

## **Delegate's Report to the 2012 Spring Assembly**

The theme for the 2012 World Service conference was "Our Spiritual journey – we get as we give" it was held from April 15<sup>th</sup> –April 19<sup>th</sup> in Stamford, CT. I arrived on Saturday April 14<sup>th</sup>. I was very excited about this first WSC for me and was looking forward the upcoming week. I checked in, went to my room and called my husband to let him know I had arrived safely. Went I hung up the phone my first thought was "what have I done!" away from home and not knowing anyone. Just then there was a knock on my door, a delivery of flowers form NYN AWSC. This lifted those first clouds of fear. I placed the flowers in my room so that I could see them from every corner. Whenever I looked at them during the week I knew I was not alone. Thank you all.

Saturday afternoon I met my mentor, Maddie P., Delegate from Iowa as we had prearranged. We went to registration together and she helped me get my notebook in order for the Conference. With Maddie by my side I met many Delegates that afternoon and a large group of us went to dinner that evening.

Sunday began with orientation in the morning for the Panel 52 delegates. There are 23 of us, new Delegates. The morning went very quickly. In the afternoon we broke up into our assigned Committees or Task/Thought Forces. As I told you in my report to the AWSC I was assigned to the Literature Committee. This was my first chance to meet my fellow committee members.

Later on Sunday was the Sharing Area Highlights. Each Area presented a success from last year and a challenge for this year. One recurrent challenge for many Areas revolved around Alateen. We had 2 minutes for our sharing. Two minutes goes very fast and many, including myself had the bell ring before we had finished. Everyone took it in stride with a lot of laughter.

Sunday evening was the opening dinner; everyone was excited to be there. I received my 2012 WSC pin from my mentor, Maddie P. The speaker after dinner was Liz W. S. of the Executive Committee. She is a third year member of the Executive Committee. In her sharing she focused on the 9 Conferences she has attended.

Monday morning began at breakfast with group pictures of each Panel. There was a lot of passing of cameras. We then began our work in earnest with the opening of the 2012 World Service Conference. The first order of business was seating the non-voting participants in attendance. Those with voice but no vote were David Z., Director of Business Services, Maria G., Mexico and Peter A., New Zealand. With voice limited to ECRPM was Debbie G. and with no

voice and no vote was Teresa A., Associate Director of Member Services-Spanish. All but David Z. are Al-Anon members.

The rest of opening session included review of ground rules, voting procedures, etc. Much of the first day had to do with financial issues.

We began with the Auditor's Report. This was presented by Penny R., Treasurer and David Z., Director of Business Services. The 2011 audit Report was completed by a different group this year for a fresh look. This report was completed by Cherry, Bekaert & Holland. As of December 31, 2011 the total assets for Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc were \$9,452,664 and liabilities were \$1,411,290 which leaves unrestricted net assets of \$8,041,374 among 3 funds – General, Reserve and Building. The Reserve Fund had a balance of \$3,848,701 at year-end after recording investments at fair value and estimating the cost of postretirement health benefits. The Building Fund, established in 1995 to record the purchase of the headquarters office, shows the cost of the land, building and building improvements at \$2,056,564. In the General fund, income from operations totaled \$5,136,678 and expenses for the year were \$4,932,942. As a result the General Fund balance was increased by \$203,736. A gross profit of \$3,354,087 was realized on literature sales and contributions were \$1,296,073. Forum subscriptions totaled \$273,653. In October 2007 the Board of Trustees approved annual transfers of up to 4% of the average fair value of the Reserve Fund for the 36 months ended on December 31 of the prior year to the General fund. This transfer totaled \$183,600 in 2011. A net decrease of \$109,746 was recorded in the Reserve Fund. The Reserve Fund loss, including realized and unrealized gains and losses totaling \$61,655 and estimated postretirement health benefits increase of 448,091. Building fund expenses are charged to the General Fund as occupancy costs.

This audit was provided to the Conference members well before the Conference for our review and allowed for questions to be sent in, in advance. We were also allowed time for questions at the end of the presentation. I do have a copy of both the questions submitted and the Audit if anyone wishes to review it.

The next financial matter that was discussed was the proposed budget for 2012. This was lead by Penny R., Treasurer and David Z., Director of Business Services. A copy of the budget has been distributed. The budget shows that it is expected that expenses will be \$216,000 more than revenue for the year. The estimated expenses will be \$5,273,000 and revenues will be \$5,057,000. There were two adjustments from the Preliminary Budget. Instead of hiring new staff, a consultant will be used to fill the open Personnel/Training Manager position. The membership survey was omitted on the Preliminary Budget.

Projected Expenses - Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$340,000 from last year's actual. Labor costs are expected to increase \$124,000 due to more staff becoming eligible for the retirement plan and cost of living and merit increases effective June 1, 2012. The change in labor expenses from the preliminary budget to the final version was due to the position of Human Resources being outsourced. Building occupancy increased from 2011 to 2012 because of a new roof and expected repairs to the 15 year old heating system.

Estimated Income - Income from literature sales are estimated to be about \$214,000 less than last year and Forum subscription income to be less. Budgeted contributions are \$1,500,000 which is about \$204,000 more than last year's actual. Beginning in 2008, it was agreed to transfer up to 4% of the fair value of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund. Since the average value dropped for the 36 months ending December 31, 2011, investment income budgeted is about \$21,000 less than last year.

There were a few notes during this presentation the really caused me to pause and think. During 2011 25% of the WSO income was from contributions. 59% of the active groups made e contributions, so out of 15,689 active groups only 9,226 contributed leaving 6,463 groups that did not make any contribution. If each group were to increase their contribution by \$13 in 2012 it would mean the estimated budgeted contributions would be met, if the increase were \$26 more all expenses would be met. Looking at NYN 53.5% of the groups in the Area made contributions to WSO. The average total contribution per group for the 2011 was \$74.03. The increase from 2010 to 2011 was \$1329. The average cost of service per group was \$248.07.

The Annual Report was presented by Ric B., Executive director of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. As such he is responsible for the overall supervision of the WSO staff and for the administration of organization's policies. The Board of Trustees along with the Executive Committee direct business operations of the WSO, observing the By-Laws of the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board acts as the chief service arm of the WSC; they guard the legal rights and control the finances and serve as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts and the Conference Charter.

Ric first wanted us to know that he had to make an amends with regards to the Family Health Survey. It has been continually stated that with the survey the policy established by the Policy Committee with regards to surveys was followed. It turns out that while the spirit and intent of the policy was followed, the letter of the policy was not. Part of the policy was for a task force of staff and members to review the survey, this did not happen. However the survey was brought to the Executive Committee where 6 volunteers, 2 staff did review.

Due to the length of the Annual Report I will attempt to outline major points of the report.

- Board of Trustees:
  - ❖ Approved amended guidelines for the Executive, Nominating, and Finance Committees, as well as the Conference Leadership Team
  - ❖ Approve new scoring form for RT and TAL candidates
  - ❖ 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 give the WSO permission to publish electronically *The Forum* and

### *Having Had a Spiritual Awakening* (B-25)

- ❖ Appoint a Task force to pursue the idea of memorial gardens, benches, bricks or trees as a revenue stream
- ❖ 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.
- Strategic Plan: The Board continues its revision to the Strategic Plan. Looking at how Al-Anon currently does business, what does or doesn't work as well. Utilizing a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)
  - ❖ **Universal Understanding of Recovery:** The meaning of Recovery will be understood by everyone – both within and outside of Al-Anon Family Groups, including professionals, government agencies, and the general public. The definition of recovery will be clear and concise, including how membership in Al-Anon leads to recovery.
- Executive Committee: Meets monthly, the administrator of the World Service Office.
- Policy Committee: Utilizes spiritual principles that guide policy and is the largest group conscience outside of the world Service Conference (WSC)
  - ❖ Public relations: continues work-in-progress on revision and reorganization of the Public Relations section of the 2010-2013 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual
  - ❖ Memorial Contributions: Thought Force study on current policy on memorial contributions.
  - ❖ Babysitting Services: Statement on babysitting in "Groups at work" more appropriate.
  - ❖ "Do Not Refer": Continue discussion on groups that do not adhere to Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions. Discussion will continue at 2012 WSC.

- ❖ Dual members in Service: Thought Force to identify spiritual philosophy underlying this policy. Task Force to consider improvements for clarity to the existing language.
- ❖ Scientific Research: Post on Member's Website the original Policy Statement that was established for WSO to follow when cooperating with scientific research.
- ❖ Group E-mail Address: January WSO authorized to use e-mail to directly contact members serving their groups as CMAs (Current Mailing Address)
- ❖ Social Networking sites: January authorized WSO to initiate a presence for Al-Anon on social networking websites. A "passive" presence. WSO initiated sites on Twitter and Facebook in August
- ❖ Title change: Change of title of pamphlet "To the Mother and Father of an Alcoholic" to "To the parents of Alcoholics" (P-16)
- Administrative Team; Created to have oversight of certain office-wide projects assigned by the Executive Director. Also to provide leadership support to office in absence of Executive Director.
  - ❖ Developed and refine disaster recovery plans.
  - ❖ With electronic communication to CMAs identified valid CMA e-mail addresses and sent first electronic newsletter.
  - ❖ Several publications now published on-line only
  - ❖ Upgrades to "Unlimited Abundant Resource Survey"
  - ❖ Addressing issue of late delivery of *The Forum*
- Communication Services/Public Outreach:
  - ❖ TV PSA Campaign; Sketches IV nearly 90,000 airplays on TV in 2011. 54% increase over Sketches III. More than 400 broadcast TV stations gave airtime to Sketches IV, 31 % increase from Sketches III. Reached a total audience of 427 million in US in 2011. Down about 10% from previous year which mirrors general decline in broadcast TV viewership.
  - ❖ Radio PSA campaign: Airplays nearly 90,000 on more than 350 radio stations compared to 31,000 airplays on 263 radio stations for previous radio PSA campaign (two years ago)
  - ❖ Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism: 362,075 copies distributed, nearly 4% increase over 2010.
  - ❖ Public Outreach Web site: New version of English language Public Outreach Web site in April. In 2011 web site in English, French and Spanish increased by 7.3%
  - ❖ Public Outreach DVD: 4<sup>th</sup> printing since April (AV-31)

- ❖ Social Media: Facebook and Twitter to share information about Al-Anon with members, professionals and the general public. Over 500 followers on Twitter. Facebook postings read by 300 to 500 people.
- Public Outreach Committee: Identified and prioritized target audiences, included men and women, ages 26-40, young parents and parents of teens and adult alcoholics.
- Fellowship Communications:
  - ❖ Many Voices, One Journey (B-31) New 426 page book.
  - ❖ Legacies Workbook (working title) Plan to introduce at 2013 Al-Anon International Convention in Vancouver, BC.
  - ❖ How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics (B-32) new soft cover edition.
  - ❖ The Forum Personnel subscriptions declined by 9% from 22,834 to 20,986.
- Literature Committee:
- Member Service/Group Services Department
  - ❖ Group Records Coordinator Calls
  - ❖ Area Alateen Process Conference Calls
  - ❖ Alateen
  - ❖ Group services Podcasts
- Membership Outreach Department
- Al-Anon/Alateen International

There is much more in the Annual Report than what I have outlined here.

The Triennial Report on the Executive Committee for Real Property Management: Presented by Penny R., this was the 6<sup>th</sup> Triennial. Questions to ask: Has ownership of property been financially feasible? Yes. A savings of at least \$55,000 per year with ownership in Virginia Beach vs. rental in NYC. Any negative impact on fellowship with ownership? No negative impact

3 year Trial to Disband Admissions/Handbook Work Group & the Group Services Committee was lead by Lori K. Immediate Past Chairperson of Group Services Committee and Bev A. Immediate Past Chairperson of Admissions/Handbook Work Group. This was a 3 year trial begun in 2009. Currently duties are being successfully handled by other committees with regards to Admissions/Handbook. The whole of WSO provides services to groups Committee members have been freed to work on task forces. The Board of Trustees voted to disband both after the 3 year trial period.

Early in the year Delegates were asked if they would be willing to give up time assigned for Chosen Agenda Items (CAI) so that discussions could be held with regards to electronic literature. It was noted that if the agenda did allow time for CAI discussion this would also take

place. With this in mind Delegates were asked to present topics which were of interest to them and their Areas for consideration. These were reviewed by the Conference Leadership Team. Like topics were combined and then submitted to Delegates. They then selected 2 topics that they most wanted to discuss. Based on those totals 2 topics were chosen to be presented at Conference. After they were presented there was a discussion from the floor. We were able to have both CAI brought up for discussion during the Conference.

The first CAI was “How do we empower the average Al-Anon member to speak up at meetings when someone else’s sharing is not Al-Anon?’ In the group, some dual members tend to speak about their program, mentally ill members tend to speak about therapy, and only one or two members would say something to help members return to Al-Anon Principles How do we empower others to speak up.

Tradition 5 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. Often these newcomers may regard the alcoholism as having only a minimal impact on the family compared to the other addictions. Nevertheless, they are family members of alcoholics, and we have an obligation to try to help them while at the same time remember our singleness of purpose and not allow our focus to be shifted away from alcoholism.

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? As we continue to grow and reach out to new and potential members, our message of hope must remain clear. In attempting to embrace new members in our own Areas and in other service structures, we are increasingly challenged with multiple outside influences (i.e. treatment center jargon, culturally diverse terms and phrases, other 12-Step fellowships’ verbiage, etc.) to keep our message consistent. When we give a pure and undiluted message of hope, and guide others to give the same clear message, we lessen confusion and distraction as we give to ourselves and others who embark on our spiritual journey.

The general thoughts from the discussion were that balance and love are needed when approaching people at meetings, don’t shame anyone. That we need to model behavior, “Let it begin with Me”. The importance of structuring meetings around CAL and Traditions. Also using

“Groups at Work”. Finally keep in mind, tolerance and time, balance and the presence of the Higher Power.

The second CAI discussed was “How does WSO see social networks, such as Facebook and YouTube, as a way to attract and retain new members to our fellowship?” Even though the WSO has now entered Facebook and Twitter, what are the ways in which social networking can aid in attracting and retaining members into our fellowship and retain our anonymity and keep within the understanding of our Traditions?

After 60 years of Al-Anon we are still not well know. How can we get Al-Anon and Alateen “out of the closet”? Because of the Traditions the WSO proceeds with caution. In 2007 first posted on YouTube. During 2011 presence on Facebook and Twitter, these are outreach tools. Also the Website has new features including podcasts and blogs. It’s not that we’re not well known but that we could be better known.

The discussion about electronic literature took place over three days. Each day the focus of discussion was different, the impact on AIS/LDCs the first day, the impact on the WSO the second day and the impact on Structure outside the WSC structure the final day. There was a lot of information presented. Delegates shared information from their Areas along with their own personal thoughts and ideas. Many different ideas and opinions where shared. There will be many more discussions on this topic. It is not an either/or situation, both traditional and e-literature are important.

Delegates were able to participate in two skill building workshops during the Conference. I chose “How to deal with difficult situations” and “How to engage audiences using multiple strategies and techniques”. I enjoyed both workshops. The first reinforced for me that I have the tools available to me to deal with difficult situations, the 3 Legacies, Slogans, Listening and the Service Manual. My second workshop was very good for me with my first report to the Assembly coming shortly after the conference. I think by my final report in 2014 I might be comfortable with giving this report!

During the whole week at Conference there were a number of Task Force and Thought Force presentations. There were 3 Thought Forces; 1. How to utilize the Service Manual, 2. Members involved in Service Work who are unable to effectively fulfill their responsibilities and 3. How changes to the environment outside of Al-Anon may affect our meetings and fellowship as a whole. Again there was a lot of discussion after all 3 presentations. The discussion on the Service Manual center on increasing use of this underused tool. One phrase I heard was that the Conference should be cheerleaders for the Service Manual. The other two Thought Forces



both called upon the use of the Service Manual in dealing with their respective issues. Also both called upon communication, patience and open-mindedness.

The first Task Force – Reach out to Minority Groups presented a number of ideas or templates that might be used by Areas. They could be adjusted to meet the Areas needs. These include a PowerPoint; creating awareness in the Area and members. It presents factual information for a basic understanding of who makes up our fellowship and why we need to continue to grow. A Personal cultural self-awareness inventory: Action step to self-awareness. This individual inventory is for members to reflect on where they are with the commitment to reach underserved populations. And finally a Cultural diversity worksheet that will help the area and groups make small modifications to extend a broader welcome to new members and broaden the Al-Anon welcome. It includes; a) suggested list of CAL to display in groups, b) suggested public outreach plan in worksheet form to help reach professional communities, c) Utilizing culturally diverse current members

The second Task Force – To develop presentations that will help to strengthen the communication between AIS< Areas and Districts presentation centered on building trust, cooperation and most importantly, respect among all three entities. That 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 they can communicate utilizing the many resources we have available to us today, thus improving communication and reducing conflict among the three entities. With this in mind the suggestion was a series of meetings with the AISs, Districts and Area. To have honest conversations, to build working relationships and explore common goals.

1. Meeting to discuss purpose and set goals.
2. Second meeting a meal together.
3. Meet at Assembly where all work together on a presentation on working together.

This could be done every three years.

The finally the Task Force of Trustees reported on the Conference Structure, The Board of Trustees and the conference has spent years trying to come up with a plan for our structure that would work for everyone but it hasn't gone done. The Task Force is now asking Conference members to think "outside the box" about our structure. In describing this opportunity they used the words "Freedom, vision and no holds barred". A trial period has begun for Areas to come up with a personalized Area structure that would enable groups to have full communication, participation, and representation. Areas may make any changes to the structure as it appears in the Service Manual except for the "Policy Digest" pages 75-121. Examples could be a simple as 1 year terms instead of 3 years for DRs or as complex as an Area

deciding to send the Alternate Delegate to the Conference with the Delegate. This second person would have no voice or vote and the expenses would be the responsibility of the Area. The length of the trial period has not been set yet. If the structure in your area is working well there is no need to make changes just for the sake of making changes. The Board of Trustees is looking forward to hearing thoughts and ideas and is there to answer any questions or concerns.

During this year's Conference 4 trustees-at-Large were approved and 4 Regional Trustees, Canada East, Canada West, Canada Central and US South Central. Also approved were Board Officers and a member of the Executive Committee on Real Property Management. (ECRPM). Members of the Executive Committee, its Chairperson and the Chairperson of the ECRPM

This coming year will begin the process for choosing Regional Trustees for the following Areas: US North Central, US North East and US South East. The process for choosing regional trustees was reviewed and RT caucuses were held to choose a Chair and Alternate Chair as part of this process. I will be reviewing this process in more detail later today when we vote on submitting Anne F.'s resume as our candidate for North East Regional trustee.

The Public Outreach Committee presentation had some exciting information to pass on to us. I'm sure Summer has a lot of information about all of these so I will be brief. The first is a new feature on the WSO website. It is "The Best of Public Outreach" This is a service tool for Public Outreach activities. The second item talked about was the Public Outreach Poster contest. The WSO welcomes members' horizontal or vertical designs for new posters based on the current Theme – "Is someone else's drinking tearing you apart?" Winning entries will be posted on the members' Web site for use as Public Outreach posters.

There was good news and bad news when talking about the PSAs. In the last 2 years TV and radio combined PSAs have reached 1 billion people in the US and Canada, In 2010, 400 million people and in 2011, 600 million people. Nielson rated the PSA in the top 5% of all public service announcements the last 2 years. The bad news is there are still important markets that have not played any PSAs. The new how to "The Best of Public Outreach" has information on how to get TV and radio stations to play the PSAs. I have a DVD with the latest PSA to give to Summer. It is not broadcast quality but will give you an idea of the PSA. Copies can be made of this DVD.

One discussion that took place during the week was on a "Do Not Refer" policy. The conversation was begun last year at the 2011 WSC. The concerns centered on groups that Areas believe operate outside of the Legacies. This included groups that do not use CAL, high pressure groups, groups with only dual members etc. some areas have addressed these concerns by

delisting them from the Area. As a result have asked the World Service Office to support their decision by applying a code so that callers to the toll free meeting line would not be referred to these groups. The discussion centered on the principles that Areas can use to discuss and develop policies for groups not adhering to the Legacies and the principles the Area can use to support groups to successfully follow the Legacies. The discussion that followed was very thought provoking. Much included using the Traditions and concepts in any policy development. Once Areas have had principle-based discussions and developed their own policies on groups that do not adhere to Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions, they will be able to provide input to the Policy Committee.

The Literature Committee brought to the Conference for discussion: Developing a new pamphlet about mental, emotional, verbal and physical abuse in alcoholic relations. This discussion was very emotional and there were many different ideas and opinions expressed. In the end no motion was made. There is a lot more that needs to be looked at before any motion can be brought to the Conference. This for me was one of the most emotionally draining discussions that took place all week.

Delegates were able to sit in on two open meetings during the Conference, the Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees. The open Policy meeting continued a discussion of the policy on Al-Anon's cooperation with researchers. In January the Committee agreed that participation with researchers is important to Al-Anon in that it provides conclusive data of the credibility of Al-Anon as a program and not simply anecdotal reports of members. The committee agreed that the procedure to review research requests needs to be improved.

There were actually two open Board of Trustee meetings, one on Tuesday evening and a second on Friday morning. Both meetings were brief lasting about an hour.

On Wednesday, April 18<sup>th</sup> the conference took a break and made a trip to Stepping Stones in Bedford Hills, NY. It was a wonderful break as it was a lovely spring day and was the first chance I had had to get outside in four days. We took 5 buses on the trip to Stepping stones. When we arrived we had a picnic lunch in the gardens and then had plenty of time to wonder through the house, visit "Wits End" and of course visit the gift shop. We had an extra treat as a number of Al-Anon volunteers had made some wonderful desserts for us, including beautiful sugar cookies in the shape of a shoe. This was my second visit to Stepping Stones and it was every bit as moving to me as my first visit. We returned to the hotel in the afternoon and after a short break were right back to work.

There were two International visitors to the 2012 World Service Conference. Maria Evangelina de Leon G. from Mexico and Peter A. from New Zealand. Both shared with us during the Conference and added to discussions during the week.

During the summer of 2011 Ric B., Executive Director and 3 Trustees made a 6 week trip to Europe to visit Service Structure in Europe. Ric was there the full 6 weeks and the 3 Trustees were each there for a 2 week period. Also Roger C., Trustee, made a trip to Iceland. The GSO in Iceland was asking for help with a couple of problems.

Ric B. and Roger C. attended the European Zonal meeting in Leeds, England. The IGASM meets every 2 years, there were 14 countries in attendance. The number of Alateen meetings in Europe has stayed the same as has the ratio of Alateen to Al-Anon meetings. The same struggles affect the European structures, financial issues. There are 24 out of 50 countries in Europe that have an Al-Anon structure.

Trustee, Bev A. joined Ric in Istanbul, Turkey. Al-Anon in turkey is evaluating their structure, having AIS and beginning with "Groups at Work" first.

They then went to Slovenia. Here the meeting also centered on evaluating their structure, there is no GSO but there is an AIS. There was a lot of interest and questions on translating literature. Also a lot of questions on Alateen and Adult Children meetings. Ric and Bev then continued on to Hungary and Poland. In Hungary the discussions again centered on evaluating the structure, there is no GSO but there is an AIS. Questions included "Do I have to speak at a meeting?", "Introduce myself?", "How long are meetings?" etc. There is no Alateen at present. They talked about translating "Groups at Work". "In all our affairs" is to be translated. In Poland there is a GSO, there are 14 Areas. Of these 2 have Districts. There were lots of questions about our WSC; they have had a Conference for the past 14 years.

During the next leg of this tour Ric was accompanied by Chairperson of the Board, Karen R. for visits to Austria and Italy. In Austria they follow Germany because of the common language. They are able to make money on literature sales because Germany sells to them at a discount. The questions they had were round how to talk to members about making contributions and sponsorship. Italy was celebrating their 35<sup>th</sup> Al-Anon anniversary. There were many issues discussed including difficult people, the Charter, Traditions, Conference, the Serenity Prayer and pyramid groups.

Also during 2011, Marsha W., Director of Member Services and Vicki H., Trustee visited Panama. They attended the Central American Zonal Meeting. This 3 day meeting included 15 people from Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama and Guatemala. There are many challenges in this

region. There are many indigenous people, in Guatemala there are 22 different languages. Must carry the message differently than to the University area. Also have to deal with guerilla warfare. The economy affects them greatly, those doing service work are centrally located, and they have to pay their own travel expenses. Illiteracy and poverty have a great affect. There are 2 GSOs, in Costa Rica and Guatemala.

The 2013 Al-Anon International Convention will be held July 5-7, 2013 in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. I have made a book marker with a few facts about the Convention for Officers, Coordinators and DRs. Registration information will be available on-line this fall. A few paper registration forms will be mailed to groups at about the same time. There will be an International Convention website set up this summer. Registration fees: \$115 by December 31, 2012, \$140 before May 31, 2013 and \$165 after June 1, 2013. There will be a Day of Service on Thursday, July 4<sup>th</sup>. There will be a separate registration fee. More information when the registration information is available this fall. Just a reminder, you must have a passport to enter Canada. The Passport card is only good if you are driving.

The 2013 World Service Conference will be held in Virginia Beach, Virginia from April 15<sup>th</sup> through April 18<sup>th</sup>. Sunday April 14<sup>th</sup> will be for orientation for new Delegates, committees and Sharing Area Highlights and the open Board of Trustees meeting will be April 19<sup>th</sup>.

After the Board of Trustees meeting Friday morning many Delegates began to return home. There were 12 of us who stayed so that we could present our bids for the 2018 Al-Anon International Convention. NYN's presentation was in the afternoon. Joan S. came to wait with me and Debbie and Melissa from the Albany County Convention and visitors Bureau were there to do the actual presentation. They did a great job but in the end we were not one of the finalists. The three locations chosen were Baltimore, Maryland, Denver, Colorado and Indianapolis, Indiana. In the next few months these 3 cities will be visited to see how they best meet our needs before the final decision is made.

This was my first Conference. I was told repeatedly that I was in for the experience of my life. I can only say that this was so very true. I wish I could put into words how wonderful this week was. It was so much hard work but there was so much joy, laughter and caring along with the hard work. There are a few pictures here that my mentor, Maddie P. took of me during the Conference. I have tried to give you all a glimpse of the Conference in my report. I have not touched on everything that happened but will be using my article in the HiLights to cover them. The conference Summary will be out this summer, please get a copy for yourself. There is some much more than I could cover today.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve NYN as your Panel 52 Delegate.