

Delegates Report on World Service Conference 2016

The 2016 WSC was held from April 11-15, 2016 at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia. As your New York North Delegate, it was a privilege to attend as your representative. Our **Theme was REALIZING OUR SPIRITUAL POTENTIAL!!!**

On Sunday Night April 10 we arrived to receive our conference Notebooks, our Name badges, Lanyards and to meet and greet many returning Delegate. We also were able welcome the some of the New Delegates (Panel 56) and to show them the ropes (how to SHOP at the Love Gift Store, where the mailbox was and how to put their Work Binders together). It was so nice to see all of them.

After Dinner with some of my fellow Panel 55 Delegate's & NERDs we settled down for the night to prepare for the week ahead of us.

On Monday morning I attended my assigned **Task Force on Meeting Types (Assigned at the 2015 Conference)** to prepare for our Presentation that would take place on Thursday Morning. We practiced our Skit, decided how we would present our workshop & talked about any last minute ideas that would help people to understand our Presentation.

Before we started our Afternoon Session we were informed that our Former Executive Director, Ric Buchanan has retired from and will be replaced by a Temporary Director Mary Gregory (former Chair of the Board of Trustees & Executive Committee and a New York North Delegate). Before retiring to Florida, Mary was an active member of Al-anon in the Buffalo Area. **(One of our own)**

We thank Ric for his Service to Al-anon during the years of 1996-2016. If people would like to Sign a Card to wish him well, I have provided one here. I will send it to WSO who will forward it to him.

We then continued on the day with a presentation about the roles of the various members of Select Committees, Task/Thought Forces, and Work Groups.

We then broke for to attend the Task Forces we were assigned to.

My new assignment was to the Task Force: **Spiritually in District Money Discussions (there were also Task Forces relating to Groups & Area Money Discussions).**

Our Charge was to review the barriers and strategies presented to us by the WSC presentation created at the 2015 World Service Conference presentation **"Thought Force: Create Strategies to Show the Importance of Abundance and Spirituality in Money Discussions."** Members of the 2015 WSC requested a workshop or skit that could be presented to their Areas on the spiritual principles in financial matters. Topics to consider were the Principals of Gratitude, Abundance, Acceptance, Equality, Mutual Trust and Willingness. Etc. We also considered who our audience was (new GR's, members who have been Al-Anon for a while)people can make their own judgments, what are the Spiritual Principle involved, Fear, Control, Prudent or Ample Reserve, GR 41-Financial Inventory. We were asked to review the barriers and strategies to incorporate realistic financial situations that would aid members in relating to the financial discussion.

I will be able to give you more information on this at the Fall Assembly.

This year we had a **new Format for the Sharing Area Highlights**. Delegates submitted that Area Successes & Concerns to the Committee and then they were reviewed to see if there were concerns that effect most Area and we then took time to discuss them.

We were divided by table and here are the subjects talked about at each table.

- Delegates Reports/Prioritizing Information
- Our Role as Delegates
- Floor Motions/ Procedures
- Encouraging Participation Service at beyond the Group level. (also in our groups as well)
- Self-Support
- Effective Communication
- AWSC

We talked amongst ourselves and then had feedback.

We felt that this was a way for all of us to share on a smaller scale and to learn from each other. For those who are interested I have the questions that we were asked to consider and I hope to have the feedback soon. I will present some of the in my Northern Highlight Article soon so that if you would like, you could use them in your Groups or Districts Business Meetings.

To start the week off in the Spirit of Unity we had our Opening Dinner, where we officially pinned & welcomed the New Panel 56 Delegates. Trustee and Conference Co-Chairperson Karen Ward-Parente, spoke about how she reached her Spiritual Potential thru working the Steps, Traditions & Concept of Service in her life and work and how this gave her a sense of purpose. What a wonderful night and a special way to look at our own Spiritual Potential. **(Maybe we can have a Stretch Break here).**

The week was filled with many hours of presentations, skits, voting items, thought processes, and time to reflect on how these decisions affect not only us as a group, but Al-Anon as a Whole.

Each day outgoing Panel 54 members gave a three minute talk on how they had reached the Spiritual Potential thru Al-Anon and Service. They shared how there "Recovery SOARED" (there unofficial title "Panel 54-See us SOAR (Service our Al-Anon Responsibility)

As a result of our discussion last year regarding **Alateen** and if the model that we are using works, an Alateen Survey was done in March of this year. We were given the statistical and some of the questions that were asked. There were 292 respondents, they had to screen out people who were not members today, members who were over 21 and those who did not answered the first three questions.

Some of the information that we learned:

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- Current Alateen members learned about Alateen through other teens, their parents who were AA or Al-Anon Members and through Professionals.
- The average of teens attending was 14.26 years of age, some started Alateen before they were 10 and the average oldest age was 18.74.
- Teens like Face to Face Meetings.
- The least important thing to them is Technology (we thought they would like Alateen chat rooms better.)
- Groups that grew we were involved in Service.
- Groups grew that when they Focused on the three Legacy's
- 20% wished there were meetings in school (do to transportation problems of getting to meetings if parents did not attend a meeting at the same place or same time,
- Teens wanted us to encourage all of our members to send their children, grandchildren or other teens to Alateen even if we think they were affected or not (see table card that talk about this).
- They want to be welcomed in to Al-Anon meetings and they have something to share.

The results of the survey and the questions will be shared with us and our Alateen Coordinator after it is discussed at the next Board of Trustees Meeting and we will be able to give you more information on this when we receive it.

We continued to review and discussed **Memorial Contributions and the wording changes of Concept 11**. These were voted on and after they are approved by the Board of Trustees we will be sent copies of them for you to replace these pages in your Service Manual. If you would like to see them I will have a copy here today for you to look at.

I was assigned to a **Breakout session on Alateen. What is the key to unlocking the success for Alateen throughout our Areas?**

- Define Success. . Is this just in numbers attending groups, number of groups in Area or how we attract and keep newcomers?
- How do we keep Group Sponsors from burnout?
- What do we give AMIIS to do (they can be used for back up to give Sponsors a break and to carry the message of the availability of Alateen while they are attending the weekly Al-Anon Meeting)?
- Keys to success are groups that focus on the program,
- Groups that the teens feel it's theirs and not the Adult members. Groups lead by the Teens and decisions made by the teen
- Alateen can grow through periodic Open Meetings (such as Fund raising meetings, Holiday Meetings or inviting the teens to Lead the Al-Anon Meeting using their literature and picking the topics, let them share before the adults in the room share.
- Success is when we see Alateens move on to Al-Anon.

•Affirmations of the Regional Trustees for the following Areas:

- U.S, S Northeast - Joan Sullivan Second 3year Term
- US Southeast – Not affirmed
- US North Central Debbie Grace Second three year Term
- Trustee at Large Elizabeth (Jennie) McCann Maine Second Three year Term
- Judy Kirby Nevada Second three Year Term
- Rosie Morin Texas East First three year Term
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- Board Officers Debbie Grace Chairperson
- Joan Sullivan Vice Chairperson
- Elizabeth (Jennie) McCann Treasurer
- Executive Committee Bev Anderson Chairperson
- Paula Burleson Member at Large
- Connie Hurst Member at Large
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- Executive Committee for Real Property Management
- Thomas Blake Three Year Term
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2015 Audit:

2015 Audit of the Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc. was done by the Auditing group **Dixon Hughes & Goodman, Inc.** The results were positive, which means we are handling our accounting process appropriately. However we are projecting a deficit budget for 2016.

If you are interested in looking at it I have a copy of it with me and the questions & answers that will help to explain it)

2016 Budget- See WSO Members Page for information)

Total Labor Cost \$3,620,000

Total Operating Expenses \$5,002,000

Deprecation on Building \$ 55,000

Total Expenses \$5,057,000

Estimated Revenue

Literature Sales

(Less cost of Printing) \$2,600,000

Contributions \$1,800,000

Forum Subscriptions \$ 250,000

Investment Income/Transfer

From Reserve Fund \$ 223,000

Total Estimated Revenue	\$4,873,000
Net Increase (decrease)	\$ (184,000)

As you can see WSO is **projecting a deficit Budget again this year** (bigger than last year) Some of the reasons are declining Literature Sales and declining Investment Income. Membership has decreased and Group Contributions are declining as a result. In 2015 we asked Groups to **Think Abundantly** regarding their contributions. Contributions through the Quarterly Appeals did increase and Forum Subscriptions did increase revenue. We thank you for getting word out but we still need to look deep with yourselves and have those conversations about **Money**. WSO Spends Approx. \$268.00 per groups. Is your group contributing this much each year, do you have a budget and is WSO Donation a part of it? Here are some suggestions and strategies that might help us to Think Abundantly. (Contributed by Jennie Mc. WSO Treasurer:

We all have concern about the projected budget deficit for 2016. I would like to offer some encouraging words and some tactics or strategies that might help to close this deficit and even have us end the year in a surplus. I am very optimistic about our abundance! We have so many members, groups and districts that are able to each help in a small way with potentially huge results.

Literature sales:

What if only 1 member at half the meetings bought a hardcover book this year who weren't intending on buying a book and 'paid it forward' – gave it away to a newcomer, Al-Anon friend or library? We could increase literature sales by \$90,000. What if three people in each meeting bought a book? What if every member bought an 'extra' book this year?

Appeal to members:

What if each member placed \$15 in the appeal envelope this year? I can't even begin to tell you what opportunities that would present! Are you able to make that kind of contribution? Is it possible that other members, with encouragement and an understanding of the purpose would be able to do the same? What if many members could contribute even more?

Individual members:

What if every member clicked on the 'Contribute Now' button and made a contribution? What if some gave \$1, some gave \$5, some gave \$15 and some were able to give even more? The possibilities are almost incredible. \$200,000? (That might be only \$1 per member) \$1,000,000? (That might be \$5 per member) \$3,000,000? (That might represent \$15 per member) Think of the possibilities!

Groups:

What if even 25% of the groups gave an extra \$20 this year? We would realize \$76,000. What if they were able to give more? What if all groups were able to give a little more this year than last?

Districts:

What if even half our districts contribute to WSO? Any amount would be an expression of gratitude, abundance and responsibility.

We are blessed with so many grateful members. That is our abundance. If each of us does a little, we can accomplish a lot. While it is wonderful to receive contributions of many thousands from districts, Areas and members, we cannot depend on those generous service arms and individuals alone. We each have multiple opportunities to express our gratitude for what Al-Anon has given us.

Please don't be discouraged. If we relay the message that we each can and do make a difference, we can not only close the deficit but fund the Reserve as well as some exciting new initiatives at the World Service Office to further support our members and ensure Al-Anon's presence far into the future.

I have copies of the 2015 Contributions by State for you to look at if you are interested in what your group gave last year I will be happy to find this information out.

(The Audit gives the Nitty Gritty Stuff and the Budget gives the projected Income and Expenses)

LITERATURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: Should the WSC give Conceptual approval to remove the "Prayer for Today" from Conference Approved Literature?

The question arose because two different members in two Different Areas requested that the Prayer for Today at appear on the **Just for Today Wallet Card (M-10)** and **Book Mark (M-12)** as well as on page 101 from **How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics (B22)** should be removed. Although it is beautiful, it is clearly a religious prayer, and should be revised or discontinued. The second member requested that the words "O, Divine Master, in the second paragraph of the prayer be changed to "God" Because the prayers included in the **Newcomer Packet(K-10)** she felt it could give many newcomers the idea that Al-Anon is a religious Program.

Using KBDM discussion they discussed it for many months and reached a unanimous consensus to recommend the removal of the "**Prayer for Today**" from the **Just for Today' Bookmark and Wallet card**, as well as from **how Al-anon Works**. The Committee decided to have discussions through AFG Connects to brainstorm ideas on what, if anything, it would recommend to replace the prayer where featured.

At the December meeting it was recommended that , if the Conference agreed to remove the **Prayer for Today**, then the text could be enlarged without adding any other material, and that page 101 in How Al-Anon works could end with a quotation from the last Paragraph in **When I got busy I got better**.

Many Delegates had strong feelings for and against. Many of the talked to their area before hand and some felt that if we took God out of the program we would be taking the Spiritually out of it. Some offered to edit it or to provide it with another prayer. Some thought we could edit it. We were not able to this come to a consensus so that this recommendation was not put to a motion and put to a vote.

I ask that you take some time today to gather your thoughts on this and if we can take about 30 minutes this afternoon to allow you to express those thought with us. (Following the guidelines of 1 time at the mic and the 2 minutes) or you can e-mail me after to let me know. I will pass them on to the committee.

Helen H. is On the WSO Literature Committee I would ask that if you have any questions or concerns you direct them to her.

Highlights from the 2015 Annual Report

Policy Committee- would draft language for a proposed change on Memorial Contributions. The Proposed language would be brought for to the 2016 WSC for discussion and Vote (Motion Voted on and Passed).

Administration: Approved the Finance committee recommendation for the selling of **Courage to Change (eB-16)** as a complete version on iTunes and in two parts on amazon, Nook and Kobo due to pricing policies. The Forum was approved to be sold as a monthly subscription in order for all members who have access to systems other than Nook to receive to receive the Forum.

Archives: Lois' Story (AV-1) and Lois W. and the Pioneers (AV-24) were converted to DVD and a closed captioned version was included on each DVD.

The price of \$25.00 would cover the costs of mailing to and from the office

Feedback about their experience using communities. After reviewing this and consulting 3 outside companies for replacement for e-communities AFG Connects became the choice.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism: Al-Anon members distributed a record breaking 387, 425 copies in 2015. Members and service arms that bought the magazine were sent thank you'd for their participation.

The FORUM: At the end of the year 2015, personal subscriptions to the Forum totaled about 18,400 – a decrease of seven percent from 2015.

Media: Al-An presence on new media, such as Face book, Twitter, and You Tube offer Al-Anon members throughout the world opportunities to share the Al-Anon message of recovery quickly, easily, and inexpensively, The potential is for new media eventually to reach bigger audiences that traditional media, such as television and radio.

These , these are just some of the Highlights of 2015 so in order to conserve time and your tiredness of hearing my talk I would suggest you order the 2016 Conference Summary (can be purchased for \$5.00 online or at your Area Literature Depot. All DR, & Officers will be receiving them free from me.

Policy Committee Recommendation to revise the Text Regarding “Conventions and Other Events for title “Conventions” on page 85-86 in our Service manual. Because there was no clear consensus as to the Wording that we could live with we did not make a Motion to take a vote on it and we ask that it be sent back to the Policy Committee for Consideration for next year.

Our Chosen Agenda Item #5as

- How do we adapt and evolve to attract and retain younger members (under 40) while staying true to our purpose, traditions and concepts?

- We need to save the big roof that covers our house, emotional, mental and spiritual. We have to unify the name of Al-Anon Family Groups for good.

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- Are we as inclusive as we could be whether potential newcomer or member has religious belief or not (the agnostic)?

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- Are the number of Al-Anon groups worldwide growing or shrinking? And once we determine the answer, how can we best respond to address the trend?

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The data available on numbers of AFG meetings around the world has not been collected and analyzed to provide insight into trends – to answer questions such as, are AFG and Alateen meeting numbers growing or shrinking, or what are the trends in particular regions, states, provinces, countries, etc. In Massachusetts, our meeting numbers are half of what they were in the 1990s. What are other Area experiences? If we had this data, how could it help us make better decisions about public outreach, communication with the membership, financial support, etc.?

CAI:

How can we attract and retain more members under the age of 50?

Explain the importance of this CAI and how it could shape Al-Anon as a whole:

According to the latest Al-Anon Annual Survey results, 80% of our membership is over the age of 50. The percentage of Al-Anon members rapidly declines according to their age group to less than 1% as it gets closer to the age of 24 or younger. The average age of our Al-Anon members has risen from 56 in 2009 to 60 in 2015. As the average age continues to increase, we may jeopardize our long term sustainability or solidify a perception as a fellowship for older individuals.

CAI:

How can Al-Anon attract younger, more diverse members beyond the current Al-Anon member being a 62-year-old heterosexual white woman; to maintain and increase Al-Anon's current membership?

AI-Anon/Alateen may be growing internationally but here in the U.S. our membership is diminishing. Without 20 to 40-year-old diverse membership will AI-Anon/Alateen still be here for the next 65 years?

We need to be aggressively visible in the youthful eye - college campuses, young adult associations, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Cable/internet TV, Theaters, Subscription Radio, Arena venues, electronic billboards, App adds, etc.

We need to assist these Medias, that they may recoup their revenues by helping AI-Anon; without breaking Our Traditions.

Literature focused on younger more diverse groups - (electronic and audio that can be used as intended – 366 chapters)

Task Force Presentation regarding Acceptance of Communities, Culture and Beliefs.

Here you will realize that as members of AI-Anon we do not know why people come to our doors. I am reminded of the f Slogan” Attraction rather than promotion and the AI-Anon Declaration “Let it Begin with me! (Give information to Molly to present.)

Other Presentations were

- Public Outreach Video
- Central America and European & Ibero-American Zonal Meeting (these are like our WSC for other Structures in the World who meeting in Area’s close to their home and who might not be able to send a representative to the IMAG Meeting held every two years.)
- Task Force on Meeting Types (I was on this task Force and I will make this presentation at the Fall Assembly).
- TEAM Event
- This is just a small part of the week and you will be able to read about them for more details in the 2016 Conference Summary that will be published in the summer and will be available on the WSO Members page as soon as possible
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- One of most Spiritual Part of the Day for me was the personal shadings of the outgoing delegates of Panel 54. The shared how there service in AI-Anon helped their Recovery Soar and that how it affected them personally. What a wonderful way to start each day.

After the Conference ended on Saturday Morning we were invited to go to the World Service Office for a Tour and some of us stayed to attend the 65th Anniversary Celebration of AI-Anon (was personally paid for and not a part of the WSC). I was happy to be joined by some very Special New York North Members (Anne F. Gwenne R. Connie D., Helen H. and Dianne R.,) we had a great evening of fun and

Fellowship and enjoyed new and old friends who have made a difference in our lives as we have journeyed together in Service.

If you want more information on anything that I have describe here please put you questions on Paper and put in the Ask-It Basket or contact me by e-mail.

Respectively Presented,

Diane C.
New York North Delegate
Area 39
Panel 55