I participated in the Regional Trustee process elections as a voter and a ballot collector. We visited Stepping Stones. I was hanging back, watching people visit with Lois. She said, "Aren't you going to come and sit with me?" I said, "My camera is broken." Lois said, "Don't you have a Higher Power?" About a week later, a picture arrived in the mail. I don't remember the rest of the conversation.

2001—Happy 50th Birthday! Al-Anon's Hope Begins with Me

I returned to the WSC, this time as a Trustee after a 14-year absence. It seemed to me the dignity of the WSC was missing. There was lots of fluff—more like a convention than Al-Anon's WSC. People talked constantly during the presentations, and voting seemed to have no importance or consideration. The Conference Committee workshop was based partly on "To Tell the Truth,"—"Will the real Lois please sign in." Sharings in the workshop were on gifts of the program, which were very moving. When the third-year Delegates went up to give their talks, I thought we were at the Miss America pageant. Also, *Living Today in Alateen* was introduced. The World Service Office (WSO) became visible as the Al-Anon sign on the WSO building was lit at night. The 50th celebration dinner was fun and exciting. Norma M., who was the Chairperson of the Board and the Conference Chairperson when I was Delegate, was the main speaker.

2002—Al-Anon's Image in a Changing World Anonymity—Not Invisibility

During the Conference Committee workshop, people wore bags covering their heads. There was lots of discussion on making Al-Anon visible, while preserving our tradition of anonymity. *Hope for Today* was introduced. The Conference was here in Stamford, so we could visit Stepping Stones. Unfortunately, the buses got stuck in mud. The "Gorilla of Change" made his appearance. The structure change was introduced, as was the *Forum Journal*.

2003—Change! Create New Possibilities

This theme affirmed the structure change. The Conference voted to return to the original text of the Legacies. The Concept Eleven descriptive text was reviewed and approved. The "World Service Handbook" was being reviewed to conform to the structure changes. The Conference Committee workshop was the top 12 list of service roles and responsibilities that make Al-Anon Family Groups healthy and responsible. I especially liked using "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work." The special public outreach project and the Board Vision and Mission Statements were introduced.

2004—Dynamic Groups Today—Building Blocks for Tomorrow

This was one of my favorite themes. There were lots of ideas exchanged on making strong, dynamic groups. We answered the questions: What makes members, as individuals, dynamic?

and What are the building blocks that make a group dynamic? Among the discussions were the By-Laws revision and a continuation of the Concept Eleven descriptive text revision. There was an affirmation of the Board's Alateen minimum safety and behavioral requirements. The revised *Blueprint for Progress* was introduced.

2005—Energize Al-Anon—Expand, Explore, Experience!

When the Conference Committee and Board of Trustees first discussed this theme, we expected the energizer bunny to show up in full force! The "World Service Handbook" and descriptive text of Concept Eleven were our *big* discussion items. When they passed, I no longer slept with my *Service Manual*! In honor of the 30th anniversary of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies," we all received a reproduction copy. During the Regional Trustee (RT) nominations, we discovered a big need to revise the RT Plan. During the Conference workshop, Wizzo Jones and six Jones cousins explored the Conference Charter. This was a lot of fun, as well as a great learning experience. The By-Laws' revision was presented, and there was no recall by the WSC. The Directors' presentation, "Creating a Culture of Trust," was a fantastic introduction to the principles of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) to Reach an Informed Group Conscience. This reminded me of when I was Delegate, and there was a grapefruit on the podium, to remind us that the grapefruit was to be a repository for bitterness, a precursor to "presume goodwill." We all struggled with the KBDM process, but it has made the Conference and other WSO-level work better!

2006—Shared Leadership—Moving Forward with Confidence, Collaboration, and Clarity

We practiced shared leadership. No longer were we alone at the podium for presentations. "Ana Nimity and the Mythbusters" rode into the Conference on their stick ponies for a great anonymity discussion. There were two mid-week clearing the air sessions, one led by the Delegates to show support for the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, WSO Conference Staff, and the WSO. These sessions helped change the tone of the WSC to be one of mutual respect. The descriptive text for Concepts One through Seven was reviewed, discussed, and passed. We learned to frame, do a presentation, have a discussion, and then present a summary.

2010—Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference

I was back to the WSC in my third volunteer role, as an at Large member of the Executive Committee. I participated in orientation and opening discussion of the theme. One of the Areas brought, as a love gift, a thin gold bracelet. To me this really symbolized the theme: Without care, our bracelet will break, but as we each step back to expand the circle of hope, we strengthen our personal programs and insure it will continue into the future, for our children, grandchildren and beyond. We had terrific Thought Force and Task Force presentations and discussions. Diversity seemed to be everyone's favorite topic.

2011—Expanding our community of hope by embracing

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

I'll never be able to hear, "When the Saints Come Marching In," without thinking, "Each time I give, my spirit lifts. My spirit soars with every gift. When I reach out to help another, I receive more than I give," or David and his funny money. We celebrated 60 years with a mortgage burning, a WSO open house, and a banquet, as well as our new book, *Many Voices, One Journey*. During the pre-banquet time, I had an opportunity to talk with the woman who had the most Al-Anon time and who presented *How Al-Anon Works* to the "youngest" member; I was very impressed when the longtime member shared that her primary service work was beginners' meetings!

2012—Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give

I love this theme. This year, the work of the Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, and Task Forces I've been on focused first on what are the spiritual principles of our topic.

When I first started Al-Anon, I didn't know I was soul sick. I thought that I was fine, if only he'd quit drinking and go to work. Life would be good! After all, I grew up in a church started

by my circuit rider great grandfather (also probably with an alcohol problem). I did all the stuff that goes with being a youth in a small church. I learned early that participation is the key to harmony. I also thought I didn't need a better relationship with God; I was grandfathered in because of my activity and my family's connection.

The "God Steps" never bothered me as they do some, but I didn't get that spirituality came from the efforts I made. My husband's first Sponsor was very helpful, with the Third Step, including the idea of getting my own Sponsor to help me! Lois has said our entire program is spiritual, and that's what I have needed, a spiritual program. My second group had two women who got the spiritual principles and shared each week their miracles through reliance on their Higher Power, and practice of the tools! They even let me borrow their Higher Power until I had my own, I'll be forever grateful.

The spiritual principles have carried me through the last eight months. When I share at Regional Delegates Meetings, my best advice is to place yourself squarely in God's hands, leave home at home, and stay in the moment. During my service activities and travel, that's what I try to do. It works—we get as we give!

These are my brief thoughts, observations, and remembrances of 12 World Service Conferences. Thank you for the opportunity to share; it's been my honor.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Paul G., Panel 50, New Jersey

I like to start my story by considering our Third Tradition, "The relatives of alcoholics, when gathered together for mutual aid, may call themselves an Al-Anon Family Group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. The only requirement for membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend." When I tell my story, it is the last part of the Tradition that is important to me—my relatives and friends are people I care about and love. Mine is a love story and how the disease of alcoholism affected it.

I am going to start my story in the middle. It was a Sunday morning, my mother was calling me, and worry was in her voice. My father was having a heart attack, they were too afraid to act. I called for help, which arrived quickly; I followed the ambulance to the hospital. I was grateful for my Step work and making amends to my father. If God choose to take my father that day, I would be okay. In the end, I would still have his stories to share.

There is an old tale where the main character states, "In the end, all we have is our stories." Like him, I understand that I am a hero. Not that person who is performing some extraordinary deed, rather I am the primary, or main character, in a story. Until I came to Al-Anon, I was never the main character, but rather a supporting actor. I would like to think I was the best supporting actor, but some of you might be big competition for me. Thankfully, I am no longer in the running for that award.

I grew up on the New Jersey coast. I used to say the Jersey

Shore, but that is another thing the disease of alcoholism seems to have taken from me. There was no alcoholism in my family as a child. I come from a family of eight children and that alone causes plenty of chaos. I accepted that we had no boundaries and everyone was in your business. I got a lot of mixed messages. I asked my parents to teach me how to swim, but they never did. If I were bored, my parents would suggest I go to the beach and play. I understand today that they were overwhelmed, but at the time, I took it to mean I wasn't important, I didn't count, and I wasn't loved. Themes I continue to carry.

So, I taught myself to swim and gained barely enough ability to keep from drowning. One day the waves were large, and I wasn't about to let my lack of knowledge or skills prevent me from having fun. I soon was caught in a rip tide. I was being pulled off shore and near exhaustion. A young woman saw me struggling and told me to swim towards the jetty. She climbed onto those slippery rocks in that big surf and reached out her hand to pull me to safety. She was a hero that day, without her I probably wouldn't be here. I mention this not because it's dramatic, but because it shows how early on my willfulness and inability to continue to ask for help got me into trouble.

As a teen, I made a conscious decision not to be in contact with my Higher Power and choose to live my life without God. Coincidentally at this time, my older brother began drinking. The effect for me was the anxiety caused by constant criticism, a lack of trust, and fear of retribution if I said anything. This influenced my relationships. I got along with everyone, but

was not really close with anyone. I could hang with the rockers, geeks, stoners, and jocks, but no one knew me. Those I was closest with were just like me—affected by alcoholism. I knew: Joe’s dad did all the cooking, to keep quiet at Rob’s house, and to step over Steve’s mom while she slept on the stairs. I never knew it was alcoholism, but even then I was spending time with families affected by someone else’s drinking.

This pattern was to continue in my life. Almost every substantial relationship I had was with an alcoholic or someone who was affected by living with alcoholism. I was 20-something when I attended my first Al-Anon meeting, a family day at a rehab. I didn’t think Al-Anon was for me, but the seed was planted.

I met Sara at a wedding. She was well educated, had worked as a model, and laughed at my jokes. She told me that she was an alcoholic, but I had no idea what that meant. I had my share of fun and did a lot of things, but I could always stop. If there was something I had trouble understanding, it was why I could stop and why the alcoholic could not. We had a turbulent relationship. I tried to be supportive, but I had no concept what that involved. I can say I loved—and still love—her. My love as it was expressed through the disease of alcoholism was not often pleasant.

The effects of the family disease of alcoholism progressed in me quickly. Our opening reads: “. . . and we become irritable and unreasonable without knowing it.” I was irritable and unreasonable and everyone knew it, except me. I lived in anger, always on the verge of exploding. Understand I have a history of violence contending with my brothers’ drinking. At 6’4”, 240 pounds, and overflowing with rage, I am scary to all those around me, and myself. I remember my body shaking from the anger and resentment. I was also afraid. I did not want to hurt Sara, who was now my fiancée. Truthfully, I was worried that if I did not change, I could end up in jail—and I don’t look good in an orange jump suit.

Then I remembered about Al-Anon. I still had the book I purchased when I attended that family day. I literally blew years of dust off the book when I found it. I read a few pages and understood there was something there for me. A search on the Internet directed me to a group that was meeting that night. It was a hot Tuesday night. I met you in an old town hall, the windows were painted shut, and a donated fan was in that doorway that sounded like only an old donated fan does. I remember that you were happy to see me that night, like you were waiting for me to show up, and that I felt a little better an hour later. When leaving that meeting, God graced me with a simple fact: if I wanted to feel better tomorrow, I could go to another meeting—and I did. That is how Al-Anon began to work for me.

I attended meetings and learned some basic things. I found great relief in the First Step, as I could stop trying to live someone else’s life and began living my own. Step Two offered me hope. “Doubting Your Sanity” was an early favorite for me because I did. Sara progressed in her disease, in and out of rehabs and struggling. I was asked to care for her cat. The cat wasn’t very friendly at first. It was so afraid that it hid in my closet. There are things you learn when you reach to grab a scared cat. Cats don’t scratch you. A cat grabs you with their claws and you pull

away. You scratch yourself. I learned that it was my reactions that were hurting me, not what others were doing. Twenty-eight days later, the cat was comfortable and we had become great friends. It was time for the cat to return home. I thought how sad the cat will have to go back to live in that crazy house. God then spoke to me and asked, “What about you Paul? Are you going back? Don’t you deserve better?”

Sara was now trying to detox herself. I knew this was dangerous to do, and at times I thought it might kill her. It was after doing this a couple of times that I called to tell her I had to end our relationship. It remains one of the hardest things I had to do. As soon as I hung up my phone, it rang. It was someone in Al-Anon calling me for help. We helped each, that’s how it works. When I hung up the phone a second time, it rang again and it was an old friend. I talked to other people and I began to feel better. I realized that God put them in my life at that moment because He cared for me. That is how Al-Anon has worked for me.

I worked the Fourth and Fifth Steps and found that the exact nature of my wrongs was my inability to love and accept myself. I worked my Sixth and Seventh Steps assisting a group of Latino men. A nearby community was trying to run them out of town. My gift and my profession is my ability to photograph subjects and make them look good. So this big white guy went out to help some Latino day workers and me speaking no Spanish. I arrived and announced I was there to help. Grateful, they suggested I have a cup of coffee, and so I waited. Eventually, they found they could use my help. I began photographing portraits of them for a project I called “Eye Am.” I decided to have a benefit show for a non-profit they had formed. No coincidence the day fell on my birthday. Thank you, God. We raised enough money for the group to secure an office. A story of the show appeared on the cover of three newspapers and was written up in the *New York Times*. How is that for God showing me that I have value? When I do His will, only good things will follow.

I grew closest to two of these men because they spoke the best English. Both turned out to be alcoholics. God showed me that alcoholism knows no language or cultural barriers, and that if there were alcoholics, family and friends were affected by them. Then our Area’s Webmaster I asked if we could translate our Web site. Remember, I speak no Spanish, but I knew God would give you the power to carry out His will—and He did. Like an angel, an Al-Anon member visiting from Mexico, who worked as a translator, contacted me, and the site was translated several days later. That is how Al-Anon has worked for me.

Later one of those men I grew close to, died from his disease. I cried when I learned of his death in Mexico. He left behind a beautiful wife and child. It was the day before I was to leave for our International Convention in Pittsburgh. When I saw the group of Mexican members on parade at our Convention, God showed me that there would be help for his family in Mexico at an Al-Anon group if they wanted it. Al-Anon is a worldwide fellowship.

I met a remarkable woman. She was caring for her grandson, as this was one of the ways she was being affected by alcoholism. The relationship did not last, but I enjoyed it, and loved spending time with her grandson. One of the effects of alcoholism on

me was that I was unable to sustain a relationship long enough to have children. Now I believed I had something to offer children. I found a solution in Al-Anon called Alateen, and with the help of two other members started an Alateen group. It was the most enjoyable service I have done in Al-Anon. Please consider starting an Alateen group yourself.

So how am I today? My relationships are much better, though at times, they are still challenging and I think that is the way it is supposed to be. I asked my God why I don't have that one special relationship that I think I want. His answer was that I am not to have love for one person, but have to love every person. I didn't like that answer, but I try to follow through with it. In loving all of you, I am brought in closer contact with my God.

My father didn't die that day. While in the hospital, I asked if he was scared. Because of you, he trusted me enough to say yes. Since you taught me how to give hugs, I asked if he wanted one. When I gave him a hug, because of you, he felt safe enough to tell me he loved me. If there were a word to describe how I am today, I would choose grateful.

Gratitude is my service to Al-Anon in action. I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to do many things in Al-Anon. In doing these things, my God has shown me the value I have in His world. The greatest of His gifts is to see those spiritually injured be transformed with the help and hope that is offered in Al-Anon. We save lives here. My life was saved here. Today I do my best to practice: courage, love, forgiveness, honesty, and trust "One Day at a Time." By definition, those are the characteristics of a hero. We are all His heroes when we act with His will for us. I remember how I was the day I first met all of you, and I know how I am today. Thank you. May God's grace be with you always.

Mary G., Executive Committee Member

A "Spiritual Journey." I don't recall having signed up for such a trip—researching, buying tickets, packing, or taking photos along the way. As I walked into my first meeting so many years ago, I did not know where the next 35 years as a member of this program would take me, give me, or make of me.

"We get as we give." I could never, ever have set out to get what I have gotten. I owned no basket big enough to fill with what I have received. My journey has been beyond my understanding or dreams. When I arrived at Al-Anon's doors, I was not equipped for the journey on which I was unknowingly embarking.

I came to Al-Anon seeking answers and having some slight awareness that the means I was using to remedy my living situation were not working. My life was narrow, unhappy, and barren and had created an angry, confused, and melancholy me. Into an alcoholic marriage, came a young woman with low self-worth (though she hid that beautifully), who had all the answers (which she shared readily, never acknowledging even to herself that they didn't work), with a spirit of self-reliance and righteousness (because that was what kept her together), with a brain full of limits and fears that kept her from the desires of her heart (which she would not let herself identify).

Here I am many years later—a mature and maturing woman,

who has had experiences and opportunities that have created an abundant life beyond the imagining of the 29-year-old who walked into the arms of Al-Anon.

I didn't get this abundant life by anything I consciously did to attain it; I wouldn't have known how to do that. Instead, I just kept showing up, being willing to serve, rarely saying no, and following those who came before me. That was the foot path of the spiritual journey I have been treading for so many years. It has been transformative because it has allowed me to uncover gifts I didn't know I had, principles that have held me fast through good and tough times, and people with whom to work, share, and grow. I give thanks to those members of my group, my Area, and Conferences who have been my friends and guides. I will never forget that day a long time ago when a group was meeting at my home to work on our Fourth Step inventories. One friend, enjoying some insight I had shared, hugged me and said, "Oh my, gosh! What are *you* going to be?" I remember being totally non-pulsed at those words, having no idea what she saw in me. But, deep inside, I embraced her comment with hope that there might actually be a plan for my life beyond my current circumstance.

My Higher Power, with whom I barely had a passing acquaintance at the time, knew the work that needed to be done in me so that I could serve. Unbeknownst to me that Higher Power was setting me on my journey using Al-Anon service as the vehicle.

Recently, a young woman spoke at my group. Her sharing showed that she was "getting" the program. I thought to myself: "Gosh! What is *she* going to be?" I knew her spiritual journey had begun.

I recently had the privilege of being at an Assembly where the Chairman opened the Assembly by reading a passage from the seventh edition of the book, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*. It was in the section on volunteers, written by Margaret D., the FORUM editor back then.

In part, it read: "...the precious giving of ourselves to lighten another's burden is our special privilege and grave responsibility. ...As long as one Al-Anon member helps another, through word or deed, that member is a volunteer, doing a special job no one without his experience is fitted to do."

An inspiring passage for sure. Each one of us has that incredible privilege and responsibility. We sponsor, we organize events, we write, we lead, we speak, we participate in outreach, and we perform skits—Boy! Do we perform skits! In these rooms, we listen, learn, discuss, and then make decisions that ensure our fellowship will continue to lighten the burden of those who find our program of recovery—truly a special privilege.

I fell in love with the program and especially with service, discovering that I needed service more than service needed me. I showed up at the Al-Anon Information Service, the district, the Area, and the World Service Conference. Somehow, you all endured my shortcomings and kept allowing me to do the work of Al-Anon despite my sometimes over enthusiastic performance and obnoxious personality. In service, we are helped to confront our weaknesses, shortcomings, and egos because our fellow trusted servants help us grow. I have learned that we're all on personal spiritual journeys at different places in recovery. In

the intensity of service and passion for the program, this sometimes causes conflict. It is not always about “us,” but it is about someone’s spiritual walk. I have experienced pain in service; perhaps you have as well. But that pain has led me to understand and protect my essence, to shed some unwanted character traits, and to identify who I really want to be—one who seeks to act on a higher spiritual plane. I have learned that I want to be true to my best-self more than I want to do any particular service job and so I have tried to accept and develop the role of servant leader, reminding myself always that the privilege and responsibility to serve are more important than anything my ego thinks it needs. I have gained the wonderful insight that if I remain true to a higher purpose, goodwill result. If this is “you get as you give,” I get it.

The fears I had to confront in journeying from there to here were many: Fears that kept me from finding a way around apparent obstacles or those that were self-created, Fears that paralyzed me and kept me on my “path to nowhere.” I didn’t travel abroad when I was a college French student because I was just too afraid of going far from home and of public transportation that was outside my experience. My family pattern was “we can’t, we shouldn’t, and that’s not for us,” so I received no encouragement to step out. In truth, I had visions that seemed focused on some distant star that already made my family nervous. The journey my Higher Power was sending me on required me to rid myself of fears in order to do the work set out for me. It was always accomplished one small step at a time. During my first year in the program, a trembling woman held on to the steering wheel of her car and set out on some trips aimed at overcoming her fear of losing her way. Participating in the Area forced me to go away for weekends; invitations to speak forced me onto airplanes. Soon after my first year of Assembly participation, I was on a plane and a bus taking my students to France! Al-Anon was opening up the world and my life. I was living more often outside my comfort zone, but always surrounded by your love and faith in me and buoyed up by a growing faith in my Higher Power.

The principles of the program, particularly those I was learning in the Traditions and Concepts, were transforming how I related to and interacted with others. They provided standards of behavior I could trust. I began to apply them outside the fellowship in my professional life. There, too, my Higher Power was pushing me out of my comfort zone but girding me with the confidence I was developing by serving. I was learning so much about me, about how to do new things. The gifts uncovered in Al-Anon work had an impact on my career. The skills I developed in my Al-Anon service life gave me my professional life. My years of editing the Area newsletter and doing Public Outreach encouraged me to leave the classroom and to take a job doing Public Relations. My experiences in Area leadership gave me the tools I needed to become an administrator. The principles of the Traditions and Concepts that had become my way of living and leading made me a different kind of administrator and my staff would say to me frequently, “You’re different

than the other administrators.” Best of all, I learned that my Higher Power and I could make things happen that were for the good of others. I now anticipated changes rather than running away or hiding in a forest of excuses. I was becoming freer to live a full life.

As Trustees, we occasionally have the opportunity to bring the WSO presence to foreign lands. One of the most defining moments of my journey occurred when Al-Anon sent me to carry the message to West Africa. After greeting our bus with dancing and singing, the villagers—men, women, and children—gathered to greet us in their mountain village in Cameroon. Under a pole barn where a meeting was held, I was called upon to share about the pain and confusion of living with alcoholism and the peace I had found in Al-Anon. As I spoke in basic French, the people, dressed in their colorful garb and headwear, seated on wooden planks in that equatorial heat, did exactly what they do here when they identify. They nodded their heads knowingly, some eyes held tears—including my own. I am still filled with joy and awe that a little girl from Bownsville, New York, once afraid to get on a bus, was carrying a message of hope to those in pain on another continent. “Why me,” I ask? “Why not you?” answers my Higher Power. Do you have a similar dialogue with your Higher Power? You must be on a spiritual journey!

One of the privileges of growing older is becoming retrospective. I look back and identify spiritual laws that have been in operation throughout my life: That when I give more, I get more; If I share my talents and resources with other people, the more inner peace I have in return; That there is more than enough of everything for everyone if I give it away in service to others; That when I am grateful for what I have, I will find even more to be grateful for; That giving and receiving are different aspects of the transforming energy of the universe and in my giving, I keep the abundance of the universe circulating; That we all have a purpose for our life, a unique gift or special talent which when used in service to others, allows us to find joy and peace; That if I want to get something, I need first to give it. In Al-Anon’s short form: “You have to give it away to keep it.”

Most of my adult life has been spent serving in this program. In a year, I will have ended this incredible WSO-leg of the journey. I am already scanning the horizon for new beginnings. I look toward the universe and ask, “What now? What’s next?”

I don’t know the answers to those questions anymore than I did in the beginning. I do know that if I keep showing up, being willing, and learning from those who came before me—continuing to give, I will get exactly more than I need.

Whenever I speak, I always end with this quotation. It is from Saint Francis.

“Remember that when you leave this earth, you can take nothing you have received...but only what you have given; a full heart enriched by honest service, love, sacrifice and courage.”

That is the spiritual journey I have been blessed to be on. I wish the same for each and every one of you.

CLOSING SESSION

Karen R.
Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Bev A.
Conference Chairperson, Trustee

In the closing session of the 52nd World Service Conference, the Chairperson of the Board stated, “Lois and Anne’s visionary idea of a Conference where all Al-Anon members and groups would be unified as we continue our spiritual journey is a reality! As I sat and listened to all of you and all of the presentations this week, the Conference theme, ‘Our Spiritual Journey—we get as we give,’ was in action. Every presentation, every activity was given with the idea of disseminating information and ideas which will be shared with our membership.

“One example is the continuing electronic literature conversation which enables us to discuss merging the use of technology with our principles of self-support, unity, and anonymity. Then our finance skits reminded us not only do we give in a service capacity, but our spiritual connections come through the donation of money to keep services available in our structure and around the world which was exemplified by the European and Central American trips. Another way our spiritual journey continues is when we base on conversations on the principles embedded in our policies and procedures as we are doing with “do not refer,” the public outreach sections that we talked and the other policy issues. The Skill-Building, Shared Leadership sessions are all about getting and giving as Trustees and Delegates work together, share their information with the Conference, and then go out and share with the membership. One final point about getting and giving is from the perspective of the Panel 50 Delegates. They talked about how giving service enhances their personal programs. Included in the comments were:

- I have to give up my ego to give.
- I no longer need to feel a part of—I just am.
- In giving of myself, I found myself.
- I got back me.

“So, our spiritual journey here at Conference is complete this year. As you go back to your Areas and share what you have received with them, another spiritual journey begins. We did get as we gave.”

The Conference Chairperson asked Conference members to reflect on the week and to consider the following questions. How did you fulfill your individual roles as Delegates, staff members, Trustees, and Executive Committee members to form that effective group conscience we saw in action this week? What wisdom have you absorbed this week? Will you go away from this year’s Conference with the knowledge of how powerful our gathering has been? How will you tell the story of the 52nd WSC to members in your Area or home group? Will you tell them they can be secure in the knowledge that we, as leaders, take seriously the trust given us in Concept Three to act as the fellowship’s overall conscience through discussions centered on our spiritual principles? Will you share with them that the key to a sustainable future for Al-Anon rests with us, the membership, to be open to change and willing to communicate with each other?

Conference members then took a few minutes for quiet reflection to evaluate the work of the 2012 World Service Conference and to write about a particular session or activity that fulfilled the Conference Theme or one of the Conference Goals.

Several Conference members shared:

- I liked the Finance Committee skits. When I first came, we were putting ten cents in the basket. We’ve come a long way.
- The Sharing Area Highlights session before the Conference began gave me a glimpse into each Area. Your presuming goodwill gave me confidence to share the concerns in my Area.
- The electronic literature discussions were very insightful. People did their homework and came with lots of ideas.
- We set the stage with our Conference Goals. Diverse and sometimes opposite opinions were expressed and received with mutual respect.
- Trusting in the process and remembering that we all have what is best for Al-Anon in mind.
- Great Conference. I feel a lot of unity and love.
- I am so struck by the commitment of everyone in this room and the knowledge and sharing of experience, strength, and hope
- This is my first Conference. I’ve never been a Delegate, so I didn’t know what to expect. At one point, I was feeling, “Who am I? What is my place?” Then the Chairperson of the Board “pinned” me, and I knew that I belonged.

- This was really a spiritual experience. The discussion on a possible piece of literature on abuse was interesting as I wondered, “Which side is going to win?” It turned into a spiritual experience that was not about winning or losing.
- This is my ninth and last WSC. I’ve seen things that have been very spiritual. There have been some tacky situations from time to time, but this time there has been a level of respect and sharing unlike any other.

Following the Closing Dinner, scroll presentations to the Panel 50 Delegates, and the Spiritual Speakers, the Conference Chairperson rapped her gavel on the lectern to close the 52nd World Service Conference.

2012 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

Floor Discussion—Literature Committee (Piece on Abuse)

Literature Committee

The Literature Committee Chairperson and staff member presented background information regarding the possibility of developing a new pamphlet about mental, emotional, verbal, and physical abuse in alcoholic relationships.

Background

A member wrote to request that Al-Anon produce a book focused specifically on abuse in alcoholic relationships, including verbal abuse. In a six-page e-mail addressed to the Board of Trustees, she went into great detail how, although Al-Anon literature is very good, it includes nothing that “calls out abuse for what it is in a very concentrated way.” Her e-mail was forwarded to the Literature Committee for discussion at its March 2012 meeting. After exploring the issue from a variety of different points of view, the Literature Committee voted to bring this idea to the Conference for further discussion.

Conference members discussed this topic at length over a three-day period.

- Is this abuse that we have allowed others to inflict on us, or abuse that we have inflicted on others?

Since the focus is on ourselves, we should look at all angles of this.

- Based on my experience with the Alateens, I would really like to see this come forward. Many times in the small Alateen group I sponsor, I was thanked by the Alateens for being told that they did not have to put up with abuse.
- We’re currently having an issue with a member who is continually abusive toward other members, and we would love to see some direction on what is the best way to handle these types of situations.
- I believe our literature has spoken to this in subtle ways, but not directly. Specifically addressing the topic of abuse might help break down the wall of denial. Abuse is a common occurrence with this disease and to say that this happens to a lot of us helps members to realize they are not alone.
- In my Area, there have been questions about how to address issues of abuse. One concern is reporting abuse while still protecting anonymity.
- From the Al-Anon Adult Child perspective, it is important to look at the topic of abuse. Whether intentional or unintentional, sometimes we get used to the abuse and accept it unknowingly.
- This consideration touches upon the 2009 Membership Survey, which for the first time asked members to respond if they have been emotionally, sexually, or physically abused. The percentage was very high. There is a stigma or shame attached to having lived in an abusive situation or having been abusive to others. It really helps the fellowship to have literature address topics such as abuse.
- I’d like to see a pamphlet address abuse, and not only abuse, but neglect as being a part of that abuse.

Char G.F.
Chairperson

Tom C.
Associate Director of
Communications—Literature

- I think it is a great idea to develop a piece of literature on abuse. Emotional abuse and mental abuse are not so easily recognizable. It would bring out another elephant in the room by increasing awareness.
- I see this in the context of learning to set healthy boundaries and reasonable expectations of other's behavior.
- This is important to consider. Anyone living with alcoholism is in an abusive situation on some level. My concern is that we might want to define abuse.
- In the past, the Board has had professionals come and they have asked, "How do we reach a more diverse population?" We were told we would have to talk about abuse. Also, some professional organizations don't like Al-Anon because they think we tell people to stay in the abuse.
- This is very much akin to the intimacy piece from last year—something people are afraid to talk about. I like the idea of it being from both sides. The abuser does not always have the drink in his/her hand.
- I grew up in an alcoholic home and watched my dad beat on my mother, and I thought my mom should just shut up so he would quit hitting her. I would like to see a book, not just a pamphlet, address this topic fully.
- Has the Literature Committee done a search of our literature, including our *Forum*, to see if we have addressed this topic in our existing literature?

Yes, I searched for these to answer the member requesting the piece. The primary source is the book, In All Our Affairs.

- I got the help I needed in our existing literature. I'm concerned we'll get diverted from our primary purpose. I question whether we will get into giving advice.
- The hardest part for me was Step Four and looking at what I did to contribute to the abuse. A child does nothing to contribute. I wrote a letter to myself telling myself that as a child I was not responsible for this abuse. I feel a piece of literature on abuse would be very helpful.
- Seeking help in a shelter was too combative for me, but what we currently have in our existing literature is not adequate either.
- I suggest asking the fellowship to discuss this and see what comes in. It might help us get past our own denial.
- I came into these rooms not knowing what abuse was, especially subtle abuse. I had to learn what unacceptable behavior was for me—whether I endured it or imposed it. I didn't go through abuse, I went through torture. I think this literature would allow people to start talking. I think that people who don't want to look at abuse won't touch that literature, kind of like the piece on sexual intimacy from many years back.
- I want to offer some information to add some knowledge on the discussion we had. Our 2009 Membership Survey said 59 percent of the membership had been in some sort of abuse. Twenty-one percent are still experiencing some form of abuse. Forty-five percent have been physically abused, 85 percent reported emotional abuse, and 90 percent reported verbal abuse. This could be a part of our 2012 Membership Survey so we have additional data. I appreciate opening this discussion again. When an issue keeps coming back, it comes back because we are open to hear it, it is unresolved. I'm wide open to a pamphlet or a book; I'm just glad we put a name on this thing again.
- There was some discussion about asking for sharings from the membership. Did we decide to do that or not?

There was a suggestion to do that should there be a motion. The Literature Committee is prepared to do that, should the interest be there.

- I would like to open up this discussion with the membership first and see what kind of response we get. I think you would be surprised about the volume and depth of the sharings you would get.
- A number of people expressed concern/fear that this might fall into a therapeutic piece. It is my understanding that this would be an experience, strength, hope piece.
- There are five readings on abuse in the *Courage to Change*. The big points are already there, I feel. Alcoholism is a disease, but a disease like no other. The abuse tied to alcoholism is like no other. I would like to see something for the newcomer.

- I would have loved it if someone in the rooms would have said, “Divorce him.” No one did. It took me six years to figure out that’s what I needed to do for me. I was in a fog for 20 months when I came into Al-Anon, there was only so much I could absorb. I’m not in favor of developing a piece of literature on abuse. This is already available in our literature and in a Fourth Step. If I need outside help, I need to go get outside help.
- Maybe we could consider a service tool in cooperation with professionals, like with the National Abuse Hotline. We might not be able to help you with this, but this organization might be able to help.
- I have experienced abuse and I share that in my story. One-on-one, I share that there is outside literature and outside help available. I feel this is an outside issue.
- I think this would be a beneficial thing for the fellowship. With the proper invitation to the fellowship, we would get some sharings that would produce the piece.
- This is a big part of our recovery.
- I am not in favor of the piece. I am in favor of us using the literature we already have.
- Abuse is a symptom of the disease of alcoholism. If we have members’ sharings, we’re not talking about therapy.
- I don’t view this as therapy; it’s no different than when I see the Alateens come to meetings and talk about the abuse in their house. I hear about abuse in the Al-Anon meetings, I feel it in the Alateen meetings.
- I am opposed to having a special piece, even though I experienced abuse and I share about that in my story. When I came in 40 years ago, we had three books. When I learned to gain self-worth, I learned to step away from the abusive situation.
- The good news is we get to have all our feelings. The bad news is we get to have all our feelings.
- Having been subjected to abuse as a result of alcoholism and not realizing my part in it, I would strongly recommend we develop a piece.
- I think this would be good for a beginners’ packet.
- I’m talking about verbal abuse and I didn’t find myself until I realized I existed under verbal abuse. I am an avid champion for Al-Anon literature, and I feel this would only enhance our collection.
- I’m in favor of a piece of literature on abuse. Growing up in an alcoholic home, I was subjected to all forms of abuse.
- When I came into Al-Anon, I was tolerating abuse and this was the first visible symptom of the effects of alcoholism in my life. I hadn’t recognized there was a problem before. If I had seen a pamphlet that talked about abuse, I would have connected some dots.
- I’m in favor of going home and talking to the membership. We need to know if there is a need before we begin this. I feel like I don’t have a lot of information right now. I would like to see what we have about abuse in our current literature. I get overwhelmed with the amount of literature we have. For me, it is too much. I need more information to make a decision.
- Maybe literature isn’t the best way to address this issue, but I see many longtimers who don’t recognize the abuse and live in denial. Rage and withholding of love and affection are symptoms of abuse.
- I hear stories about abuse in every meeting I attend. I just think we have to be very careful that we don’t get away from our primary spiritual aim. When I work with someone who is in my shoes, I find the answers in our existing literature.
- This would be a great piece to give to law enforcement as an outreach piece. I easily talk myself into believing that I deserved the mild abuse I experienced.
- I am against having a piece on abuse. When I came to Al-Anon, it really took a few years before I was ready to look at the abuse I experienced and inflicted on others. I don’t think this would be good for the fellowship to have a pamphlet specifically on the topic of abuse. It’s already in our literature as a part of our program.
- If we have such specific pieces, it’s almost like a promise that if you come to Al-Anon, we’ll fix the problem. When we use our Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process, we are

exposed to the knowledge so we can make an informed decision. We don't have this today—we need all the information.

- I am not interested in this piece of literature. We have had all kinds of discussion about abuse using the literature we have in the meetings I attend. I don't think we need something that addresses it so directly. Our literature is there to bring awareness to us in a gentle way when we are ready to see it.
- As a District Representative, I lived in a very upscale neighborhood, and I realized there were three shelters in my district. When I contacted the shelters to do some outreach for Al-Anon, they told me “no.” They were concerned that the people there would use Al-Anon to justify the abuse they suffered. We haven't explored all the possibilities of what we could use and what we have. Let's use the KBDM process on this. Maybe we'll choose a DVD or something on our Web site.
- If we're supposed to be using KBDM, why are we having this conversation?

This was brought up as a discussion, not a motion, because the Literature Committee desired a discussion.

- I don't feel this is a piece of literature that we need. I, too, have abuse in my story, and I benefit from what is already written. My father was obsessive about religion, but I don't think we need a piece of literature addressing that.
- I have mixed feelings about this. When I think about something on abuse, if someone is living in this, would they really pull a pamphlet off the rack and read about this? I am concerned about us defining abuse. I am concerned about our offering a solution to abuse in Al-Anon.
- I have all sorts of thoughts going on. We had a piece on domestic violence in the days of a prominent murder trial that was discontinued because it was not in demand.

Following the discussion, the Literature Committee Chairperson announced that the Literature Committee would withdraw from further discussion at the WSC. The Literature Committee will continue to discuss this topic and move forward with a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making presentation at the 2013 Conference, if the Committee is in agreement.

2012 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

MOTION #1 — CARRIED

(BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2012 World Service Conference:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach

Director of Business Services, Non-Al-Anon Member

María Evangelina de León G.

International Representative—Mexico, Al-Anon Member

Peter A.

International Representative—New Zealand, Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

Debbie G.

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

With no voice and no vote:

Teresa A.

*Associate Director of Member Services—Spanish (in training)
Al-Anon Member*

MOTION #2 — CARRIED

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

To approve the 2011 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #3 — CARRIED

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

To approve the 2012 Finance Committee Report.

MOTION #4 — CARRIED

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

To approve the 2011 Annual Report.

2011 ANNUAL REPORT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ADMINISTRATION

OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

Ric B., Executive Director

The Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) meets quarterly and is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the World Service Conference (WSC), establishing business policies of the World Service Office (WSO), estimating revenue, administering services to the membership, publishing and distributing Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and approving the annual reports submitted by the Executive Director and WSO staff.

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is empowered to act on behalf of the Trustees between Board meetings. It has legal authority bestowed by the Board of Trustees to have oversight of day-to-day affairs of the WSO, and receives monthly service updates from the Directors and the Executive Director.

AFG, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization, listed under Section 501 (c) (3) of the United States (U.S.) Internal Revenue Code, and has been incorporated in New York State since 1954. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. has been incorporated since February 1999 as a registered charity under paragraph 149 (1) of the Income Tax Act of Canada.

The Executive Director is responsible for overall supervision of the WSO staff (currently an average of 50 full-time employees) and for administration of the organization's policies. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Member Services, or the Executive Director's designee, acts in his stead. An Administrative Team (the three Directors and the Controller) oversee office-wide projects, review resource allocations, and serve as a resource to the Executive Director. The Director of Business Services is directly responsible for business operations and controlling finances.

AFG, Inc. is committed to equal employment opportunity and is in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local fair employment laws and guidelines. AFG, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or disability status. Every effort is made to maintain a work atmosphere that is free from harassment.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mary Ann R. /Karen R., Chairpersons

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 the 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 new tagline for *The Forum*, "Sharing Recovery, Unity and Service."
- To approve creating a series of Group Services Podcasts on the various aspects of sponsorship.
- To approve staff travel to Betty Ford Center's Family, Children, and Educational Programs, and the Betty Ford Institute in Rancho Mirage and Palm Desert, CA.
- To approve the amendments to the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Retirement Plan.
- To test the idea of a WSO Alateen Work Group and a series of Alateen Task Forces and Thought Forces through October 2011.
- To print *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32) in English in softcover to be sold for a price of \$5.00 within the World Service Conference structure for a one-year trial period.
- To approve staff travel to Ottawa and Toronto, ON in May-June 2011 to prepare for closure of the NPIC office, to explore virtual office locations, and to visit Canadian national organizations.
- To approve mailing a complimentary copy in English, Spanish and French of *Al-Anon/Alateen Groups at Work 2010-2013* (P-24) to all individual subscribers to *The Forum*, *Le lien*, and *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción* in the WSC structure.
- To accept the recommendation of the Public Outreach and Literature Committees to discontinue the leaflet *Anonymity* (P-65).
- To register all groups as Al-Anon groups, eliminate the field on the Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1) titled "Group Focus," and to suggest to groups whose members are of similar life situations, such as Al-Anon adult children, parents, men, women, and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT), to include that designation in their group name.
- To digitize the film and raw footage from *Lois's Story* and *Lois and the Pioneers*, and keep the film as a display artifact.
- To approve travel costs for three Trustees and one staff member to go to Iceland, England, Turkey, Slovenia, Hungary, Poland, Austria, and Italy to meet with Board Members from those countries with General Service Offices; to meet with members and/or representatives from the Al-Anon Information Services in the evolving structures; to attend the European Zonal Meeting; and to attend Italy's 35th anniversary celebration at their national convention
- To fund a hard copy mailing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2012* second printing to all groups in the U.S. and Canada.
- To approve the list of materials to be stored off-site as a part of the Al-Anon Family Group WSO Archives Guidelines
- To approve travel costs and translation services for a Trustee and staff member to attend the Central American Zonal Meeting November 25-27, 2011, in Panama City, Panama.

The Board, in its legal and financial capacity, took the following actions:

- At the Annual Meeting:
 - To approve the 2011 Finance Committee Report.
 - To approve the 2010 Annual Report
 - To approve the 2010 Auditor's Report
 - To authorize ownership of property
 - To give conceptual approval for a new piece of literature on intimacy
 - To elect two Trustee at Large (TAL) nominees, two Regional Trustee (RT) nominees, and to appoint a one-year TAL nominee as well as elect Board Officers, Executive Committee At-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), following traditional approval by the Conference where required.
 - To approve the Committee Chairperson appointments for 2011-2012
 - To approve changes to the Employee Policies and Procedures manual.
 - To hire Cherry, Bekaert & Holland to do AFG, Inc. audits for the next three years.
 - To review the annual tax return (Form 990).
 - To appoint a project manager to oversee the audio-taping of *How Al-Anon Works for the Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22) in English
 - To set the equalized expense for the 2012 World Service Conference at \$1,350 U.S.
 - To set the equalized expense for the 2012 IAGSM held in Cape Town, South Africa at \$1,735 U.S.
 - To allow Al-Anon Dar to translate and print Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature in Serbian.
 - To allow Al-Anon Informacios Szolgalat es Irodalom Terjeszto Kozpont to translate and print Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature in Hungarian.
 - To create a Thought Force of up to five Al-Anon members to provide updated information about procedures, program, and committee responsibilities at Area Al-Anon conventions and Area A.A. conventions with Al-Anon participation.
 - To keep the Annual Board Meeting open to anyone who wishes to attend.

The Board, in its oversight capacity, took the following actions:

- To approve amended guidelines for the Executive, Nominating, and Finance Committees, as well as the Conference Leadership Team.
- To approve the 2012 World Service Conference theme as follows: Our Spiritual Journey—We Get as We Give.
- To appoint a Task Force to develop a process for removing members who do not fulfill their responsibilities to their Committee/Thought or Task Force.
- To approve the new scoring form for RT and TAL candidates.

- To approve holding the October 2011 Board of Trustees meeting and week in Vancouver, BC.
- To begin the process of moving the Trustees out of the Chair position of the Literature and Public Outreach Committees and create a process to appoint At-Large members as Chairpersons.
- To let go of the Theme Work Groups in the Strategic Plan and create Task Forces to create current goals for the plan in the following categories: changes to infrastructure, membership expansion/outreach, and strengthening internally.
- To discuss strategies to host a blog on how service contributes to recovery on the bulletin board instead of creating a Thought Force.
- To support the International Coordination Committee in asking structures to support other structures to achieve a better attendance rate at the IAGSM.
- To give the WSO permission to publish electronically *The Forum* and *Having Had a Spiritual Awakening* (B-25).
- To send a letter to the Delegates asking them if they would be willing to give up an hour or two of their Chosen Agenda Item (CAI) time on the 2012 WSC agenda, to allow the Board to discuss e-literature and its impact on the WSO, the AIS/LDCs, and the GSOs.
- To appoint a Task Force to pursue the idea of memorial gardens, benches, bricks, or trees as a revenue stream.
- To ask the Finance Committee to explore ways to send multiple envelopes with the appeal letter so the members of a group can make individual contributions.

STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

Vicki H., Strategic Plan Oversight, Chairperson

As the Board continued its revisions to the Strategic Plan, much effort has been spent in looking at how Al-Anon currently does business, what works and what doesn't as well as brainstorming what needs to be done to move Al-Anon further toward its Vision and Mission Statements. Utilizing a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats) the Board has identified priorities with which they will be revising the plan.

While most of the Goals and Objectives from last year are being considered and perhaps altered for the revised plan, one Objective has been continued as originally written:

Universal Understanding of Recovery

The meaning of recovery will be understood by everyone—both within and outside of Al-Anon Family Groups, including professionals, governmental agencies, and the general public. The definition of recovery will be clear and concise, including how membership in Al-Anon leads to recovery.

Priority:

Goal #3: Everyone—both within Al-Anon and outside—will have the same universal understanding of family recovery.

Objective #1: By April 2011, develop a clear and concise defi-

inition of family recovery.

Progress: A test definition has been clarified using member surveys, and sent to a select group of Professionals for their input as to the definition's relevancy.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Judy P./Mary Ann R., Chairpersons

The Executive Committee, which meets each month, is the administrator of the World Service Office, with legal authority granted by the Board of Trustees to conduct its daily affairs. Its seven members, one of whom serves as Chairperson, are appointed by the Trustees. They include the Executive Director, one member of the administrative staff, the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees and three Al-Anon members elected by the Board of Trustees who contribute experience in specific fields and situations. Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval.

On-going work of the Executive Committee:

- Approves the minutes and actions of the Finance Committee.
- Accepts the monthly unaudited Financial Statement.
- Approves special projects of the Board and staff that involve day-to-day operations.
- Receives monthly service updates from the Executive Director and the Directors of Business Services, Communications, 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.
- Tracks and evaluates the endeavors of the Work Groups to meet the Strategic Plan goals and objectives (on hold for 2011 while plan is undergoing review and revision.)
- Approves Coordinator conference calls.
- Reviews the annual letter from the WSO's Copyright lawyer regarding the Copyright laws and the Internet.
- Reviews and updates the progress on Project Approvals and Proposals to Study submitted by the staff.

Actions approved by the Executive Committee and presented to the Board of Trustees:

- Approved the printing of the *Timely Reprint Parents of Alcoholics* (P-18).
- Approved the printing of a laminated *Conflict Resolution Wallet Card* (S-71).
- Approved the printing of the following pamphlets in Serbian, *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7), *Purposes and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32).
- Approved an increase in printing of *Le lien* and *Al-Anon*

y Alateen en acción from five to six issues annually, at no additional cost to subscribers.

- Reviewed reports submitted by the WSO Archives Off-Site Storage Determination Task Force.
- Approved that the selling of literature racks be discontinued as they can be ordered on-line for less than the WSO can sell them.
- Approved the concept of the Communication Services 2011-2012 Integrated Marketing Plan with suggested amendments.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Karen R./Paula B., Chairpersons
Robert S., Secretary

The Policy Committee utilizes spiritual principles that guide policy and is the largest group conscience outside of the World Service Conference (WSC). The Policy Committee meets quarterly before the Board meeting and 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 "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 WSC must then approve it by no less than a two-thirds vote.

Public Relations

In 2011, the Policy Committee continued its work-in-progress on a revision and reorganization of the Public Relations section of the *2010-2013 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual*. This work began when the 2010 WSC referred proposed changes to the section back to the Committee for further review. After discussion, the Committee decided to reorganize the entire section, with the goal of highlighting the spiritual principles that have guided public relations in Al-Anon throughout its history. A Task Force has worked on the Public Relations section throughout the year, bringing its work for comment and review by the entire Committee every quarter. Where appropriate, the reorganized section will revise and update current material; add new material pertaining to electronic media; and clarify roles and responsibilities within the Al-Anon service structure in regard to public outreach and public service announcements.

Memorial Contributions

The 2011 WSC discussion on Memorial Contributions generated a request for further study on the current policy on memorial contributions. Specifically, to consider whether the policy on contributions could be changed to permit a non-member to make a contribution to Al-Anon Family Groups in honor of a deceased family member who was an Al-Anon member. A Thought Force first explored the spiritual principles behind Tradition Five and the principle of giving comfort during times of bereavement for non-members who want to honor a deceased Al-Anon member. The Thought Force will continue to study the issue and is not proposing any changes at this time.

Babysitting Services

The Policy Committee discussed babysitting services provided in Al-Anon meetings. The discussion focused on the safety of children left in the care of the group meeting's babysitter. The Committee noted that this policy discussion occurred in 2003 and was determined to be a matter of group autonomy. When members contact the World Service Office, they are told to refer to the facility's policy regarding children on the premises and local laws regarding babysitters. The Committee agreed by consensus that a statement on babysitting in "Groups at Work" was more appropriate.

'Do Not Refer'

The Policy Committee continued the discussion about groups that do not adhere to Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions. Some Areas have requested that WSO not refer callers to these meetings. Hence, this topic has been referred to as "do not refer." Normally, neither WSO nor the Policy Committee gets involved with Area issues. However, the concern on how this affects Al-Anon as a whole has resulted in further discussion at the Policy Committee. The Committee recognized that many Areas have not held discussions with their members, and do not currently have policies or a process in place to address these groups. Therefore, the Committee is facilitating a discussion at the 2012 World Service Conference to identify a list of principles that Areas can utilize when determining whether or not a group is adhering to the Twelve Traditions; principles the groups can use to more fully comply with the Twelve Traditions; and principles the Area can utilize to support groups to successfully adhere to the Twelve Traditions. Once Areas have had this discussion, the WSO will be clearer in what role, if any, the World Service Office should play in supporting the Areas and the groups.

Dual Members in Service

Based on the Open Policy Committee Meeting at the 2011 World Service Conference, it was determined that there is confusion within the fellowship on the role of dual members in service beyond the group level. A Policy Committee Thought Force was appointed to identify the spiritual philosophy underlying this policy. Based on the information gathered from researching past World Service Conference discussions, revisions of Policy language in the *Service Manual*, A.A. and Al-Anon guidelines, and a 1976 audio clip of Lois W. addressing the World Service Conference, the Committee agreed the language in the "Policy Digest" needs further clarification related to the spiritual foundation of the policy and the importance of maintaining two separate service entities. A Task Force has been formed to consider improvements for clarity to the existing language.

Scientific Research

In 2011, the World Service Office cooperated with a scientific research project investigating aspects of family recovery from the effects of alcoholism. The Cooperation with Researchers Policy which set the criteria for cooperation was approved by the Policy Committee in 2007. As a result of member confusion and concern with this type of cooperation with researchers,

the Policy Committee agreed to post on the Members' Web site the original Policy Statement that was established for WSO to follow when cooperating with scientific research. Additionally, the Executive Director wrote to the Conference members about this project in January and again after the 2011 World Service Conference. The background material, including a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet, was posted on e-Communities for all Conference members.

Group E-mail Address

In January, the Committee authorized the World Service Office to use e-mail to directly contact members serving their groups as CMAs (Current Mailing Address). For many years, the WSO has routinely used e-mail to conduct Al-Anon business with Delegates, Public Outreach Coordinators, Literature Coordinators, and other volunteers in the service structure. However, the Policy Committee had not previously granted explicit permission to contact CMAs via e-mail. CMAs had previously been contacted via the U.S. and Canadian postal systems. The WSO said it would regulate the electronic flow of information to CMAs with the same restraint that it has employed in contacting them through the postal services.

In April, the Executive Director sent an e-mail to all CMAs announcing a new electronic newsletter to be sent to all groups. CMAs were advised that if they were unwilling or unable to receive this type of publication, that an e-buddy or perhaps a different CMA might be in order for the group.

In July, the World Service Office sent an electronic newsletter to those CMA e-mail addresses as recorded in the iMIS database. The subject line and WSO e-mail address contained "Al-Anon." Following feedback from members of the fellowship, in October, the Committee reviewed some proposed clarifications to the policy on e-mail, on p. 91 of the *2010-2013 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual*. The Committee affirmed that e-mail correspondence is assumed to be private when it is between the World Service Office and a member holding a service position. Therefore, it is not a violation of anonymity to receive an e-mail message with the name Al-Anon or Alateen in the subject line or in the WSO's e-mail address.

Social Networking sites

Also in January, the Committee authorized the WSO to initiate a presence for Al-Anon on social networking Web sites. The Committee accepted a Thought Force recommendation that Al-Anon take a "passive" presence on these Web sites, that is, that Al-Anon take advantage of the opportunity these Web sites offer to convey information to the general public, for public outreach, but without creating an on-line environment that would stimulate interactive discussion among Al-Anon members in a way that would lead them to break their own anonymity on a public Web site. The WSO initiated sites on Twitter and Facebook in August.

Title change

Following a recommendation of the Literature Committee, in July the Committee voted to change the name of the pamphlet *To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic* (P-16). The new

name of the pamphlet is *To Parents of Alcoholics* (P-16). The rationale for the change is that addressing the pamphlet to the “mother and father” of an alcoholic could be understood narrowly, implying that it was relevant to only two-parent families. The new title is considered to be more inclusive, and more in touch with a wider variety of family situations.

ADMINISTRATION

The “Using Al-Anon’s Traditions in Our Personal Lives” blog was active on the Members’ Web site in English, Spanish, and French. Each month, a podcast was added to the previous written text of the featured Tradition. Al-Anon members were able to listen to conversations on each of the Twelve Traditions, as well as post comments about their interpretation of the Traditions. In English, a cumulative total of 351 comments were posted; 39 comments in Spanish, and 69 comments in French.

Visitor Statistics:

	English	French	Spanish
Home Page	3,559	321	419
RSS/Atom feed	28,463	443	596
Comments feed	2,159	632	706
Tradition 1 Page	183	32	31
Tradition 1 Audio	68	17	30
Tradition 2 Page	218	101	28
Tradition 2 Audio	62	21	22
Tradition 3 Page	171	31	33
Tradition 3 Audio	64	14	26
Tradition 4 Page	125	26	29
Tradition 4 Audio	55	8	14
Tradition 5 Page	134	32	36
Tradition 5 Audio	62	13	15
Tradition 6 Page	119	33	31
Tradition 6 Audio	50	11	12
Tradition 7 Page	120	39	23
Tradition 7 Audio	38	10	16
Tradition 8 Page	107	28	24
Tradition 8 Audio	45	11	7
Tradition 9 Page	94	28	19
Tradition 9 Audio	53	10	8
Tradition 10 Page	106	21	12
Tradition 10 Audio	38	6	10
Tradition 11 Page	103	21	25
Tradition 11 Audio	35	11	10
Tradition 12 Page	123	28	24
Tradition 12 Audio	26	8	7

Because of difficulty in finding volunteers to tape the Traditions podcasts, particularly in Spanish and French, it was decided not to continue the podcasts for the Twelve Concepts of Service. The podcasts and all postings will continue to be available for listening, reading, and commenting through the end of 2012 because we are using the comments from all three languages in the creation of the LEGACIES WORKBOOK (working title) which will be available in all three languages at the 2013 International Convention.

In April, approximately 500 people attended the 60th Anniversary Dinner at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. The program included a longtime member, Dee M. from Virginia, and Myrna H., the past Executive Director of the World Service Office. Earlier in the day, an estimated 700 members attended the Open House at the World Service Office with guided tours by Trustees and staff, presentations on the new Public Outreach site, as well as demonstrations of the new Public Outreach DVD, *Al-Anon and Alateen’s Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31). In the afternoon, members attended a mortgage burning ceremony with the Chairperson of the Board and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management. Members were also able to purchase the new softcover edition of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32) and the new book *Many Voices, One Journey—Al-Anon Family Groups* (B-31). In addition to the excitement of the event, participants at the dinner were entertained by a lightening and wind show accompanied by a severe weather warning.

After the retirement of the Translation Services Manager, Raquel K., the position was reconfigured to add an Associate Director, Member Services—Spanish, who would not only oversee translation operations, but also provide additional support to Al-Anon groups. Teresa A., from Arizona, joined the Office in October. The Group Services Assistant-Alateen position was also reconfigured and the WSO hired a bilingual-Spanish member who has several years of Alateen experience, both as a member in Mexico and as a Sponsor in New Mexico. He will begin working in 2012. After retirement of the Controller in October, a new Controller was hired with slight alterations in responsibilities.

After feedback from the members regarding the final definitions of family recovery, the Information Analyst sent proposed definitions to professionals who have worked with Al-Anon Family Groups in a variety of situations. Final responses were delayed due to the Analyst being out for maternity leave the last quarter of the year.

Since the Information Analyst began making presentations at a variety of research conferences, researchers have contacted the World Service Office wanting to write articles using the data from the “2009 Membership Survey.” This is the first time that independent researchers have asked for permission to use our data in writing articles for scientific publications.

Also as a result of our attendance at the Research Society of America, a group of researchers, some of whom were Al-Anon members, contacted the World Service Office in 2009 about applying for a grant to study why newcomers come to Al-Anon and whether there are any documented benefits from attending Al-Anon meetings, even after only a short period of time

(six months.) After a couple of applications, the research project was funded through a grant and the Office was contacted requesting to send letters to our groups about the project and its purpose. After discussion with the Executive Committee, the project was deemed an appropriate opportunity for cooperation with professionals because the volunteers and staff believe that data-based research could increase Al-Anon's credibility with professionals and increase the number of referrals to Al-Anon by professionals. The Office reviewed the questionnaire and gave feedback, recognizing that even though we are cooperating with the researchers, the actual research questions are the responsibility of the researchers themselves and are (from the Al-Anon point of view) an outside issue. According to our policy on Collaboration with Researchers, the researchers were not given access to any contact information for any Al-Anon member or Al-Anon group. Instead, the Executive Director sent a letter to the groups selected for the mailing, asking them if they were interested in participating in this outreach opportunity. If so, they were asked to make contact information available to the researchers. A copy of this letter was posted on e-Communities for the Conference members in January. The researchers created the packets that were sent to the groups, and sent sealed envelopes with the postage paid to the World Service Office so that the mailing was done without financial cost to the WSO. We affixed a random sample of group labels unto the envelopes and mailed them. The researchers did not receive any group contact information from the WSO and did not receive any such information unless the group responded positively to the initial request and made the decision to send that information to the researchers. Unfortunately, the letter to the groups was not clear which resulted in a lot of confusion and turmoil, as this was a new process.

During the 2011 WSC, the Executive Director met at dinner with a group of Delegates who had concerns about portions of the process. After those conversations, the Executive Director contacted the researchers and adjustments were made to the letter sent to the groups, the consent form, and the directions to the group secretary. After the second and third mailings to selected groups, additional comments were received by the WSO, both positive and negative.

In July, the Executive Director communicated those concerns to the Policy Committee and the Committee agreed to review the original policy regarding Cooperation with Researchers at a future Policy meeting. In the fall, one Area filed an appeal with the Board of Trustees, which was to be heard at the January 2012 Board meeting.

Some of the correspondence was not answered until the Board had the opportunity to provide further direction in its role of oversight. Some members did, in fact, call and were given information, which allowed their groups to decide whether to participate or not. No groups were asked to review or evaluate the survey itself, as that would be a violation of the Traditions and involve the groups in having an opinion on outside issues. Instead, groups were asked to approach a newcomer outside of the meeting and ask whether the newcomer was interested in filling out the survey. If the newcomer answered affirmatively, the survey would be given but no further discussion about

whether it was completed, etc. was to occur. If the newcomer answered negatively, the person was to be thanked without any further discussion.

Survey Participation Statistics:

Total number of groups recording	976 (out of 4500 groups contacted)
Positive responses	853
Negative responses	123
Groups with survey packets	847
Total survey from newcomers received representing 335 individual groups	565
Groups withdrawing participation after receiving survey	173
Follow-up surveys received (after 6 months of 1 st receipt)	189 (not a total – still mailing out)

After a review by the Executive Committee of our bulk mailing policies, several publications were only published on-line. Additional e-Communities were added in order to notify the previous mail recipients that a new edition of a publication has been posted. This will not only make more materials available to more members at a reduced cost but also allow Area trusted servants to pass the information via e-mail to other audiences with a minimum of time and cost.

Upgrades to the "Unlimited Abundant Resource Survey" have allowed staff to utilize more members in a variety of limited time opportunities. A new process for notifying members to update their information will be implemented in 2012.

Progress on implementation of electronic literature continues to be slow. While an outside consultant was hired to explore various methods for distribution and sales of electronic literature, no solution seems imminent in terms of protecting the copyright and restricting unlimited distribution of materials without hiring or partnering with an outside entity. This type of partnering often leads to the appearance of affiliation and the partners often use our customers (members) as potential clients to market their own products. We will be meeting with staff from the A.A. General Service Office in January 2012 to explore how they are proceeding in this arena. The hope is to have some experience to share during the 2012 World Service Conference discussions.

As a result of coordinated operational plans, both the 2011 Conference Summary and Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2012 were mailed ahead of time in August, and without additional stress on warehouse and customer service personnel.

During the summer, the Office became aware that *The Forum* was not arriving before the beginning of the month in both the U.S. and Canada. After discussions with the mailer, it was determined that the issue was the national post offices and not our schedule. Since we can only change the things we can, we moved up *The Forum* production schedule an additional week in order to get them to members in a more timely fashion.

A staff Task Force was created to implement recommenda-

tions from a Conference Thought Force on Conflict Resolution. Beginning pieces of a kit were identified and some materials were created, one is the *Conflict Resolution Wallet Card (S-71)*.

The Office continues to work with Areas regarding issues involving incorporation and revisions to bylaws. Several Areas have realized that they incorporated the Assembly and the groups (our spiritual arms). Suggestions for revisions to bylaws and other language to help clarify the Area's organizational needs vs. its traditional roles were discussed. The Executive Director continues to be available to help Areas at any stage of this process, in order to provide clarity and support.

The World Service Office has learned that some Al-Anon Family Groups are making group contributions to the Stepping Stones Foundation in violation of the Traditions. The World Service Office understands that the fellowship may be confused that the Stepping Stones Foundation, although founded by Lois W. is not part of Al-Anon. While individuals are free to support any activity they choose, Al-Anon Family Groups' money is to be used to support Al-Anon and Alateen activities throughout the service structure.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The Administrative Team is composed of the Director of Business Services, the Director of Communication Services, the Director of Member Services, and the WSO Controller. The Administrative Team was created to have oversight of certain office-wide projects assigned by the Executive Director, as well as to provide leadership support to the office in the absence of the Executive Director. The Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Member Services, has full authority to act on behalf of the Executive Director in his absence due to travel or illness.

Over the past several years, the Administrative Team has developed and refined disaster recovery plans so as to be able to restore services quickly should any emergency affect daily office operations. In 2011, hurricane Irene struck while the Executive Director was travelling on business. Services were interrupted only briefly during Irene; and business data, electronic equipment,

and employee safety were protected appropriately. In general, the plans in place worked well, though the experience helped identify some weak points and opportunities for improvement, in anticipation of future emergencies. This storm offered a practical opportunity to test emergency plans and procedures.

In March 2011 the Executive Director sent an electronic communication to Al-Anon Group CMAs (Current Mailing Address) informing them that the Policy Committee authorized direct electronic communication with groups at its January 2011 meeting. CMAs were asked to verify the e-mail address for their group. A request was made that CMAs who were not able to receive e-mail select an e-buddy, or that the group select a CMA who is able to receive electronic communications.

The Administrative Team worked with the Web Architect and the WSO Group Records Coordinator to identify valid CMA e-mail addresses and sent the first electronic newsletter to over 6,000 English-speaking groups in July 2011. As a result of that initial communication, electronic mail delivery issues and concerns, including bounced back e-mails and the ability to unsubscribe, are being addressed while Group Records continues their efforts to obtain an e-mail address for all group CMAs. The Al-Anon Family Groups Annual Update Sheet has been revised to include space for the CMA e-mail address. Articles and ads about electronic communication to groups have been published in *The Forum* magazine.

During the year, the Administrative Team completed a comprehensive review of the WSO's Administrative Manual, which had not been updated in several years. The purpose of the review was to ensure that the Manual accurately documents the WSO's current business policies, procedures, and management philosophy, some of which had changed since the Manual was last revised. Language in the Manual was also reviewed for clarity and consistency.

The Administrative Team routinely gives direction and input on a range of office-wide projects and initiatives. In 2011, such activities included the upgrade of the iMIS database to version 15, and the improvement and strengthening of data and office security protection.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

PUBLIC OUTREACH

TV PSA Campaign. The Sketches IV campaign generated nearly 90,000 airplays on television in 2011, a 54 percent increase over Sketches III, which was previously our most successful PSA campaign. Since 2007, the Sketches campaign has reported an all-time high for Al-Anon PSA TV airplays in each of its four years, building on growth that began in 2006.

More than 400 broadcast TV stations gave airtime to Sketches IV, a 31 percent increase, compared to Sketches III. An additional 100 cable TV stations ran Sketches IV. This success was achieved in a highly competitive environment: Al-Anon PSAs compete for limited PSA airtime with about 2,500 other organizations each year.

Due to a glitch in reporting technology no Canadian air-

plays were counted in the first eight months of the Sketches IV campaign, even though Al-Anon members in Canada told us that they saw Al-Anon PSAs in heavy rotation in those months. But despite the lack of any reported airplays in Canada for two-thirds of the year, airplays in Canada were down by only 23 percent for the entire year. Annual results in Canada would likely have shown strong growth for the year had airplays been counted in all 12 months.

Al-Anon's message reached a total TV audience of 427 million in the U.S. in 2011, including continued broadcasts of Sketches III. That total is down by about 10 percent from the previous year, which mirrors a general decline in broadcast TV viewership. Even though there were fewer TV viewers overall in 2011, the market value of the airtime to reach that smaller audience

increased sharply. The market value of airplay for Sketches IV was equivalent to \$12.2 million in paid advertising time, up 66 percent from Sketches III. Al-Anon's return on investment in TV PSAs was equivalent to \$167 dollars in paid advertising time for every dollar spent on the production and distribution.

Radio PSA campaign. Al-Anon's PSAs generated nearly 90,000 airplays on more than 350 radio stations, compared to 31,000 airplays on 263 radio stations for our previous radio PSA campaign (two years ago). The comparison is not "apples-to-apples" because the previous campaign measured results for only nine months, but the disparity of proportion indicates the success of this year's program: the campaign generated nearly triple the number of airplays with only three months of additional measurement. The number of stations that broadcast Al-Anon PSAs increased 33 percent, while the number of months measured increased by only 25 percent.

Our highest saturation rates were in French-speaking Canada and Spanish-speaking America, where the size of the listening audience was proportional to the total number of French-speaking Canadians and Spanish-speaking Americans respectively. In total, the radio campaign reached a combined audience of 176 million.

The campaign was able to deliver its message at a cost of less than 3 cents per person. The market value of this airtime was equivalent to an estimated \$13.1 million in paid advertising, for a return on investment of an estimated \$254 for every dollar invested in radio PSAs.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism. Calendar year 2011 results for *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine, the largest member participation public outreach project, reached an all-time high of 362,075 copies distributed, nearly a 4 percent increase over 2010. The campaign that ended in July fell only 400 copies short of equaling the all-time high for a single printing, 184,000, which was reached in July 2010. That total includes an all-time high for English language (160,550), as well as an all-time high for Spanish language (16,425).

Public Outreach Web site. The WSO launched a new version of the English language Public Outreach Web site in April. The new Web site includes multi-media content based on member sharings and testimonials provided by professionals. Translation of the new site into Spanish and French was begun before the end of 2011.

In 2011, visits to the Public Outreach Web sites in English, French, and Spanish increased by 7.3 percent compared to the previous year. That growth stands in contrast to 2010, when visits to the three Web sites increased by less than 1 percent.

The English-language Public Outreach Web site showed a 7 percent increase in visits, with a total of 1.1 million visitors for the year. Visits to the Spanish-language site increased only 3 percent, but visits to the French language Public Outreach Web site increased 34 percent. One of the most significant reasons for the sharp increase in visits to the French Web site was the success of Al-Anon's PSA campaign on French-speaking radio stations. Thirteen radio stations played the PSAs for a total of

more than 3,000 broadcasts. In previous years, we have observed a correlation between an increase in visits to the French Web site and heavy PSA airplay on French language media.

Public Outreach DVD. The Public Outreach Video, *Al-Anon and Alateen's Role in Family Recovery* (AV-31) was introduced in April. It is now in its fourth printing. Members purchased more than 3,500 at the nominal cost of \$5 each, for use at health fairs and other Public Outreach presentations. The DVD includes content for three target audiences: potential newcomers to Al-Anon, potential newcomers to Alateen, and professionals. The DVD offers separate presentations for each of these three audiences and also allows members to mix and match content to suit the needs of specific situations. Translation into Spanish and French with subtitles is in progress.

Social Media. In the Fall, the WSO initiated pages on Facebook and Twitter to share information about Al-Anon with members, professionals, and the general public. Currently we have over 500 "followers" on Twitter. Our Facebook postings are read by 300 to 500 people. Generally, staff members post information on these sites several times each week.

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Paula B./Judy A., Chairpersons
Pat Q., Staff Liaison,
Associate Director of Communications—Public Outreach/Media

The Public Outreach Committee consists of six Delegate members, up to five At-Large members, the WSO staff liaison, and a WSO Volunteer Chairperson. The Committee meets once per quarter by telephone conference call.

During the course of the year, the Committee identified and prioritized target audiences for use by staff in developing public outreach messages. While Al-Anon's Public Outreach efforts are created to bring hope and help to everyone affected by someone else's alcoholism, the target audiences are intended to extend Al-Anon's reach beyond the limits of its core membership base and bring more diversity into the fellowship. Accordingly, the Committee's target audiences include: men and women, ages 25-40; young parents; and parents of teen and adult alcoholics.

In other business, the Committee reviewed and approved scripts for both radio and TV PSAs. These PSAs included focus on the target audiences. Also, the Committee reviewed and suggested changes to the newly revised on-line version of *Best of Public Outreach* (P-90), which is a "how to" manual to assist Al-Anon members seeking to engage in public outreach activities. Further, the Committee requested that the new version be introduced to the 2012 World Service Conference, and has prepared a presentation for use at the Conference.

The Literature and Public Outreach Committees jointly recommended discontinuance of the pamphlet *Anonymity* (P-65) to the Executive Committee.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

Many Voices, One Journey (B-31). This new 426-page book was introduced during celebrations honoring Al-Anon's 60th

anniversary in April. The book includes the sharing of members through the years as they—and our fellowship—faced growth and the struggles that accompany it.

LEGACIES WORKBOOK (working title). A writer has been selected, and work on this project is proceeding according to schedule. The 36 chapters on using the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service in our personal lives, will include postings from the English-, French-, and Spanish-language Legacy blogs on the Members' Web site, as well as insightful questions based on the sharings. The workbook is planned to be introduced at the Al-Anon International Convention, in Vancouver, in 2013.

How Al-Anon Works for Friends and Families of Alcoholics (B-32). The new soft cover edition of *How Al-Anon Works* was well-received by the fellowship. It is priced at \$5 per copy, to encourage members to widely share Al-Anon's basic book with newcomers to the program. More than 40,000 copies were sold.

The Forum. Personal subscriptions to *The Forum* declined by 9 percent in 2011, from 22,834 to 20,986. It has been losing about 150 subscriptions per month. Personal subscriptions are still about 1,000 higher than in 2008, when they reached a low point before a one-year rebound.

FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Charles Y., Chairperson
Sharon H., Board Liaison
Robert S., Staff Liaison, Director of Communication Services

The Committee consists of the Volunteer Chairperson, four At-Large members, the WSO Staff Liaison, and a Board of Trustees Liaison. The Communications Manager and Communications Assistant attend with voice and no vote.

Members of the Committee work on an individual basis throughout the year, evaluating member-submitted sharings. They meet together as a Committee twice each year by telephone conference call.

In March, the Committee discussed the results of the "2010 *Forum* Readership Survey." There was a wide range of contradictory input. The readership most appreciated the "My Story", "One 'Quote' at a Time", and the longest and shortest features respectively. More than 3,000 readers responded to the Survey, with more than half of them saying that they read the entire magazine straight through, from start to finish, as soon as it arrives.

The Committee discussed the question of whether to print the Twelve Steps in each issue of *The Forum*, as was done many years ago. Generally, it was agreed that the purpose of *The Forum* is to facilitate member sharing across the fellowship; and that *The Forum*, with or without the Twelve Steps, was not supposed to serve the same function as *Groups at Work* (P-24), namely, to be a one-stop resource for running an effective Al-Anon meeting. This discussion prompted a WSO decision to distributed a complimentary copy of *Groups at Work*, on a one-time only basis, to all *Forum* subscribers as a way of familiarizing members with this under-utilized tool. The booklet was included in

the December 2011 issue of the *Forum* and was sent to 23,000 individual subscribers.

The *Forum's* new tagline, developed by the Committee, made its debut in April: "Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service." It was believed to be a more accurate reflection of the purpose of the magazine. The change was well-received by the fellowship.

A discussion ensued on how to define "best in class" sharings. The Communications section receives hundreds of sharings during any calendar year. While many are good and have nothing wrong with them, many resemble each other greatly, and do not offer any uniquely helpful insight.

FEAC members took turns talking about what they look for when grading a sharing. A "how to work an aspect of the program" sharing is valuable, as in "What I learned in my first year," "how to use Al-Anon's tools," or one about "how to choose a Sponsor." The consensus was that the quality of the writing made the difference between a 1 and 2 grading. This led to a discussion about attracting younger members to Al-Anon, and how to make the material attractive to them so they can in turn write for the magazine. Note was made that the back cover would be a good place for a quote or thought of the day that would highlight the photo.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Ann C./Charlyn F., Chairpersons
Tom C., Staff Liaison,
Associate Director of Communications—Literature

The Committee, consisting of eight Delegate members, four At-Large members, the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Volunteer Chairperson, continued to meet via quarterly conference calls throughout 2011, as part of a trial period.

In January, the Committee reviewed and approved the final draft of *Many Voices, One Journey* (B-31), a book celebrating Al-Anon's 60 years of recovery.

At the 2011 World Service Conference, the Committee recommended conceptual approval for 1) a piece of literature made up of the stories of longtime members, 2) a piece for families and friends of alcoholics in treatment, and 3) a piece on intimacy in general, including sexual intimacy, in alcoholic relationships. Discussions that followed at the Conference indicated that only the piece on intimacy generated enough interest to be presented as a motion, which carried.

After Conference approval, the Committee gave approval for wording of an INTIMACY IN ALCOHOLIC RELATIONSHIPS (working title) sharing sheet to solicit writings for the project.

The Committee unanimously approved an outline for the LEGACIES WORKBOOK (working title) that was approved by the 2010 Conference.

After appointing a Task Force of parents of alcoholics to review recent *Forum* stories from parents, the Committee reviewed and approved wording of a "Timely Reprint" that included the top-rated stories. Policy and Executive Director review followed, and the reprint, *Parents of Alcoholics* (R-18), went to print in time for an early 2012 release date.

The Committee considered suggestions from the Executive Committee for changes to *To the Mother and Father of an Alco-*

holic (P-16) and *How Can I Help My Children?* (P-9). As a result, it recommended a title change for *To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic* to the Policy Committee. It also recommended minor revisions to *How Can I Help My Children?*, which were approved by Policy reviewers and the Executive Director, and will be included in the next printing in early 2012. While revising *How Can I Help My Children?*, changes were also made to the portion of *Dear Mom & Dad* (P-67) excerpted in the pamphlet. The latest printing of *Dear Mom & Dad* also includes these changes.

During the year, the Committee reviewed several other suggestions from the fellowship for new literature or revisions to existing literature. As a result, the Committee agreed to make minor wording changes to two paragraphs of *So You Love an Alcoholic* (P-14), and text in *Alcoholism, the Family Disease* (P-4) regarding “special focus groups,” in keeping with a Policy Committee recommendation. The latest printings include these changes. The Committee also agreed to a revision of *Youth and the Alcoholic Parent* (P-21), which will begin in 2012.

MEMBER SERVICES

GROUP SERVICES DEPARTMENT

GROUP RECORDS

In 2011, eighty-six percent of the Areas (58 Areas) accessed the WSO On-line Group Records Web application to process Al-Anon group changes. The remaining Areas were contacted by the WSO Group Records Department and offered assistance to navigate the site. Several upgrades were released during the year with enhanced features such as the submission and administration of new Al-Anon group registrations and additional reports. The new Al-Anon Group Change Log report that shows changes processed by the WSO staff and Area Group Records Coordinators will replace the current Area Group Records Coordinator monthly mailing, starting January 2012.

The number of Al-Anon group changes sent directly to the WSO on the Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1) has decreased during the year, as Areas have been encouraging members to follow their Area process when sending new group registrations and changes. Sending the form to the Area allows Areas to verify information prior to submission to the WSO. There was no significant reduction in the number of changes submitted by the groups to the WSO on the Annual Update Sheet. As a result of the On-line Group Records Application, duties of the WSO Group Records Department staff are shifting to a combination of data entry and verification of the data submitted by the Area Group Records through the Application.

Due to a request from the Policy Committee to cease using the term “group focus” because that term resulted in confusion within the fellowship, a letter was sent in November from the WSO to Al-Anon groups that noted a special focus designation suggesting that they include their similar life situation in their group name as the designation was being removed from our database. The Group Records Coordinators were notified that the group focus options will be removed from the WSO’s On-line Web Application and the Al-Anon Group Registration/Change Form (GR-1) is being revised to accommodate that change and to be more uniform in style with the new on-line application.

The 2011 Al-Anon Annual Update Sheet was revised in September to include fields for the CMA e-mail address and phone number. A major revision of the form is scheduled for 2012.

GROUP RECORDS COORDINATOR CALLS

The Area Group Records Coordinator calls were held in March and September. The main focus of the calls was the WSO On-line Group Records Application; submitting appropriate group names was also discussed. “What can the WSO do to support the Areas with submitting appropriate group names?” was one question asked. A suggestion was made to include more information on group names in the Starting an Al-Anon Group guideline (G-12). Since over three percent of the group names on the registration forms submitted to the WSO don’t meet the criteria for registration, it was requested that Coordinators become aware of the criteria used by WSO listed on p. 77 of the *2010- 2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section, under the heading “Choosing a Group’s Name.” A process has been established with the WSO On-line Group Records Application to ensure that similar responses are provided by WSO and the Area Group Records Coordinator to groups with inappropriate group names. When a name is not approved, the registration is placed in “Waiting for Information” status, and an explanation is added in the notes so the Group Records Coordinators are aware of the response provided to the group.

The total number of registered groups in 2011 is 25,295

- US/PR/BDA Al-Anon 13,268
- US/PR/BDA Alateen 1,002
- Canada Al-Anon 1,341
- Canada Alateen 78
- International Al-Anon 8,947
- International Alateen 659

Ninety-two electronic meetings are currently registered, including 37 telephone meetings and 55 Internet meetings – seventy of the meetings are English, six Spanish, two Spanish/bilingual, two German/bilingual, two Russian, four French, four German, and one each in Danish and Portuguese.

AREA ALATEEN PROCESS CONFERENCE CALLS

Conference calls were held in March and September for Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) to review the Annual Area Alateen Recertification Process. The September call specifically

focused on the importance of Areas having processes in place for their Alateen paperwork. Staff sought input from these trusted servants on proposed changes to the WSO timetable, including sending an additional report after the certification process was completed that included a post-recertification list of Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS). WSO staff offered to send the recertification packets earlier so that Areas could return them by June 15. That change was proposed to support Areas that consistently submit incomplete packets and struggle to meet the July 1st final deadline for having complete packets submitted. The staff suggestions were well-received by the Alateen Coordinators, AAPPs, and Area officers. Area Delegates and Alateen Coordinators were invited to listen in the conference calls. 5,489 AMIASs were certified in 2011.

ALATEEN

Seventeen Areas have requested Alateen chat rooms; at year end, there were nine weekly Alateen chat meetings on the schedule (eight English and one French-speaking). Over 200 teens registered to participate in the chat meetings; however the chat meetings continue to have sporadic attendance. Several teens attend the meetings on a regular basis. A link to the chat registration page was added to the Members' Web site, so that current Alateens can support the chat meetings. Discussions are in process with French-speaking General Service Offices to set up a chat room for their use.

The new Al-Anon/Alateen DVD (AV-31) was well received by the Area Alateen Coordinators. Several have used it in their Alateen outreach activities. Clips from the video are posted on the expanded Alateen section of the Public Outreach Web site.

Discussion boards were added to the Area Alateen Coordinator e-Community. Coordinators are now able to share their

experience, strength, and hope with each other on a variety of Alateen service topics.

Throughout the year, Group Services staff worked with Area Alateen Coordinators and AAPPs on several issues with Alateen group registrations. No group can use the Alateen name if they are not currently registered with certified AMIASs as the associated Alateen Group Sponsors. The Current Mailing Address (CMA) must also be a certified AMIAS. Any group whose registration information is not current is not entitled to meet as "Alateen." The WSO works with the Area to bring such groups into compliance with the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. When notified by the Area that the individuals are not willing to comply, the WSO will notify the meeting facility that the group is not authorized to use the Alateen name.

GROUP SERVICES PODCASTS

Four podcasts on "Group Concerns" were posted to the Members' Web site. The podcasts were developed to provide support to groups and their Group Representatives. The four podcasts are titled "How my group functions as a community," "The need for GRs and GR duties," "How to become a Group Representative," and "The structure of the Al-Anon/Alateen fellowship."

The first two in a series of podcasts on "Sponsorship" were also posted to the Members' Web site. Additional podcasts will be added in 2012. All the Group Services podcasts include a "comments" blog, where members can share their experience, strength, and hope with each other on the podcast topic. Podcasts for the French and Spanish Members' Web sites are scheduled for 2012.

Three podcasts recorded on sponsorship will be posted to the Members' Web site in 2012.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE AND AREA DELEGATES

The Panel 51 Delegates were given access to e-Communities, the on-line system the WSO uses to communicate with the Delegates.

2011 Conference members submitted a total of 19 Chosen Agenda Items (CAIs). The Conference Leadership Team created a Task Force, consisting of two Delegates, to combine similar CAI topics into one question. As a result of the Task Force's work, ten CAIs were presented to Conference members for voting. Sixty Conference members voted.

Ninety-seven voting members attended the 51st World Service Conference in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 11-15, 2011. Mexico and New Zealand each sent a General Service Office Representative to attend the 2011 Conference. The *2011 World Service Conference Summary* (P-46) is posted on the Members' Web site. This year, all Summaries from all past Conferences were posted on the Members' Web site.

Dr. Vivian Jackson, Research Instructor at the National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for

Child and Human Development, presented a workshop in the General Session entitled "Cultural and Linguistic Competence: A Strategy Towards Diversity and Inclusion."

E-COMMUNITIES

Area Chairpersons, District Representatives, Literature Distribution Centers, Al-Anon Information Services, Area Web Coordinators, Area Newsletter Editors, as well as present and past Conference members were added to e-Communities. The responsibility for maintenance and posting on the Area Web Coordinators and Area Newsletter Editors communities will be split between Member Services and Communications Services. When new information or topics arise, Frequently Asked Questions are added to the folder in the Conference Mailing community.

DISCUSSION BOARDS

Several new Discussion Board topics were posted to the Conference Mailing community on e-Communities. The Discussion Board feature allows Conference members to participate in

discussions, talk to each other, and provide mutual support in their roles. The Discussion Boards provide a place where Conference Members can share their experience Area-to-Area and ask for shared experience from other Areas.

TEAM—TOGETHER EMPOWERING AL-ANON MEMBERS

Seven TEAM Events were held in 2011, including the first one in Canada. Events took place in Saskatchewan, California South, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Kansas, Washington partnering with Oregon, and Florida North and South Areas as partners.

Areas continued to be creative in their selection of location and topics for the event—sites included a museum, a senior service center, a church, and hotels. Agenda topics were customized to meet the needs of the Areas partnering with the WSO. Some of the numerous topics Areas selected, in addition to the WSO's contribution of the Trustee Search, WSO sharings, and Giving—Our Spiritual Link to Gratitude, were: reaching a group conscience, group safety, outreach to teens, conflict resolution, using the Concepts in our personal lives, abundance, KBDM, and the relationship between Al-Anon the fellowship and AFG, Inc. the organization. Communication continued to strengthen between the partners as both became more familiar with planning this new innovative event.

The TEAM Evaluation Form was introduced in 2011. One section of the form identifies the presentations and asks attendees to respond to specific questions about the presentation. Additional questions about the event and the attendees are also included on the form. There is a section where the Host Committee has the option of adding any questions of specific interest to the Area, such as about the location, topics, etc.

Also new for TEAM Events is a link on the TEAM page of the Members' Web site to the calendar of future TEAM Events. Planning with the WSO begins six months prior to the event; however, TEAM Events are posted on the calendar whenever the basic information, including contact information, is submitted to the WSO Meeting Planner. The calendar is updated monthly. TEAM Events will also continue to be posted on *The Forum* calendar on the Members' Web site. Twelve TEAM Events are already scheduled for 2012.

INTERNATIONAL

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

A.A. accepted Al-Anon's invitation to participate in Al-Anon's 2013 International Convention in Vancouver, British Columbia. A "Save the Date" flyer was mailed to the Delegates in January. The flyer was an insert for the groups' copy of the February *Forum*, as well as the Spring *Area Highlights* mailing. The flyer

was posted on the Members' Web site.

The Planning Committee met to discuss the WSO Volunteers/Staff attending, Host Committee Chair invitation letter, and the fall 2011 site visit. BC/Yukon's Area Assembly elected a Host Committee Chairperson; the WSO Coordinator and Co-Coordinator met with the Host Committee Chair on the site visit. Also on the site visit, the 2013 Chairperson, Coordinator, Co-Coordinator, and Meeting Planner met with the five major hotels in Al-Anon's Room Block, as well as with the housing company, two decorators, transportation people, Tourism Vancouver, and the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre. In addition, the Coordinator, Co-Coordinator, and Meeting Planner met with four hotels to review space for the Conference Reunion Luncheon. The Planning Committee discussed the budget and registration fee.

A pre-convention "Day of Connecting" service event, with a separate registration fee, will be held on Thursday, July 4, 2013.

2015 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous with Al-Anon Participation, July 3-5, 2015

Ric B., Chairperson, 2015
Barbara O., Coordinator, 2015
Teresa A., Co-Coordinator, 2015

The World Service Office accepted A.A.'s invitation to participate in the International Convention in Atlanta, Georgia.

2018 Al-Anon International Convention, July 6-8, 2018

Ric B., Chairperson, 2018
Teresa A., Coordinator, 2018
Barbara O., Co-Coordinator, 2018

During the 2011 World Service Conference, Delegates were invited to submit bids for Al-Anon's Sixth International Convention.

AL-ANON/ALATEEN INTERNATIONAL

Africa

South Africa: The General Service Office (GSO) sponsored a public outreach activity celebrating 60 years of Al-Anon in South Africa. The theme "Al-Anon Family Groups Sixty Years of Hope" was used on a bookmark given to professionals and newcomers, and on a printed banner that was displayed at health fairs and other formal group activities, such as speaker meetings, throughout the year.

Europe

Belgium (Flemish-speaking): Updating service materials was a major priority. In their efforts to have the best translation possible, a GSO contact asked if the title of Al-Anon literature can be changed. The WSO responded "no" as any suggestions of title changes to Conference Approved Literature (CAL) needs to be sent to the WSO Literature Committee for consideration.

Belgium (French-speaking): The French-speaking and Flemish-speaking GSOs cooperated in organizing a 50th anniversary of Al-Anon/Alateen celebration in Belgium on the 3rd of



September. The event took place in Brussels and the day long program included an Alateen share and a power point presentation of Al-Anon slogans in French and Flemish.

Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union): Activities were geared towards strengthening the 143 Al-Anon groups, including one Alateen meeting. Workshops, throughout the year, focused on topics using The Twelve Concepts of Service as the primary theme. A goal for 2012 is to translate the book *Paths to Recovery – Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions and Concepts*, (B-24).

Denmark: The Literature Committee began work on translations of the *Dilemma of the Alcoholic Marriage* (B-4), *As We Understood...* (B-11), and *Hope for Today* (B-27). This is a significant milestone because of the 24 books published by the WSO in English; only six books have been translated into Danish.

Finland: To cut travel costs, it was decided that the Executive Committee would hold regular electronic meetings using video chat three times a year. The translation and printing of *Blueprint for Progress: 4th Step Inventory (Revised)* (P-91) was a successful project, and a financial success for the service structure.

Greece: In keeping with the principles of Concept Eleven, the service meeting voted to form a Literature Committee. The Committee members have the responsibility to translate Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL) as determined by the service meeting.

Iceland: The service conference voted to have a unified public outreach message to share the benefits of Al-Anon. A project to support this goal included TV and radio interviews. During the WSO visit, a meeting was organized with service members to respond to their questions ranging from how to strengthen the service structure to sharings about Anonymity in Our Personal Growth and Reaching out to professionals.

Hungary: After a visit by the WSO in 2009 when representatives shared on the topic of effective communication, the first Al-Anon Information Service/Literature Distribution Center (AIS/LDC) was registered at the World Service Office in February. In addition ...*In All Our Affairs: Making Crises Work for You* (B-15) was the first book selected for translation and was published in time for the annual conference held in November.

Italy: The 35th Anniversary of Al-Anon in Italy, in conjunction with

the 60th anniversary for Al-Anon, was observed at the national convention in Rimini. The GSO invited the WSO Executive Director to attend and participate in the program, at their expense. The Chairperson of the Board also attended, with a portion of her costs paid by Italy as well. In recognition of this occasion, *Opening our Hearts, Transforming our Losses* (B-29) was translated and printed.

Norway: The Public Outreach Web site was re-designed. To reduce expenses, the GSO moved. In addition to the new location being cost-effective, the office is downtown and centrally accessible for the membership.

Poland: The publication *Three Views of Al-Anon—Alcoholics Speak to the Family* (P-15) was translated and printed for the first time. This project was the first for the Literature Committee that formed in 2010. As a part of a planned European visit, WSO representatives met with members in Krakow that attended planned service meetings by the GSO.

Portugal: The GSO was invited to participate in a public outreach event organized for non-profit organizations by the National Congress of Alcoholism - Ministry of Health of Portugal. The event was well attended. This annual event was an opportunity to share the benefits of Al-Anon with the community in Almada where the GSO is located.

Serbia: In cooperation and with support from the WSO, members in Belgrade are translating the three recommended introductory pieces of literature: *A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7), *Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13), and *This Is Al-Anon* (P-32). There is currently one Al-Anon group in Serbia.

Slovenia: During a WSO visit, discussions about the consistency and the quality of translations of Al-Anon CAL helped members understand the value of having a Literature Committee. This topic will be discussed further at the 2012 service meeting.

Slovakia: After discussions during a 2009 service meeting in Poland with WSO representatives on the topic of how to start a local service center, the first AIS was registered with the World Service Office in March. This AIS is located in Poprad and provides services for 15 groups.

Sweden: The General Service Office translated and printed *Paths to Recovery –Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24). Members submitted their gratitude to the GSO as this is the first new literature available in ten years.

Switzerland (German-speaking): An Al-Anon service seminar, sponsored by the GSO, had an attendance of over 50 members. The agenda included a general discussion on Concept One, and various workshops focused on service. There are 35 Al-Anon groups and four Alateen groups.

Turkey: Although the decision was made to translate the book *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22), the translator selected was not able to complete the project in the time allotted. Plans include continuing the project in 2012 with a new translator.

UK & Eire: The General Service Office hosted the third European Zonal Meeting (EZM), which is a service meeting for established and evolving service structures. Representatives from 16 countries, including the U.S. & Canada, participated. The General Secretary agreed to be the administrator for the newly formed European Zonal Discussion Board which is available only for active representatives that were eligible to attend the last European Zonal Meeting.

Ukraine: At the annual service meeting, a decision was made by the groups to form an AIS in Kiev. There are 27 Al-Anon meetings, eight of which are located in Kiev.

Asia

Afghanistan: The English-speaking limited access group, which was located at a U.S. military base closed due to poor attendance. There are currently no registered Al-Anon groups in Afghanistan.

India: Members in the southern part of India now have access to the Al-Anon message in their language, as the translation of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6) was published in the Telegu language. This is the sixth Indian language in which CAL is published.

Japan: Because of the confusion of some members in the groups, the GSO organized a series of public outreach programs to explain that Al-Anon Japan is the resource for CAL in Japan. With WSO authorization, Al-Anon Japan is the only entity in Japan that is authorized to translate and print CAL.

Korea: As their major project in 2011, the General Service Office translated and printed *Living with Sobriety* (P-49) and *Sexual Intimacy and the Alcoholic Relationship* (P-77).

Australia/New Zealand

Australia: A visit to an indigenous settlement within Australia was a firsthand opportunity to reach out to a remote community. Beginner meetings were held and members shared their personal stories. This public outreach project was in cooperation with A.A. One Al-Anon group was registered with the GSO as a result of this project.

New Zealand: The GSO launched a newly designed Public Outreach Web site. The GSO hosted their first TEAM Event and consulted with the WSO for ideas for the GSO TEAM member agenda items. New Zealand is the first GSO to hold a TEAM Event in place of Regional Service Seminars.

North and Central America

Costa Rica: The GSO was very busy with public outreach activities that included radio interviews with GSO personnel and visits to schools to share the benefits of Alateen. In addition, a RSS was held for the first time; attendance was over 100 people.

Cuba: After losing contact for eight months in 2011 contact was established again through e-mail with the service structure. The WSO received notification that a convention was held in Havana celebrating the 18 years of Al-Anon in Cuba.

El Salvador: Because contributions from the groups increased, service members involved with the AIS voted to reopen the GSO that closed in 2006 for financial reasons. To date, there are 39 registered groups.

Guatemala: Due to political problems within Guatemala, the groups had dwindled because of severe economic conditions. The GSO sent out an appeal letter for the first time and as a result group contributions increased. This gave the GSO the funding to reprint *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).

Honduras: Representatives attended the Central American Zonal Meeting. There are currently 11 active groups supporting efforts to form their first Al-Anon Information Service.

Mexico: The GSO public outreach efforts included having themed posters available for members to purchase and display in public places such as libraries. Representatives from the GSO were interviewed by the local newspaper for an article on Al-Anon in Mexico, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary, where participants shared a summarized version of their personal stories.

Nicaragua: Their first AIS/LDC was registered with WSO in November. Throughout the year, members participated in various public outreach activities, which included a meeting, for the purpose of sharing the benefits of Al-Anon with the professional community.

Panama: A new AIS/LDC located in Panama City registered with the WSO. This is the second AIS for Panama. Panama City was also the host for the Central American Zonal Meeting.

South America

Argentina: A Regional Service Seminar was held to ensure the GSO continues communicating with the membership. Currently there is no General Secretary for the office. *When I Got Busy, I Got Better* (SP-78) and *Alateen's 4th Step Inventory* (SP-64) are the literature items that were reprinted and sold at this event.

Brazil: The translation of the books *Courage to Be Me – Living with Alcoholism* (B-23) and *Discovering Choices* (B-30) was approved. A national public outreach campaign titled "The Right Route" was launched and the bookmark "When you don't know where to turn...because someone drinks too much..." (M-76) was translated. Plans include having members give these bookmarks to professionals. The Alateen Committee launched an activity which involved all of the Al-Anon and Alateen Family Groups in Brazil. The aim of

the activity was to share positive experiences about working with Alateen to encourage those members to consider sponsoring Alateen groups.

Colombia: Publications re-printed for the first time included, *Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions Illustrated* (SP-60), *Doubling Your Sanity?* (SP-87), and "Let It Begin..." Declaration Card (SM-8). The WSO Executive Director was invited, at Colombia's expense, to attend their national conference in October 2012.

Peru: An Al-Anon Public Outreach Web site, started by the GSO, was launched for the first time. A new literature item, reprinted by the GSO, *Al-Anon Basic Program Wallet Card* (M-7) is selling well to the groups.

Venezuela: To ensure unity within the service structure, and understanding of group structure, all groups were encouraged to use *The Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2010-2013*. There are currently 87 Al-Anon and 13 Alateen groups.

COMMITTEES, TASK AND THOUGHT FORCES

TRIAL ALATEEN WORK GROUP

Anne F./Carol V., Chairpersons
Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services

In 2011 a trial Alateen Work Group was formed to explore the idea of obtaining input from Alateens through a series of Thought and Task Forces. Two Thought Forces were approved. The 2011 Alateen Advisory Work Group held a series of conference call meetings to discuss the trial and setting up the two Thought Forces.

The first Thought Force was held in conjunction with a large multi-Area Alateen conference. Alateen participants were selected from among teens already registered and attending the conference. A face-to-face meeting was held on the topic of "Transitioning." The Task Force was asked to identify what type of support Alateens need, expect, and want in order for them to continue their recovery into Al-Anon. They created a list of barriers facing teens that are starting to attend Al-Anon, and developed and prioritized a list of ideas to overcome these barriers. Several ideas will be conveyed to Communications Services and Group Services. All of the ideas will be studied further by the Alateen Work Group and additional disposition determined.

The second Thought Force was held via conference call with four Alateens. The Thought Force identified and prioritized podcast topics appropriate for the teenage Public Outreach Web site visitor who has never attended Alateen. The list of topic suggestions will be incorporated into audio podcasts for the Alateen section of the WSO Public Outreach Web site.

The Work Group is scheduled to present a proposal to the Board of Trustees in January 2012 regarding the trial Alateen Work Group.

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Carol V./Bev A., Chairpersons
Vicki H./Connie H., Co-Chairpersons
Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—Conference

Dr. Vivian Jackson was confirmed as a presenter to 2011 World Service Conference.

In initial planning for the 2012 WSC, the Conference Leadership Team unanimously agreed on (and the Board approved) the 2012 Conference theme: *Our Spiritual Journey—We Get as We Give*. The full cost to attend the 2012 World Service Conference was set at \$2,210, and the Equalized Expense was set at \$1,350.

Staff finalized a fully executed contract for the 2012 WSC, which will be held at the Stamford Marriott Hotel and Spa in Stamford, Connecticut, April 15-19, 2012. The following sessions will take place on Sunday, April 15: The New Member Orientation Session, Committees/Task Forces/Thought Forces, Sharing Area Highlights, and the Opening Dinner. The Conference will begin Monday, April 16, and the Closing Dinner will be held Thursday, April 19.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE (ICC)

Judy A./Roger C., Chairpersons
Penny R./J.P. M., Co-Chairpersons
Marsha W., Associate Director of Membership Services—International

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) started preliminary planning for the 2012 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) that takes place October 3-6, 2012 in Cape Town, South Africa. The theme selected by the Committee, with input from the General Service Offices (GSO) and 2010 IAGSM Delegates, was "No Structure Is Ever Alone – IAGSM." Plans include taking an inventory as to the purpose and value of the meeting.

ZONAL MEETINGS

England

The Fourth European Zonal Meeting took place August 18-21 and was hosted by the UK & Eire GSO in Leeds, England. 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 UK & Eire and the U.S. and Canada, the following structures sent representatives: Austria, Belgium (French-speaking), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland (French-speaking), and Switzerland (German-speaking). The theme for this meeting was "Our Common Welfare." With a primary role as a resource for the meeting, WSO was asked to facilitate a workshop on the topic "Conflict Resolution." To ensure that the lines of communication are kept open between meetings, WSO suggested and the participants agreed, that a Discussion Board on e-Communities would be a consistent information tool. Only current eligible meeting participants would have access to this Discussion Board.

Panama

The WSO participated in the eighth Central American Zonal Meeting that was hosted by Panama City. The meeting took place November 25-27. Five countries participated in the meeting: Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Panama. Of these, only Costa Rica and Guatemala have national service offices. The WSO representatives, using the services of a paid simultaneous interpreter, were able to fully participate in the meeting. As a result, the discussions were meaningful for all parties and gave everyone the opportunity to ask questions. A primary topic discussed was the purpose and intent of the licensing agreement for a General Service Office to sell AI-Anon Conference Approved Literature to an evolving

service structure. The discussion covered the following:

- The purpose and intent of the agreement
- Who could initiate the agreement
- Who could sell the literature
- Who signs the agreement
- What costs could be charged
- What the WSO role is regarding the agreement

Overall the meeting was very productive. The WSO representatives were able to convey to the members that communication with their structures was important to the World Service Office. Members were reminded how to contact the WSO with their questions, and the process to follow if they do not receive a response.

BUSINESS SERVICES

We upgraded our member database to iMIS version 15. This revision gives us a better security system and insures continuation of vendor support.

We have improved the security of our databases by requiring that network and iMIS passwords be changed every 3 months. We have also established sign-in requirements for our wireless routers.

The roof on the World Service Office was replaced during March 2011 at a cost of \$150,000. These expenses will be depreciated over ten years.

We have installed a shadow cloud system to back up our information to the network. This will enable staff to continue our headquarters activity in case of the destruction of our network system for any reason.

Canada Revenue audited our 2009 Canadian information return. The main issue was that our Canadian records were not in Canada. We have arranged with our attorney to store our records to comply with that requirement. In response to the attorney's advice, we are also improving our system of allocating expenses to Canada.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Bev A./Penny R., Chairpersons
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 2012 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:

- Creation of the Thinking Abundantly In...blog on the Members' Web Site to explore the idea of abundance.
- Revision of the financial contribution envelopes.
- Designed educational sessions for the members of the Board of Trustees to improve the Board's financial literacy.

2012 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Judy A.
 Bev A.
 Roger C.
 Char G.F.
 Vicki H.
 Connie H.
 Laurie K.
 J.P. M.
 Harriet T.

Regional Trustees

Paula B., US Southeast
 Ann C., Canada East
 Sandie D., Canada Central
 Anne F., US Northeast
 Sharon H., Canada West
 Penny R., US Northwest
 Karen R., US Southwest
 Carol V., US North Central

Executive Committee

Mary Ann R., Chairperson
 Ric B., Executive Director
 Karen R., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)
 Penny R., Treasurer
 Paula B., Policy Chairperson
 Mary G., Member at Large
 Liz W.S., Member at Large
 Barbara O., Staff member

Non-Trustee Committee Chairpersons

Debbie G., ECRPM Chairperson**

World Service Office Staff

Ric B., Executive Director
 David Zach, Director of Business Services*
 Barbara O., Director of Member Services
 Robert S., Director of Communication Services
 Claire R., Associate Director of Communications—
 Professionals
 Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Member Services
 Marsha W., Associate Director of Member Services—
 International
 Pat Q., Associate Director of Communications—Media
 Suzanne M., Associate Director of Member Services—
 Conference
 Teresa A., Associate Director of Member Services—
 Spanish (in training)**
 Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—
 Literature

International Representatives

Peter A., New Zealand**
 María Evangelina de León G., Mexico**

AREA DELEGATES

Vickie C., Alabama
Kathleen B., Alaska
Jane H., Alberta/Northwest Territories
Cecilia K., Arizona
Shirley R., Arkansas
Shirley T., British Columbia/Yukon
Patrick B., California North
Jayme C., California South
Teri M., Colorado
Rita C., Connecticut
Judith S., Delaware
Terry K., Florida North
Jennifer D., Florida South
Vicki L., Georgia
Tom N., Hawaii
Kathy B., Idaho
Gene W., Illinois North
Cathy B., Illinois South
Roberta H., Indiana
Maddie P., Iowa
Judy W., Kansas
Jo Etta M., Kentucky
Sylvia G., Louisiana
Rita C., Maine
Kerry L., Manitoba
Jeannette M., Maritime Provinces
Jack S., Maryland/District of Columbia
John P., Massachusetts
Liz P., Michigan
Elaine L., Minnesota North
Vicky A., Minnesota South
Daphne F., Mississippi
Geneva D., Missouri
Cindy C., Montana
Craig M., Nebraska
Denise S., Nevada
Pauline M., Newfoundland/Labrador
Nancy P., New Hampshire
Paul G., New Jersey
Norm W., New Mexico
Ruth S., New York North
Petra L., New York South
Patsy A., North Carolina/Bermuda
Connie B., North Dakota
Rex M., Ohio
Jane S., Oklahoma
Margaret R., Ontario North
Jane H., Ontario South
Bette R., Oregon
Maria A., Pennsylvania
Sara M., Puerto Rico
Jocelyne L., Québec East
Hélène D., Québec West
David G., Rhode Island
Linda B., Saskatchewan
Jan R., South Carolina
Rhonda P., South Dakota
Grace M., Tennessee
Nancy M., Texas East
Debbe P., Texas West
Mary Y., Utah
Anne S., Vermont
Phyllis M., Virginia
Magdalena E., Washington
Marti S., West Virginia
Cheryl A., Wisconsin
Carol W., Wyoming

