

**AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS**  
**48<sup>TH</sup> WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**  
**DELEGATE REPORT**  
**MAY, 2008**

The 48<sup>th</sup> Annual World Service Conference was held April 13<sup>th</sup>- 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at the Stamford Marriott Hotel and Spa in Stamford Connecticut. This was my third and final Conference as a Delegate after attending the first two in Virginia Beach, Virginia which is the home of the World Service Office (WSO). At the first two we got to visit the World Service Office and see, first hand, how they operate worldwide. This year our visit was to the home of Bill and Lois Wilson in downstate New York. It is called Stepping Stone and I'll discuss it in detail later in this report.

I went this year with very mixed emotions; on one hand eager to see my fellow delegates who I have come to really love and care about and anxious to go about the business of our fellowship by participation in the Group Conscience of our worldwide interests. On the other hand I was sad because this would be our last Conference together and probably the last time I would see some of these great people.

The Theme of this year's World Service Conference was "Build Bridges- Energize Our Spiritual Quest". Building these bridges and energizing our spiritual quest is the connection of the WSC to the Areas, the Districts and to the Groups" according to Zelda Richwine, former Chairperson of our Board of Trustees. Zelda went on to say "that Lois and Al-Anon's early pioneers were the first to Build Bridges- Energize Our Spiritual Quest. May we be the ones to continue to Energize our Spiritual Quest and Build Bridges". "The World Service Conference is the group conscience of our fellowship and it is charged with the task of serving as guardians of the Traditions and of the worldwide service of the Al-Anon Family Groups." Additionally she says "Our Service Life has brought each of us to this World Service Conference which serves a very useful purpose. Each World Service Conference has done much to maintain the unity of Al-Anon Family Groups and build the bridge to spread the knowledge of Al-Anon Family Groups throughout the world. The World Service Conference is the bridge that brings the embers to their World Service Office and the WSO to them, and it energizes our spiritual quest while keeping the office on its toes to be sure it is doing the very best for Al-Anon Family Groups as a

whole". As I have in my previous reports, not only for the record but also for the benefit of those that haven't heard a Delegates Report from the World Service Conference before I want to take the time to present you some general information about the World Service Conference. This is so we, as an Area are informed about what the Conference is, some of its history, its purpose, and its Annual Meeting.

**The World Service Conference (WSC)** – is defined as Al-Anon's annual meeting attended by all World Service Delegates from the United States Canada and their territorial, areas; representatives from overseas countries, members of the Board of Trustees, and Executive Committee, Chair people of selected committees and the WSO administrative staff and other office personnel. The Conference provides guidance to the WSO in service matters brought to its attention.

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

When our fellowship was small this service arrangement worked well and did much to unify Al-Anon and spread its message around the world. Eventually this no longer worked because Al-Anon Services were not linked to the growth of the groups throughout the world and without these links new troubles could eventually come about. As a result, and with me skipping over a great deal of detail, Lois in looking at the AA structure, and how well it served its fellowship, decided, in working with Bill W, to put forth a sample inexpensive plan in 1961 on a three year trial basis. The first Conference was very small and its delegates were chosen by dividing the United States and Canada's continent into four quadrants by lines drawn through its approximate center from east to west and north to south coinciding with state and province boundaries. Three delegates were chosen in the first year from each of the four quadrants. These came from the states and provinces with the greatest number of Al-Anon groups. In each of the second and third years twelve more delegates were chosen from those states and provinces with the next greatest number of Al-Anon groups. Following this formula all states and provinces have had

the opportunity to join The Conference. In 1963; because of the success it had shown, the trial Conference became permanent. The Conference is now 48 years old and because I joined the Conference two years ago I am a delegate of Panel 46. When a delegate stands at Conference he/she should always introduce themselves by name, state or province, panel, and district. Therefore, I would say " My name is Bob Conway from New York North, Panel 46, and District 39."

**Purpose of the Conference** – Al-Anon's Tradition Two states: "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". The World Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon. It is the practical means by which the group conscience can speak; it is the voice of World Al-Anon and the guarantor that our world service shall continue to carry on under all conditions. The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown; it makes for unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole upon important matters. This makes it the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateens harmony and survival.

**Annual Meeting** – "The WSC is an annual meeting of the elected delegates from each Area of World Service Conference Structure. The Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and the World Service Office Conference staff, through discussions and deliberations at the WSC, the active voice and effective group conscience of Al-Anon is heard on World Service matters. Delegate member attending the WSC are chosen by the groups through a series of elections and in this truly democratic manner are entrusted by the group conscience in accordance with Concept Three to make decisions of the fellowship worldwide."

For the second year in a row the preparation for Conference was aided by an email system called the File Exchange which has greatly reduced the previous manila envelope snail mail system. I still received a pre-Conference Communication Kit by mail with many of the details regarding Conference preparation. It included dates, times, deadlines, travel info, registration forms, a copy of the World Service Charter, a summary of Conference procedures, information about organizing pre-sent documents for insertion in the Conference Notebook and a general information list.

I once again signed up to be a sponsor this year and I was assigned a delightful woman from Reno, Nevada named Judy Kirby. I lucked out once again because we connected right away via

telephone in preparing for the Conference and our relationship got even better once we met in person. I helped her put her notebook together, answered questions, gave her Conference pin at the opening dinner, and sat next to her throughout the entire Conference. We became fast friends and I really enjoyed working and interacting with her.

As I mentioned earlier, much of the pre-conference information we received this year was through the File Exchange. This is a computer file that we have password access to that provides us with regular updates of information from World Service in the form of e-mails and attachments. Each is accompanied by a cover letter so we know what to be looking for. Suzanne Martin from the WSO does a fabulous job with this and many other functions leading to the delegate's success at Conference. You just read the e-mails, print them out, and put them in an order that will be helpful to you when converting to the Conference Notebook upon arrival at Conference. At the top of the File Exchange are three boxes that contain more information to help you prepare. The cover letter in the File Exchange will tell you if something you need to review has been placed in one of the boxes. One is the "2008 Conference" and usually contains lengthy Conference related documents. Another is "Frequently asked Questions" that the WSO receives and answers, and the final box is "Forms" that we can use i.e. Trustee Candidate forms, Hot Topic forms, or procedures like how to invite WSO staff members or Trustees to your Area, etc. This system has been extremely helpful to delegates in preparing for Conference and a very convenient way to stay organized in your preparation.

Speaking of being helpful preparing for the Conference, I once again this year was privileged to attend our annual Northeast Regional Delegates (NERD) Conference in Mansfield, Mass. As usual the Conference was a combination of the sharing of a great deal of firsthand experience, strength, and hope and a great deal of fun and enjoyment. We welcomed all the new NERDS (new delegates from our region) and gave them a number of tips regarding what to expect at Conference as well as answering any questions they may have. In addition we did the following:

- Reviewed three Timely Topics after choosing from a number suggested by the members.
- Discussed some of this year's Conference agenda items
- Heard the Regional Delegates Report.
- Reviewed last year's WSC highlights.

- Reports from Secretary and Treasurer
- Area Highlight Session
- Discussed NERD bid for 2009
- Elected Anne Farrell Chairperson for 2009 Conference
- Played an enjoyable "Yankee Swap" game
- Heard words from the new NERDS

NERD was once again a great place to prepare for the WSC and I got a great deal from it. New York North was represented by Lavaughn R, Anne F, Connie D, and myself as current or former delegates and Marion W; a former Trustee. That is a fine turnout from any Area. NERD took place three weeks before our WSC and now it was back home for more preparation. I had already done a preliminary read of everything that was sent to me either by the File Exchange or the Manila Envelopes through snail mail. I kept it all chronologically but about ten days before the Conference I put it together by topics that were Notebook/Agenda items for this year's Conference and did another thorough reading of everything. I also put them in Conference Notebook order and reviewed it all by spending over an hour on the telephone with my sponsee.

The day before the opening of the Conference has been the only day I have given a summary of what takes place throughout that day. I have not found it very effective to spell out the intricacies of each Conference day in detail but rather bring home the main "Hot Topics" of the Conference in detail and also provide other topics of a lesser priority in a bullet format in my report. This, and as I've said earlier, regarding the history, purpose and its Annual Meeting is the way I have chosen to share my experience at the WSC as your delegate. With that said, the first day included meeting my sponsee from Nevada and helping her put her Conference Notebook together as well as answering any questions she may have had. I also tried to prepare her for her afternoon new delegate's orientation. That evening we had the opening dinner and all the sponsors present their sponsee with their WSC pin. It is a very touching and important ceremony to begin their careers as Delegates. It was also an event that took me back to the dinner that I received my pin and the memory of how important it was to me.

Following the dinner all the delegates took part in the Sharing Area Highlights session. This session is not an official part of the Conference but it is held by the delegates to share with each other the happenings in their Areas during the past year. A delegate can learn a lot about things that have worked successfully in other areas and possibly bring some of these ideas home to their own

areas. They also can provide their successes and failures with the other delegates. This session is two hours long and provided a great deal of helpful information for all of us. The question we were all asked to consider this year in preparation for the Area Highlights was "How can we get ourselves and others more involved in Recovery, thus Energizing our Spiritual Quest"? I got to speak and present during this session and learned a lot from other presenters as well as hopefully providing some ideas for them that will help their areas.

The Delegates allow the Board of Trustees and the WSO staff to sit in the meeting with no voice. In turn, the delegates are allowed to sit in on a Board of Trustees meeting without voice.

The first day at Conference, I felt went very well. I was very enthused and ready to get down to the business of the Conference the next day.

**Conference Opening**— Mary Gregory, the Chairperson of the 2008 Conference and a New York North member, opened the session by using a shoe as her gavel (a throwback to the days of Lois). She gave a wonderful message of welcome and really set the tone for a very efficient successful Conference. The first item she presented was a full Conference Orientation beginning with the Conference **Goals:**

- The spiritual tone of the WSC will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members. They will agree to disagree but always be respectful of one another Vary opinions and still love each other All equal and all leaders — mutual respect
- Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the structure, and be able to articulate decisions.

**Rules:**

The next item covered in the orientation was the Conference Rules. Once again members were asked to follow a set of rules that are set up to help us attain our desired goals in an efficient and timely manner. Each day there was a clever participating task that involved different Conference members. The reason for this was to keep the rules in the forefront of all our members' minds. The rules, once again, are as follows:

- ✓ The Agenda may be changed at the discretion of the Chairperson if he/she thinks it will keep Conference business moving in an orderly fashion
- ✓ No applause regarding opinion or point of view in respect for others points of view.
- ✓ Start and Stop meetings on time.

- ✓ Two minutes at the microphone
- ✓ Be courteous to others
- ✓ Stay on Topic
- ✓ No side conversations
- ✓ If someone says what you were going to say, sit down and don't say it
- ✓ Please no perfumes or cologne (allergic reactions)

### **The Roles of Conference Participants:**

The members of the Conference interact as the Group Conscience of World Wide Al-Anon.

- Delegates - Link between WSO and Area Familiar with Service Manual Understands Conference Rules Forward looking Trusted Servants of World Wide Al-Anon
  - Executive Committee - Absorb all the different prospective Responsible for Daily oversight of WSO
  - Staff - The implementors of Conference actions Resources for Conference members
  - Board of Trustees - Responsible for a vision, a mission, a strategic plan
  - Elect successors - Approve final agenda; Link between the Spiritual and AFG Inc.;
- Proceeds resources necessary for Conference to carry out directives.

### **Insert Schematic of the WSC Group Conscience**

Mary finished the orientation by discussing the use of "Hot Topics" Forms and how they would be helpful to us delegates when developing our reports for our areas. She also indicated that we would have a "summing it up session" each evening to review and clarify the topics of that day.

Two other items that I felt were of significant value to anyone participating in the Conference were also discussed by Mary. They are as follows:

- To Presume Goodwill as an intricate part of who and what we are as a Conference
- To see and ponder the daily CAL quote that was printed as part of our daily agenda

These were always very inspirational and spiritual to me and put me in a great frame of mind to approach each day's agenda items. Here are the quotes

- "I ask myself. Am I ready to make a difference"? [When I Got Busy I Got Better, page

21]

- "I don't need to understand the Power greater than myself, only to trust it". [As We Understood, page 159]
- "My leadership style is different from the strict authoritarian style in the alcoholic home of my childhood. I simply present my experience, strength, and hope to others and provide support and encouragement for them to do their best. I strive to let it begin with me, which is true Al-Anon leadership in action." [Hope for Today, page 251]
- "I was glad to know that the wishes of the membership would be checked by the Trustees for all legal aspects, by the Conference for all Traditional aspects, and by the guidance of a Higher Power that would see to us all." [Paths to Recovery, page 291]
- "Good leadership never passes the buck." [2006-2009 Al-Anon/ Alateen Service Manual, Concept Nine descriptive text, page 186.]

My style in presenting this report over the past three years was to first present the "Hot Topics "as designated by the Board of Trustees and/or the Conference Chairs and to also present what I believe to be other topics that I feel our area would be interested in and benefit from in a bulleted format

I think this is a good time to bring up a subject that I first heard discussed by our Executive Director Ric Buchannan a few years ago and then once again by the then Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Judy Philson in 2007. She said "We all must remember that our Higher Power is here at Conference and present in all the final decisions, whether we agree with them or not". Our Higher Power is an intricate part of Group Conscience." That was and is a very critical point in my beliefs as an Al-Anon member and has made me much more comfortable and acceptable whatever the results of "Group Conscience". That statement, I believe is at the very foundation of our wonderful fellowship.

Our purpose is to come together to take care of the business of Al-Anon. We are the voice of Al-Anon and the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateens harmony and survival. Conference members interact as the Group Conscience of World Wide Al-Anon.

Once again the Knowledge Based Decision Making Process used to reach an informed group conscience was continued to be used in some but not all of our deliberations this year. The Process, being so relatively new still needs more time to be fully implemented and fully



understood and accepted. We are confident however, that the member is moving in the direction of a great deal of confidence in the process.

The following are the four elements of the Knowledge Based Decision Making Process are as follows:

- Open Communication between leadership and membership
- Dialog before deliberation
- All decision makers will have common access to full information
- We exist in a culture of trust

Hearing that, I once again remind myself to **PRESUME GOODWILL** when approaching my participation in this process.

Again this year immediately after the World Service Conference concluded the Annual Board of Trustees Meeting was held on Friday in order to make the Conference's traditional action. At the Annual Board of Trustees Meeting the Board suggested five topics that we should include in our Area Delegate Report. These were identified earlier in this report as "Hot Topics "and the identification of these topics was conveyed to us in a letter of May 2<sup>nd</sup> from Mary Ann Reid, the newly elected Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. We also received a handout of suggested "Hot Topics" from the 2008 World Service Conference on the last day of the Conference. As a result of that document I will add some more "Hot Topics "to our presentation.

#### **THE FOLLOWING ARE THIS YEAR'S "HOT TOPICS"**

1. Anonymity
2. Excess Bequest Funds motion and AREAS input for the process to distribute these funds
3. Trip to Stepping Stones
4. The use of Task Forces with Delegate members, for example the Reserve Fund Guidelines Task Force that produced the Reserve Fund Guideline (G41)
5. Charter changes to protect the Alateen Traditions
6. Conference Theme Session: How can we more effectively use the skills and talents of our WSC members to energize their spiritual growth?
7. Conference Theme Session: How can we, as WSC members, expand, renew, and strengthen our connections with the fellowship?
8. The Quarterly Appeal Letter

9. Chosen Agenda Item #3 – Creating and maintaining healthy groups focused on our spiritual principles and free from program dilution
10. Chosen Agenda Item #5 – Are we preparing our future Trusted Servants for their positions?

### **Anonymity**

The following is the subject of one of the five Policy Motions "At the Open Policy Committee meeting held at the 2007 World Service Conference on April 26, 2007, the Committee discussed the issue of anonymity on the Internet. Al-Anon members have expressed concern about protecting their anonymity in e-mail, on the Web, and in other forms of electronic communication. Currently the Policy Digest does not address these issues in depth. The issue was explored further at the July Policy Committee meeting. There was confusion among members about the use of last names on the Internet, including our password protected Al-Anon web sites open only to members. Some members were surprised to discover through an Internet search that their full names appeared on an area Al-Anon Web site. The Policy Chairperson appointed a work group to propose language pertaining to anonymity in electronic media for each of three sections in the Policy Digest under Anonymity: "Anonymity Outside Al-Anon," "Anonymity within Al-Anon," and "Anonymity in Our Personal Growth. "After discussions in October, the work group made further revisions to the proposed policy. The proposed language was discussed and revised again at the Policy Committee on January 25, 2008. On January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Policy Committee approved a motion to recommend these changes. Policy Motion # 3- Motion to amend the text on pp 83-84 of the 2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, "Anonymity." New text is underlined and in bold, strikethrough text indicates deletion. (Unanimous)

The Motion passed as Motion # 6 on 4/15/08 at the 2008 World Service Conference. Attached in this report is the Old Text regarding this issue. The specific new text is underlined and in bold and the strikethrough text indicates deletion. This information appears in the Policy Committee letter from Judy Philson dated February 29, 2008.

What We Know – Members have asked for Internet classification.

Main Points:

- Cover all media
- Making sure we know who our intended audience is

- Ongoing and evolving
- Internal vs. External – How does technology change the use of the publication
- Provide Webinars, IPod, PowerPoint or other technology based presentations on Recovery topics. This topic falls under the Support and Strengthen Our Structure section of the Board of Trustees Strategic Plan under Goal # 1:
- How does this topic tie to the Boards Strategic Plan? The Board and Staff will be catalysts to strengthen the groups and to expand our mutual relationships. Fewer groups operating that do not Al-Anon Philosophy.

**Attachment**

3. MOTION to amend the text on pp. 83-84 of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies*, "Anonymity." New text is underlined and in bold, strikethrough text indicates deletion. (Unanimous)

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| <p><b><i>Anonymity</i></b></p> <p>The experience of our groups suggests that the principle of anonymity—summed up in Tradition Twelve as "the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions"—has three elements: There is anonymity as it applies outside. Al-Anon, governing our contacts with nonmembers and organizations; anonymity within the fellowship; and anonymity as it contributes to our personal growth.</p> | <p><b><i>Anonymity</i></b></p> <p>The experience of our groups suggests that the principle of anonymity—summed up in Tradition Twelve as "the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions"—has three elements: There is anonymity as it applies outside Al-Anon, governing our contacts with non <u>members and organizations, the general public, the media, and professionals;</u> anonymity within the fellowship; and anonymity as it contributes to our personal growth.</p> |
| <p><b><i>Anonymity Outside Al-Anon</i></b></p> <p>Tradition Eleven gives a specific guideline: "we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV and films." This gives potential members confidence that their identity will not be revealed when they join Al-Anon. Also, personal anonymity at the public level guards the fellowship from the Al-Anon/Alateen member who may be</p>      | <p><b><i>Anonymity Outside Al-Anon</i></b></p> <p><b><u>Anonymity and the General Public</u></b><br/> <b><u>When dealing with the general public it is important to use discretion in revealing one's Al-Anon membership. In settings where there is no media involved (health fairs, speaking to community groups or schools, etc.), members are free to use their full names, if they are comfortable doing so.</u></b><br/> <b><u>Anonymity and the Media</u></b></p>         |

tempted to seek public recognition.

When speaking or writing as an Al-Anon/Alateen member at the level of press, radio, TV or films, use only first names or pseudonyms. In photographs for publication and in TV appearances, faces should not be recognizable. This may be achieved by back-to-camera or blurring of features in some way.

It is, however, important to make Al-Anon known through our public information work with professionals who come into contact with families still suffering from the effects of alcoholism. Such contacts, of course, make it necessary for the Al-Anon and Alateen members involved to give their full names. Al-Anon members also give their full names to interested doctors, spiritual leaders, school or industrial personnel

Tradition Eleven gives a specific guideline: "we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV." **It is Al-Anon policy to interpret Tradition Eleven to include the Internet as well as all forms of evolving public media.** This gives potential members confidence that their identity will

Personal anonymity in the media at the public level guards the fellowship from the Al-Anon/Alateen member who may be tempted to seek public recognition. When speaking or writing as an Al-Anon/Alateen member at the level of press, radio, TV or films in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet, or other evolving public media, members use **only their first names and last initial** or pseudonyms. **Members can also speak without identifying themselves or sign articles "Anonymous."** **In published or broadcast media, photographs, video, film, or Web postings should not reveal full face images of those identified as members.**

**On any Web site accessible to the public, whether an Al-Anon site or not, members' full names and faces are not posted if they are identified as Al-Anon/Alateen members.**

#### **Anonymity and Professionals**

It is, however, important to make Al-Anon/Alateen known through our outreach information work with the many types of professionals who come into contact with families still suffering from the effects of alcoholism **someone else's drinking.** Such contacts, of course, make it necessary for the **When working with professionals,** Al-Anon and Alateen members involved **are more credible and**

effective to when t h e y give their full names and contact information. While personal anonymity is not required in outreach to professionals, it is helpful to inform the professionals of the importance of anonymity and confidentiality in. Al-Anon/Alateen. Al Anon members also give their full-names to interested doctors, spiritual l ,odcrs, school or industrial personnel. Alateens must comply with local laws and their Area Alateen requirements in regards to personal anonymity in all public outreach work.

Electronic Communication outside of Al-Anon E-mail provides a quick and easy way to communicate the Al-Anon message to the media and professionals. Members' business e-mail addresses should not be used for Al-Anon outreach, as they could imply affiliation, and *may* not be confidential to the member.

Web-based communication, such as on-line audio/visual materials (Web casts or podcasts), social networking sites, and blogs, provides members with easy access to distribute information about Al-Anon recovery to a large audience. In keeping with Tradition Eleven ("Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all AA members."), members who use this type of communication outlet must maintain their personal anonymity and that of any Al-Anon/Alateen or A.A. member, as the Internet is a form of media.

***Anonymity Within Al-Anon***

Members use their full names within the fellowship when they wish. The degree of anonymity a member chooses (first name, pseudonym, or full name) is not subject to criticism. Each member has the right to decide.

Regardless of our personal choice, we guard the anonymity of everyone else in the fellowship, Al-Anon/Alateen and AA. This means not revealing to anyone—even to relatives, friends, and other members—whom we see and what we hear at a meeting.

Anonymity goes well beyond mere names. All of us need to feel secure in the knowledge that nothing seen or heard at a meeting will be revealed. We feel free to express ourselves among our fellow Al-Anons because we can be sure that what we say will be held in confidence.

At open Al-Anon meetings, group anniversaries, conventions, or workshops where nonmembers are present, Al-Anon and Alateen members are free to decide how much anonymity they prefer. It is well to open such meetings with a brief explanation of the Eleventh and Twelfth Traditions. One suggestion is as follows:

*There may be some who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity at the public level.*

*If so, we respectfully ask that no Al-Anon, Alateen or AA speaker or member be identified by*

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Members use their full names within the fellowship when they wish. The degree of anonymity a member chooses (first name, pseudonym, or full name) is not subject to criticism. Each member has the right to decide. Regardless of our personal choice, we guard the anonymity of everyone else in the fellowship, AlAnon/Alateen and AA. This means not revealing to anyone—even to relatives, friends, and other members—whom we see and what we hear at a meeting.

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There may be some who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity at the public level in any form of press, radio, films, TV, Internet and other electronic media. If so, we respectfully ask that no Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. speaker or member be identified by full name or picture in published of-broadcast, **or Web-posted** reports of our meeting The assurance of anonymity is essential to our efforts to help other families of alcoholics, and our Tradition of anonymity reminds us to place Al-Anon and Alateen principles above personalities.

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At the service level (Group Representatives, District Representatives, World Service Conference members, etc.) it is practical to use full names and addresses to facilitate communication.

Letters (including the return address) to an Al-Anon or Alateen member should never have the name Al-Anon or Alateen on the envelope.

Letters to The Forum should give full names, addresses and phone numbers. Material that is published will be signed anyway the writer wishes: first name and initial, initials only, "Anonymous"—either with or without geographical location. Area Newsletter Editors usually follow this procedure.

**At any function that records its speakers, members need to be aware that some recorders have Web sites that are open to the public. If speakers use full names, their sharings including full names could be posted.**

**In Al-Anon service positions** At the service level (Group Representatives, District Representatives, **Coordinators, World Service Conference members, etc.)** it is practical to use full names and addresses to facilitate communication. **However, anonymity and our Tradition of non-endorsement could be compromised in electronic communication with e-mail lists and methods of forwarding messages, as**

well as on public Web sites. Posting material originally meant for members only (such as printed flyers, reports, letters, e-mail messages, and newsletters) on Web sites could result in posting a member's full name, which violates the principle of anonymity.

Service communication via e-mail is expedient and efficient, but care and common sense must be taken in its use, particularly in forwarding messages. Use of blind copies protects members' anonymity. Members should select with care the e-mail addresses they use to conduct Al-Anon business. It is recommended not to use members' full name in them. Business e-mail addresses might not provide privacy and could imply affiliation.

Letters (including the return address) to an Al-Anon or Alateen member should never have the name Al-Anon or Alateen on the envelope. The WSO uses "AFG, Inc." on envelopes sent to members in order to maintain anonymity. Care should also be taken in the wording of e-mail subject lines, as the e-mail address may not be private.

Letters Submissions to The Forum should give

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|   | <p>include full names, addresses and phone numbers. Material that is published will be signed any way the writer wishes: first name and initial, initials only, "Anonymous"—either with or without geographical location. Because The Forum is a publication available to the general public, personal anonymity is maintained. Ar a Newsletter Editors Service arm publications usually follow this procedure if distributed outside the fellowship.</p>  |
| <p><b>Anonymity in Our Personal Growth</b></p> <p>Each member has the right of decision regarding personal anonymity within the fellowship. We share as equals, regardless of social, educational or financial position. Common sense in the use of anonymity provides freedom and the security each member is assured in Al-Anon. Our spiritual growth has its roots in the principle of anonymity. (See "Anonymity.")</p> | <p>Anonymity in Our Personal Growth</p> <p>Each member has the right of decision re.arding personal anonymity within the fellowship. In Al-Anon/Alateen we share as equals, regardless of social, educational or financial position. Common sense in the use of anonymity provides freedom and the security each member is assured in Al-Anon. Our spiritual growth has its roots in the principle of anonymity. Each member has the right of decision regarding personal anonymity within the fellowship, which we respect whether the member is attending meetings, not attending meetings, or deceased. (See "Public Relations Anonymity.")</p> |

## Background

At the Open Policy Committee meeting held at the 2007 World Service Conference on April 26, 2007, the Committee discussed the issue of anonymity on the Internet. Al-Anon members have expressed concern about protecting their anonymity in e-mail, on the Web, and in other forms of electronic communications. Currently the *Policy Digest* does not address these issues in depth. The issue was explored further at the July Policy Committee meeting. There was confusion among members about the use of last names on the Internet, including on password protected Al-Anon Web sites open only to members. Some members were surprised to discover through an Internet search that their full names appeared on an Area Al-Anon Web site. The Policy chairperson appointed a work group to propose language pertaining to anonymity in electronic media for each of the three sections in the *Policy Digest* under Anonymity: "Anonymity Outside Al-



Anon," "Anonymity Within Al-Anon," and "Anonymity in our Personal Growth."

After discussion in October, the work group made further revisions to the proposed policy. The proposed language was discussed and revised again at the Policy Committee meeting on January 25, 2008.

On January 25, 2008, the Policy Committee approved a motion to recommend these changes.

### **Excess Bequest Funds**

The following backup information was provided to Conference members in preparation for an expected motion coming forth at the 2008 Conference regarding the matter of changing the policy regarding the limit on bequests to Al-Anon Family Groups. In addition to the background information we were also provided a number of questions and answers related to Bequests and the Process for Excess Bequests. I am attaching both these documents as attachments at this point in my report.

### **Background to Policy on Bequests**

At the 2007 World Service Conference, it was suggested that the limit on bequests be reviewed, while keeping within Al-Anon principles. A review of the current policy regarding bequests is a Goal and Objective within the Board of Trustees' Strategic Plan.

At the July 2007 Board meeting, the Finance Committee was appointed as a task force to further review the issue and bring forth recommended wording.

In framing this issue for the Policy Committee, the Finance Committee Chairperson presented the following background information:

The first printing of the Policy Digest in 1975, states that the WSO may accept a *one time* legacy from an Al-Anon member in any amount up to U.S. \$1000. In 1986 that amount was raised to U.S. \$5,000 and "(Contact the WSO for details)" was added as a last line to the policy. In 1992 the limit was raised to U.S. \$100,000 and in 2004 raised to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit; this remains our current policy.

Since the last revision of the Policy in 2004, members have contacted the WSO wishing to include Al-Anon in their estate plan and desiring to bequeath more than the maximum allowable amount, stating that they have no heirs and wish to give back to Al-Anon to the extent they desire. Additionally, some Conference members have questioned, "Why the limit?"

Under the direction of the Chairperson of the Board, in 2006 the Finance Committee began to

discuss the issue of removing limits on bequests while maintaining the spiritual principle that keeps the World Service Office dependent on the groups for funding and not operating independently of them.

The Finance Committee presented their thoughts to the Board of Trustees at the July 2007 meeting. The Chairperson of the Board appointed the Finance Committee as a Thought Force to continue discussions and to possibly come forward with a proposal for consideration by the Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees.

The proposal would:

- Allow a one-time bequest to the WSO in any amount desired by the member so long as it is not earmarked.
- Report separately on the Financial Statements any amount that exceeds 10 percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit.
- The World Service Conference would authorize the expenditure of these amounts. The Board of Trustees would then administer those expenditures with the Conference's guidance.
- The proposed policy gives the World Service Conference express oversight of these funds.

In Policy Committee discussion, one member noted that this proposal "presumes goodwill" and a high level of trust between the Board and the Conference; if the Conference will trust the Board to proceed with this proposal, the Board will trust the Conference to appropriately authorize the use of the funds. In its traditional role, the Conference has never had responsibility to specifically direct the use of funds.

**\*The Motion passed by more than the required 2/3 vote at the 2008 WSC.**

**In floor discussions at the 2008 WSC, Conference members included the following points regarding this Motion:**

**Pros:**

- The last time the WSO was fully self-supporting was 1952.
- The likelihood of receiving a large donation is minimal.
- The intent of the motion is that no entity will have control of the money. The motion contains checks and balances—any money above ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit would be identified for projects to be authorized by the WSC. The Board or its Executive Committee would then oversee the

implementation of those projects. The staff would then implement the projects and report back to the Conference through the Board.

- The fellowship has benefited from the special projects and foreign trips funded by the Reserve Fund in the past.
- Our members don't want to be restricted on how much they can give to Al-Anon Family Groups.
- Any member could give a million dollars to his/her group; it would be better for the fellowship to have the WSC decide what to do with that amount of money rather than a small group.
- The WSC can change the Policy, if it is later determined that the Policy was a mistake.

**Cons and responses (in italics):**

- Is this Motion consistent with our principles especially Tradition Six? Does it divert us from our primary aim? Would discussions in Areas be just about money?

■ *This motion is about meeting the needs of members. The discussion should be about being in line with our spiritual principles.*

*It'll only divert us if we allow it. Tradition Six is often misquoted and thus not understood. It says: "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." It's not about Al-Anon having money. It's about lending our name to outside enterprises to get money, property, or prestige. As long as what we take has no control over us and we don't merge ourselves with outside enterprises, we really maintain the spiritual idea of Tradition Seven—that we're self-supporting. We're not asking members, but allowing members to pay what they can.*

- Groups would feel that their contributions are no longer necessary to support Al-Anon as a whole. How solid would that policy remain on not using that money to support world services? I can envision not being able to fund daily stuff but having too much for special projects.

■ *Monies would be put into a special fund, not the General Fund. We don't ever want the groups to feel like they don't support the WSO. They need to continue to be responsible for it. The truth is that we have not been completely self-supporting through just member contributions since 1952.*

- Members may try to obtain special recognition.

■ *WSO does not ask how much a member is leaving for Al-Anon in their will*

when they call with questions and earmarking is prohibited.

- Areas experiencing difficulties may think bequest monies would be used to support WSO big projects.

■ *The WSC would determine how the money would be used. Use big thinking—there are no limits. The idea here is mutual trust between the Board of Trustees and the WSC.*

- Al-Anon may get too rich. We're discussing money without limits and may become wealthy to a perilous degree. Would this be a violation of Concept Twelve?

■ *Funds would be used for special projects generated from and approved by the World Service Conference. A minimum of 25% of new money would be spent each year. Money isn't everything; we can do so many things with it. We're not reaching everyone we need to reach. Imagine what we could do with all the extra money. The safeguards of this motion ensure that the General Fund is going to remain intact. The motion doesn't change the fact that funds to operate our WSO will continue to come from our General Fund. If people die and leave us additional money, we can fund projects. Newcomers don't care about how much money we have; they want relief.*

- How do we reconcile the Tradition of being self-supporting without violating Concept Twelve and idea of no limits?

■ *The policy allows excess bequest funds to only be used for special projects approved by the Conference. The policy does set a limit—there is still a limit on amount to world services (10% goes to General Fund), Under the terms of the motion, the WSO could not use this money to fund its annual operating budget or routine projects. How to spend the remaining money will be decided by the Conference.*

Comments:

*Based on past experience the likelihood of a large donation is minimal.*

Rely on God rather than react to our fears just because we have never been there before regarding bequests.

If we had a bequest for a million dollars under the current policy we could only accept \$497,330 during the year 2008(10% of the total revenue of the WSO general fund as identified in the previous year's audit). This Motion would allow us to accept the remaining \$502,670 and to spend at least \$125,665 the first year and a minimum of 25% of the balance in subsequent years. We don't

contest wills or become drawn into family disputes.

### **Wrap-up:**

We come into Al-Anon in a culture of fear. When we first looked at abundant resources it was all about balancing the budget. We get fearful when we talk about expanding Al-Anon worldwide or having too much money. We don't think about how that money could be used to reach more people in pain from the effects of someone else's drinking.

Members say that it is their money and why can't they give back to Al-Anon what has been given to them.

## **Policy Questions Related to Bequests and the Process for Excess Bequests Distributed at the 2008 WSC**

### **Bequests**

**Q: Since 2004, when this section of the Policy Digest was last revised, how many members have contacted the WSO concerning their interest in leaving a large bequest?**

A: Only a few members have done that. One couple recently called because they are revising their will and wanted to know if the limits had changed.

**Q: Do you have any idea about the value of those possible large bequests?**

A: We do not have an idea. We do not think it's appropriate to ask.

One past Trustee would have left us more than the \$100,000 limit but could not do so because of the limit at that time. We partially returned another gift because it exceeded \$100,000. This member's estate was quite large; she would have likely left us a larger amount, had she been permitted to do so. None of these people are seeking personal recognition. Each of them said they wanted to give back to the fellowship that saved their lives.

**Q: What percentage of revenue are bequests?**

A: This percentage varies from year to year. In 2007, two percent of total income was from bequests; ten percent of contributions were bequests.

**Q: On the financial statement, where are bequests listed?**

A: Bequests are included with contributions.

**Q: How many "one-time legacies" are arranged while an Al-Anon member is still living (procrastination is a major character defect)?**

A: "One-time legacies" are included in the will, which is written while the Al-Anon member is

still living.

**Q: Since 1992, how much money has been donated as bequests each year to the World Service Office?**

A: Our detailed records don't go back as far as 1992. Here is **all** of the information available to us:

|      |    |            |
|------|----|------------|
| 1997 | \$ | 5,266      |
| 1998 | \$ | 3,597      |
| 1999 |    | \$ 104,180 |
| 2000 | \$ | 2,590      |
| 2001 | \$ | 45,954     |
| 2002 |    | —none—     |
| 2003 | \$ | 3,520      |
| 2004 | \$ | 3,000      |
| 2005 |    | \$ 354,566 |
| 2006 |    | \$ 113,464 |
| 2007 |    | \$ 116,220 |

**Q: Over the last five years, have any bequests been received in excess of the established limits at the time of receipt? If yes, what is the policy for the return of any excess amounts? Has any exception ever been made by the Board of Trustees or the Conference to waive this policy and accept the additional funds?**

A: There have not been any bequests received in excess of the established limits. If there had been, the amount that exceeded the limit would have been returned.

Neither the Board nor the Conference have ever made any exception or waived this limitation to accept additional funds.

A: All assets we have received in the past have been converted to cash, usually before we receive

**Q: If the bequest consists of more than just cash, is there a policy or procedure WSO follows to dispose of the assets left to WSO?**

them. If we receive stocks that fit in with our fund managers' investment strategy, we would not convert those assets into cash immediately.

**Q: The Policy Motion #4 does not adequately take into consideration the disposition of non-cash assets such as real property, personal property, securities, personal notes, etc.**

**Have any procedures been established for the disposal and conversion of non-cash assets into cash? If yes, what is the process and who would be responsible for this process?**

A: Policy Motion #4 focuses only on Al-Anon's *policy* on bequests. How the policy is implemented is not a matter for the *Policy Digest*. Policy Motion #5 outlines the process for implementing the new policy, should the Conference approve Policy Motion #4. This process explains how the Conference, Finance Committee, and Board of Trustees would work together to implement the policy for money in the Excess Bequest Fund. This question asks about how non-cash assets in a bequest are converted into cash for deposit in the Excess Bequest Fund. Our Finance staff routinely converts non-cash assets in a bequest into cash; the procedures for doing that are not relevant to Policy Motions #4 and #5. These non-cash assets would be converted into cash for deposit into the General Fund; the amount above the current limit would either be returned to the estate, as we do now, or deposited in the Excess Bequest Fund if the Conference approves Policy Motions #4 and #5.

**Q: With this proposed revision to the bequest policy, is WSO expecting to rely more heavily upon on bequests as a source of income in the next several years rather than financial support from members and groups?**

A: Definitely not. This proposed revision would allocate excess bequest funds only to special projects selected by the Trustees and approved by the Conference. Under the terms of the proposed revision, the WSO could not use this money to fund its annual operating budget or routine projects. When the Board of Trustees asked the Finance Committee to explore this issue, the Board asked for a solution that would not weaken the WSO's financial dependence upon the groups.

**Q: Have any safeguards been considered to prevent the WSO—or the Conference—from taking any action on an issue that would give special consideration to a member who has promised a bequest and is asking for a favor in return?**

A: It's hard to imagine what any such action could possibly be. The WSO can take no significant action without first seeking the approval of the Executive Committee. The Conference

itself would approve any project that would be funded with the excess bequest funds. Because of the way we share leadership, no one individual has the power to grant special favors of any significance; with shared leadership, it seems highly unlikely that any one individual would receive special consideration that would conflict with our Traditions and policies. Our current policy already prohibits the earmarking of contributions "for special purposes unless recommended by the World Service Conference," as per p. 86 in the *Policy Digest*.

**Q: The additional portion of funds in excess of the ten percent will be reported separately on the financial statements. Has any limit to the aggregate amount of these donations been considered?**

A: No aggregate limit has been discussed, but the proposed process would limit the accumulation of large amounts of money in the Excess Bequest Fund by requiring that a minimum of 25 percent of the fund be spent each year on special projects.

**Q: Interest earned on the funds in excess of the ten percent limit will become part of the General Fund. Wouldn't it be better to keep the interest as part of the special project fund?**

A: It is not correct that interest earned on the funds in excess of the ten percent limit will become part of the General Fund. In fact, any interest earned would remain with the asset that generated that interest. Therefore, interest earned **by assets** in the Excess Bequest Fund would remain in the Excess Bequest Fund.

**Q: If earnings on interest are significant, is the Board concerned that we will no longer be relying fully on the support of our groups and the sale of literature, almost becoming a not-for-profit foundation?**

A: Earnings on interest will never reach those levels because the strategic goal of the Excess Bequest Fund is to fund projects every year, not to accumulate capital over many years. The procedure for implementing the Excess Bequest Fund, recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the Policy Committee, states that a minimum of 25 percent of the fund's assets should be spent **on** projects each year. That's contrary to the investment strategies that non-profit foundations employ to protect their endowment and perpetuate the fund.

**Q: Other than a bequest coming from a non-member or a person who cannot be confirmed as a member, have any bequests been returned? If so, why?**

A: We have not returned any bequest from a member, although in accordance with our policy that contributions cannot be earmarked, we have refused to accept any conditions placed on the use



of the bequest funds. When the amount given was in excess of the limit, we have returned all funds that were over the limit, including both principal and interest. In a case when a bequest exceeded the limit and also earned interest before we received it, we returned everything over the limit, including interest earned on funds that were within the limit.

**Q: When filing IRS Form 990 (Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax) there are special rules that require the disclosure of the name and address of anyone who contributes more than 2 percent of the total amount of contributions received by the organization. Form 990 is a public document; how do we protect the anonymity of the party making the bequest?**

**A: This information is required by the IRS when filing the Form 990, but we cover the name and address of such a contributor when someone requests a copy of the form from us.**

**Q: I would like to see an addition to our bequests policy which allows the immediate family (spouse, siblings, children) of a deceased Al-Anon member to send a "onetime" memorial contribution/bequest to WSO in memory of the deceased Al-Anon member.**

**I am fairly certain that if I died, my AFG friends would send memorials to my husband who, according to our current policy, would not be able to pass them on to WSO since he is not an Al-Anon member. The only way he would be able to give the memorial money back to AFG Inc. is to give it to an Al-Anon friend, asking her to make the contribution to WSO for him (I think this is a deceptive method which our program principles don't support, but people do resort to in order to contribute to WSO).**

**When my Sponsor's husband died recently (he was a longtime member of A.A.), many of his friends sent memorial money. I counted the hundreds in cash. My Sponsor wanted to give it back to A.A. but was unable to do so because of a similar policy. Result: She kept the money because she didn't want to take a devious, circuitous method. His fellowship did not benefit from the memorials. She also felt guilty for doing nothing because she couldn't.**

**Bottom line: our fellowship misses an opportunity for financial support from longtime members who die. People who love an Al-Anon member often know that the member loved Al-Anon; thus WSO is the logical "charity" to receive memorial money. (I can't take action when I'm dead.) An open memorial policy would eliminate shady practices, but would also give WSO memorial money which naturally might flow to it—if it could.**

**A: This policy question is a separate issue from Policy Motions #4 and #5. A Policy**

Committee Task Force has been assigned to study this question.

### **Process for Excess Bequest Fund**

**Q: The procedure to implement the policy as outlined in Policy Motion #5 does not call for the formal approval of the Conference. Can the procedure be amended in order to remain consistent with the provisions of Policy Motion #4?**

A: Policy Motion #4 pertains to the policy on bequests that exceed our current limits. It states: "The World Service Conference would authorize the expenditure of these excess amounts. The Board of Trustees would then administer those expenditures in accordance with the Conference's guidance." Clearly, the formal approval of the Conference is necessary.

**Policy Motion #5 is linked to Policy Motion #4. If the Conference rejects Motion #4, Policy Motion #5 will be withdrawn. Therefore, it is not necessary for Motion #5 to repeat the statement about Conference approval that appears in Motion #4.**

Motion #5 outlines the procedure for implementing the policy. It states: "In April, the Conference members will prioritize the proposed projects on the floor of the World Service Conference." This statement explains the implementation of the formal approval process, which is outlined in Motion #4.

**Q: The Finance Committee recommends that spending an annual minimum of 25 percent of the money in the Excess Bequest Fund is reasonable. Can some additional background be provided to help members of the Conference understand why the minimum of 25 percent?**

A: A minimum of 25 percent, of course, does not define the maximum amount that could be spent in a given year. It may be that far more than 25 percent of the Excess Bequest Fund is spent in a year. But defining a minimum of 25 percent that must be spent each year sets up a solid firewall that limits the growth of the fund.

**Q: The background information on this motion states that "...the procedure to implement that policy is not itself a policy and would therefore not be included in the *Policy Digest*." What is the process needed to amend the procedure as it relates to this motion, especially since it will not be published?**

A: Though not published in the *Policy Digest*, the procedure will be published in other places: the Policy Committee minutes, the 2008 World Service Conference Summary, *The Forum*, and elsewhere. The process is highly visible in that it directly engages members of the World Service Conference in the prioritization and approval of specific projects. All Conference members—

A: Tradition Six warns us against involvement in "problems of money, property and prestige" because of the danger that they might "divert us from our primary spiritual aim." Tradition

including members of the Finance Committee, Board of Trustees, and staff—work together in this process. Any Conference member could request that the Conference reconsider or modify the procedure at any time. Depending upon the nature of the request, the Board, Finance Committee, or Policy Committee might create a work group to explore the issue.

**Q: If a will is contested, what is (and/or will be) our policy to deal with this?**

Ten says that "our name ought never be drawn into public controversy." Tradition Eleven speaks of "attraction rather than promotion." Consequently, we don't aggressively pursue bequests now, and modifying the limitation on bequests would not change our way of doing business.

The Policy Committee, like the Board of Trustees, is a guardian of our Twelve Traditions. The Finance Committee brought the implementation procedure as well as the proposed policy change to the Policy Committee so as to ensure that any change would not divert us from our primary purpose or lead us astray from Al-Anon principles.

The procedure for implementing this new policy would eliminate any institutional incentive to aggressively pursue additional bequests. It very clearly keeps excess bequest funds separate from the operational budget, so that the WSO would be dependent upon the groups, rather than bequests, to fund its operational budget. The procedure also mandates that a large proportion of those excess funds be spent on current projects every year, so as to prevent the accumulation of capital into a large endowment that might develop its own institutional impetus for growth, eliminating a possible incentive to pursue bequests.

Finally, the procedure for implementing this change requires the direct involvement of the World Service Conference—Al-Anon's broadest group conscience—like the Policy Committee and the Board of Trustees, is also a guardian of our Twelve Traditions.

As a result of this background information the Policy Committee passed Motion #4 – To amend the text on page 85 of the 2006-2009 Al-Anon /Alateen Service Manual, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Finances, Contributions to WSO- Individual Bequests. The new text is underlined and bold, strikethrough text indicates deletion.

**Bequests**

"The WSO may accept a onetime bequest legacy from an Al-Anon member in any amount provided its use is not restricted by the donor.

Bequest amounts up to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit will be placed in the General Fund.

Members may give more than the ten percent ; however, the portion of the bequest above ten percent will be reported separately on to financial statements. The World Service Conference will authorize the use of these excess amounts and the authorized expenditures will be administered by the Board of Trustees. These excess amounts are not available for general purposes unless further authorized by the Conference.

This motion was passed as written above as motion # 9 at the 2008 World Service Conference. The motion passed by more than the required 2/3 vote at the 2008 WSC.

### **Important Information:**

- A legacy is a gift with strings attached. A bequest is an outright gift.
- This is the first time the Conference has been given this type of responsibility.
- Money may be available for special projects related to the strategic plan.
- The spiritual principle of Tradition 7 is still maintained
- This falls under the Unlimited, Abundant Resources section of the Board of Trustees Strategic Plan. Goal # 1: To discover and use universal resources.

### **Trip to Stepping Stones**

The trip to Stepping Stones that Conferences members participated in really helped me really see the bridge from the Al-Anon past to its present status as a worldwide fellowship that reaches out to people whose lives have been affected by th disease of alcoholism. It is the historic home of Bill and Lois Wilson, co-founders of AA and Al-Anon and when I contrast this visit with my two visits to the World Service Office in Virginia Beach I can see and feel that the memorabilia at both sites help enhance an understanding of the great growth and history of this wonderful fellowship.

Stepping Stones was the home of Bill and Lois Wilson from 1941 until their deaths in 1971 and 1988. It has been designated a state and national historic place. A marker on the property at the edge of the garden reads "Here is the home of Bill and Lois Wilson. " Bill W was the cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous-1935 "Lois W" cofounder of Al-Anon Family Groups-1951."

The home is a very warm, comfortable and peaceful place including a great stone fireplace in the living room, Lois's baby grand piano which visitors are encouraged to play, and not far away is Bill's violin and cello. This living room is a place that the Wilsons entertained many people in over the years. The home is filled with memorabilia including photo's, letters, gifts, tapestries, etc. that all help aid the teaching of the history of the fellowship. Other things of historic value in the main hose are Lois's desk where she did a great deal of her writing and correspondence, their

famous kitchen table that's still intact, and a variety of family heirlooms and other personal memorabilia as well as an extensive archive.

The interior of the house is furnished exactly as it was upon Lois's death.

Up the hill from the house is Bill's cinder block studio cabin called "Wits End" which Bill built with a mason friend. This was Bill's getaway and the place where his creativity was enhanced by his simple but attractive surroundings. It is done in knotty pine with a beautiful hardwood desk, a fireplace, a day bed, and various mementos hung on the walls or placed neatly on shelves throughout its interior. The book Alcoholics Anonymous was written on the aforementioned desk that is still there. This is also known as the "Big Book" and has sold more than 20 million copies worldwide.

Stepping Stones is in the process of converting the garage that was built in 1951 to a visitor friendly space. It will be a resource for the community and a place to gather comfortably (There is currently no indoor seating available at Stepping Stones) There will be exhibition space, reception/retail space, a lounge/library, a kitchen and a video area with seating. The outside frame will remain intact, and will look the same as before from the outside.

"Stepping Stones Foundation began in 1979 to contribute to the knowledge and understanding of alcoholism and its effect on family and society, and to preserve Stepping Stones, and its historic archives for Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon Family Groups members and those interested in alcoholism education and research. Today it shares the story of hope for the recovery from alcoholism in the individual and the family, as it is embodied in the lives and home of Bill and Lois Wilson.

There is a website for you to visit to gain even more information regarding this historic site: [www.steppingstones.org](http://www.steppingstones.org) and availability to visit Monday through Saturday at 1:00 P.M. (with reservation) and at other times by appointment.

This year and every year you are invited to Lois's 56<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Groups Picnic, It will be held on Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 12:00P.M.-2:00 P.M.- rain or shine. It is held on the lawn of Stepping Stones at 62 Oak Road, Katonah, New York, 10536.

Phone: 914-232-4822

E-mail: [info@steppingstones.org](mailto:info@steppingstones.org)

Web Site: [www.steppingstones.org](http://www.steppingstones.org)

I would highly recommend anyone in program to visit this historic site to get to see firsthand the

foresight of these two amazing people and how far we have come in our effort to always be there when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help.

Please give it some thought. It is not that far downstate and pretty easy to find. I believe you'll come away feeling even better about being a member of this fabulous fellowship.

The Use of Task Forces with Delegate members, for example, the Reserve Fund Guidelines Task Force that produced the Reserve Fund Guidelines. (G-41)

At this point I am inserting a document into this report called Presentation on Committees that gives us a history of the Al-Anon Committee system and how it is ever changing,

### **Presentation on Committees**

In 1955 a discussion was held noting that the work at Headquarters had become so involved that it was suggested that committees be formed to handle publicity, literature, and finances. Lois stressed the general need for larger committees and stated that we were in a very dangerous position because of one man committees. Should a chairman become ill, it would be a great loss.

Lois recognized when change was needed and embraced new ideas, but at times had difficulties convincing others to seek help with their tasks. Slowly changes were made and our pioneers began to recognize the benefit of having a variety of ideas exchanged, rather than one person's thoughts.

As committees began, the committees were told the reason they were formed and then they began the work that was requested. Committees were often formed for a three-year trial basis and their guidelines appeared to be designed as they went along. They were always flexible and could be updated when needed.

The first committees were composed of staff members and volunteers. Later, Trustees were added and then in order to widen participation, Delegates were assigned to committees. Prior to their first Conference, Delegates were given a list of the Selected Committees and were asked to prioritize their first three choices. They were then assigned to a committee that they would stay on for their term as Delegate. These Delegate Committees have met annually at the Conference with interim work being done first by mail, and then evolving to also using conference calls and e-mail. By 1984 when it was suggested that they have a Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), and rather than just assigning the task, it was decided that a committee should be formed to develop a job description for the CCT.

During the past few years a transition has been taking place. Some committees revamped their

guidelines annually and submitted their guidelines to the Executive Committee for review and approval. Several other committees have disbanded on a three-year trial basis. These committees were deemed to no longer be effective, needed, or necessary in their current format. For example, the Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee was disbanded on a three-year trial basis as their work is being done routinely by the Public Outreach Committee. So, the work and purpose of the Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee was redundant. The Public Outreach Committee no longer has an Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee so that the ongoing work can be done by short-term work groups which may have professionals on them. This is being done so that outreach to professionals can focus on specific types of service tools and categories of professionals. The Public Outreach Committee encompasses outreach to professionals, so the Advisory Committee's work was redundant. The Archives Advisory Committee was disbanded on a three-year trial basis because its purpose, management of WSO records, is a staff function. Other committees have revamped their guidelines and are doing much of the work through conference calls and e-mail.

Small groups, i.e., Alateen Advisory, have recently been able to participate by meeting at Regional Service Seminars and/or through conference calls which allows for greater geographic participation as members are not required to travel outside their region. This is being tried on a trial basis.

A good example of an evolving committee is the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC). Back in 1960 Lois met with opposition when she suggested having a volunteer Forum Committee to assist the Forum Editor. The Editor said it was such specialized work that it would be a problem to find the right people to help her. Later in 1960 a committee was formed with volunteers who were willing to type or do paper work.

In 1962 Lois expressed "concerns about the future of Al-Anon" and the danger of having "all its eggs in one basket." The Forum Editor said that she had tried having a committee and it just didn't work out. In 1967-1968 Lois suggested to the Board of Trustees that they appoint an Editorial Board for the Forum which would become a permanent part of the structure. The Board would serve in an advisory capacity and would meet monthly.

By 1972 the Forum Editor had recognized the benefits of having a committee which gave her varying points of view.

In 1977 and again in 1982 a recommendation was made that the position of Forum Editor be a

Trustee position. The Trustee Chairman would not be chairman of the Forum magazine, but of the Forum Editorial Committee. A committee was formed to discuss the recommendation and a Chairman of the Forum Committee was named on an experimental basis for one year. In 1983 a postponement on the decision was requested and more members were added to the committee investigating the pros and cons of the Editor becoming a Trustee.

In 1985 this was again discussed as the roles of the Forum Editorial Committee and the Forum Business Operations Committee seemed to have overlapping roles and there was no clarity of the parameters of the positions.

In 1987 the Board approved the concept of eliminating the paid Editor of the Forum from the Board and carried a motion that a volunteer Trustee Chairman be appointed starting in 1988. This was done on a three-year trial basis and became permanent in 1991.

In 1996 a standing committee of members throughout the U.S. and Canada was formed called the Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) and met four times annually.

By 2007 FEAC members had requested changes to their committee and changing their review process and doing some meetings by conference call.

As our committees are being restructured, the ability to participate has been improved. More AI-Anon/Alateen members throughout the structure are now able to participate on a short-term basis rather than a fixed number of at-large members who serve one-year terms and can serve up to six years on a WSO Selected Committee. Some committees, such as Public Outreach, are able to have short-term task-oriented groups for specific projects and they are able to have professionals on the committee by utilizing e-mail and conference calls.

In 2007 a few Delegates were assigned to a task force on the Reserve Fund guidelines. This is an example of ways for Delegates to participate in short-term task-oriented groups where results are readily apparent.

In the documents that we have provided to all WSC members, it is a fact that WSO Committee structures have always changed. Sometimes, there was reluctance to change, but as the benefits become apparent during three-year trial periods, there is a positive response.

Committees that have traditionally not had Delegate participation are now having open discussions at the World Service Conference to bring a broader spectrum of our membership's ideas to the committee.

As Delegates are given the choice of being on a committee or short-term task forces, it is part of



our Strategic Plan. Task Forces or Thought Forces can be formed to move forward with the activities of the Strategic Plan, for example, making recommendations on how technology will be used to engage resources in the completion of tasks or projects; developing measurements to gauge if the groups have become more engaged in welcoming newcomers; or preparing a presentation to educate the fellowship on the interpretation of Tradition Six and Warranty One. As we look back at our history, we can see that while change have always been taking place, there may have been resistance to some of the changes. However, the benefits of the changes won't be fully appreciated until we see the results. When changes are not beneficial, we have the option to implement another trial period if further study is needed, make recommendations to further modify the committee, or seek approval to dissolve the committee. Because our Concepts of Service provide us with flexibility, we can move ahead with endless possibilities or we can always revert back if the changes did not prove effective because we know where we have been.

The first committees of Al-Anon were composed of staff members and volunteers. Later Trustees were added and then in order to widen participation, Delegates were assigned to committees. Prior to their first Conference, Delegates were given a list of selected committees and were asked to prioritize their first three choices. They were then assigned to a committee that they would stay on for their term as Delegate. These delegate committees have met annually at the Conference with interim work being done first by mail, and then evolving to also using conference calls and e-mail.

During the past few years a transition has been taking place. Some committees revamped their guidelines annually and submitted these guidelines to the Executive Committee for review and approval. Several other committees have disbanded after a three year trial period. These committees were deemed to no longer be effective, needed or necessary in their current format.

### **Charter Changes to Protect the Alateen Traditions**

The following Charter changes were initially proposed via a motion at the 2008 World Service Conference. The World Service Conference Charter contained in the 2006-2009 Al-Anon/ Alateen Service Manual, World Service Handbook (pp 152-156) as follows (new text is underlined in bold, strikethrough text indicates deletion):

#### **Proposed**

To insert the statement below immediately following: "As Amended by the 1996 WSC" on page 152:

**And strike out:**

The Charter that follows applies to all Registered Al-Anon and Alateen groups.

And amend 3f as follows:

While the Charter may be changed (with the exception of items 3d, 3e, and 12) by the vote of three quarters of the Conference members, any changes to the wording of the Al-Anon or Alateen Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, or General Warranties of the Conference Charter (item 12), or any change to the stature of the Steps, Traditions, or Concepts of Service, will always require the written consent of no less than three quarters of the Al-Anon groups.

The Note on page 156 of the 2006-2009 Service Manual as it was an editorial addition at the end of the Charter and was never Conference Approved.

NOTE: This motion was tabled and sent back for clarification and rewording after a long discussion at the 2008 World Service Conference.

Conference Theme Session- How can we more effectively use the skills and talents of our WSC members to energize their spiritual growth?

- We can convey information to our membership more effectively by utilizing today's technology to enhance providing the information from the WSC throughout the links of service.
- For the WSO to develop and make available technology based tools for training purposes using things such as Webinars, iPod presentations, Power Point, and other tools as they are developed. These will present a consistent and standard message that will enhance our ability to deliver important information that will not be so reliant upon delivery of this information based on a trusted servant's interpretation.
- Produce CD's for District, Group or individual members on subjects such as the Steps, Traditions and Concepts, Sponsorship, Detaching with love, etc.
- Provide more funds to make visits from WSO staff or Trustees to discuss subjects or policies that need clarification.
- Develop E-cal presentations that will send spiritual messages to our membership.
- Develop a "Thought for Today" from the WSO that a member could register for and receive via e-mail.
- Have a willingness to share with other and especially new members the skills and talents you have developed or improved as a result of

your service to the fellowship: i.e. Acceptance, listening skills, learning to love one's self, patience, etc.

- Make an effort to survey segments of our fellowship to see what members have some skill sets that would be helpful to our fellowship as a whole or to a particular segment of the fellowship i.e.(a District)

Some examples : computer skills, speaking skills, writing skills, musical skills, skit development or production, managing a budget skills, etc.

Conference Theme Session:

How can we as WSC members expand, renew and strengthen our connections with the fellowship?

- Invite and host World Service Conference staff or Trustees to our Area to help energize members.
- Set Up DR Conference Calls.
- Delegate meetings with various Districts by delegate and others.
- At Assemblies, help GR's recap important points to take home. Design and use "Hot Topic" forms to streamline the process
- Recap critical points at the end of an Assembly.
- Invite newcomers to Assemblies and Regional Service Seminars.
- Bring home and excitingly convey "Hot Topics" Information as acted on at the WSC.
- Try to work on getting a high percentage of GR's at Assemblies.

Outcomes:

- Preparing others to be our future leaders
- Every level of Service can learn to think big

How does this topic tie to the Board's Strategic Plan?

It fits under the Support And Strengthen Our Structure section of the Plan. Goal # 1: The Board and Staff will be catalysts to strengthen the groups and to expand our mutual relationships.

**THE QUARTERLY APPEAL LETTER**

We know that since 1952 the group members have not provided the contributions

necessary for the WSO to be fully self supporting through voluntary contributions. Most groups don't understand that the appeal letter is for individual members contributions not group contributions.

Some points to explain to my Assembly:

- Most groups think it's a reminder to end in the groups contribution.
- Originally in 1952 Lois asked for a semi-annual contribution of \$1:00 per member.
- Since 1960 the groups contributing have only increased by 1.5%.
- A good idea is sharing the reading of the appeal letter to create enthusiasm. (Delegate at Assembly) (GR at group level)
- Use pie chart to explain where the money is going.

Outcome/Conclusion:

- "Money is our messenger in places where you cannot be."
- Member's contribution is a reflection of a member's gratitude.

How does this topic tie to the Boards Strategic Plan?

It fits under the Unlimited Abundant Resources section of the plan. Goal # 2: The Finance Committee will ensure that the budget reflects the priorities of the Strategic Plan as set by the Board of Trustees.

I'm adding here a copy of a handout that was given to all members at this year's Conference. It's titled "Appeal Letters Framing." I'll ask some of you to participate in a short skit related to this topic at the Fall Assembly.

### **Finance Committee Presentation to the 2008 WSC**

#### **Appeal Letters Framing**

**In 1960 Anne B., President to the Board of Directors, addressed the Delegates at the first World Service Conference. In her address she stated that there was more work at Headquarters than can be handled; more staff is needed and that volunteer contributions are only being sent from 55% of the registered groups. She asks the Delegates to carry these concerns to their Assemblies.**

The following is a historical summary beginning with the origin of the first appeal letter in 1951 to the letter of appeal as we know it fifty-seven years later.

In September of 1951 the first voluntary contribution was received at the Clearing House from a member in Lynn, Massachusetts. According to Anne B. the then President of the Board of Trustees, receipt of this single contribution gave the committee the courage to ask groups if they were ready to contribute toward the operation of the Clearing House.

In 1952 Anne B. and Lois W. wrote a letter to the 'Family Groups' asking if they would care to make a semi-annual voluntary contribution of \$1.00 per member to support the Clearing House. They further stated that the contribution would give all an equal opportunity to support their service center and would be voluntary. They asked the groups to discuss this request and send their opinions to the Clearing House.

The response from the groups was reported to be 'wonderful' with contributions enclosed. This good news was reported to the groups in a follow-up letter with a reminder that it was time to send their spring contributions.

As early as 1954 a letter was received from one of the groups suggesting that members were not receiving their money's worth from the Clearing House. Anne and Lois responded with an explanation that while the services of the Clearing House were for the use of established groups of greater importance was the work toward our common goals:

- ✓ In helping new groups get started
- ✓ Giving hope and encouragement to isolated and despairing relatives of alcoholics
- ✓ Providing an opportunity for an exchange of ideas and experiences
- ✓ Producing standard literature
- ✓ Obtaining good publicity through magazines and other new outlets

Between 1951 and 1954 the number of groups grew from 20 to 500.

In 1958 in an effort to raise more funds a motion was made and approved to send the appeal letter to foreign groups.

In 1960 a separate appeal letter was mailed to all groups asking for contributions to support the operating expenses for the World Service Conference.

In 1961 the Chairperson of the Conference, concerned that only 55% of registered groups contributed to Headquarters, felt there was a need for more awareness of the purposes of Headquarters among individual members. Lois suggested that if the Delegates could

By 1965 Alateens were sending contributions to the work at Headquarters.

return home and let the members see how their dollars spread Al-Anon to others like themselves, individual Al-Anons might develop a stronger sense of financial responsibility to Headquarters.

Since contributions in 1964 fell \$1000.00 below expectations the effectiveness of the appeal letter was questioned and the idea of seeking professional help to write the letter was discussed.

In 1966 the Conference voted to abandon the separate Conference Appeal letter as it confused members and institute three appeal letters for general support of World Services.

The 1989 conference held a workshop on "**How can we motivate groups to increase contributions?**" Suggestions included:

- ✓ Emphasize in local Areas the need for contributions
- ✓ Placing articles in Area newsletters with a personal touch
- ✓ Using and explaining the Seventh Tradition

Responding to a need to increase contributions in 1998 it was recommended by the Budget Committee that the appeal letter be mailed quarterly. This was presented to the WSC and approved. Because it is not possible to keep a mailing address for each individual member letters are sent to the groups requesting a special collection. This allows each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level.

It is now 2008 and we share the same concerns as Anne B. did in 1960. The percentage of groups contributing in the year 2007 was 56.45%, 1.5 % higher than in 1960. To quote Vi F., the 1962 WSO Treasurer: How do we effectively utilize the appeal letter and instill a sense of responsibility within the individual member that "Money is their messenger in places where they cannot be?"

We hope you enjoy the following presentation that responds to the above question and supports the Strategic Plan Theme "Unlimited Abundant Resources", Goal #2: The Finance Committee will ensure that the budget reflects the priorities of the Strategic Plan as set by the Board of Trustees; Objective #1: Increase the contributions 30% by the year 2012; Activity #1: Create a presentation for the WSC illustrating the use/benefits of the appeal letter.

**Chosen Agenda Item #3**

**Creating and maintaining healthy groups focused on our spiritual Principles and free from program dilution.**

**KBDM Process Format for this agenda item (See attached handout below)**

KBDM Format for Chosen Agenda Item Topic #3 Creating and maintaining healthy groups focused on our Spiritual Principles and free from program dilution.

*The information included on this page was gathered from the background provided by the WSC members who submitted the topic. Each point was included under a question, some under more than one question.) You may believe the points fit better elsewhere and that is fine since the primary purpose for using this KDBM format is to provide a way for all relevant points of a discussion to be considered. Please feel free to add other points you hear or that you wish to make during the Conference discussion.)*

**What do we know about our fellowship needs, wants and preferences that are relevant to this discussion/decision?**

- The importance of Principles above Personalities
- Creating and maintaining healthy Al-Anon groups that adhere to the spiritual principles of the Al-Anon program found in Concepts One, Tradition One, and Tradition Four
- A desire for diversity in our program that appeals to many different kind of people
- A desire to retain a very broad spectrum of types of groups and members
- Members want specifics in training rather than generalizations
- Some members believe it's time to address these issues.
- There is concern for the newcomer and their impressions of the program.

**What do we know about the "capacity" (resources) and "strategic position" of our fellowship that is relevant to this discussion/decision?**

- Concepts One, Tradition One, and Tradition Four are spiritual principles that can guide the groups
- Within meetings there are true Al-Anon leaders, new and seasoned members who want to share experience, strength and hope
- There are meetings that focus on the principles of the program (our spiritual quest).

- There are meetings interested in the Al-Anon service structure.

**What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of our fellowship's environment that is relevant to this discussion/decision?**

- In some districts and AISs dual members are seated in positions of service above the group level.
- The Twelve Traditions are sometimes read with changes to the wording (gender) as evidenced at the RSS in Minot, ND (Sept. 2007)
- There is some dissension within the fellowship caused by members misunderstanding of leadership roles, including "dual members" and an occurrence of a type of sponsorship, which is overpowering and demeaning.
- There is concern about a dilution of the Al-Anon Program
- Occurrences of a lack of strong service and program sponsorship has been reported as well as meetings becoming more "therapy sessions" losing the spiritual nature and Twelve Steps of our program.
- Al-Anon meetings take on various forms.
- There are meetings that focus on the principles of the program (our spiritual quest). ). There are "what happened last week" sharing meetings. There are meetings specific to a topic or a situation or a membership (for example: Steps, Parent Groups. Gay and Lesbian Groups). There are also "bridge meetings", Big Book Study groups, and various formats of cult-like groups.
- Within meetings there are true Al-Anon leaders, new and seasoned members who want to share experience, strength and hope, domineering members and members ambivalent to Al-Anon beyond the group level.
- There are meetings interested in the Al-Anon service structure and meetings that are not interested in the Al-Anon service structure.
- There are members and meetings with embedded social/cliue patterns.
- New members come to meetings. Some stay, more are just short-timers.
- Certain practices of many Al-Anons are diluting the program giving many newcomers a distorted impression of Al-Anon.



- Some of these practices are: Chants used at the end of the meeting, use of the A.A. Big Book, pushing pyramid sponsorship, and words and phrases from treatments centers.

**What are the implications of our choices? (Pros cons other)**

**What do we wish we knew, but don't?**

- How can bridges between the Conference/WSO and each Al-Anon group be improved?
- How can groups become energized with the principles (spiritual quest) of the Al-Anon program?
- How can we help in creating and maintaining healthy Al-Anon groups that adhere to the spiritual principles of the Al-Anon program found in Concepts One, Tradition One, and Tradition Four without losing the very broad spectrum of types of groups and members that provide diversity in our program and appeal to many different kind of people?

One of our Delegates from Panel 46; Rick P. from Manitoba, Canada took on this Chosen Agenda Item and gave a report to the Conference as a whole based on his work in preparing for this subject. I really liked and enjoyed what he said and I thought I'd share some of that with you as part of my report on the happenings of the 2008 World Service Conference.

He saw our fellowship as our "garden." "At one time it was quite small and sheltered. Our Pioneers were able to keep it up with a few volunteers. However, through their hard work and dedication our "garden" has become quite large. It now requires quite a few caring hands to maintain it, nurture it and keep bearing sustenance for all those who require it."

He goes on to say "Each of us has to help with the up keep. It is a full time job. We have to encourage others to become loyal gardeners' and, as all gardeners' know, weeds and invasive plants may try to take over our garden. Even though these plants may be beautiful in their own place, if they are not gently removed from our garden they may destroy it." Informed participation may be one of the primary things to help keep our garden producing excellent results.

Keeping a good balance between not working a very responsible program and being

an overbearing fanatic about it is important to remain a healthy and productive member of a group that strives to be one that follows the teachings of the fellowship and does not participate in a group conscience that strays from some or many of the fellowships beliefs. We need to keep in mind however that there will always be challenges to our beliefs and principles and the best way to deal with those situations is to be an informed member who understands our fellowship and what is an isn't acceptable behavior for an Al-Anon member. Some things that might be helpful ways to be and informed member are: Being familiar with Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature (CAL), studying the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts and being involved in fellowship service that will have you interacting with people ready, willing, and very capable of sharing some wonderful experience, strength and hope.

Rick also discussed Traditions One and Four as well as Concept One in his presentation about Creating and Maintaining Healthy Groups Focused on Our Spiritual Principles and Free from Program Dilution.

Tradition One – "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity". This reminded Rick that "the principle of humility allows us to put the common good of all those who suffer from the disease of alcoholism in a loved one ahead of our own personal agendas." If one group chooses not to be consistent with this Tradition it could have a negative effect on more groups or individuals and possibly initiate a domino effect.

Tradition Four – "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters effecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole." This reminded Rick that his responsibility was to do all that he could to encourage those he comes in contact with to be conscious of how straying from our primary purpose may adversely affect our fellowship.

Concept One – "The ultimate responsibility and authority for Al-Anon world service belongs to the Al-Anon groups." We then have an individual responsibility to become informed so as we can be a contributing member to an informed group conscious. This will also allow us to question a member or members who are taking

part in or initiating an action or process that serves to dilute our fellowship.

#### Chosen Agenda Item #5

Are we adequately preparing our Future Trusted Servants?

This question is another one that we can use the aforementioned KDBM Process Format to help answer it. I have added that document using the same format questions used in Chosen Agenda Item #3. (See below).

#### **KDBM Format for Chosen Agenda Item # 5**

**Are we adequately preparing our future Trusted Servants for their positions?**

*The information included on this page was gathered from the background provided by the WSC members who submitted the topic. Each point was included under a question, some under more than one question.) You may believe the points fit better elsewhere and that is fine since the primary purpose for using this KDBM format is to provide a way for all relevant points of a discussion to be considered. Please feel free to add other points you hear or that you wish to make during the Conference discussion.)*

**What do we know about our fellowship needs, wants and preferences that are relevant to this discussion/decision?**

- *Members want their Trusted Servants to be prepared to do their jobs*
- *Members are concerned that there is leadership for the future of Al-Anon*
- *Communication about what the service positions entail is important*
- *There is a desire for consistency in service*
- *The fellowship has past trusted servants*

**What do we know about the "capacity" (resources) and "strategic position" of our fellowship that is relevant to this discussion/decision?**

- Examine the need for service training and discuss ways in which leadership training could be implemented to reach the entire fellowship.
- We function in a culture of trust
- The fellowship has past trusted servants who could be utilized

**What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of our fellowship's environment that is relevant to this discussion/decision?**

## **What are the implications of our choices? (Pros cons other)**

### **What do we wish we knew, but don't?**

- Are we adequately preparing our future Trusted Servants for their positions?
- Do we spend enough time (and have enough workshops) training the future leaders of Al-Anon for the responsibilities of service in Al-Anon?
- Could specific training material be developed that would address these issues that could be used to standardize these roles so we don't spend the first year learning what the job really entails?
- Does it matter *how* we get members involved in service?

In order to exist in an atmosphere of trust, how can we communicate the expectations of service positions?

- Can service expectations be consistent from group to group, district to district, Area to Area, and Region to Region within our service structure?
- Are the Past Delegates an under utilized "bridge" to the fellowship?

One of the primary problems that I've observed however is that many of the processes and programs related to our Al-Anon Family Groups fellowship do not use assessment tools to measure the success or lack of regarding the activity or program we are carrying out. In other words; how do we know that the things we are doing are successful? Outcomes Assessment tools and success measurement as a result of their use are necessary tools in these times when anecdotal results are just not acceptable. This is especially true when dealing with professionals who often want to see and review success research data as a result of an outcomes assessment tool or process. Our staff needs to include some professionals with this type of expertise in order for us to keep abreast of the "state of the art" in the assessment field. This will partially fall under the Strategic Plan Section of Universal Understanding of Recovery. Goal # 1: To acquire research that validates the importance of family recovery. This obviously takes assessment of data.

Other factors that can help prepare our future leaders are as follows:

- World Service Office Staff and Trustee visits to our areas.

- Job descriptions that include time needed to carry out the duties and an explanation of what talents/skills are needed to do the job.
- The use of Transition Meetings that pair the current holder of an AI-Anon position with a newly elected replacement. The incumbent can explain some things about the general duties, any pitfalls to watch out for and some suggestions and or advice based on their experience. I believe it is also important to let the successor know that he/she should do the job using their own style and should not worry about doing everything exactly as their predecessor did. It would also be comforting to let them know you are there if they need you but not looking over their shoulder.
- The World Service Office could increase the use of Technology in their training programs.
- Interactive Webinars would be a terrific tool to train at a variety of locations at the same time and have the advantage of interactivity to answer questions or clarify a point.

**Outcome/Conclusion:**

This will really help standardize the message being accurately conveyed from the WSO through the links of service. Standardizing training tools will enhance the chances of the message being understood in the same way by all links.

I believe that our guidelines and Service Manual are very good and informative documents but some people are more visual learners or might prefer some of the aforementioned methods to those documents. This world is getting more and more technically oriented and many young people are use to and prefer more technological methods to prepare them for the future.

**How does this topic tie to the Board of Trustees Strategic Plan?**

It falls under the Unlimited, Abundant Resources section of the Plan. Goal # 1: Discover and use universal resources.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT TOPICS FROM THE 2008 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE**

The following is a list of informational items from this year's 2008 Conference. For the purpose of time I am listing these with a very short and simple explanation because a more detailed account of these topics will appear in the "Conference Summary "publication. This document is provided every year following the WSC and it is a very well done summary of all aspects of the Annual World Service Conference. This document is provided to DR's, Officers and Coordinators, and is available to anyone else for a minimal charge of three dollars. I highly recommend that you purchase this document because it is very informative and a document that one can take their time reading at there're own pace. This document will teach you a great deal about Al-Anon and how it operates. If you purchase it you will not be sorry.

- The Admissions Handbook Task Force has been discussing the issue of further division or consolidation of Areas. The current policy is that "A state, province, or territory having more than 400 groups may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference. A state, province, or territory may divide only once, as reaffirmed at the 1982 WSC." This is an ongoing topic of discussion but there has been a petition from California regarding division.
- At the time of Conference there were 15,431 Al-Anon and Alateen Groups in the United States and Canada.
- The Registration form for the Connecting With Our WSO Day to be held on July <sup>3rd</sup> is available on the members Web site, [www.al-anon.org/members](http://www.al-anon.org/members)  
Registration fee is \$10.00. This will include interactive hour and one half workshops to be held from 9:00A.M. Thru 4:00P.M. An agenda will be posted on the member's site in June.
- Leadership Training Workshop sessions were held this year at the WSC. One session was a follow-up session to last year's session on Conflict Resolution. This was a session for all members led by our Executive

Director and two delegates. Three others were held on two separate days so delegates got to choose two of the three. The topics were:

**1. How to Prepare and Give an Effective Delegate's Report**

**2. Connecting the Concepts of Service with various service roles.**

**3. Using Knowledge Based Decision Making for a Group Conscience in an Area.**

- **Again this year at Conference there was an early morning Al-Anon meeting each day at 6:30 A.M. There was also one evening meeting.**
- **A new Group Packet was developed and mailed in Mach for any group that registered after January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. The WSO hopes that this change from a single mailing to multiple communications with new groups will strengthen the groups and encourage a connection with the links of service.**
- **We were all provided with a skit regarding the subject of the WSO Appeal Letter which I'll try to use at the fall assembly. It's pretty short and sweet but makes its point.**
- **The 2008 World Service Conference gave conceptual approval to produce a new piece about Al-Anon's history in commemoration of Al-Anon's first 60 years projected to be published in 2011.**
- **Discovering Choices (B-30) is the title of Al-Anon's new book about our recovery in relationships. The plan is to release the book at the International Convention in Pittsburgh in July. It is a soft cover, is 335 pages, and will cost \$15.00.**
- **The Conference Reunion Luncheon will be held in the Grand Ballroom at the Hilton Pittsburgh on Friday, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2008 from 11:30A.M. to 1:30P.M. Tickets are \$45 dollars and reservations must be received by June 6th, 2008 and must be made with advance payment.**
- **By-Laws Framing- There is three changes to the U.S. and Canadian By-Laws that were approved by the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committee. One involves a statement which was added which requires Trustees to sign a document that outlines expectations of leadership and potential. Another is a statement of clarification that was added regarding the roles of Trustees at Large and Regional Trustees. The final one was acted on as result of the By-Laws group suggesting an absence of two meetings during any 12 month period.(i.e., the 12 month period beginning from the first absence) would be cause for removal. The process for removal is a two thirds written ballot from those present at the Board meeting.**
- **The Big Meetings held at the International Convention in Pittsburgh will be held in the Mellon Arena**

while the Workshops will be held at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center.

- The WSO has produced a 15-20 minute Podcast audio recording of a new meeting. It's an opportunity for groups to use as a tool for public outreach. We can download for use at a beginners meeting.  
Respectfully Submitted By Robert M. Conway, Jr. Delegate, New York North

## **2008 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS**

### **MOTION #1 – (BY CONSENSUS) – CARRIED**

That the following persons be seated at the 2008 World Service Conference:

#### **With voice, but no vote:**

|                              |  |                       |
|------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| David Zach                   | Director of Business Services                  | Non-Al-Anon<br>Member |
| Nydia Julia Marcos Deccarett | International Representative – Mexico          | Al-Anon Member        |
| Inga von Einem               | International Representative -<br>Germany      | Al-Anon Member        |
| Louise Combrink              | International Representative – South<br>Africa | Al-Anon Member        |

#### **With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:**

|                   |  |                |
|-------------------|--|----------------|
| Annette Thuresson | Chairperson, Executive Committee for<br>Real Property Management | Al-Anon Member |
|-------------------|--|----------------|

#### **With no voice and no vote:**

|                    |                     |                       |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Nicolette Stephens | Information Analyst | Non-Al-Anon<br>Member |
|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|

**MOTION #2 – (92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)** To approve the 2007 Audited Financial Report.

### **MOTION #3 – (92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) - CARRIED**

To approve the 2008 Finance Committee Report.



**MOTION #4 – (92 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) - CARRIED**

To approve the 2007 Annual Operational Report and Strategic Plan Update.

**MOTION #5 – (89 yes, 4 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) - CARRIED**

That the 2008 World Service Conference give conceptual approval to develop a piece of literature on Al-Anon's first 60 years.

**MOTION #6 – (91 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED**

To approve Policy Motion #3.

(see attached text)

**MOTION #7 – (93 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) - CARRIED**

To approve Policy Motion #1.

(see attached text)

**MOTION #8 – (93 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) - CARRIED**

To approve Policy Motion #2.

(see attached text)

**MOTION #9 – (70 yes, 23 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) - CARRIED**

To approve Policy Motion #4.

(see attached text)

Executive Director and Associate Director Member Services International to attend Memo

To: Conference Members

From: Ric Buchanan Executive Director

Date: 8/19/2008

Re: **2007 Annual Operational Report and 2007 Strategic Plan Update**

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Each year, the Annual Operational Report highlights the day-to-day activities of the WSO staff and volunteers for the members. This year we have included a Board of Trustees Strategic Plan Update that reports the progress of the Plan's goals and objectives.

As you read these reports, mark down any questions that need clarification before the vote to approve the reports at the Conference.

A written copy of those questions and answers will be provided to you at registration for the 2008 World Service Conference, Saturday, April 12, 2008.

Please record any questions, citing the page number and paragraph in the attached document. You may e-mail, fax, or surface mail these questions to the WSO by **March 28, 2008**. Time will be provided during the approval process for other questions related to the Annual Report.

I hope that you enjoy reading about the activities of our World Service Office.

**2007 Annual Operational Report**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**ADMINISTRATION**

Ric B., Executive Director

***OVERALL ADMINISTRATION***

**The Board of Trustees** of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) meets quarterly and is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the World Service Conference (WSC), establishing business policies of the World Service Office (WSO), estimating revenue, administering service to the membership, publishing and distributing Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and approving the quarterly and 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.

**AFG, Inc.** is a not-for-profit organization, listed under Section 501 (c) (3) of the United States (US) 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 The Executive Director is responsible for overall supervision of the WSO staff (currently 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. 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**

Judy P./Zelda R., Chairperson

The Board of Trustee is self-electing, approving all nominees for Trustee at Large (TAL) as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee-at-Large members, and the respective Chairpersons of the two Executive Committees were elected, having been given Traditional Approval by the conference where required. It also approves the Committee Chairpersons for 2007-2008 as proposed by the Chairperson of the Board. It accepted the resignation of Bidge B., Trustee at Large.

In accomplishing its responsibilities for setting and proposing agenda topics for the 2007 World Service Conference, it approved:

- Changes in the supporting text of Concepts Eight, Nine, Ten, Twelve and the Warranties.
- Policy Motion to amend the text on page 77 of the *2004-2006 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, Digest of Al-Anon & Alateen Policies, Finances, Reserve Fund to read: Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. has the right and obligation to establish and maintain a Reserve Fund. This fund, established in 1970, has a two-fold purpose: ensuring the continuation of Al-Anon's essential services and the funding of special projects.
- Admissions/Handbook Motion to amend the *2004 – 2006 Al-Anon/ Alateen Service Manual* on page 148 by deleting the second paragraph under “WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (AREA COMMITTEE STRUCTURE):” “Each district allocates funds to send its DR to the meetings of the Area World Service Committee. (Groups allocate funds for DRs to attend meetings of the Area Assembly as GRs.)”
- Provided all materials in preparation for the World Service Conference and for the preparation for Delegates' reports on-line.

At the Annual Meeting, it approved the actions of the Conference, giving them legal effect:

- The Southeast Regional Trustee position will remain vacant and a Regional Committee on Trustees will be created to nominate a candidate using the trial Regional Trustee plan at the 2008 Conference.
- 2006 Annual Report as presented at the 2007 World Service Conference.
- 2006 Auditor's Report as presented at the 2007 World Service Conference.
- All 2006 World Service Conference Motions.

In preparation for the 2008 World Service Conference, it approved:

- Change to 3-d of the Conference Charter and the formal adoption of the editorial note for presentation at the 2008 Conference for its approval. This change would then incorporate the Alateen Traditions into the Charter and give them the same protection from change that the Al-Anon Traditions are afforded.
- Admissions/ Handbook Committee's recommendation to write a "big thinking" question around the topic of populous/declining Areas for discussion at the 2008 WSC.

Other actions approved in its role of oversight:

- The title of the new Service Manual: *Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual 2006 – 2009*. It was agreed to print *Groups at Work* again as a separate booklet.
- Continue sending *The Forum* free to every English-speaking group in the World Service Conference structure trial for a second year.
- Investment Goals with the Board adding new goals, modifying previous ones, and withdrawing others.
- Task Force of members who work in the estate-planning field to gather the most recent information and material for a fact sheet or guideline on estate planning and other considerations for Al-Anon members when considering inclusion of Al-Anon in their estate plan.
- Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada as the site for the 2013 International Convention.
- Conceptual approval for an e-CAL contest.
- Task Force of Conference members to explore the idea of allowing contributions from the non-member family of an Al-Anon member in memory of a deceased Al-Anon member and to formulate a big question for the 2009 World Service Conference.

- Reports on international work and visits to Russia, Spain, France, Finland, Germany, Romania, Greece, and China.

### ***EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE***

Cecelia L./Mary C., Chairperson

The Committee meets monthly and is the administrator of the World Service Office, with legal authority granted by the Board of Trustees to conduct its daily affairs. It approves actions of the Finance Committee and special projects of the Board and staff that involve day-to-day operations. Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval:

- Printing of *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29).
- Requests for restructuring committees.
- Approves appointments to the United States and Canadian Alateen Advisory Committee members to be held at Regional Service Seminars.
- At-Large members of the e-CAL, Forum Editorial Advisory, Literature and Public Outreach Committees.
- Committee Guidelines when submitted for approval.
- Conference calls to Area Public Outreach and Literature Coordinators .
- Changes to the WSO Employee Policies and Procedures Manual.
- Finance Committee monthly report.
- Set Registration Fee for the 2008 International Convention and receives periodic updates.

- Staff travel to national and international meetings and conferences within and outside the fellowship.

Other work of the Committee includes:

- Receiving information concerning the reorganization of office staffing including positions open or filled.
- Received suggestions sent in by 2007 WSC members on the proposed wording changes to the descriptive text of Concepts Eight, Nine, Ten, Twelve, and the Warranties in preparation for the Board's final approval.
- Staff reports on the progress of various projects such as media coverage, printing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, and Public Service Announcements.
- Issues that violate Al-Anon's copyright or are otherwise potentially problematic.
- Monthly reports from the Executive Director for Administration, and the Directors of Business Services, Communication, and Member Services.

#### ***ADMINISTRATION:***

The Executive Director in fulfilling his responsibilities to supervise the World Service Office continues to evaluate each job when vacant and make adjustments in consultation with the appropriate Director and needs of the fellowship. This year the Associate Director Group Services/bilingual position was eliminated when a suitable candidate could not be found. The responsibilities were realigned within the Group Services Department. Several positions were regarded as a part of the overall process to provide the services needed to the fellowship. A former staff member was retained as a consultant to help rework the *Groups At Work* section of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. A task force within the office worked with the consultant to ensure that all changes approved by the 2006 and 2007 World Service Conferences

to the Policy Digest, Handbook and Concepts of Service Sections would be included.

This year the translation of the *Manual* was completed within 2007 in both Spanish and French. The Conference Approved Literature catalogue was also translated and will again be produced annually in all three languages.

The Communication section was also realigned with the elimination of the Associate Director/Literature I position and the reorganization of the job responsibilities of the WSO Forum Coordinator and Public Outreach Coordinator. These alignments have already resulted in clearer reporting lines and the streamlining of the literature and *Forum* production processes. e-CAL is now handled under the Communications Manager, the redesigned position referred to above.

An attempt to create interest on the Member Web site resulted in the Asia blog in the Spring of the year and furthered exploration of the additional ways to engage the fellowship in the work of the World Service Office. Beginning work for the interactive blog *Using the Concepts in Our Personal Lives* was completed in time for the translators to finish its translation into Spanish and French. This will allow all members to individually study the Concepts and then write in their own languages their insights and understanding.

New positions this year included the addition of the Information Analyst who will assist the staff in developing and reporting data regarding the demographics and needs of the fellowship through the triennial Membership Survey and other specific need surveys throughout the year. She created four different presentations of the Membership Survey data to meet the needs of professionals as well as give the members tools to communicate who the members of Al-Anon are both to the fellowship and professionals in their communities.

The Web Architect was a revised position in order to improve the World Service Office's ability to reach more members using better technology and present Al-Anon as a reliable but current resource in a changing and evolving world. Improvements to the e-CAL submission process as well as the research and implementation of the Concepts blog have already been achieved.



## ***ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM***

The Administrative Team is composed of the Director of Business Services, the Director of Communication, the Director of Member Services, and the Controller. The Administrative Team was created to have oversight of certain office-wide projects assigned by the Executive Director as well as provide leadership support to the office in the absence of the Executive Director. The Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Member Services, has full authority to act on behalf of the Executive Director in his absence due to traveling or illness.

Cross-sectional work groups were used to suggest an organization-wide project to support the Strategic Plan. The Administrative Team chose, “The WSO staff and volunteers working together will engage Al-Anon groups in the U.S. and Canada to be more welcoming to newcomers, introducing newcomers to all aspects of the Al-Anon Program in a clear, concise manner” as a project under the main idea Support and Strengthen Our Structure. Current welcoming practices would be assessed by surveying groups and newcomers. The surveys will be mailed with the group copies of the March *Forum*. The survey results will be analyzed to determine the next steps.

In order to establish an identifiable look that will energize our brand image, the Administrative Team solicited proposals from local design agencies, then engaged one of the agencies to begin their work in June. The work will be completed in 2008 with a new set of graphic standards for use in communicating our image.

The Administrative Team was charged by the Executive Director to create a Disaster Response Team. The roles and responsibilities of the team have been defined and a primary and back-up person for each critical area has been identified. Team members are meeting to set up recovery procedures for their areas of responsibility.

## **COMMUNICATION SERVICES**

### ***PUBLIC OUTREACH***

The *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* public outreach magazine continued on the growth track that has

made it the most successful and significant public outreach project in Al-Anon's history. In 2007, Al-Anon members in the U.S. and Canada distributed 233,500 copies of the magazine—a 28 percent increase compared with 2006, when the magazine first replaced the September issue of *The Forum* as our primary outreach publication. In 2006, members distributed 168,475 copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, a 28 percent increase compared with the September 2005 issue of *The Forum*.

In 2007, for the first time we had two printings of the magazine. In the spring, we did a second print run of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007*, which made its debut in September 2006. In the fall, the first printing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2008* was completed.

This year, 2008, will therefore be the second in which we have two print runs of the magazine, which is published in English, French, and Spanish. It remains to be seen if the fellowship will continue to distribute the magazine in increasing quantities in 2008. Compared with 2007, however, the Public Outreach department is significantly increasing its efforts to inform members how the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine can simplify their efforts to credibly explain the Al-Anon program to a wide audience.

Our annual Public Service Announcement (PSA) campaign for 2006-2007, "What It's Like," showed a 20 percent increase in television broadcast airplays compared with the previous year's campaign. The increase in airplays looks more modest—7 percent—when it is compared to the average number of airplays for the previous five annual campaigns. Of the six campaigns since 2001-2002, "What It's Like" ranks third in airplays. Our PSA campaign's results are measured for the 12-month period beginning each July.

Our current PSA campaign, "Sketches," got off to a slow start because of distribution problems; it wasn't launched until August. Television stations, however, have continued to broadcast "What It's Like." In the four-month period of August–November 2007, television stations broadcast PSAs from both campaigns: "What It's Like," which includes one PSA; and "Sketches," which includes three PSAs. With both campaigns still in play, Al-Anon enjoyed a 37 percent increase in PSA broadcasts, compared with August-November 2006. Last year we also had two PSA campaigns running simultaneously for some months, but we did not accumulate data for the 2005-2006 campaign after June 2006.

"Sketches" started to gain some traction in October and November. In November 2007, for example, the three "Sketches" PSAs generated 22 percent more airplays than "What It's Like" got

in November 2006. In November 2007, total Al-Anon PSA broadcasts were up 76 percent compared with November 2006 when we count broadcasts from both the “Sketches” and “What It’s Like” campaigns. Again, we have a higher year-over-year comparison when we count airplays for two campaigns running simultaneously, but we do not have any measurements last year for the previous year’s campaign after June 2006.

As a long-term trend, television stations have been cutting back on the time allotted for public service announcements; and generally, competition is intense for the limited time available for PSA broadcasts. It is greatly encouraging that our PSA airplays are getting more air time in this challenging environment.

Beginning in April, for the first time we received public service advertising on Google.com and Google.ca (Canada). Click-throughs from Al-Anon public service ads have sent nearly 16,000 visitors to our Public Outreach Web site. Our Google PSAs appeared on more than 300,000 pages viewed by Google users. Also for the first time, we also put our PSAs and other video material onto YouTube.com, where these files generated about 2,000 “visits.” This information is also available on our Public Outreach Web site, but we believe putting it onto YouTube.com enables us to reach a different audience other than those who are looking for information on our own Web site.

In 2007 we began to be more proactive in outreach to print media. We used Google and other search engines to begin tracking references to Al-Anon in on-line newspapers and news services; and to identify potential contacts and Al-Anon-friendly writers and columnists. We took some first steps to build a closer relationship with these Al-Anon friendly journalists; we thanked them for their support; and sent them copies of *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses*. We wrote to them a second time enclosing copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007* and *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2008*. We expect this effort to yield some positive results in 2008.

In 2007 we wrote three new press releases, two of them for the winter holiday season that usually creates so much trouble for the families of problem drinkers. Also, we had our first conference call with Public Outreach Coordinators in a long while, and worked with them to distribute our press releases to local newspapers.

### ***PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE***

Gen B. / Mirta S., Chairperson

Judy Alexander, Chairperson, Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee

Winnie Schmidt, Chairperson, Outreach to Professionals Advisory

Mary Lou M./ Patrick Q., Associate Director Communications—Media

Claire R., Associate Director Communications—Professionals

The Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee recommended that the M-46 Card be discontinued and that a business card template take its place. The committee also recommended revisions to the M-44 *Al-Anon Is & Is Not* bookmark. The Public Outreach Committee reviewed the proposed changes to the M-44 bookmark, making one minor change to the Advisory Committee's recommendation.

The Committee reviewed proposed text to a new bookmark, to replace the Crying House bookmark.

The Committee reviewed the content and offered suggestions for *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2008*. The Committee also had a knowledge-based discussion on several topics affecting public outreach: how to welcome newcomers, tasks to engage public outreach coordinators, and the role of the AIS in public outreach. The Committee reviewed and approved the content for the "Sketches" PSA campaign.

Although the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee was disbanded on a trial basis, one member was utilized for an Al-Anon presentation and workshops at the Mid-Atlantic Addiction Training Institute in Indiana, PA. Members were also asked to submit articles from their perspective as professionals for inclusion in the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2008* and 2009 magazines and to provide comments about the benefits of the "Meeting on Wheels" presentation format. Suggestions made by the Advisory Committee were also implemented in the 2008 printing of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine.

Like the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee, the Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee recommended that it be disbanded on a trial basis. The Committee stated that the Canadian needs for communication to professionals and the media were already incorporated into

the Public Outreach Committee meetings and processed by WSO staff.

### ***FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATION***

Prior to April, staff made final edits to the manuscript of *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29), based on comments from the Literature Committee, copy editor, Policy reviewers, and the Executive Director. An index for the book was also completed. This new book was introduced at the 2007 World Service Conference during a half-hour workshop on loss. The book has been well-received by the fellowship, and is reported to have been a valuable tool for discussion at meetings and workshops on grief and loss.

Staff prepared an internal communications campaign to bring news about the new book to the fellowship. This campaign included announcements, order forms, and a B-29 Web Page, as well as articles and ads in *The Forum* and *Area Highlights*.

Even before B-29 was completed we developed a new project plan to complete B-30 (working title: OUR RECOVERY IN RELATIONSHIPS) in time to introduce the book at the International Convention in Pittsburgh. We also created a new outline for the content of the book.

In January 2007, we hired two new writers to begin work on the project. In the first nine months of the year, they provided a series of drafts for all the chapters. By the end of the year, we were able to send the Literature Committee the final draft of the manuscript, which was well-received by the Committee members, who offered many helpful comments for further improvement.

Our experiment in Electronic Conference Approved Literature (e-CAL) was launched in February 2007 with the introduction of the e-CAL page on the Members' Web Site. To date, most of the members' e-CAL sharings have been electronically-submitted text, rather than recovery sharings that utilize a wide range of multi-media tools available for Web publication. So far, the e-CAL web page has attracted only a small following of less than 1,000 readers per month. Although there have been articles about e-CAL published in *The Forum* and *Area Highlights*, we've found that many members are still unaware of the e-CAL web page and unclear on the concept of what e-CAL could be. We hope to communicate these messages more effectively in 2008.

*The Forum* made substantial progress in adjusting its editorial content to reflect a wider range of diversity and different levels of recovery within the fellowship. Among other new features, each month's issue includes an "Instant Meeting," to encourage the use of *The Forum* at meetings.

While many members have commented on the revitalized content of the magazine, there is still much work to be done in making the magazine an essential part of Al-Anon recovery for a larger number of members.

In 2007 we conducted a conference call with Literature Coordinators, the first such event in a long time. The primary topic for discussion was the introduction of *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses*. Following the conference call, we introduced a new Literature project. We asked the members to suggest questions for discussion that would make possible a deeper understanding of *From Survival to Recovery*. We received more than 70 sets of topics, quotations, and questions from members and groups from at least 21 Areas throughout the Conference structure. Selections from this information will be included on the Member's Web Site and in *The Forum*, in support of the Sample Chapter to be posted on the Web Site.

### ***LITERATURE COMMITTEE***

Lorraine F. / Roger C., Chairperson

Tom C., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communication—Literature

The Committee's major project was the review and final approval of OUR RECOVERY IN RELATIONSHIPS (working title), "a comprehensive piece about our recovery in alcoholic relationships." The 2001 World Service Conference gave conceptual approval to this project. The book drew upon the experience, strength and hope of about 1,100 members, who submitted written sharings to the WSO. Committee members read two drafts of the complete manuscript, and made extensive comments and suggestions.

The Committee also reviewed text changes to *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22). These changes were based on a motion from the 2003 Conference, which was amended by the 2007 Conference. It includes a new chapter on the Twelve Concepts of Service and additions to the Traditions chapter. These changes were also approved by Policy Committee members and the Executive Director, and will be included in the next printing as well as a revised index to include the new material.

Several suggestions from the fellowship for new literature were reviewed throughout the year, but at this point the Committee has decided not to make any recommendations to the Conference.

### ***e-CAL COMMITTEE***

Mary Ann R. / Doreen D., Chairperson

Patrick Q., Associate Director of Communications—Literature/e-CAL /Julie M., Communications Manager

The Committee reviews all e-CAL submissions within a 5-day turn-around period. An e-CAL submission requiring minimal changes can be published within a period of several weeks, also including a Policy review, and review by staff and Executive Director.

### ***FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FEAC)***

Bidge B. / Mary Ann R. / Winnie S., Chairperson

Suzanne M., WSO Forum Coordinator / Robert S., Director of Communications

The Forum Editorial Advisory Committee met once by conference call in January to discuss the magazine's editorial challenges for the year. Throughout the year, the Committee reviewed member-submitted sharings for *The Forum* in batches of 50 articles. This streamlined approach to committee work reflects changes planned in 2006.

## **MEMBER SERVICES**

### ***MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH***

### ***ADMISSIONS/HANDBOOK COMMITTEE***

Lyn D./Carol V., Chairperson

Cynthia H./Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

The Admissions/Handbook Committee was asked to review for clarity the text that accompanies the “Area Committee Structure” chart on page 148 of the World Service Handbook section of the *2004-2006 Service Manual*. Because the same information is clearly stated on page 126, “At the

District Level” section, “Finances” sub-section, second sentence, the Admissions/Handbook Committee recommended that the paragraph be removed from page 148

In response to an Al-Anon member’s question asking for clarity about what level of Coordinator was being referred to in the last sentence on page 126 of the “Conference Procedures” section, “Finances” sub-section, “At the District Level,” Finances section, the Admissions/Handbook Committee recommended that the sentence be removed and that the term “Assembly Treasurer” be changed to “Area Treasurer” as the Treasurer acts on direction from the Area Assembly in accordance with the Area budget. The Committee thought that the reference to funding of Coordinator’s expenses is an autonomy issue and does not belong in the “Conference Procedures, At the District Level” section, which is talking about the District Representative’s expenses.

The Committee continued its study of dividing populous states and provinces and initiated a brainstorming session to develop a “big thinking question” to submit to the Board of Trustees.

### ***CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM***

Mary G., Chairperson

Doreen D., Co-Chairperson

Cynthia H./Suzanne M., Associate Director Member Services—Conference

In July, the Conference Committee was restructured to form the Conference Leadership Team. This change, which is a trial, was made to help the Team focus on a coherent schedule and goals for the Conference at an earlier date. This smaller group, with representation from WSO volunteers and staff, is providing for more successful communication and providing clarity. Any activities that might require more people will be assigned to Task Forces of volunteers and/or staff, as needed.

### ***INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE***

Doreen D. / Claudette D., Chairperson

Marsha W., Associate Director Member Services—International



The 2006 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting Summary was sent to all General Service Offices and 2006 Delegates. The Summary is also available on the Members' Web site.

The idea of a Trial Zonal Meeting discussed at the 2006 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) became a reality when the German General Service Office organized a meeting for countries in Europe that took place August 10-12, 2007. There were eleven service structures, including the US and Canada, that sent participants. To focus the meeting, the participants' devised the following Mission Statement: *To improve cooperation between the European Structures in order to support the growth of Al-Anon/Alateen in Europe.* It was decided that future meetings will take place during the year there is no IAGSM scheduled.

Planning began for the 2008 IAGSM which will be held in Helsinki, Finland October 1-5, 2008. The Chairperson and the Associate Director Member Services--International visited the site following their participation in the Trial Zonal Meeting.

### ***INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS***

Ric B., Chairperson, 2008 and 2013

Marsha W., Coordinator, 2008

Suzanne M., Co-Coordinator, 2008; Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

Barbara O., Co-Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

### ***2008 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION***

In addition to being available on-line in English, Spanish, and French, the Registration/Housing forms for the 2008 International in Pittsburgh, PA were mailed in the fall to all groups, District Representatives, Coordinators, Lone Members, *Forum* subscribers and the General Service Offices.

The contract for dorm housing did not materialize in a self-supporting, financially feasible

manner. As a result WSO was not able to offer dormitory housing as an option for the 2008 International Convention. Several options were explored before making the final decision.

Before the Convention begins, a new activity is planned for registered attendees— interactive service workshops. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet others including WSO staff and volunteers on Thursday July 3.

There are two luncheons scheduled during the Convention. The Pioneer Luncheon, which is open with limited seating, and the Conference Reunion Luncheon, a closed event, for past and present Conference members. Both are ticketed events.

### ***2013 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION***

The Convention Site Committee, consisting of six WSC Delegates selected by lot at the January 2007 Board Meeting, four Trustees, including the Executive Director and the incoming Chairperson of the Board, Convention Coordinator and Co-Coordinator, Director of Member Services, and Director of Business Services, reviewed the bid presentations for 14 Areas in the U.S. and Canada following the 2007 World Service Conference and selected three sites for inspections.

The 2013 International Convention Site Selection Committee visited Denver, Colorado; Anaheim, California; and Vancouver, British Columbia in August. Members of the Site Selection Committee (one Trustee, Executive Director, Director of Business Services, Director of Member Services, and the 2013 Coordinator) spent a day and a half in each city touring the facilities where Al-Anon's major events would take place and gathering data on estimated costs for holding the Convention.

The Site Selection Committee made a recommendation to the Board of Trustees to hold Al-Anon's 2013 International Convention in Vancouver. The Chairman of the Board and Coordinator for 2013 Convention visited the site. At its October meeting, the Board approved Vancouver as the site of the 2013 Convention.

## ***INTERNATIONAL***

WSO representatives went to Romania, Greece, Germany, Finland, France, Spain, and Russia in 2007. The purpose for these trips was to meet with members in various settings about service and share on other Al-Anon/Alateen related topics unique to the country or service structure.

Translations of literature, provided by the World Service Office, were done in Mongolian in the following literature pieces:

*A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic* (P-7)

*Purpose and Suggestions* (P-13)

*This is Al-Anon* (P-32)

In addition the “Groups at Work” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* is available in Mongolian.

A common theme in correspondence from service structures and countries that are trying to form a service structure is Public Outreach. Many indicate they are trying to share the message about Al-Anon and Alateen within their communities by doing more organized projects, by participation in open forums when invited, and by reaching out to professionals within their communities. Some have also indicated that Service Seminars/workshops organized during the year were successful ways to introduce and involve more members.

## ***GROUP SERVICES***

The Al-Anon Group Registration/Change form (GR-1) has been revised for clarity and to reflect the field names in the new WSO database. The group focus category **Regular Al-Anon** was added as were separate fields for the meetings with special formats- Beginner meetings and Introductory meetings (formerly called Institution meetings). Reference to specific *Guidelines* and the *Service Manual* (P24/27) for additional information were added where applicable. The on-line version will include a direct link to these publications.

The bi-annual Area Group Records printout has been adapted to reflect the new database fields. The most significant change is the term “suspended” has been changed to “No Mail” as it describes the actual status of the group when mail is returned as undeliverable to the group’s

Current Mailing Address (CMA). After two years in No Mail status the status is changed to Inactive. As the name implies, groups with No Mail status do not receive any mail from WSO including the group's free copy of *The Forum*, new editions of the *Service Manual*, or other WSO correspondence. Information on the printout is used for WSO toll-free meeting line and local meeting directories.

In 2007 about 12% of the new groups registered submitted group names that did not meet WSO criteria. Most of the groups submitted names that implied affiliation with outside entities, were confusing, or were slang terms. Group Records contacted the group with information and references in **Groups at Work** and **Policy Digest** sections of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (24/27)*.

The total number of groups in 2007 is:

|                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| U.S. Al-Anon 12,946,*  | U.S. Alateen 926;    |
| Canada Al-Anon 1,393,  | Canada Alateen 79    |
| Overseas Al-Anon 9,107 | Overseas Alateen 770 |

Al-Anon Electronic meetings registered world-wide are 37 on-line meetings and 14 telephone meetings.

\*It was noted that due to some U.S. groups having multiple meetings, there are approximately 1,500 more meetings than groups. These meetings do not receive separate mailings from the WSO.

The "Al-Anon & Alateen Groups at Work" section of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)* was expanded and reorganized. *Groups at Work (P-24)* was also printed as a separate booklet, allowing members easy access to this basic group information and the meeting format.

In an effort to better serve the groups, the Executive Committee approved discontinuing sending a binder to the new groups effective January 1, 2008. The reformatted information will be sent to the groups in two mailings. A clear plastic envelope will replace the binder.

## ***ALATEEN***

The Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Services has attended two Alateen Conferences in Canada. Areas have reported success in using Teams consisting of multiple certified Al-Anon Group Sponsors available for Alateen groups allowing flexibility in service to Alateen.

## ***NEW MATERIALS AND REVISIONS:***

The bookmark, *Sponsorship—Working Together to Recover* (M-78), is available in English/French/Spanish.

*Guideline for Al-Anon Web Sites* (G-40)

*Electronic Meeting Guideline* (G-39)

*Starting an Alateen Group* Guideline (G-19)

*Cooperation between Al-Anon and A.A.* Guideline (G-3) was revised in collaboration with Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) The guideline adds on Alateen participation in A.A. events, and clarifies members' roles at open A.A. meetings. New language emphasizes that neither A.A. nor Al-Anon recognize combined A.A./Al-Anon meetings. It is available in English/Spanish/French.

## ***GROUP SERVICES COMMITTEE***

Frank R. /Margot M., Chairperson, Chairperson

Barbara O., Director of Member Services/Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen & Special Services

Doris W., Chairperson, Alateen Advisory Committee, Trustee

In a conference call meeting, the Group Services Committee continued its discussion of how to best serve the fellowship and implement the goal, “Strengthen and support our communication through defined links of service.” It is clear that ongoing education in the Areas is important. One Area established a Membership Outreach Coordinator to reach out to groups in inactive districts, resulting in increased attendance at Assemblies. Many Areas use the Internet and e-mail to increase communication. It was agreed that the Committee’s next step will be to develop an action plan to implement the goal.

A related topic is how Areas can best work with their Al-Anon Information Services (AISs). In many Areas, there is harmony and cooperation; in others, there is a history of conflict. In many cases, the AISs were in place before the Areas were established. Ways need to be found that all service arms can work together in a spirit of unity for our common purpose.

The Group Services Committee provided input to staff on the *Open Meeting* guideline (G-24). It was agreed that there is much confusion about open/closed meetings in general, and that this guideline is focused on a special open meeting for public outreach purposes. New text in the “Groups at Work” section of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) explains the difference between the two types of meetings. The Committee consensus was that generally the content of the G-24 guideline is usable, but the title needs to be more appropriate to the content.

As a trial in 2007, the Alateen Advisory Committee (AAC) met twice, at the USSE Regional Service Seminar (RSS) and the Canada Central RSS. The trial structure worked well, involving more Alateens and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service than in prior years. Canadian Alateens expressed appreciation for being included for the first time. Both meetings used the same agenda, discussing the WSO Strategic Plan as it relates to Alateen, and how Al-Anon and Alateen can help Alateen to grow.

AAC members agreed that they would like more participation in Alateen by Al-Anon members, and would like to be considered as equal, valuable members of the Al-Anon Family Groups. Welcoming Alateens to Al-Anon meetings, especially when Alateen is not available, is a necessity.

When not in meetings, the AAC members participated in RSS activities. Both RSS evaluations showed appreciation for the Alateen attendance.

A proposal has been approved to hold three AAC meetings per year in conjunction with Area Assemblies. The three- year trial will allow members from every region in the US and Canada to participate and get a broader perspective on the needs of Alateen, as well as bring WSO staff and

Volunteers to the Areas.

## **BUSINESS SERVICES**

### **iMIS**

In 2007 we conducted extensive testing, including parallel processing of the new iMIS software program. In June we went live with the system and established a data maintenance work group for quality control. We are in the process of reviewing the iMIS shopping cart module and plan to implement the shopping cart in 2008 and interface it with the sales module.

We have tested the inventory system in iMIS and plan to use for literature in English in 2008.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

*Zelda R./Mary Ann R., Chairperson*

David Z., Director of Business Services

The Finance Committee meets monthly and reports to the Executive Committee immediately following the Finance meeting. During Board week the Finance Committee reports directly to the Board of Trustees.

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 include:

- Approve the quarterly Appeal letters.

- Review handouts on previous year's contributions received from the US and Canada for distribution at the World Service Conference.
- Recommended the equalized expense price to send a Delegate to the World Service Conference to the Board of Trustees.
- Reviewed and submitted recommendations of the Investment Strategy goals, to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- Reviewed each department's budget with the Director of that service in preparing the Preliminary 2008 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January.
- Recommended to the Board of Trustees that the Preliminary Budget be sent to the World Service Conference members after the auditors have completed their field work.
- Approved that the *Courage to Change* CD-ROM be discontinued due to drop in sales. The decision to create the *Courage to Change* in a CD was abandoned due to the inability to obtain copy-protection and a recognized trend towards downloadable mp3 files.
- Reviewed and relayed to the fellowship information that pertains to IRS regulations such as the change in U.S. law relating to cash contributions. Effective this year, a taxpayer is required to have a receipt for each cash contribution claimed as an itemized deduction. The receipt must be from the organization that has received tax-exempt status from the IRS.

To support the Strategic Plan Theme, **Unlimited Abundant Resources, Goal #1: Discover and use universal resources, Objective #2** Within the next 3 years, raise the allowable limit of bequests, the Finance Committee submitted a request to the Policy Committee for a change to the policy under the heading Bequests. The Committee further developed a plan for managing the excess Bequest funds and the prioritizing of special projects by the WSC.

The Committee further developed a goal under the Theme: **Unlimited Abundant Resources Goal**



**#2:** The Finance Committee will ensure that the budget reflects the priorities of the Strategic Plan as set by the Board of Trustees.

This goal will ensure that adequate funds are available to support the Strategic Plan keeping in mind the use of the money within spiritual principles.

**Objective #1:** Increase the contributions 30% by the year 2012

- The Finance and Executive Committees will give a presentation on the Quarterly Appeal at the WSC
- Recognizing that there is a tendency in the fellowship to rely too heavily on literature sales for income the Finance Committee asked the Chair of the Board of Trustees to appoint a World Service Conference member Task Force on member contributions.

### **ADDENDUM TO THE 2007 ANNUAL REPORT**

#### **Al-Anon/Alateen Internationally**

#### **AFRICA**

**South Africa:** The General Service Office advised, for the first time in the history of their service structure, three Public Service Announcements for TV, radio, and written publications were produced through the assistance of a paid professional agency. One of the PSAs received an award and as a result was selected for viewing starting January 2008.

#### **EUROPE**

**Austria:** A representative participated in the Trial Zonal Meeting held in Germany. As a result of attendance at that meeting, a discussion will take place in April at the annual spring service meeting about forming a Trial National Service Structure.

**Belgium** (Flemish-speaking): The General Service Office relocated their office to cut the cost of

finances. Two representatives were sent to the Trial Zonal Meeting for European service structures held in Essen, Germany.

**Commonwealth of Independent States** (formerly the Soviet Union): The World Service Office sent the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees and the Associate Director Member Services – International to the Service Meeting held in Moscow. In addition to attending local meetings, there were also meetings with representatives from the Russian Service Committee and members involved in service. A discussion with all involved the proper process of obtaining permission to translate Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature. It was stressed that only the Russian Committee for Russian-Speaking AFG has permission to reprint Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature for the Commonwealth of Independent States.

**Finland:** Two representatives, Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee and Associate Director Member Services—International visited the site in Helsinki planned for the 2008 IAGSM. The visit also included scheduled meetings with the Board of Trustees as well as members involved in service to share WSO service experience on a variety of questions.

**France:** The General Service Office advised they were pleased that two World Service Office representatives visited the office. The WSO representatives met with two Board of Trustee members and the past General Secretary in October. The office received notification from the landlord they have to move in June 2008 as the building in which the office is housed is being sold.

**Germany:** The General Service Office hosted the first Trial Zonal Meeting for European service structures in August. The meeting was called “European Talk.” The meeting was open to countries with national service and/or evolving service structures. Ten countries including the US and Canada sent representatives. Germany invited the the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Al-Anon in Germany. The Director of Member Services also attended as part of her training.

**Greece:** Two representatives from the World Service Office, Director of Member Services and Associate Director Member Services - International, were invited to participate in the Al-Anon

program held during the 13th International A.A. Greek Convention. The WSO representatives also met with service representatives from the Al-Anon Information Service to answer questions regarding Al-Anon service structure.

**Iceland:** The General Service Office advised that with a total of 39 Al-Anon groups and two Alateen groups, their service structures are still moving in positive directions.

**Italy:** The General Service Office advised the Literature Committee completed the translation and adaptation of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* and will have it available in 2008.

**Poland:** The General Service Office sent two representatives to the first Trial Zonal Meeting for European service structures. The office moved to a new and larger location in Poznan.

**Romania:** The World Service Office sent the Director of Member Services and Associate Director Member Services—International to Bucharest to meet with members involved in service. Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature printed and *Groups at Work* in Romanian, by the World Service Office, was given to the group in Bucharest to have on hand for newcomers and public outreach.

**Spain:** The General Service Office advised their 2007 Conference was very successful. The World Service Office visited the General Service Office in October and met with the Board of Trustee and members involved in service.

**Sweden:** The General Service Office advised their Literature Committee has been working on a number of translation projects and hopes to printing new Conference Approved Literature in 2008.

**Switzerland** (German-speaking): The General Service Office sent two members to attend the Trial European Zonal Meeting. The General Service Office also has a new General Secretary.

**UK & Eire:** The General Service Office has a new General Secretary as of May. The General Service Office also sent the General Secretary and the current IAGSM Delegate to represent their service structure in the Trial European Zonal Meeting.

### ASIA

**China:** Two Trustees, the Associate Director - International and a retired WSO staff person participated in a Training Institute for professionals that took place in Shanghai, Beijing and Kunming, China. WSO participants had a presence in the plenary sessions in each city and held scheduled AI-Anon meetings.

**India:** Interest by members to participate in the meetings of the Trial National Service Structures is broader. Two more states are participating, bringing the total to ten. WSO is planning to send representatives to attend the 2008 meeting.

**Japan:** The General Service Office indicates the new location of this office is more accessible to the members.

**Korea:** The General Service Office has a new General Secretary and has moved to a new location that will support their budget.

### AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

**Australia:** A representative from the General Service Office advised they are doing a major revision of their Australian Service Handbook due to the many amendments in the WSO Service Manual. The General Service Office sent the General Secretary to the 47<sup>th</sup> World Service Conference.

**New Zealand:** A representative from the General Service Office advised the previous General

Secretary was rehired. The Board of Trustees is also in the process of reorganizing and adapting the WSO Board as a model.

### **NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA**

**Costa Rica:** A representative from the General Service Office advised they held two Regional Service Seminars and held their 11<sup>th</sup> National Conference in October 2007.

**Cuba:** Although communication was not as consistent with the World Service Office over the past year, some correspondence received indicates members are still meeting and actively involved in service.

**Mexico:** The Associate Director Member Services -International and Translation Services Manager participated in the National Service Conference held in Mexico City. The structure, with permission of their Conference, purchased a building to house General Service Office opened in April 2007.

### **SOUTH AMERICA**

**Argentina:** After much work and planning, the General Service Office purchased property, with the permission of their Conference, and moved into a permanent location in the spring of 2007.

**Brazil:** The 2007 Service Conference was very positive. Public awareness was increased through projects by the membership during 2007.

**Colombia:** A representative from the General Service Office advised that their service structure continues to be stable and members have participated in area public outreach projects to raise awareness within the professional community about the benefits of Al-Anon and Alateen.

**Peru:** The General Service Office advised, because of the financial support from the membership, they have been able to do more reprinting of literature.

**Uruguay:** A representative from the General Service Office advised they have selected two Delegates to attend the 2008 IAGSM.

**Venezuela:** The General Service Office has had a good year with the sales of literature. The service structure continues to explore ways to unify the members, identifying themselves as Al-Anon Adult Children, while focusing on the principle of Al-Anon as a whole.

## 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

A new theme, **Support and Strengthen Our Structure** was added to the Strategic Plan. It includes some of the Goals previously included under the other themes and additional Goals as well.

A new Goal under this theme was developed by the staff and added to the Strategic Plan as follows:

### **Support and Strengthen Our Structure**

**Goal #6** The WSO staff and volunteers working together will engage Al-Anon groups in the U.S. and Canada to be more welcoming to newcomers introducing newcomers to all aspects of the Al-Anon Program in a clear, concise manner.

**Objective #1:** To develop effective research-based methods for groups to use to create a welcoming environment for newcomers.

A new goal was added to the **Unlimited, Abundant Resources** theme as follows:

**Goal #2:** The Finance Committee will ensure that the budget reflects the priorities of the Strategic Plan

**Objective #1:** Increase the contributions 30% by the year 2012

A Task Force was appointed to design strategies for this objective. Included in the Task Force's charge was to prepare for a discussion on the topic at the 2009 World Service Conference.

**Progress on the Strategic Plan – 2007- 08 Priorities:**

The Board approved the following goals/objectives as priorities and task forces were appointed for each:

**1. Support and Strengthen Our Structure, Goal #5** Evaluate and recreate the structure of the WSO selected committees and other program delivery processes in innovative ways rendering them dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task oriented to fulfill the current needs of the organization.

**Objective #1:** By July 2008, using specific criteria, evaluate the selected committees and redefine their current definition and operation to ensure that they meet the on-going needs of the organization.

*Approval was given to suspend the Canadian Public Outreach Subcommittee for a three-year trial basis.*

The Canadian Public Outreach Committee, a subcommittee of the Public Outreach Committee, believed it no longer contributed to the planning process for public outreach. The Chair expressed the opinion that continued participation in the parent Public Outreach Committee would be enough to ensure that Canadians are being served.

*Approval was given to suspend the Outreach to Professionals Advisory Committee for a three-year trial basis.*

Suspending the advisory committee could be a way to allow the Public Outreach department to create task forces and thought forces to make broader use of the fellowship and community's resources.

*Forum Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) Restructured (trial)*

With the new review process, each member reviews articles at their home and sends their responses to the WSO. FEAC meets only by conference call. The cost savings and the

convenience for the members by avoiding the time and problems of air travel are two of the most obvious immediate benefits. Enthusiastic participation of the Committee members has allowed for in-depth discussion on exploring ways to generate interest in *The Forum*. The communication continues between meetings via e-mail.

*Conference Committee –restructured (trial)*

The Board restructured the Conference Committee so that it will streamline the preparations for the World Service Conference. Membership includes the Executive Director, Chairperson of the Board, two Trustees serving as Chairman and Co-Chairman, Director of Member Services, and the Associate Director Member Services—Conference. The Conference Leadership Team (trial) will enable a focus on both content of sessions and setting the actual agenda for sessions. Each and every session of the Conference will reflect and be evaluated on its adherence to the Conference theme.

*Alateen Advisory Committee restructured (trial)*

The Alateen Advisory Committee is in a trial period of restructure with Advisory Committee meetings held with regional representation at RSSs. For the trial in 2007, the Alateen Advisory Committee met at the Southeast RSS in Charleston, West Virginia and in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. At-Large members are selected from the country where the RSS is held. This has allowed Canadian Alateens to participate and has invigorated the Committee. The Alateens also have an opportunity to participate in the RSSs.

*RSS Committee –restructured (trial)*

The RSS Committee has been restructured as a work group for a trial period. The Committee formulated questions to gather information from Delegates at the 2007 World Service Conference. It will continue to seek innovative ways for communicate between the World Service Office and the fellowship.

*Admissions/Handbook Restructured (trial)*

The Admissions/Handbook Committee has been restructured as a work force that will meet only to resolve timely questions on the handbook. The Board has begun conversations on other ways to



handle approval of admissions for seating at the WSC since this has become a cursory process. During the trial, the Chair of Admissions/Handbook Work Force is not serving on the Conference Leadership Team.

### *Delegate Participation on Committees*

Discussion has begun on Delegate participation on Committees. The use of technology and a rapidly changing environment means that Delegate input could be used in more timely, innovative, and dynamic ways. Committee work could be accomplished in other ways, freeing Delegates to focus on their primary work as the link between the World Service Conference and their Areas. Delegate input will be sought on this issue at the 2008 World Service Conference.

The Delegates were polled regarding their interest in serving on short-term, focused dynamic task forces to meet current organizational needs rather than on a Selected Committee during their terms. This would enable a more dynamic connection of the Delegates to the actual business of the Conference and free them up from responsibilities associated with staff work. Other members could continue to provide the necessary fellowship input and a process to ensure Conference review/oversight would need to be developed.

*e-CAL Committee* – At present e-CAL is in its second year of a three-year trial period. An on-line review process was designed for the review of e-CAL. E-CAL resides on the Members' Web site and has posted text, video and graphic sharings throughout the year.

The Executive Committee approved requests for restructuring committees.

**2. Support and Strengthen Our Structure, Goal #5** Evaluate and recreate the structure of the WSO selected committees and other program delivery processes in innovative ways rendering them dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task oriented to fulfill the current needs of the organization.

**Objective #2:** Create an innovative Regional Service Seminar by 2008.

A Task Force (see the Regional Service Seminar Committee above) is charged with developing a rationale to support a plan for a new service-oriented event whose purpose is to connect the WSO

and staff with our members.

A Task Force suggested the format for an innovative service event to take place at the 2008 International Convention. It will serve as a trial of various formats for future service-related events. Successful aspects of this event can be added to the new RSS events.

Reorganization of the committee structure allows the Executive Committee to choose candidates without the constraints of geographical boundaries.

**3. Support and Strengthen Our Structure, Goal #4** Fill Board vacancies with competent, able members who fulfill the current needs of the Board.

**Objective #1:** The Board will annually review its composition to determine what skills it will look for in upcoming Trustee vacancies (RTs and TALs),

*RT Selection Plan Training was approved and delivered at the 2007 WSC.* The presentation reminded scorers to constantly refer to the qualifications necessary to be an RT when scoring the five sections of the résumé. An information packet was assembled and given to all Conference members.

A Board Task Force was appointed to compile the skills of the current Trustees and to determine how to assess the skills needed in the future. A Board Profile instrument was designed. This is a work-in-progress. The Task Force will develop a timeline for communication between the Nominating Committee and the Conference Committee on Trustees as well as the Nominating Committee and the various Regional Committees on Trustees. There will be a new task force appointed to further develop the skills survey for Board members to use to familiarize themselves with each other about their background and skills. It can be used by the Chairperson to assist with assigning Board members to task forces and work groups based on their skills.

A Board Task Force was appointed to study whether there would be any advantages of having a non-member serve on the Board. The Board is continuing to discuss this topic.

A Work Group was appointed to research and discuss removing members from the Board of Trustees. Their initial discussions led to a discussion of the By-Laws of the Corporation. A proactive stance that would clearly state what is expected of a Trustee during the application process and before a Trustee accepts the position was endorsed as one part of the process. The Board approved a document spelling out the Attributes of a Board Member.

**The Board approved adding an additional question in writing for the candidates for Trustees for the purpose of assessing writing, thinking, and communicating abilities as well as offering insight into the level of understanding candidates have on spiritual principles in addition to current issues of the organization. This question was used in the most recent selection process. The question will change each year to reflect a current issue of concern to the Board.**

The Nominating Committee continues its discussion with Conference Committee on Trustees regarding the preparation of Leadership Training workshops for use in the Areas.

**4. Support and Strengthen Our Structure, Goal #1** The Board and staff will be catalysts to strengthen the groups and to expand our mutual relationship.

**Objective #1:** Individual members of the Board of Trustees will participate in 15 different service events annually.

The Board has set up a method for requesting Trustee visits to Area service events. Funds have been identified to support this goal. In 2006-2007 Trustees visited and made presentations at the following Assemblies:

Colorado

Minnesota North

Utah

New York North

Saskatchewan

California North

BC/Yukon

Quebec East

Alberta/Northwest Territories

Illinois South

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| Texas East   | Ontario South |
| Connecticut  | Indiana       |
| Oklahoma     | Mississippi   |
| North Dakota | Nevada        |

**At these assemblies Trustees shared their service and personal stories, gave presentations, Q & A sessions, and workshops on the following topics:**

Leadership, Concept Nine, Ways of Contributing to the WSO, Service Manual, the Board's Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission, Prescription Al-Anon, International Outreach, Conference theme, e-CAL, Conflict Resolution, Literature, Using Groups at Work for meetings, Alateen Advisory Committee, 2008 International, Alateen Talk, Alateen skit, WSO websites, Understanding and Using Electronic Communication, On-line Meetings, Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) and the Traditions, How the WSC works, WSC schematic, Alateen Requirements, Minority Voice, What a Trustee does and how a Trustee is elected, Sponsorship and Controlling Sponsorship, KDBM and the Twelve Concepts of Service, Outreach to other language and cultural communities, *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses*, Culture of Trust, Responsibility, Big thinking sessions from the 2007 WSC, Public Outreach, Public Outreach and Anonymity, Shared Leadership, Service Structure: Working Together, Anonymity within the fellowship, AFG, Inc/ AFG, the fellowship, Concepts of Service in your personal life, and Involving Past Trusted Servants

The Board articulated and reviewed the criteria needed for each Board member to be successful in this outreach to the Areas and in the world as a representative of the Board. These included endurance, health, and dietary needs as well as cultural sensitivity among others.

A Task Force was appointed to develop a feedback sheet for Areas to let the WSO know if the Trustee visits were helpful to the Areas they visited. The Board reviewed a first draft. The project is a work-in-progress.

The Board held a discussion at the Open Board Meeting during the WSC on controlling sponsorship issues under the larger discussion: "Having studied the roles and responsibilities of

the Board of Trustees for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., and being aware of the growing concerns of some Al-Anon members, what is the Board's role within the Bylaws of the Corporation and the Concepts of Service including the General Warranties of the Charter to ensure the long-term viability of the Al-Anon fellowship?" A variety of ideas were shared which called upon every Al-Anon member to take responsibility for learning about and keeping this topic an ongoing issue for study and discussion.

The Board approved the theme for the 2008 World Service Conference – “Build Bridges—Energizing Our Spiritual Quest” which can encourage building bridges within the fellowship and which can energize the fellowship to consider its spiritual path.

Leadership training sessions, beginning with one on Conflict Resolution, were introduced at the Conference and were overwhelmingly well received.

The notions of Shared Leadership continued to be reinforced and the culture of trust deepened during the WSC.

The continued use and understanding of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making in our deliberations has assisted in the decision-making processes at the Board and at the Conference. We have begun to internalize “Dialogue before Deliberation” as a means of thoroughly examining issues before a motion is brought to the floor.

The Board approved the idea of having a conversation with the Conference members about how issues pertaining to worldwide Al-Anon could come before the Conference in a more dynamic way.

Board members continue to strengthen their relationships with Delegates by making direct contact with Delegates following each quarterly meeting to discuss issues of concern to the Delegates and to answer questions that they might have. In 2007 there has been a focus on getting Delegates feedback on issues related to the WSC.

The idea of having conversation around questions which require “big” thinking (questions which are not easily answerable with a yes/no) was instituted as part of the WSC to encourage forward-thinking among all Conference members for the benefit of Al-Anon.

The *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* was printed with all four sections, Al-Anon Alateen Groups at Work, Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies, World Service Handbook, and Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service in one publication. A simultaneously printing of the Al-Anon/Alateen Groups at Work section as a separate publication was completed and mailed to every group. The Groups at Work document was made available at a low cost to encourage every member of the group to have and use it further unifying groups.

A task force was appointed to catalogue and update current presentations that Trustees could take when they visited an area. Suggestions for additional presentations are under consideration and development.

**The Nominating Committee reminded the Board that members of the Board, Executive Committee, and staff also share the responsibility to seek out members to serve at the WSO level when going out to speak in the fellowship or where groups of members gather.**

**The staff added additional ideas to support this objective:**

A new Literature Project was developed for Literature Coordinators to share with districts, groups, and members in their Areas. Participants were asked to select a meeting topic using *From Survival to Recovery* (B-21), which will be the Spring 2008 Sample Chapter selection on the Web. They were also asked to select a corresponding brief quotation and write five questions for meeting discussion pertaining to the topic. Over 70 sets of topics, quotations, and questions from members and groups from at least 21 Areas throughout the Conference structure were submitted for possible inclusion on the Members’ Web site.

*The Forum* is sent free all groups within the structure. It is a catalyst to unity across the structure, including news and information about the strategic plan, conference, and other activities affecting Al-Anon as a whole.

Staff members participated at RSSs, as well as attended several Area Assemblies and workshops, sometimes in partnership with a Trustee.

**Goal #2:** Prepare the staff, Board and Executive Committee to go out into the fellowship in order to articulate the Vision, Mission and the Strategic Plan of the Board.

**Objective #1:** The Staff, Board and Executive Committee have a viable tool to communicate the Vision, Mission and the Strategic Plan of the Board within one year.

A Task Force has been formed to develop an evaluation form.

A PowerPoint presentation has been designed for the purpose of assisting in explaining the Strategic Plan process.

### **Everyone, Everywhere**

**Goal #1:** The Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee and the World Service Office Staff will be catalysts to bring together potential partners who can make a difference in the lives of those affected by someone else's drinking.

The Board approved the theme for the 2008 World Service Conference – “Build Bridges— Energizing Our Spiritual Quest” which can encourage outreach efforts.

The Executive Committee approves staff travel to hear presentations by professionals and to discuss how best the Al-Anon principles can be utilized.

The staff listed other projects that support this goal.

A Canadian Al-Anon member was identified to serve as a liaison on the Canadian National Treatment Strategy Workgroup representing Canadian families of alcoholics.

The WSO served as a resource to the Director of Hallmark Hall of Fame Project Development and two writers' creation of screenplays for a television special about Lois W., Al-Anon's cofounder.

Members were informed about major media events related to alcoholism and families of alcoholics that included the HBO/USA Today television series on Addiction.

The coordinator for an experiential program called Professionals in Residence (PIR) in the Training Department at the Betty Ford Center included *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007* in the training notebooks for the remainder of sessions held in 2007 and is ordering 200 copies of the second printing of the 2008 edition for next year. The students of this course are all types of professionals: counselors, psychologists, probation officers, lawyers, and medical students. The Coordinator of the Betty Ford Treatment Center Outpatient program is taking copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2007* to a new treatment facility in Mexico that the Center is assisting.

Dr. Neil Capretto, Medical Director of Gateway Rehabilitation Center, Pittsburgh, PA gave a presentation on the families of alcoholics at the Pennsylvania Medical Society Conference in Gettysburg. His presentation included a half hour meeting on the subject of detachment held by six local members. This is the fourth time he has seen a "meeting on wheels" included in presentations. He believes it is effective because it makes a family presentation "real." Three members who are professionals that have made a presentation with a "meeting on wheels" or have observed one have been asked to submit their comments on the "meeting on wheels" and its value so that an article can be developed for the membership.

The Public Outreach staff has worked to develop closer, more supportive relationships with syndicated newspaper columnists who have written news articles that recommend Al-Anon. Public Outreach has encouraged Coordinators at the local level to build relationships with their local newspaper editors.

**Objective #1:** To invite one non-member professional partner annually to attend and observe a Board of Trustees meeting.



The Board approved allowing the WSO Information Analyst to attend Board Meetings. She is not an Al-Anon member. It is hoped that this will develop her understanding of the work of the Board. It will also allow the Board to ascertain whether an impartial and objective non-member could aid the Board. This is a first step in the Board's consideration of whether having a non-member at Board Meetings could assist us in building a partnership with a professional or an organization which would help carry our message of hope and recovery.

**Goal #2:** The Board, Executive Committee and Staff will coach/support the fellowship in building partnerships to make a difference in the lives of those affected by someone else's drinking.

The Executive Committee approves Area Coordinator conference calls in an attempt to provide clarity and understanding of policy in respect to the respective responsibilities of the coordinator and to build relationships with the staff.

**Objective #1:** To establish a resource bank that includes three different approaches to address anonymity within the next 3 years.

The staff created and presented several presentations on anonymity at conventions and assemblies.

**Goal #3:** During all planning and business meetings, the Board of Trustees will have a priority focus of spending 80% of time in forward-thinking strategic work and 20% of time in evaluation. Evaluations will include a quarterly review of the WSO's activities and the Board's self-review.

**Objective #1:** By October 2007, the Board will have adopted and successfully used a tool which will be an accurate evaluation of its work, will assist in improving its work and also assist in the oversight of the WSO's work.

The Board has tested some self-assessment tools related to the use of its time and internal functioning.

The Board has delegated the review of the WSO's day-to-day operations to the Executive Committee. The Committee approves projects and receives reports from the departments at each meeting. These reports allow the Committee to assess the work's relationship to the Strategic Plan as well as review its progress. Project proposals/approvals contain a specific connection to the Plan and plans for evaluation and measurement are included.

A Strategic Plan Oversight Task Force has been appointed to review all new suggested goals and objectives for clarity and style prior to their presentation to the Board. This year it suggested 5 priorities for the Board. Following Board approval, the Board Chairperson appointed task forces for each.

A Task Force to design a process for the Strategic Plan, its regular update and evaluation has been at work and presented a preliminary idea to the Board for discussion in October. Once there is final approval, the flow for the regular review and generation of Goals and Objectives will ensure its continued use and maintenance keeping it future focused and integral to the work of the Board.

The Chairperson of the Board wrote an article on the Strategic Plan for the fellowship which appeared in *The Forum* in December 2007.

The Board noted its desire for Delegates to receive the necessary information in advance so that the Conference actions will be related to the Strategic Plan, whenever possible.

The Chairperson of the Board writes a quarterly letter to the Conference Members keeping them apprised of the work of the Board.

### **Unlimited, Abundant Resources**

**Goal #1:** Discover and Use universal resources

**Objective #2:** Within the next 3 years, raise the allowable limit of bequests

A task force was appointed to study and prepare policy language regarding allowing greater bequests. The Board of Trustees approved language to amend the Policy Digest Section to permit unlimited bequests with the Conference having authority on how to spend those amounts that exceed the current limit of 10 per cent. The 2008 World Service Conference will discuss the proposed change.

**Goal #3:** Articulate, model and operate within the Fellowship in a reality of unlimited, abundant resources.

Following a request from a Delegate suggesting that a piece on finances and maintaining a prudent reserve be developed for groups and Areas to use when conducting their financial inventories, a task force was appointed to include two Delegate members. Presently, the Task Force is unsure if the piece will be a guideline or a fact sheet.

The Board approved the appointment of Task Force of Conference members to explore the idea of allowing contributions from the non-member family of an Al-Anon member in memory of a deceased Al-Anon member and to formulate a discussion question for the 2009 World Service Conference.

The Board approved the appointment of a Task Force of members who work in the estate-planning field to gather the most recent information and material for a fact sheet or guideline on estate planning and other considerations for Al-Anon members when considering including Al-Anon in their estate plan.

The staff included additional projects that support this goal:

The Associate Director Communications—Literature and the Director of Communications held an hour-long conference call with Literature Coordinators to enhance communication and cooperation regarding their role and generate enthusiasm for *Opening Our Hearts, Transforming Our Losses* (B-29). Thirty-seven Area Literature Coordinators participated in the call.

The call helped the WSO continue to build a relationship with Literature Coordinators and support them in using their unlimited abundant resources to effectively encourage the use of Conference

Approved Literature in their Areas. It was an opportunity for the WSO to cooperate with Areas by providing an environment for Coordinators to collaborate with each other while affording the WSO the opportunity to respond effectively to questions, concerns, and misinformation. It helped build trust, mutual understanding, and enthusiasm between the WSO and Coordinators. Several of the Coordinators who participated made more frequent contact with the WSO after the call than they had in the past. They also seemed to have a clearer sense of their role and carry out their responsibilities more effectively.

The Associate Director Communications—Media and the Director of Communications also hosted an hour-long conference call with Public Outreach Coordinators. Forty-eight Area Public Outreach Coordinators participated in the meeting. The topics discussed were how to make better use of Public Outreach resources, and how to involve the fellowship in Public Outreach projects.

Audio sound clips of Al-Anon members speaking as “family members of alcoholics” (without revealing their membership) were used in 2007 Recovery Month Web casts by the US Government’s Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. The WSO served as a resource for the Web casts throughout the year. Its recommendation for a family focused Web cast was implemented.

Child Family Services located in the Timmins District of Ontario reprinted the “Referral – Attend Al-Anon Family Groups” article from *The Forum* in conjunction with National Child Abuse Month. This article is one of three made available for duplication on the Internet in each issue of *The Forum*.

**Bob Conway,**

**New York North - Three Minute Talk to Conference**

It is difficult for me to express in words what the Al-Anon Family Groups including Alateen has done for my life. A few notables are a daily connection to a Higher Power which has truly energized my spiritual quest, developing a spirit of mind that I am never alone, realizing it’s ok to do things for myself without feeling guilty, understanding that I can still do for and care for others without it becoming detrimental to myself or them, teaching me about self love, knowing that I can say what I really think without fear of people being judgmental and, of course, the greatest gift in my mind, that being the gift of real hope. All these are miraculous happenings that moved my

life from one of dysfunction and fear to hope and serenity.

When I first thought about the Theme: “Build Bridges-Energizing Our Spiritual Quest” I asked myself what I have experienced in these past eighteen years that would equate to Building Bridges in some way. The following have been critical to my recovery:

- To build a bridge that would move my life from one of fear and dysfunction to one of trust and hope through meetings, service, sponsoring, etc.
- To understand how important Service Bridges are as a function of recovery and how communication is essential to its success. The obvious place where communication plays a huge role is in the bridges built from the World Service Conference, to the Areas, to the Districts, to the Groups, and finally the individual members. Members are elected to serve at the various levels of Service and to carry the message from the WSC to all levels of our structure
- Still other important bridges necessary for the fellowship to function effectively are bridges to local professionals and churches that explain what we’re about, bridges between generations of members (i.e. alateen), bridges that take us from a mindset of rigidity to one of acceptance of change as a positive thing not to be fearful of.
- The ultimate bridge for me to cross however is the one that will take me from this marvelous human existence to an eternal life beyond physical death with my Higher Power who loves me unconditionally.

My role, as I see it in serving as part of the hands of Al-Anon is to be there for others in need in any way I can be helpful and to make my Service an intricate part of the foundations of those aforementioned bridges I spoke of. Service, I believe is at the very core of our fellowship and therefore at the very core of the bridges.

My quest for spirituality has given me faith that my trust in and connection with my Higher Power on a daily basis in my lifetime will serve as a wonderful preparation for the day I will meet my Higher Power after crossing that ultimate bridge. My role as a Delegate these past three years has inspired me and energized my Spiritual Quest beyond anything I could have imagined and I thank the members for providing me the honor of being a Delegate and the Conference members for all their love, understanding, and support.