

**ACTION IS
ATTRACTION –
THERE IS NO GROWTH
IN THE COMFORT ZONE**

**L'ACTION, C'EST L'ATTRAIT –
IL N'Y A PAS DE CROISSANCE
DANS LA ZONE DE CONFORT**

**LA ACCIÓN ES ATRACCIÓN =
NO HAY CRECIMIENTO
EN LA ZONA DE COMODIDAD**



59th Annual
World Service Conference 2019

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS 2019 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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

*2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual
(P-24/27) page 180*

Concept Two
The Al-Anon Family
Groups have delegated
complete administrative
and operational authority
to their Conference and
its service arms.

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CORE PURPOSE

Helping families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences.



CORE VALUES

- **Spiritually based:** adhering to our Legacies
- **Honest:** treating all equally, with integrity and respect
- **Transparent:** sharing process, content, and information
- **Self-supporting:** refusing outside funding



ENVISIONED FUTURE (2024-2029)

- AFG, Inc. is a global organization with technology-based operations that support the delivery of on-demand, barrier-free access to the program, information, meetings, and Sponsors.
- The research-validated effectiveness of the Al-Anon/Alateen program in addressing the family disease of alcoholism is recognized by professionals, schools, and religious leaders. Their recommendations to this program increase membership and expand its outreach.
- Society as a whole benefits from reduced health care costs, lower levels of incarceration, and increased graduation rates.
- Families and friends of alcoholics benefit from greater connectedness to support, no matter their location or language.

GOALS (2022-2024)

- **Goal: Members**
AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.
- **Goal: Public**
Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.
- **Goal: Organization**
AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.



The 2019 Conference Summary is available in color online at al-anon.org in the Members section. Remember, you can enlarge the text by using the zoom button.

2019 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES AND 2019 TASK AND THOUGHT FORCES

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

Assignment	Panel 57 (2017-2019)	Panel 58 (2018-2020)	Panel 59 (2019-2021)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Sarah S., Chair MO Carmen O'M., LA Sue C., SD	Jeffrey F., Chair Elect, PA Phil G., KS Sue G., ON(S)	Katie W., OR Susan B., WIUPMI Wally C., MP
Literature Committee	Gail F., AR Gail L., CT Janet P., NV	Christine W., IL(N) Leah L., TN Marcia M., CA(S) Theresa M., OH	Lois H., MA Lynn B., BC/YK
Public Outreach Committee	Beth K., IA Dave B., SC Jean H., SK Madeline S., WY	Cheryl A., FL(S) Kay M., TX(W) Mintie G., MB/NWO	Kathy D., WA Rick G., CO Sheri S., ND
Task Force: Reaching and Unifying Rural and Large Geographic Populations	Angela D., NL/LAB Kathy B., ID Terry T., AK	Betty A., MN(S), Chair Kay C., TX(E) Rosanna H., CA(N)	Claudia M., AZ Fred H., MN(N) Jennifer M., MS Samantha M., OK
Thought Force: Fear of Change	Mabel M., PR Stephanie S., NM/EP Taaj J., NY(S)	Ann M., MI, Chair Barbara H., RI Cindy J., FL(N) Patti P., HI Sherry H., KY	Anu B., NC/BDA Mary Jo Y., ALNWFL Sharon F., AB/ NWT
Thought Force: Identifying Ways to Look at Service in Relation to Roles, Terms, and Possible Roadblocks	Debbie C., ON(N) Nancy D'A., NH	Miriam B., IN, Chair Claudette D., QC(W) Idalia R., MD/DC Kim C., DE	Barbara T., GA Carol S., MT Donna S., NJ Joanne P., VT Terry W., VA

DELEGATE TASK FORCE: CONFERENCE PURPOSE, MAKEUP, AND ROLES FOR THE 2019 WSC

Cindy J., Panel 58, Florida North, Chairperson | Christine W., Panel 58, Illinois North | Kay M., Panel 58, Texas West | Ann M., Panel 58, Michigan

Members of the Task Force presented a brief description of the World Service Conference's (WSC's) purpose, makeup, and roles.

"Our 'Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter' tells us that the purpose of the World Service Conference is:

- a. To be the guardian of both Al-Anon's world services and its Twelve Traditions;
- b. To be a service body, not a government.

"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 guarantee that our world services shall continue to carry on under all conditions.

"On page 12 of our *2016 World Service Conference Summary*, Concept Four reminds us, 'In our service as Delegates, we are able to participate constructively in a harmonious working partnership with all Conference members. To do this, I need to read the essential information provided to contribute to the Conference discussion and to vote responsibly. I am being trusted, not only to do the work, but to decide what work is important and how to go about doing it. Respect for ourselves as equal Conference members, combined with full participation at the Conference, helps us to serve our worldwide Al-Anon family as trusted servants and assure harmony.'

"Conference members include state, provincial, and territorial Delegates from the United States (including Puerto Rico), Canada, and Bermuda, and WSO Volunteers and Staff, the Chairman of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), and Representatives from other countries.

"In addition to listening, participating, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, Delegates bring the viewpoint of Areas on matters affecting all of Al-Anon and return to Areas to share a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide. Delegates are the bridge of understanding that links the groups to world Al-Anon. Delegates are trusted servants of Al-Anon as a whole.

"Apart from listening, participating, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, the Board of Trustees has a legal responsibility for the funds and services provided by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board of Trustees guards the legal rights of Al-Anon Family Groups. They protect our principles from distortion and dilution. The Board of Trustees is the chief service arm of the World Service Conference.

"All members of the Conference participate by listening. The Executive Committee, made up of WSO Volunteers and Staff, also participates and votes on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. There are WSO Staff members who listen, participate, and vote

on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. There are also WSO Staff members who listen and participate within the scope of their position but do not vote. The Chairman of the ECRPM listens, has voice regarding the Committee report, and serves as the timekeeper. International Representatives listen, report on their structure, and give a prepared personal sharing. They participate with the Conference members throughout the week in social and small-group gatherings.

"The Conference meets once a year for a few days. It would be impossible for everyone to have firsthand knowledge of the many issues on which they are expected to vote. The makeup of the World Service Conference allows for the shared knowledge of WSO Volunteers, WSO Staff, and WSC Delegates to be discussed and considered as a full body. We need the input of everyone in their various positions of service to make informed group conscience decisions on behalf of Al-Anon as a whole.

"The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown. It provides for unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole in response to important matters. The World Service Conference is the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen's harmony and survival.

"Spiritual principles underlie all our service work, as expressed in the Concepts and Warranties:

- **Unity** - We observe the spirit of the Traditions.
- **Respect** - No Conference member shall be placed in unqualified authority over other members, and all decisions are reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by unanimity.
- **Participation and Harmony** - The fellowship shall always remain democratic in thought and action; this allows our fellowship to act as a whole upon important matters.
- **Mutual Trust** - The Conference does not mandate, govern, or rule; it represents the membership in a mutual relationship with the other service structures.
- **Service** - The Structure of the Conference includes members of Al-Anon who are volunteers in service. The Conference gives Delegates, WSO Volunteers, and Staff the opportunity to be of service to the fellowship in a variety of ways.
- **Responsibility** - The World Service Conference Structure relies on all the Concepts, and service responsibility is balanced by carefully defined service authority."

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Taaj J., Panel 57, New York South, Co-Chairperson | Mabel M., Panel 57, Puerto Rico, Co-Chairperson
Carmen O'M., Panel 57, Louisiana, Recorder

Prior to the opening of the 2019 World Service Conference (WSC), Delegates held a session to share Area successes and challenges. All other Conference members were invited to attend as guests with no voice. Before the Conference, the Sharing Area Highlights Recorder compiled all the Delegates' written reports and made them available electronically to the session attendees.

The Chairperson opened the session by explaining to Delegates, "You make this your own meeting. It is only for Delegates. Trustees and the Executive Committee and Staff members are invited to come as observers."



Using a "speed-dating" format, Delegates formed two circles facing each other for a speed "helloing-and-hugging" icebreaker to introduce themselves and put names to faces.

Afterward, Delegates shared their most important successes and challenges with other members sitting at their table. Then, for the remainder of the session, their successes and difficulties were reported to the large group by a member of each panel for a three-year retrospective.

Delegates reported the following highlights:

- I attended the third Native American Convention in my Area. Over 200 rural and indigenous members from the US and Canada attended workshops on overcoming shame, talking circles, and the power of gratitude. Alateen members attended for the first time. A rural District has a District Representative (DR) for the first time. The District is using an "e-buddy system" for the GRs who do not have access to email. A Minority Coordinator is helping meetings get started. I learned how indigenous members hold Al-Anon meetings.
- Hispanic groups hosted their own conference. It put me in the minority when I shared my story. I am grateful to the Board for the simultaneous interpretation at the World Service Conference (WSC) because I now understand how to allow an interpreter to speak.
- Our Area developed a "GRunco" (Group Representative [GR] Bunco) game with education on Concept Nine using the essay on leadership. We had fun, fellowship, and education about leadership and duties, along with Alateen participation.

- Our Area Public Outreach Committee had its annual billboard fundraising dinner and raised \$6,000 from calendar sales. We used the funds to replace damaged Al-Anon billboards in the Area, to renew contracts on indoor digital billboards, and to add a billboard in Spanish.

Tradition Seven:

- I challenged groups to increase donations to the WSO through gift subscriptions to *The Forum*. Ten Districts increased donations to \$100 and shared subscriptions with DRs, who are sharing with groups.

Public Outreach:

- The 2018 PSA broadcasts exceeded all the past 20 years combined! One District's Public Outreach Committee received \$4,000 in donations from their metropolitan District groups and members, which allowed them to pay for 100+ primetime PSA radio broadcasts and a one-half hour member interview. Each broadcast reached 750,000 people.
- One of our past Delegates led a reserve fund workshop based on the 2018 WSC workshop. In reviewing the reserve funds, they found they had a surplus of \$38,000. In response, they launched aggressive outreach projects. Area Outreach developed a closed-member website with a Google map and database of the state's 16,390 licensed counselors, therapists, psychologists, and social workers that allowed the Area, Districts, groups, and individuals to find more professional friends. Using that professional database, two Districts were able to send an introduction letter and *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* magazine to 3,130 professionals. The Area is developing vision/mission/strategy/Assembly goals, analyzing reserve fund excesses and how to spend them, inviting a Trustee, and considering modeling Assembly Procedures after WSC Procedures.
- Several Areas reported growth in younger members' attendance and participation at Area Assemblies and Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings and an increase in the number of Alateens helping with technology.
- A Public Information Institutions/Cooperating with the Professional Community Coordinator collaborated with seven Districts and one Spanish-speaking Intergroup to get 170 public outreach posters (ten percent of which were in Spanish) inside the rapid transit rail trains that run throughout their metropolitan area. Funds came from the Area, Districts, and the Intergroup.
- PSAs entitled "Jack" and "Samantha" have been airing on nine TV stations and 20 radio stations throughout our Area since September 2018. Our Area is also currently doing a Public Outreach Service Survey. The Area Public Outreach Committee will use this information to develop speaker training and outreach projects for 2019.
- Public outreach at Assembly was enriched with the appointment of a new Coordinator. She was charged with creating a stronger outreach effort. At the following

Assembly, she supplied all Districts with an abundance of materials and resources explaining how to put them into action. This effort led to increased membership and the creation of four new meetings.

An Al-Anon/Alateen PSA aired on a high school radio station, and the University of Delaware published an interview with Mona Dougherty (non-member), Senior Communications Specialist for Media at Al-Anon Family Groups, and myself. <http://udreview.com/hope-and-healing-al-anon-supports-those-impacted-by-alcoholism/>

Technology:

- Several Areas have implemented PayPal for expenses; others have conducted webinars, and phone meetings are being used to connect members in geographically challenged and rural Areas.
- Using Google Voice instead of a toll-free answering service is saving one Area a lot of money. The AWSC created a thought force, followed by a task force, and then voted to go with it for \$25 a month. A minimal amount was printed for public outreach.
- Our Area conducted an online survey using Survey Monkey for the AWSC at Assembly through Google Forms. The level of privacy was good.



- Online payments for Assemblies have reduced our registration volunteers' and Area Treasurer's workload. Payments by check are still accepted, but that is barely utilized.
- An online system, Eventbrite, is being used for preregistrations. It allows the user to register, sends a confirmation immediately, and maintains a current list of preregistration fees and banquet information. It will be used this year for registrations to our Serenity Breakfast.
- Several Districts successfully embrace virtual meeting technology that enhances communication among members. Three online service workshops covering guidelines for Area Assembly, group meetings, and treasury practices were held. Each workshop included a slideshow presentation using the *Service Manual*. Participants were asked to share their experience, strength, and hope on the topics with each other.

- Our Area began using web conferencing, which has reduced both travel time and travel expenses.

Alateen:

- Our Area created an Alateen Intern position that includes AWSC membership. The Area just made the position permanent in our procedures after a four-year trial.
- Our Area has more Alateen groups than AMIAS. Alateen has grown from starting in schools. When students move on to another school, they ask, "Where is Alateen?" Then, they start a meeting.
- Alateen is continuing to grow, especially through cooperation with school-based wellness centers. There are eight meetings in seven schools serving 64 teens. I was invited and visited two groups. I experienced the presence of their Higher Power working in my heart. Al-Anon is in good hands.
- Our Spanish-speaking Al-Anon group now supports a Spanish-speaking Alateen meeting. A new high school meeting will begin soon, and we have the potential to start meetings in three new schools next year. We need Alateen Group Sponsors.

Outreach to Groups and Districts Affected by Natural Disasters:

- We conducted a literature drive for Puerto Rico, and in concert with the Puerto Rico Area Delegate, we surveyed their greatest needs and made two shipments following the storm damage.
- I suggested our Area donate to the District affected by the California wildfires. Over 50 boxes of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) and \$5,000 were donated to the District and groups that suffered losses. The District created a thought force to determine how to best distribute the abundance of love and support they received. We did this because we heard someone else sharing about Puerto Rico.

Other Successes:

- Rotation of our Coordinators and District Representatives is staggered each year, and we are finding the rotation works very well with new and experienced Officers.
- The Area created an Area Events Coordinator position to relieve the Area Chair of onerous responsibilities.
- Area Officers presented service-oriented topics to struggling Districts.
- Our District started a "How to Be a Sponsor" workshop, inviting ten to 15 members to join in an intimate discussion about sponsoring others. The first time, eight members came; this time, 15 came.
- In 2017, our Area voted to rotate cities for spring and fall Assemblies. Since then, it has opened up Assembly participation from every corner of the Area. The last one had the highest attendance ever!
- Knowledge-Based Decision-Making is spreading into groups. It is making a difference in how decisions are made.
- Our new Area panel has many who are younger than our previous panel members were, which has been a long-term goal of the Area—to bring in new generations. With this

infusion, there is more discussion, and there are many new ideas of how to serve our members more efficiently and support individual growth.

- Our AWSC meetings have focused strongly on meeting the needs of and equipping the District Representatives. This has resulted in growth in the participation of our DRs attending the “Chat and Chew” prior to the start of the AWSC meetings.

Challenges and Concerns:

- Leadership—filling positions.
- Geography and inclusion—rural areas and smaller groups and Districts need support to participate. Distance to meetings is a barrier for many. Sparsely populated Districts have fewer meetings and longer commutes. This also results in fewer members being qualified to serve in a District or Area position.
- Safety in meetings—predators, pyramid sponsorship.

- Dilution—use of A.A. literature.

- Dominance—unresolved conflicts in some groups. DRs have actively assisted groups with these issues, introducing different strategies from CAL and service tools.
- Lack of unity—the focus needs to be placed on the message, not the individuals.
- Lack of participation in service and open service positions—how to get people to move from “relief” (going to meetings) to “recovery” (Sponsor, Steps, and service).

Before the session ended, elections for the 2020 Sharing Area Highlights session took place. Phil G., Panel 58, Kansas, will serve as Chairperson; Barbara H., Panel 58, Rhode Island, will serve as Co-Chairperson; and Leah L., Panel 58, Tennessee, will serve as Recorder. Delegates were asked to provide feedback to the 2020 Sharing Area Highlights Committee to help them in planning next year’s session.

OPENING DINNER

Cheré F., Trustee, Conference Co-Chairperson

Prior to the official opening of the Conference, the Conference members, an International Representative, support Staff, and guests attended the Opening Dinner.

The Co-Chairperson began her welcome with the Conference theme: “Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone!” She continued, “What a wonderful theme that can be applied in so many ways as part of our recovery. I look forward to participation in the ‘action’ of our World Service Conference and to all of us stretching out of our comfort zones.”

The Conference Co-Chairperson then introduced the Chairperson of the Board, who welcomed new Conference members to their first World Service Conference and introduced the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee. The Executive Director introduced the World Service Office Staff and general counsel.

Following dinner, the Conference Chairperson invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 59 Delegates and Conference members. Each first-time Conference member received a 2019 World Service Conference pin.

Paula B., Executive Committee Chairperson, was the opening dinner speaker. (Her talk can be found on page 72.)

Before gathering in a circle to recite the Al-Anon Declaration in unison, the Conference Co-Chairperson closed the dinner by sharing, “As we begin this week at the 59th World Service Conference, keep in mind that you are here because you were elected ‘to be the bridge of understanding that links the groups in the Area with world Al-Anon to help them continue to function in unity.’” (From page 147 in the “World Service Handbook” section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P-24/27].)

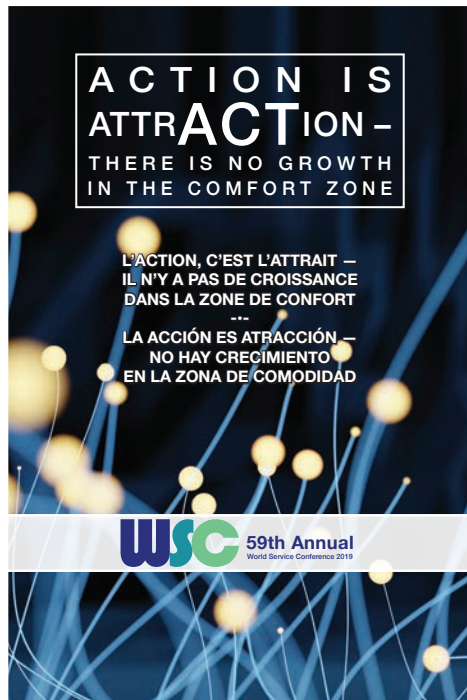
“Whether this is your first Conference or your last, we are a fellowship of equals. We want everyone to succeed. I am so pleased to be serving alongside all of you.”

CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Jennie McC., Trustee, Conference Chair

"Welcome to the 2019 World Service Conference!

"As you know, the theme for this Conference is 'Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone.' If this is your first Conference, know that although you may be uncomfortable in your chair, I hope you find comfort in the knowledge that your HP put you here and you belong here this week. If you are like so many of us, myself included, you will experience a lot of growth and self-discovery during these sessions.



"I still remember the first time I heard this Conference described as 'the largest AI-Anon group conscience in the world.' It truly is, because collectively we represent all the members in this World Service Structure, which includes the United States (including Puerto Rico), Canada, and Bermuda, and is estimated to be about 100,000 AI-Anon members. What we do here has great significance worldwide. We will make decisions that affect groups and structures in more than 100 countries.

"You all took action to be here and to acknowledge the importance of being here, and in many instances had to step way out of a comfort zone to get here. We all know this is not an easy place to get to. Others are watching what we do here and noting our willingness to step up and show up so that those still suffering because of a loved one's alcoholism will find hope and help in this fellowship we all cherish. We hope others are inspired to act to continue this conversation that was begun in 1961.

"I was so bewildered and uncomfortable growing up in an alcoholic household that I hoped that the payoff for being an adult would be enough control of my situation to never be uncomfortable again. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that that kind of control doesn't exist. Life throws a lot at us. But in learning to use the Twelve Steps I began to see that the purpose of life is not to be comfortable but to bring myself back to comfortable and serene no matter what life throws at me. It is in these challenges life sends our way that we can also find our growth. My most uncomfortable, scary, hurtful situations gave me a measure of compassion and humility that hadn't existed in me before. Maybe the discomfort is a necessary part of the growth process. It is what directs me to start at Step One and continue until I find relief, which might be one Step—ah! I am powerless!—or, it might take all Twelve before I find that serenity, stability, and connection I was looking for.



"What changes have come about as a result of Conference action that wouldn't exist if we weren't willing to ask the hard questions and step out of our collective and individual comfort zones? Would we have the Alateen Behavioral and Safety Guidelines? Would we be talking about financial matters and spiritual principles in the same sentence? Would we be discussing how to attract new members who are not typical AI-Anon members? Have we grown enough that we do not know what a typical AI-Anon member is?

"We have all taken a leap of faith to be here this week. If I can remember that in this room is a Power greater than all of us, guiding us to make the right decisions for worldwide AI-Anon, then I can relax and know any discomfort will pass as I accept the will of this wonderful, informed, and guided group conscience.

"Trust the process. We want you to be successful. We are all here for the good of the AI-Anon fellowship.

"With humility and gratitude, I now declare this 59th World Service Conference open!"

ROLL CALL

Jennie McC., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

The Conference Chairperson began the session, remarking, “Often, new Delegates are surprised to find out that they are not the only individuals who attend and vote at the World Service Conference (WSC). The Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and some administrative Staff from the World Service Office (WSO) are participants as well. Why is this? As we often hear, ‘It’s in the book’—‘the book’ meaning, of course, our *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). In this case, Concept Four of our Twelve Concepts of Service—‘Participation is the key to harmony’—and its descriptive text contain a guide that explains who participates and why. The Delegates, who meet only once a year, are primarily concerned with policies, plans, and actions to take effect in the future. The WSO Staff and Volunteers, because of their daily work and regularly scheduled meetings, are the individuals who have more firsthand information on aspects of Al-Anon business related to the present. These groups of individuals bring different knowledge and perspectives on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. Thus, the Conference has access to spiritual guidance found through the collective wisdom of all Conference participants.



“These individuals, despite their different service roles, share two common traits while at the Conference:

1. They listen and participate in discussions on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole.
2. They vote on these matters.”

To help members visualize the different groups that comprise the WSC, the Chairperson asked the members of each group to come to the front of the General Session room. The first member in each group read the role of his/her group. All members of each section were invited to introduce themselves and name their Area or position and their home group.

Delegates

Besides listening, participating, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, we Delegates bring the viewpoint of our Areas on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. We also return to our Areas to share a broader perspective of Al-Anon worldwide. We are the bridge of understanding that links the groups in the Area with worldwide Al-Anon. We are the trusted servants of Al-Anon as a whole. Read more about us in Concepts Two and Three as well as in the “World Service Handbook.”

WSO Volunteers, our Board of Trustees:

Besides listening, participating, and voting on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole, we have a legal responsibility for the funds and services provided by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. We guard the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship, protect our principles from distortion and dilution, and are the chief service arm of the World Service Conference. We ensure the goals and directions of the Conference are carried out by the WSO in accordance with our Twelve Traditions. Read more about us in Concept Seven.

WSO Volunteers, our Executive Committee:

We, too, listen, participate, and vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. We are entrusted with legal management of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This authority is granted to us by the Board of Trustees so that we can oversee the daily affairs of the World Service Office. You might know us best as the body that reviews presentations prior to Conference, but that is just a small part of the responsibilities delegated to us by the Board of Trustees. Read more about us in Concept Eight.

WSO Staff Members, our Service Workers:

We, too, listen, participate, and vote on matters affecting Al-Anon as a whole. We are Al-Anon members and paid workers of the WSO. We are in direct contact with Al-Anon members worldwide through correspondence and, sometimes, travel. We serve the fellowship in a variety of ways, all of which you have seen listed on the back of the Appeal Letter this past year. We not only support the world leadership of the Trustees, but also share world leadership with them. Read more about us in Concept Eleven.

Non-Voting WSO Staff Members

We work at the World Service Office in service roles affecting both the members of Al-Anon worldwide and other Staff and Volunteers. We often develop and implement new plans to more effectively provide services to the fellowship or the Staff. We are a visible image of world service when members visit the WSO. Read more about us in Concept Eleven and more about the functions of the WSO in the “World Service Handbook.”

Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

A task delegated to me at Conference is to ring the bell and keep everyone on time. However, my primary responsibility as ECRPM Chair is to ensure that the spirit and letter of the resolution to create the ECRPM and handle the management of our property—which includes the actual WSO building and its grounds—is upheld. This is why, as ECRPM Chair at Conference, I am given voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote. Read more about the ECRPM in Concept Eight.

Conference Recorders (*Conference Summary Recorder and Audio Recorders*)

We ensure that an accurate record of this Conference is available to members and retained for the Al-Anon Archives.

International Guests

We come to gain information regarding the World Service Conference procedures and policies, to share with you a little about our service structure, and to participate in worldwide Al-Anon. You can read our stories in the *World Service Conference Summaries*.

Interpreters

We provide oral simultaneous interpretation services from English to French and English to Spanish and vice versa to make it possible for non-English-speaking members to participate in the Conference.

SEATING MOTION

After the official opening of the Conference, the first order of business was to vote on a motion brought forth by the Conference Leadership Team. It dealt with seating certain people who could provide critical information to the Conference (e.g., a Representative from another structure, and Staff members who attended).

The following persons were seated:

With voice, but no vote:

Niketa Bailey
Director of Finance & Operations, Non-AI-Anon Member

Scot P.
Associate Director—Digital Strategy, AI-Anon Member

María Lourdes M.
International Representative—Mexico, AI-Anon Member

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

Thomas B.
Chairperson, ECRPM, AI-Anon Member

With voice limited to Finance Presentation Breakouts, but no vote:

Monday, April 15, 2019 and Tuesday, April 16, 2019
Mary Davis
Accounting Manager, Non-AI-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office Staff members be seated to observe at the 2019 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

Sunday, April 14, 2019

Yadi McCoy
Administrative Assistant (Spanish), Non-AI-Anon Member

Monday, April 15, 2019

Maya Chesley
Editorial Quality Specialist (Spanish), Non-AI-Anon Member

Nathalie Lym
Executive Administrative Coordinator (French),
Non-AI-Anon Member

Daviana Wright
Executive Assistant (Spanish), Non-AI-Anon Member

Bob H.
Webmaster, AI-Anon Member

The motion carried. (See WSC Motion #1, page 83)

WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Debbie G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

"On behalf of your Board of Trustees of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., it is my honor and privilege to welcome you to the 59th World Service Conference. Our theme, 'Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone,' will be our focus this week.

"My journey in recovery, and perhaps yours as well, is an example of this year's Conference theme. I didn't know it at the time, but when I began in AI-Anon, I had been placed right in the midst of members whose actions would attract me and convince me to do things differently. Despite my discomfort, I would 'get in the car' and say 'yes' when asked to be of service. I would share my insecurities and fears.

"It was only through taking actions that were uncomfortable and unfamiliar that my life changed. Those members encouraged and supported me when I had no confidence in myself. They knew my spiritual potential long before I did because they had experienced the same. Their actions of attraction helped me become comfortable with being uncomfortable; they helped me come to believe that a Higher Power was serving as a guide for all that could be. All I had to do was take the actions and trust in the process.

"The same can be said for the growth of our Conference. The attraction of those leaders who served before us has brought us here today. Past Conference members who experienced growth that was not always comfortable helped our fellowship grow in turn. Discussions that at the time felt like they were moving in the wrong direction, moving too fast, or not moving fast enough helped us move forward in the end. It was through the collective voices of these Conference members, guided by a loving Higher Power, that action and growth became possible.

"Our individual journeys of recovery have led us to this year's Conference. My hope for us this week is that we realize we are not alone, even in moments of discomfort. That in those times of discomfort, our collective Higher Power will guide our discussion and decisions. We need only open our minds and hearts. We have each been given the gift of being surrounded by members who attracted us through their actions, who walked through those moments of discomfort and found growth. Our responsibility this week is to trust in the same process they trusted in."

The Chairperson concluded her welcoming remarks with a reading of the Twelve Traditions.

TASK FORCES FOR INCREASED DELEGATE PARTICIPATION IN THE WSC AGENDA

After the reading of the Twelve Traditions, the Conference Chairperson presided over an orientation session. The session was created and presented by Delegates to provide Conference members with a common understanding of what a successful Conference should accomplish.

The Board's Goals for the Conference

Nancy D'A., Panel 57, New Hampshire
Angela D., Panel 57, Newfoundland/Labrador
Dave B., Panel 57, South Carolina

The World Service Conference (WSC), Al-Anon's largest group conscience, will act in the spirit of unity and goodwill to ensure that Al-Anon's world services are continually available to the Al-Anon fellowship:

Goal One: The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of Al-Anon's core principles in action.

A Delegate began, "We are not here by accident and we are not alone. Something bigger than ourselves—our Higher Power—got us this far, and when we call on our Higher Power for guidance throughout this week, we will be demonstrating Al-Anon's core principles. On page 146 of *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) it says, 'If our own position is not that of the group as a whole, we learn to support the decision reached,' and, 'when we all seek God's will, there can be no winning or losing, but only a journey to greater understanding.' We all want what's best for Al-Anon. We all need to participate respectfully and presume goodwill.

"At last year's WSC I stepped out of my comfort zone and chaired a breakout session on Finances. We had had a couple of phone meetings and I had studied the script numerous times, so I figured I would do a great job. But as the session went on, I became annoyed because it wasn't going as perfectly as I thought it should. Luckily, I finally called on my Higher Power and things seemed to flow smoothly. I no longer felt annoyed. I just felt grateful that I was even there. I knew, at that moment, that I was growing again.

"I was annoyed another time during last year's WSC, during the discussion on the *Just for Tonight* Bookmark (M-81). It seemed obvious that the majority of Delegates wanted the bookmark. I had shared at the mic and just couldn't understand why things weren't happening as quickly as I figured they should. But again, I called on my Higher Power, and when I did, I was able to just let go. Then a Delegate made a motion for conceptual approval to develop such a bookmark, and it was seconded and carried.

"I feel that I have witnessed the goals of Conference in action. This year I will make a conscious effort to focus on the goals of the Conference by remembering the helpful tips in *Talk to Each Other* (S-73):

The following ideas can help us keep in mind the spiritual nature of the group conscience, as referred to in Tradition Two:

- Listen for a Higher Power's guidance as filtered through the voice of the members.
- Separate emotions from facts, and principles from personalities.
- Share as equals and presume goodwill. Everyone involved has Al-Anon's best interests in mind, even though their opinions may differ.

- Give ourselves permission to change our minds or modify the decision later if needed.
- Trust in other members and a Power greater than ourselves, knowing that this Higher Power can work through whatever decision is made for the good of the fellowship as a whole.'

"Thank you all for helping me grow."

By applying the principles found in the Legacies, the Conference members reach decisions and provide guidance for the Board.

Goal Two: The Conference will provide guidance to Al-Anon's Board of Trustees and the World Service Office (WSO) on services to the fellowship and guardianship of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions.

Another Delegate shared, "During my first year at Conference, one of the most memorable discussions that took place was a continuation of the conversation about removing the prayer on the back of the *Just for Today* Bookmark (M-12). There had been quite a bit of discussion at prior Conferences and written feedback from many Areas that predated my first Conference. My expectation was that this was going to be a big discussion with lots of differing points of view. I wondered just how we, as Conference Delegates, could provide guidance—and even more so a decision on how to move forward—for our World Service Office and Trustees.

"The Conference Chair read off the topic of discussion and offered a framework for this conversation, then asked Conference members how they would like to proceed.

"There was plenty of lingering emotion regarding this topic. But amazingly everyone who shared did so with the deepest respect for what others had shared. After everyone had a chance to voice their Area's opinion, the Chairperson asked if the Conference members were ready for a vote to determine whether the prayer should be removed.

"The Conference response to the Chairperson truly reflected the spiritual tone in that room. The response was that, while sufficient voice and discussion had taken place, and consideration of our Traditions One and Four had occurred, it was the decision of this Conference that no vote be taken.

"This was such a powerful example of our spiritual principles in action and of our unity in the fellowship, along with our ability to provide our World Service Office and Trustees some direction regarding this proposed change to the *Just for Today* Bookmark.

"This experience has helped me tremendously in my responsibilities as a Delegate in my Area.

"Ask questions, ask for help, 'Listen and Learn.' Communicate."

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

A third Delegate shared, "These goals have influenced me not only in my service positions but also in my everyday life. Having a vision for and understanding of the purpose of the Conference and the relationships within the Structure has prompted me to ask a few questions:

"How will I share the information I received here?

"Has using the links of service proven to be a unique ability? How can other members use them?

“How can we take our experiences as Delegates with us to share with other fellowship members?

“How will I ask for help when I need it?

“Issues within my Area have often baffled me. Realizing that I do not have all the answers all the time has always brought me to Goal Three, because our Conference Goals are great guideposts. My participation at the WSC has taught me that I can communicate discussions and decisions with my Area. I’ve learned how to ‘Listen and Learn’ from others as we work together to accomplish a goal. As I come to the end of my WSC service I look forward to continuing my growth in other service positions—for this I shall always be indebted to a fellowship that has given me a fuller and more satisfying life.”

The presenters asked Conference members three questions. They responded:

1. I look forward to continuing my service in other service positions. How will these goals help me?

- I will be able to take all discussions and viewpoints back to my Area. I have a tendency to become attached to my opinion and rationalize why mine made the most sense. I grow in my humility, and strive to be open-minded and provide all perspectives of a topic, whether I agree or not.
- The spiritual tone for me is the importance of participation, equality, and presuming goodwill. I have a responsibility to listen to all voices, not just angry, loud voices. I listen, then “Let Go and Let God.” The spiritual principle of listening to all voices helps and is a great reminder.

2. How can I best take my report back?

- We are asked to be the guardians of the fellowship and the Twelve Traditions. I take the voice of the WSC back to groups in my Area, and I ask the Assembly to give me their voice. There has never been a more spiritual experience in my whole life.
- I heard a past Delegate talk about a “spiritual tone.” I didn’t get it. Seeing all the smiles brought me to tears when I was “pinned” at the Opening Dinner, and seeing the love in this room is amazing to me. I can’t wait to take this back to my Assembly.

3. How will these goals contribute to your experience at the WSC?

- Since I started on my journey, I have felt that my Higher Power provided everything I needed on the first day just getting here. Yesterday there were things I didn’t know I needed. Today, I trust that my Higher Power is with me as I try to make decisions that will guide me through the WSC.
- When I become frustrated, I will keep in mind that we are all here because we are supposed to be part of the spiritual message.
- I am fearful of not being able to take everything I’ve learned here back to my Area. But I am also learning different ways of articulating the discussions and decisions that took place here.
- When I first served on the Board, I was told I was to support the Board’s decisions whether I originally agreed or not. Was that taking my personal integrity away from me? I thought about it and came to the conclusion that I was

arrogant in thinking I was more important than a loving God in a decision. Since then, I have had no problem supporting decisions of the WSC.

- I don’t like speaking in front of big groups because of fear. The spiritual tone came last year when I was the Alternate Delegate and only had five weeks to prepare for Conference. My own panel is this year. I feel so much love. Last year, the panel walked me through process of the WSC. This year, I can “Listen and Learn.”
- The circle and triangle are brought together; there is a Higher Power in this room. We work as equals and share information from the Board and the WSO. It flows and all becomes one.
- The organizing of the call to new Delegates before the WSC, the Trustee call, the assignment of a Mentor, and yesterday’s orientation helped me feel so much more comfortable. The Hospitality Room made me feel so loved and comfortable.

The presenters concluded the session, saying, “Thank you for considering the Board of Trustees’ Goals for the Conference. We hope they are your goals, too.”

World Service Conference Theme

Kathy B., Panel 57, Idaho | Sue C., Panel 57, South Dakota
Madeline S., Panel 57, Wyoming | John I., Panel 57, Nebraska

The Conference theme sets the stage for the World Service Conference (WSC). It lays the foundation for the tone of the Conference. It encourages members to use the Legacies of the AI-Anon program to empower members to serve. Many of the breakout sessions, discussions, and other agenda items are derived from it. Outgoing Delegates often build their three-minute talks around it. The Conference theme creates unity and keeps everyone moving in the same direction.

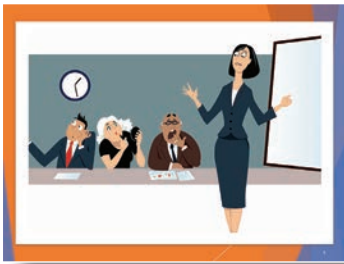
In the past, the Conference Leadership Team decided on the theme and presented it to the Board of Trustees. In 2016, Conference members were invited to make suggestions for the theme.

The purpose of the World Service Conference Theme Task Force was to present the 2019 World Service Conference (WSC) theme and its origin, and inform all Conference members of their opportunity to suggest ideas for the 2020 theme.

The Task Force members began their presentation by saying, “This year’s theme is a compilation of ideas that were submitted by last year’s World Service Conference members. Conference members recognize the growth they experience trying something new even when there is no clear end in sight.”

The Task Force presented a skit with their take on the theme. One “actor” pointed out, “Doing the same old thing wasn’t helping me become the person I wanted to be, and it surely didn’t help this meeting grow! I needed action.” The skit suggested simple public outreach actions that members who are willing to step out of their comfort zones can take to grow. Conference members were encouraged to share the skit in their Areas.

The Task Force invited Conference members to come together to develop a theme and submit ideas for the 2020 World Service Conference, saying, “We need all of you to help create next year’s theme. A couple of questions to ask yourself: What makes a great theme? Why is a theme important? We know for a fact that it needs to be quick and catchy, and it needs to get to the heart of the matter!”



World Service Conference Etiquette

Sonya M., Panel 57, Maine

Stephanie S., Panel 57, New Mexico/El Paso

A Task Force of two Area Delegates led the Conference members in a “rap” about the Conference Etiquette. The Conference Co-Chair then noted, “Adherence to our Conference etiquette at the World Service Conference helps us follow our spiritual principles.” The guidelines for Conference etiquette are as follows:

- Start and stop on time. This demonstrates integrity.
- Stick to the agenda. We embody the spiritual principle of perseverance when we do this. Additionally, conducting business in the best interest of all AI-Anon preserves recovery at all levels.
- Do not take more than two minutes at the microphone. When we limit our time at the microphone during discussions, we demonstrate the spiritual principles of humility and trust.
- Stay on topic. The spiritual principle of simplicity helps us stay focused on our primary goal: to help the families and friends of alcoholics.
- If somebody before you says what you were going to say, sit down. When we do this, we are exercising the spiritual principles of efficient leadership and awareness.
- Refrain from clapping, cheering, or booing when opinions are shared. This demonstrates mutual respect and creates an atmosphere of harmony.
- Do not have side conversations. The spiritual principle of courtesy is shown when we actively listen and form our own conclusions, leaving out reactions, opinions, and judgement.
- Avoid miscellaneous distractions. Show discipline and respect for the service commitments of those who have prepared for the Conference.
- Keep your cell phone off. This demonstrates consideration for those around you as you focus on our World Service Conference.
- Do not use perfumes or bring flowers. Be respectful and understanding of others.
- If you are unable to attend a session, notify the Conference Chair, Associate Director—Conference, or your Mentor. Our spiritual principles of selflessness and dedication are evident when we do the right thing and are responsible to those we serve. Keeping an accurate count of members present at Conference is essential during voting.
- Practice spiritual principles and presume goodwill. By practicing humility, harmony, and unity, we can reach our ideals.

Voting Procedures

Gail L., Panel 57, Connecticut | Kay M., Panel 58, Texas West

Jane P., Panel 57, Nevada

Members of the task force shared the following: “There are two methods of voting. Electronic voting is defined as: ‘a closed formal method of voting. The reason for electronic voting, besides speed, is to ensure voting accuracy and voter confidentiality.’ Open voting, on the other hand, is defined as: ‘a vote by a show of hands indicating either “yes” or “no” by Conference members.’ This method expedites business motions and avoids the formality of electronic voting.

“At the beginning of each World Service Conference (WSC), members decide if the WSC will vote by a show of hands on any business matters.

“There are generally two ways to determine the outcome of a decision:

- Consensus by a show of hands, which is not an official vote but, rather, is done to determine a sense of direction of the Conference; and
- Substantial unanimity, which is agreed upon at the beginning of each Conference. The ‘AI-Anon World Service Conference Charter’ states that a two-thirds vote of the Conference members is binding (4.a.).

“We look to the General Warranties for guidance in observing the spirit of the Traditions in our voting.

“The Third Warranty states, ‘That all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible by unanimity.’

“Abstentions are appropriate if the voter feels indecisive or inadequately prepared and informed, or if he or she was not part of the discussion.

“Abstentions lower the total number of votes cast and change the number of votes needed for substantial unanimity. Hopefully Conference members feel informed enough to vote.

“Now let’s talk about motions. A motion is a formal proposal brought to the Conference so that the Conference can take a certain action. All motions passed by the Conference are submitted to the Board of Trustees at its annual meeting immediately following the close of the Conference. Motions must be legally approved by the Board before taking effect.

“Routine Motion

- A motion originating from the Board of Trustees that requires approval by the Conference.
- Examples include: the Auditor’s Report, the Finance Committee Report, and the Annual Report

“A motion log is a document found at the beginning of the Conference Packet. This is where we record all the motions.

“The Conference also take affirmation votes to provide traditional approval of nomination candidates. Before Conference, there is an in-depth review of the nomination process. The Bylaws of the Corporation require that the Board legally elects nominees at its annual meeting after the Conference. Traditional approval by the Conference gives the Board the guidance and voice of the fellowship.

“We, as Conference members, have the responsibility to maintain confidentiality. As members of the WSC, we are ‘trusted servants.’ The spiritual principles of trust and anonymity ensure that the vote count on affirmation votes will not be discussed outside the room. Warranty Four states that ‘no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.’

“This also means we cannot take photos or text people outside of these rooms. All Conference members must feel free to vote their conscience and continue to have confidence that they are trusted servants.

“It is vital that each Conference member vote his or her conscience, as outlined in the ‘Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter’ and in the text of Concept Three, which notes: ‘the “instructed” Delegate who cannot act according to his own conscience on a final WSC vote would not be a “trusted servant” at all but a messenger.’”

Conference members were introduced to a web-based tool for voting; afterward, they reviewed the voting process. The session closed after Conference members practiced using the web-based voting tool by voting on a sample motion.

APPROVALS

2018 Auditor's Report

Joan S., Trustee, Treasurer

Niketa Bailey, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

The Director of Finance & Operations began by introducing herself to the new Conference members and commenting that, "For the past three years, I have been happy to call Al-Anon my home. Being a good steward of your money is extremely important to me. I have a great team that I work with behind the scenes."

The presentation was interspersed with Al-Anon trivia questions. The Director of Finance & Operations explained the purpose of the audit and its details to Conference members. The financial records of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. were audited by an independent Certified Public Accounting firm. The auditors, after reviewing all the materials provided, found that the Financial Statements were in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit including the opinion letter of the auditors was posted on AFG Connects for all Conference members to review. During the Conference, the Director defined some of the terms on the audit. A copy of the audit can be found on the website.

Investment Income

Investment performance helps grow the Reserve Fund. It provides for an annual transfer to the General Fund if needed. Due to market conditions during the year, the organization experienced a loss of \$453,436. Overall, the market in 2018 was volatile.

The Reserve Fund is currently at eight months of operating expenses.

Literature sales and contributions alone do not fully support our work. The Board objective is 12 months of operating reserves.

Expense Comparisons

We want the majority of expenses to be supporting the program services and literature distribution, not general administration, which they do.

Functional Expenses

These are activities that fulfill the purpose of our mission. These expenses support Program Services such as Outreach to Professionals; International Services; Group Services; Conference; Digital Strategy, including the website and public communications; and Literature. These expenses include literature publication, shipping and receiving, warehouse, and customer service. Administration protects our copyrights and trademarks.

Notes to Financial Statement

These describe Al-Anon and help improve readers' understanding of the Financial Statements. We are required to report them. They include additional information that supports summary totals or line items. They also contain information about any items that are not included in the Financial Statement.

Investments

Al-Anon continues to invest according to its investment philosophy, which is one of growth and income with a moderate risk tolerance. We have two investment brokers that we meet with and consult throughout the year to ensure that Al-Anon is invested responsibly.

Postretirement Health Benefit

This is an unfunded liability that is carried by the Reserve Fund. The liability is based on future costs, age of retirees, and life expectancy. It fluctuates yearly.

Summary

Overall, this was a great year, and with your support we have been able to move the organization forward.

Conference members had the following questions and comments:

- Thank you for demonstrating flexibility and trust. Your example has helped us grow in our Area transparency.
- How does the amount of literature sales compare with the amount of contributions?

Eight years ago, literature sales represented upward of 60 percent of our income and contributions were lower. We are seeing a trend change. Literature sales are continuing to increase, as are contributions. This means we are coming up with initiatives to move the organization forward, and you are supporting those efforts.

- Some Areas have a lot of money. Are Area contributions proportional to population? Do the Appeal Letters go to individuals and groups? Is money in the envelope for the Area?

There are more groups in some Areas, so those Areas contribute more. We don't focus on the dollar amount, but on the number of groups contributing. We receive contributions from groups throughout the year. Refer to the contribution spreadsheet to find groups in your Area that sent in contributions. The Appeal Letter is sent to groups but intended for individual members. The money in the Appeal Letter envelope does not get credited to the Area; it gets credited to the Appeal.

- There is a nice balance between literature sales and contributions. Can you speak to that balance having worked with other businesses?

The makeup of Al-Anon is unique compared to other organizations I've worked with. We are more focused on getting the message out than where money will come from. It is a fine balance we have to walk.

A motion to approve the 2018 Audited Financial Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #4, on page 83.)

2019 Finance Committee Report

Joan S., Trustee, Treasurer

Niketa Bailey, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

The Treasurer of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. opened the session: "On behalf of the Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees, I want to thank each of you and your Areas, Districts, and groups for your practice of spiritual principles in your financial matters during 2018. In one way or another, you considered abundance, anonymity, gratitude, responsibility, trust, and unity as you did your part to support our primary purpose.

"I'm going to share about the role of the Finance Committee in the development of the budget.

"The budget is currently a part of the Finance Committee report because it was reviewed by the Finance Committee at our January meeting. We recommended that it be presented to the Board of Trustees, and, later that week, they approved it.

"The budget is being provided to you now as information. Later this week at the annual Board meeting, the actual budget will be legally accepted by the Board within its responsibility, 'to control the property and finances of the World Service Office,' as described in the Bylaws.

"The purpose and duties of the Finance Committee are in the descriptive text of Concept Eleven in the *2018-2021 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

"The primary function of the Finance Committee is to see that the operations of our World Service Office remain financially sound, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principles of our program.

"Creation of the budget began last fall as the Director of Finance & Operations worked alongside Staff to draft it. At the Finance Committee meeting in December, we dedicated most of our eight-hour meeting to reviewing the details of the preliminary 2019 budget. We discussed the topic in depth, reviewing recent trends and projections based on the best information that was currently available, and we were informed of how some line items were being modified to more accurately reflect our current organizational structure.

"The Finance Committee recommended some changes and requested that Staff gather additional information for the Committee to review at its next meeting. As a result, when we met in January, we were able to give our unanimous approval to recommend a budget to the Board at the January Board meeting.

"As members of the 59th World Service Conference (WSC), you are now joining this conversation. I see it as an ongoing conversation because our financial condition today is built on contributions and decisions that have been made over the years. Our future is dependent, to a great degree, on how we make provisions to provide services for those who have yet to find our fellowship and how we serve the needs of our current members.

"Our financial affairs embody all of our Legacies:

- Concept Ten reminds me that I don't have to know all the minutia. Each financial report that we have reviewed and presented to you reflects a point in time. The quarterly Finance Update that comes with the Chairperson of the Board letter keeps you informed of trends, but the Finance Committee has gone over the details each month and you are receiving an overview.

- Tradition Twelve reminds me that anonymity and confidentiality support my ability to trust. The details of some line items in the budget like specific salaries, vendors, and member donations and purchases are confidential. Although the Finance Committee asks for and receives explanations about some numbers, we have confidence in the work of the Staff and know they respond to those questions with discretion. We trust in them.

- Step Ten is a reminder that I have to evaluate the positives and the negatives on a regular basis. For the Staff who create the reports and the Finance Committee members who regularly review them, budget variances are discussed in depth and trends are easy to spot. This keeps us on track to reach informed decisions.

"As members of the World Service Conference, we are one link in the chain of responsibility; we review the information that is presented to us and raise questions as needed.

"The Finance Committee takes this year's Conference theme very seriously. With our carefully considered actions, we are attempting to help AI-Anon and Alateen attract all those in need of the hope and help we can share while continuing to respond to the needs of current members.

"We are always taking steps to ensure that we are fiscally responsible, even if we are temporarily outside of our comfort zone."

Budget Process

The Director of Finance & Operations provided an overview of the budget process. "The process begins in September. The Finance Team provides a template to document expenses for each team. Once that is complete, we get together to review each team's budget until we have a budget that is ready to be presented. A lot of work goes into developing the budget. Several months are spent on budget formulation. Once the budget is formulated, it goes to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee reviews it, asks questions, and suggests changes. Then the Finance Committee presents it to the Board of Trustees in January. This gives them the final numbers from the previous year to use for comparison. The budget is then sent to Conference members for review. We consider normal operations, enhanced programs and goals, and Strategic Plan Initiatives. For example, enhancing programs and goals are important ways of expanding thinking. These are tasks that further our Goals and Mission."

The Director of Finance & Operations then presented the budget to the Conference members.

"The 2019 Budget shows that we expect expenses to be \$178,956 more than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,566,556 and revenue to be \$5,387,600."

Projected Expenses

"Overall expenses are budgeted to increase by \$174,648 from last year's actual. The increase is related to the costs of French- and Spanish-language interpretation at the 2019 World Service Conference, execution of Strategic Plan Initiatives, and increased travel and meetings (there will be three Zonal meetings and six Together Empowering AI-Anon Members [TEAM] events in 2019). Salaries are budgeted for normal cost-of-living increases, which represent only a one percent increase in salary expense over 2018's budget.

Estimated Income

"We are estimating income from 2019 literature sales to be about \$344,194 less than last year's and *Forum* subscription income to be comparable to the prior year's. Literature sales income is expected to be less than it was in 2018, when new literature was introduced. We are budgeting contributions to be \$2,050,000, which is slightly higher than last year's actual. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer up to four percent of the fair value of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund. For 2019, we have budgeted a transfer of four percent again."

The Director continued, "Revenue is expected to decrease in 2019. Last year we had strong literature sales, in part, because of the introduction of new literature. Literature sales are projected to decrease by five percent from 2018 and return to 2017 actual numbers. We added PayPal in our online store, which was successful. We are continuing to upgrade the online store to hopefully increase contributions and literature sales. With improved methods of contributing, we think members will want to contribute more because it will be easier to do so."

Investment Income/Transfer

"Income from General Fund investments does not include Reserve Fund income. It does include a transfer from the Reserve Fund. We are utilizing revenues for the following 2019 projects: the online store redesign for enhanced user experience; a meeting search database upgrade; project management implementation; our new and exciting Public Service Announcements (PSAs); and interpretation services, to name a few.

"The 2019 Budget includes a cost of living and projected salary increase to keep our compensation consistent with other nonprofits in the area.

"There is a small difference year over year for Packing and Shipping, and Postage reflects the use of electronic forms of communication to reduce costs.

"The Office telephone service expense had a slight increase. More bandwidth was added to manage website traffic and cloud-based software and repository traffic.

"Office Services and Expenses include computer and technology maintenance and support project management software and Staff training.

"Staff Travel includes international travel to three Zonal meetings in Slovenia, Mexico, and El Salvador; an A.A. General Service Office visit; professional conferences for public outreach to represent Al-Anon; Volunteer travel to seven meetings; Seattle Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect; six Area Trustee visits; six TEAM events; a virtual Audit Committee meeting; and Leadership Team development."

Strategic Plan Initiatives 2022–2024

"The Goals were reviewed and approved at the October 2018 Board meeting. Those that are critical to be completed in 2019 were flagged.

Strategies with a Direct Budget Impact:

- Implement a new iMIS (our database) module.
- Automate communication with groups and members to reduce required mailings to groups.
- Develop a mobile app to increase access to recovery for all generations.
- Implement translation memory software to increase access to Al-Anon tools.
- Hire a part-time Spanish-speaking member editor to improve communication.

Organization Strategies

- Incorporate international groups in our Meeting Search to increase access globally.
- Research literature publishing options to increase access to service.

Public Strategies

- Attend professional conferences (new) to increase visibility through professional networks.

"The bottom line is we have a deficit budget for 2019. Investment in enhanced programs and technology does not immediately provide an increase in revenue. Resources are expended on projects that align with our Strategic Plan Priorities and are less than one percent of the total expenses budgeted. We are funding projects that provide the greatest value to our members."

Conference members had the following questions and comments:

- What is the cost of the project management technology?

The cost was \$5,500.

- Contributions: The actual expenses for a year (2018) is close to two million dollars—\$1,953,460. Contributions are 37 percent of one year's operating expenses. How does that compare to our history or to similar nonprofits?

Our normal trend of contributions is continuing to increase the contribution levels. Literature is a larger source of income.

- It looks like executive salaries for Al-Anon are substantially below the midpoint. Any thoughts or comments?

They are below the midpoint because new executives are in place versus longtime employees. New Staff are coming in at different salary rates.

- Where do we find the cost for literature printing?

It is not listed, but it is included in the audited statement footnote where we provide cost of sales, etc. The footnote is more detailed. Literature is referring to books, not The Forum.

- Why is the cost of literature printing not on the balance sheet in expenses?

It is a direct reduction of literature sales. Literature in the budget is listed as net, so it is not broken out.

- Shipping and Handling is under expenses, which is a profit. Why not show the cost as an expense or profit as income?

It would take a lot of work to show it that way. It is not a revenue item that we do a budget for. It depends on the shipping rate and the cost to Literature Distribution Centers, and we have no control over that.

- My Area wants to see more electronic literature. Every year I tell them about the cost and they are not happy with my answer.

We hear that from everywhere. We have it as a Strategic Priority. One of our Strategies is to fully understand the implications of this change and what the best tools people want to receive are. Electronic or audio? Our margin between printed and electronic literature is different. We need to factor those things in to get a full picture.

- My District and Area would like a unique ID so when we contribute money, it could be by Area rather than the whole state.
- PayPal charges could be an opportunity to donate money that is being transferred to a nonprofit. It might make sense. Has this been considered?

Discussions are continuing on that.

- What does it cost to support a group? What should a group be aiming for in contributions to the WSO?

The cost is \$292 per group.

- Have you considered prefunding recurring items that don't occur every year, such as the Membership Survey, to break up the cost over several years?

Our accounting principles won't allow it. We can't expense for an item until it takes place.

- Is there a way to allocate funds from an operating year to be spent in a year coming down the pike?

Not as it relates to the expense portion. We can reserve the cash or pay in advance. We can have prepay, but we can't earmark anything, so we can't set aside funds. We can transfer back to the Reserve Fund.

- In an electronic meeting discussion, I heard the Quarterly Appeal Letter. I assume it was being sent electronically. Could one of our letters be sent electronically to the groups to test it to see what the response results would be?

We have considered the option. We are not sure about electronic meetings. In addition to posting it online, we send it by postal mail to Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs). We also send envelopes, so other factors go into the decision.

- Can we send contributions in Canadian funds to the Office in Ottawa?

Yes, you have the option to send funds to the Canadian address. We also have a Canadian PayPal option.

- What is budgeted for the mobile app? Is it to be used more for public outreach, or with current members? Studies show people are developing "app fatigue." They use nine a month regularly. So, what is the cost benefit? Did you factor in regular maintenance and updates?

The cost of the app is \$30,000. These include the initial costs to get it up and running and do not include annual maintenance and fees.

- What are the components of the app?

We are in early conversations around the app. We are undergoing a structured process for gathering requirements and setting expectations about what we want it to deliver and its capacity to support those things. We expect the 2019 delivery to provide a foundation for future years.

- Is this for prospective members or current members?

We need to have the appropriate conversations before we can finalize that decision.

- Are our investments in funds with a proven track record? Do we have guidelines around what companies are ethically matched to AI-Anon?

We don't invest in any alcohol-related companies/funds.

- Thank you, Staff, for your work. I am sorry we had to lower the pension benefits this year. I hope we can restore those.

It is being lowered one percent each year over three years. The WSO benefits package overall remains consistent with the market.

- Do we understand the effects of electronic literature versus published literature? How has the softcover *How AI-Anon Works* (B-32) experience affected the revenue stream? Is it a negative revenue stream?

Currently, no it does not negatively impact our revenue stream.

- AI-Anon is not advertising its e-literature.

E-book links are listed below the physical book information, so members can choose which format they'd prefer.

- Are we selling a significant amount electronically?

There has been a shockingly low response to electronic literature. When it was first released, there was lots of conversation around it in the Areas, but it is a very small revenue stream, so there has not yet been a significant impact. It begs the question: if we say we want it, why don't we buy it? So, we have to factor that in in terms of where we are investing.

- Are there alternative funding sources to support the Strategic Plan more aggressively? Earmarking? Is it possible to consider a Strategic Fund for special projects and access a reserve for that?

The Board can authorize the use of money from the Reserve Fund for special projects.

A motion to approve the 2018 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See Motion #5 on page 83).

AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

2019 Budget

	2019 Budget	2018 Actual
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>		
Literature Sales less cost of printing	2,850,000	3,194,194
Contributions	2,050,000	1,953,460
Forum Subscriptions	255,000	257,685
Convention Income (net)	-	217,358
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	232,600	(90,787)
Total Estimated Revenue	5,387,600	5,531,910
 <u>Operating Expenses</u>		
Salaries	3,200,459	3,065,192
Payroll Taxes	240,343	239,292
Employee Benefits	436,789	455,893
Total Labor Costs	3,877,591	3,760,377
Building Occupancy	271,500	278,633
Packing & Shipping (Net)	(60,000)	(46,330)
Postage	190,000	194,432
Telephone (Phone & Internet)	51,000	47,907
Stationery & Office Supplies	70,000	64,116
Office Services & Expenses	235,000	235,089
Repairs & Maintenance	13,000	13,265
Travel & Meetings	259,000	217,372
Direct Conference Costs (Net) Schedule 2	74,000	97,220
Conference Interpretation	20,000	-
Legal & Audit	70,750	73,774
Printing	127,000	113,728
Canadian Office	2,000	1,591
General services meeting	-	20,165
In-Office Volunteers	100	60
Membership Survey	-	150
PSA Campaign	87,828	95,625
Bank and Credit Card Fees	106,500	103,572
Miscellaneous	16,000	18,105
Postretirement Health Benefits	68,000	70,150
Total Operating Expense	5,479,269	5,359,001
 Depreciation (Exc. Bldg.)	32,700	32,907
Total Expense	5,511,969	5,391,908
 Net increase (decrease) from Operations	(124,369)	140,002
 Strategic Plan Initiatives	(\$54,587)	
 Planned Net increase (decrease)	(178,956)	

2018 Annual Report

The Annual Report was sent to the Conference members prior to the Conference. It included updates from various Board committees as well as the World Service Office (WSO) departments. This allowed Conference members to review the Annual Report and submit questions in advance to ensure they were clear on the material before coming to the World Service Conference (WSC). Those questions were answered and sent to the Conference members before the Conference began.

Updates are provided to Conference to enable the members to appreciate the scope of WSO Board and Staff accomplishments on behalf of the worldwide fellowship that have occurred in the first three months of 2019. This year the Chairperson of the Board's updates have also been included.

Board of Trustees

Debbie G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

"In October of last year, using a report from the Policy Committee's Electronic Meetings Work Group (EMWG) regarding electronic AI-Anon meetings conducted via social media and other online platforms as their basis for discussion, the Board of Trustees examined a potential concern regarding Facebook groups using the AI-Anon name without any link to the World Service Office. The Board agreed the Policy Committee's EMWG should refine the criteria for registration of these meetings and then work with the Executive Director to craft a letter inviting them to register. The EMWG discussions took place, the letter was crafted, and the draft was sent to the attorney for review.

"The attorney advised that our letter needed to specifically inform the Facebook/social media groups that by choosing not to register their meetings they were relinquishing their right to use the AI-Anon name. He also indicated that we must take this action quickly if we are to be successful in protecting our trademark: the AI-Anon name.

"Based on review of information; discussions during the April Policy Committee meeting; and a unanimous recommendation from the Policy Committee to the Board to direct the Office to pursue all appropriate remedies to protect the AI-Anon name, pursuant to the electronic meetings policy in the 'Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies,' the Board of Trustees, in their legal authority, unanimously approved the recommendation received from the Policy Committee.

Strategic Plan Update

"As shared in the Annual Report, the Board, At-Large members of the Executive Committee, and Staff Leadership Team met together in July of 2018 and completed a day-long Strategic Planning session with a strategic planning consultant (Tecker International, PA). We began our discussion with a focus on our ideology: Core Purpose, Core Values, Mission Statement, and Envisioned Future. We then brainstormed our Goals and Objectives. Although the Strategic Plan presented by the Board at the 2005 WSC has been reviewed and updated by the Board, our world and membership have changed significantly and the need to review and evolve our Strategic Plan has been a priority. It is not unusual to have a significant evolution of a Strategic Plan after ten years.

"We then spent another day in October working together to fine-tune the Mission Statement, Core Purpose, Envisioned Future, Goals, and Objectives.

"We clarified in our October session that the Board is and will remain responsible for the 'what'—the Strategic direction of the organization—and the Staff is responsible for the 'how'—the Strategies and action plans. The Executive Committee will continue in its assigned role (given by the Board in April of 2014), of oversight between Board meetings.

"On October 17, 2018, the Board, in its legal authority and in keeping with our assigned role as stated in Concept Nine ('In the field of world service the Board of Trustees assumes the primary leadership'), unanimously approved the Mission Statement, Core Purpose, Envisioned Future, Goals, and Objectives of the new Strategic Plan.

"Immediately following the October Board meeting, subgroups for our three new Goals met through web conferencing. Since the work of these subgroups was to identify the Strategies for each of the Goals and Objectives (in other words, to determine the 'how' piece of the new Strategic Plan), two of the subgroups were chaired by Senior Staff and one by the Executive Director. Members of the Board of Trustees and At-Large members of the Executive Committee participated equally in the work of these subgroups. Our work focused on identifying Strategies for advancing the Objectives and on determining if the Strategies demonstrated significant progress toward each Goal. Once Strategies were identified, Staff then prioritized the Strategies on the basis of urgency, considering current needs and resources. All steps were completed between the weeks following the October Board meeting and the initial development of the 2019 Budget in early November. Since this process moved very quickly last fall, we can expect to see the evolution of the Strategies throughout this year.

"Our new Strategic Plan is the blueprint or road map that connects us to our spiritual journey. As with any road, it requires review and maintenance to ensure the potholes are filled, possible detours are avoided, or, in some cases, detours are put in place while new construction is underway. Road maps become useless if they are not regularly monitored. Roads change, environments change, construction can cause delays or perhaps offer an opportunity to take a route less traveled—one that no one ever considered or even dreamed possible. The key is to keep the road visible.

"The Board of Trustees of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. holds the primary responsibility of ensuring the Strategic Plan moves forward. The road is visible through the following: Staff has designed beautiful framed posters outlining the Strategic Plan that have been placed in the Board Room and conference rooms at the WSO. The Board, Staff, and Executive Committee have individual place cards outlining the Strategic Plan. The Core Purpose, Core Value, Mission Statement, Envisioned Future, Goals, and Objectives are placed on the agendas of each Board, Finance, and Executive Committee meeting as well as of all Board committee meetings. The Board is given progress overviews through weekly Directors Updates; afterward, it has the opportunity to submit all questions and comments through the Executive Committee Chairperson. The Board will also have access to the new Asana project software, which allows it to view up-to-the-minute progress of each Strategy."

Administration

Vali F., Executive Director

“Some returning Conference members may have noticed that, over the last couple of years, the Annual Report title has shifted from the Executive Directors’ Annual Report to the World Service Office Annual Report. This new title reflects the hard work of all the WSO Staff and, equally importantly, the efforts of our hardworking Board of Trustees and At-Large Executive Committee Volunteers in their commitment to create a vision and a direction and to offer guidance to the Staff in our day-to-day work.

“Reflecting this broader scope of the Annual Report, at this Conference we have extended this Update session to include the Chairperson of the Board of the Trustees—my boss and an incredibly dedicated Volunteer supporting the worldwide fellowship.

“The goal of our Annual Report updates is two-fold:

- To provide you with insights into the work completed and underway at the Office since the end of 2018, when we submitted the Annual Report; and
- To answer any lingering questions you may have after reading our responses to your thoughtful questions about the Annual Report, or to answer questions regarding the updates we just provided.

“The Staff are excited to participate in shared leadership with the Board and Executive Committee members as we execute the Strategic Plan. The process has been a wonderful demonstration of how we can collaborate while focusing on our individual responsibilities as described in Concepts Eight, Nine, and Eleven, thus avoiding double-headed management as described in Concept Ten.

“Last year, Staff committed to refining, executing, and delivering 25 Strategic Plan Strategies in 2019. Each Strategy is designed to move us forward toward achieving AFG, Inc.’s longer-term Envisioned Future, Goals, and Objectives.

“From a Staff perspective, the work necessary to accomplish these Strategies in most cases augments our vital day jobs: answering questions from the fellowship, creating Conference Approved Literature and our trilingual publications, and organizing events such as this World Service Conference.

“To counterbalance the new workload, a group of Staff Managers and Associate Directors took the initiative to find a solution that would help them improve the efficiency of task management across the Office. The tool we selected was the cloud-based project management software ‘Asana for Business,’ which enables us to share information and responsibilities across teams. The implementation began in January with initial Staff training and the selection of three priority projects: the Strategic Plan Strategies, the 2020 A.A. International Convention with AI-Anon participation, and the monthly development of *The Forum* magazine.”

After the Executive Director provided a glimpse into the power of the Asana tool by showing a selection of the Strategic Plan project on the screen, she continued, “Staff has already completed six Strategies since the beginning of the year. These Strategies were designed to increase efficiency—so Staff have more time to apply to Strategic Initiatives and support the fellowship—as well as to expand our presence in professional networks through attendance at new conferences. Professionals, as you know from our membership surveys, are vital resources that help those who are still suffering find us. Conference members benefited directly from completion of the Strategy for simplifying Conference travel booking.

“Another benefit of the Asana tool is that WSO work, including correspondence, can be more easily tracked; this could help us reduce delays in our responses to the membership, some of which are caused by overloaded email inboxes. We are incredibly grateful to the Board for approving this initiative, which we believe is essential for us to help move the organization forward.

“In addition to implementing Asana, we have implemented organizational changes at the WSO since January that we also believe to be critical to helping us achieve our vision for AFG, Inc. Historically, the WSO was organized hierarchically, which created a small funnel through which all decisions needed to flow. While previous changes to organizational structure ‘flattened’ decision-making somewhat, the Directors and myself determined there was more to do. Since January, we have been restructuring our senior leadership Staff teams so we can delegate specific decision-making responsibility and authority as described in Concept Two. We now have three leadership teams:

- The Staff Management Team, whose purpose is to:
 - ♦ Manage Staff to enable the WSO to execute the Strategic Plan Strategies and action plans as committed to the Executive Committee and Board; and
 - ♦ Oversee the Performance Evaluation process and Staff communications, e.g., planning the agenda for monthly Staff Meetings, etc.
- The Strategic Leadership Team, whose purpose is to:
 - ♦ Deliver the Strategic Priorities of AFG, Inc. as defined by the Goals and Objectives established by the Board, defining annually the highest-priority Strategies based on the approved Strategic Plan; and
 - ♦ Make necessary organizational recommendations to achieve the priorities.
- The Staff Policy Implementation Round Table, whose purpose is to:
 - ♦ Triage problems related to the application of AI-Anon’s policy, referring matters to the Policy Committee when necessary; and
 - ♦ Determine necessary revisions and additional WSO service materials that are required.

“These changes were made after consultation with the Executive Committee and the Board. We believe they allow us to increase our throughput as necessary to meet the expectations of the Board and our fellowship.

“Much more work has been done in the Office since the beginning of the year; I’ll shortly turn the microphone over to Staff so that they can provide their updates. Before I do, however, I wanted to personally address two questions that were raised and answered through the Annual Report Q&A, but which I believe require highlighting: WSO Meeting List Publishing Policy reviews and availability of the *2018-2021 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual version two (2)* (P-24/27), particularly of the French and Spanish translations.

“I chose these two specifically because both are, at least in small part, a symptom of the challenges facing the Office that encouraged us to expand decision-making authority. The WSO is doing more—much more—than it did in the past. We have implemented a new website to which new pages in all three languages are being added frequently—have you seen the new WSO Volunteer page? We are

translating the Annual Report; we are providing greater transparency; we are creating new communities for electronic meetings; we are supporting interpretation, creating apps, and organizing electronic voting for the WSC; we are providing technology training for ourselves and the volunteers; and we are implementing the Strategic Plan Strategies, to name just a few. All of which is exciting and good for Al-Anon Family Groups and all of which represents change and increased workload. We have not increased our Staff, although we have improved utilization of the resources we have onboard. I will speak candidly when I say that in the 18 months I have been at the WSO, the pace feels like it has increased from walk to warp speed.

As a result, we are behind on some important activities. I wanted to acknowledge that directly and let you know we are taking steps to improve the situation. The good news is that we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, and it is not a train. We appreciate your patience, and I want to apologize personally if I have done a poor job of communicating the situation. I realize in retrospect that I should have done a better job sharing with Delegates and the Conference the current reality.

“So, looking at the two topics in particular...

“Regarding the question of how long the WSO review of an Area Meeting List Publishing Policy should be expected to take, I wanted to highlight a few key components of the Annual Report Q&A answer:

1. First, it is important that Delegates be aware that Areas are within their autonomy to implement Area Meeting List Publishing Policies without WSO review. Review only becomes necessary when the WSO is asked to support the Area policy at the WSO level.
2. Second, Areas do not need to have Meeting List Publishing Policies.
3. Third—and here I’ll quote directly from the Annual Report answer:

The timeline for an Area Meeting List Publishing Policy review has not yet been firmly established. ... As you can imagine, Staff did not take the process of completing a review of these policies—which would remove meetings from the WSO meeting list—lightly. Nor did a response flow quickly; Staff recognized that a simple answer was inadequate, since the response required careful articulation of how the policies were aligned with the Traditions and Concepts referenced by the Policy Committee Thought Force. As such, we were guided by the statement in Bill’s essay on leadership in the context of Concept Nine, ‘Nevertheless, we ought to ponder carefully its longtime effect. ... The temptation might be to seize the immediate benefits and forget the harmful precedents or consequences that might result.’ (2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual [P-24/27], page 198)

“Staff are working on responses and hope to provide them shortly to the three Areas that have submitted policies. With this step complete, Staff will be equipped to offer better guidance to Areas contemplating this most serious action.

“And regarding version two (2) of the *Service Manual*, we have committed that by the end of April we will provide a date when members can expect the French, Spanish, and English versions of the *Service Manual version two (2)* to be posted and when printed versions will be available for order.

“One last note before I really do turn the microphone over. We wanted to inform the Conference that we are currently seeking a member with five years in Al-Anon who also has professional Spanish Copy Editor/Translator experience to work remotely on a part-time contract basis for the WSO. We are grateful to have received some applications already, but we welcome more if you can let your Areas know this week. We will begin interviews shortly. Information is available on the al-anon.org website under ‘Employment,’ at the bottom of the page.”

Finance & Operations

Niketa Bailey, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

“I oversee several teams that provide support to the rest of the organization and the fellowship. My Department consists of Accounting, Customer Service, Shipping, Publications, Translation, Information Technology, and Building Operations. We have 18 people working in these different Teams. We like to think of ourselves as ‘behind the scenes’ Staff members. Immediately, you hear ‘finance’ and just think of the financial numbers or data. However, you may have called and spoken with someone in Customer Service to check on your contribution or received an *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (B-33) book that was sent by our Shipping Department. Most of you should have accessed AFG Connects to receive messages and documents regarding this year’s World Service Conference; our IT Department keeps AFG Connects operational. And, hopefully, most of you have had the chance to visit our beautiful office here in Virginia Beach: Our Building Operations Team works hard to maintain it. While the Programs Department is charged with creating and executing the services that give voice to recovery, we are responsible for ensuring they have the tools and infrastructure needed to do so. We are constantly finding ways to streamline operations and increase efficiencies throughout the organization.

“In addition to my role as the Director, I serve on the Finance Committee, Pension Committee, and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM).

“Since the Annual Report, our Department continues to strive to execute and facilitate the day-to-day operations of AFG, Inc. and understand the changing needs of our organization. Here are some highlights of activity that has occurred since the compilation of the 2018 Annual Report:

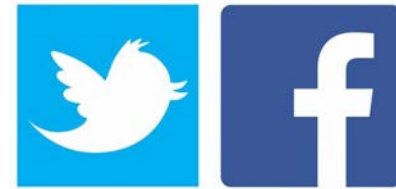
- I am excited to report that the translation of the Annual Report is underway, with an expected completion date of August 2019. This will be the first year the document has been translated into French and Spanish. This supports the Strategic Plan Initiative to enhance trilingual communication. We are striving to provide communications in all three languages simultaneously.
- We translated the ‘Let’s Talk about Safety in Al-Anon Meetings’ document. The document was sent to all French- and Spanish-speaking groups starting in April 2019. The English version of the document was provided to groups in December 2018.

- The Team completed the Spanish translation of the Lois's memorial article "A Meaningful Friendship" from the 1989 memorial edition of *The Forum*. The article will be posted in all three languages on al-anon.org.
- *Groups at Work* (P-24) has been translated into French and Spanish. Those booklets are available as free downloads on the website and are for sale on our online store.
- I am excited to report that the *Just for Tonight* Bookmark (M-81) was released in February 2019. Since its release, we have sold 55,816 copies! That's pretty amazing!



- You may have noticed the wonderful new etiquette slides for the 2019 WSC; the Publications Team had a great time designing these along with the Conference poster.
- The *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37) has been redesigned and printed in English/Spanish and English/French versions, and all versions are now available as free downloads.
- The Publications Team designed the new Strategic Plan posters and table tents that are located throughout the World Service Office.
- In March, 210,150 copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* were shipped. It was all hands on deck, with people from different departments working to get the 210,150 copies shipped out in a week and a half. Moving forward, *AFA* magazine will be available all year long; this will reduce this extra workload in the future and continue to support public outreach efforts throughout the year.
- In the first quarter of 2019, we had 1,858 *Forum* subscriptions, 5,402 literature orders placed, and we entered \$440,971 of contributions.

"We want to sincerely and humbly thank you for allowing us to serve you."



"I oversee Al-Anon's message online—on our website, social media pages, and email—and its public outreach at the national level, which includes PSAs, search engines, and online billboard ads.

"Mona, our Senior Communications Specialist, is the point of contact for media inquiries. Because she is a non-member media contact, her full name is regularly quoted in news publications. Additionally, she is the lead on the development of *In the Loop* (our biweekly email newsletter) and the PSAs.

"Bob, our Webmaster, is responsible for the regular maintenance and upkeep of our website. He is also responsible for building and sending *In the Loop* emails to Current Mailing Addresses and subscribers. He is the one who set up this year's Conference app.

"Beth, the Social Media Specialist, is responsible for selecting images and quotes and creating the memes that are posted on our social media sites. She is also conducting web conferencing interviews with Al-Anon-friendly professionals to help carry the message using video.

"Our Data Analyst, Rory, is responsible for crunching all the data. He helps us understand where we've been and projects where we're going. He's a spreadsheet super-guru.

"The Digital Strategy Team is working hard to find new ways of communicating and to improve upon existing methods of communication so that our message can reach all people, from the young to the young-at-heart. We continue to share Al-Anon's message of help and hope through social media and have been testing paid ads—the equivalent of online billboards—to raise awareness. When we carry out testing, Facebook is useful because it allows us to select our audience. For a recent study, we have selected anyone in the US and Canada who does not currently 'like' our Facebook page. In the first 90 days, we've generated over 150,000 impressions. In brand awareness terms, this means that roughly 6,000 people would be able to remember seeing our message if asked about it two days later. At this rate, at the end of this one-year trial, we will have about 600,000 impressions and 24,000 new people who will be able to recall our message, providing the opportunity for Al-Anon to become a vital resource for more families and friends of alcoholics who reach out in a moment of desperation.

"Last year was a record-breaking year for the Al-Anon website, with over 3.5 million visits to al-anon.org and over 1.4 million people finding meetings using our online meeting search. For the last two years, we have achieved our one millionth visit at the end of April, but this year we hit 1 million visits a full month earlier, with over 60% of the visits coming from first-time visitors to al-anon.org. These visits have led to over 540,000 meeting searches. At this pace, we can expect to have over four million visits and two million meeting searches in 2019. We are excited about this visibility, as it gives us the opportunity to increase newcomer attendance at meetings and to offer help and hope to more families and friends of alcoholics.

“One way we have worked to improve existing methods of public outreach is through better measurement. It’s nearly impossible to know if you’re going in the right direction without having some data to show you the way. In digital methods, it’s relatively easy with opens and clicks and pageviews, oh my! But in broadcast, it’s a bit more difficult, which is why this year we are introducing two new toll-free numbers and special web addresses to help us determine how effective our PSAs are at generating calls to our meeting line and visits to our website. This method of measurement does not give us any of the personal information of our visitors; it only shows us how many people are visiting our website because they saw one of our PSAs. This will give us more insight into the effectiveness of our PSA program than we have ever had before and will empower us to make better creative decisions for years to come.

“One of our Member Goal Strategies is to help members and newcomers find meetings worldwide. To advance this Strategy, we are reviewing approximately 2,000 meetings that take place outside the WSC Structure but that are registered with the WSO for any number of reasons. Most of these are in countries that have evolving structures or that lack any structure at all. Once these meeting addresses are verified and their latitude/longitude is determined, we will be adding them to our online meeting search.

“The Digital Strategy Team is responsible for public outreach and communications with the media. *Face the Truth* is a relatively new show on CBS, created by the producers of *The Doctors*. The shows’ producers have requested (and the WSO has authorized them) to display the AI-Anon logo during four episodes so far, including most recently for a taping in February. The show starts with an intervention in which family members and friends encourage the alcoholic to ‘face the truth.’ Afterward, the co-host recommends that the family members attend AI-Anon and Alateen.

“And finally, the Team has committed to several new Strategic Plan Initiatives, including collaboration on the Office-wide adoption of Asana for project management. The Strategic Plan Strategies charge us with keeping our website looking fresh and inviting by posting current and relevant content and by growing our *In the Loop* subscriber list. Anyone who is interested in receiving this email newsletter in English, Spanish, or French can easily sign up by visiting al-anon.org/emailme. Last but not least, we have kicked off a project to develop an official AI-Anon mobile app, which we plan to make available later this year.”

Programs

Marsha W., Director of Programs

“The Programs Department is diverse in that within our roles as a part of the clearinghouse, we are responsible for the variety of services that give voice to recovery and support the service work of the fellowship. We also have an opportunity to raise awareness, on a national level, about the benefits of AI-Anon in the professional community. Additionally, we have an opportunity to participate on various platforms that support our goal of increasing the name recognition of AI-Anon Family Groups as the organization for families and friends of alcoholics.

“The Programs Department consists of 18 dedicated people. In addition to my responsibility as the Director of the Department, I am also a Conference member, and a member of the Policy Committee, International Coordination Committee, the Conference Leadership Team (CLT), and, currently, the Executive Committee. Programs

Department members also continue their day-to-day work within their respective roles that support a variety of work generated by the fellowship. I am sure many of you have contacted us regarding information you may need about or from:

- Archives
- Group Services
- AFG Records
- Conference
- International
- Literature
- Public Outreach to Professionals
- Together Empowering AI-Anon Members (TEAM) Events

“Since the Annual Report, our Department has continued to engage in communications worldwide with Volunteers, Staff, and members of the fellowship through various platforms such as email, phone, web conferencing, and AFG Connects.

“One TEAM event, held in Las Vegas, Nevada, was completed in February. There are five upcoming events scheduled for the months of May, June, and September that will take place in Maritime Provinces, New York South, Quebec East, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina.

“I know that I can say without a doubt, on behalf of the Programs Department: Our work is enjoyable, energizing, and rewarding!”

Conference

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

“As the Associate Director—Conference, I am responsible for communicating with Delegates, Area Chairs, District Representatives, and past Conference members. I am also responsible for the year-round planning and implementation of the World Service Conference (WSC). I am a member of the Conference Leadership Team, the Policy Committee, the Staff Management Team, and the Staff Policy Implementation Round Table. I am involved in planning International Conventions as well.

New Member Orientation Web Conferencing

“The first New Member Orientation call using web conferencing was a success! Incoming Conference members were engaged in the call; they participated in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making activity and asked questions, which the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) subcommittee answered. It was nice to match faces with names.

“I recorded the meeting and sent the recording link, as well as a written recap of the call, to all invitees following the call.

The Conference Procedures Document

“Members of the Conference Leadership Team proposed adding text to the Conference Procedures document in order to define the term ‘abstention’ and to give examples of how abstentions affect the vote count.

“In addition, the CLT proposed including a brief section about ‘Documents Received prior to Conference’ that describes why certain documents are marked as confidential.

“These recommendations were presented to the Board of Trustees; the Board approved the changes at its January 2019

meeting. The results can be found in the Conference Procedures document, which is posted on the WSC Members community on AFG Connects and is included in your Conference Packet.

Chosen Agenda Items

"Thirty-eight Chosen Agenda Items were submitted by the deadline—three were submitted by Panel 56; two were from Panel 57; 21 came from Panel 58; seven came from Panel 59; two were submitted by Trustees; and three were from Staff. One Chosen Agenda Item was inadvertently omitted due to human error.

"The Conference Leadership Team reviewed the 37 CAIs to determine whether any could be resolved using the *Service Manual* or explained by World Service Office (WSO) administrative Staff. As a result, 23 topics were omitted.

"Of the 15 remaining topics, two task forces, which included two Delegates each, fact-checked and combined similar topics. After the task forces completed their work, eight topics were presented for voting.

"Out of 94 voting Conference members, 73 (17 from Panel 57, 20 from Panel 58, 18 from Panel 59, 12 Trustees, 2 At-Large Executive Committee members, and 4 Staff members) voted to discuss two topics in breakout sessions.

Chosen Agenda Items Index

"When the Conference Leadership Team invited all Conference members to share their thoughts about the Chosen Agenda Items process last summer, it was suggested that the CLT create a Chosen Agenda Items Index.

"The Index, which includes links to the appropriate *Summary*, was posted to AFG Connects prior to this year's Conference.



Staff Insight:

"A member who served as Area Delegate in the late 70s, and who is still active in service, emailed the WSO asking for more information about the Past and Current WSC Members community on AFG Connects. She had read about the community in the 2017 Annual Report in the *2018 World Service Conference Summary* (page 87).

"This piece of correspondence and the WSO's response highlight:

- Our Mission: Providing access to the Past and Current WSC Members community offers this past Delegate the opportunity to connect with and support other past and current Conference members by sharing information and experience.
- Our Envisioned Future: AFG Connects allows her on-demand access to information and a connection to support, no matter her location.
- Our Goals: Participating in AFG Connects increases her access to knowledge, resources, and the program."

Group Services

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

"As the Associate Director for Group Services, I oversee World Service Office (WSO) activities concerning Al-Anon and Alateen groups, which include: meetings and members; the Inmate Correspondence Service; and the *Alateen Talk* newsletter, a quarterly publication for Al-Anon Family Groups' teen and younger members worldwide. The Group Services Team brings the voice of electronic meetings into discussions at the WSC.



"2018 was a very busy year for Group Services. These are the highlights of activity since the compilation of the 2018 Annual Report:

- ♦ The 'Let's Talk about Safety in Al-Anon Meetings!' service tool has been extremely well received. Group Services responded to numerous emails and phone calls requesting additional copies and thanking the WSO for providing the information. As a result of that request, the service tool is now posted in English, Spanish, and French on the al-anon.org website. It can be found on the Group Resources home page.
- ♦ Many of you may not be aware that Sharon B., our Senior Group Services Specialist, retired on January 18. We were pleased to announce and welcome Christa A. as the new Group Services Specialist on January 28. She brings with her a wealth of information and extensive service experience from Area 56 Vermont. She is a past Delegate from Panel 47 and has held numerous positions at the group, District, and Area levels; this has facilitated her transition at the WSO.
- ♦ In the end of January, a new AFG Connects community for electronic meetings was launched. The Current Mailing Address (CMA) for each meeting has log-on access to the community. The decision to create this online platform was made after the successful conference call that was held with the electronic meeting CMAs and members of the Electronic Meeting Work Group in November. Their discussion threads have included comments regarding service in meetings, displaying of meeting formats, dominance in meetings, and meeting autonomy.
- ♦ The number of electronic meeting registrations continues to grow. As of March 31, 2019, we have a total of 214 meetings, with the following breakdown:

131 phone meetings and 83 online meetings in the following languages:

•152 English	3 German
•39 Spanish	1 Icelandic
•3 French	1 Italian
•2 Danish	1 Polish

- 1 Estonian 1 Portuguese
- 1 Farsi 9 Russian

The online platforms that are currently in use are:

- ♦ **Bulletin Board** – 6 meetings in English, Russian, Italian, and Danish
- ♦ **Chat** – 12 meetings in English, Spanish, Farsi, and Polish
- ♦ **Email** – 27 meetings in English, Spanish, French, Estonian, German, Portuguese, and Russian
- ♦ **Facebook Messenger** – 3 meetings in English
- ♦ **Free Conference Call App** – An online platform: Members can call in or use the app to participate in meetings; 6 meetings in English have registered since January 1, 2019.
- ♦ **Skype** – 27 meetings in English, Spanish, Icelandic, and Russian (Of these 27 meetings, 18 are in Spanish!)
- ♦ **Zoom** – 2 meetings; 1 is bilingual Spanish/English and one is Danish

Since January 1, **19** new electronic meetings have registered; this is the most ever experienced.

- ♦ The *Starting an Al-Anon Group* Guideline (G-12) was noted to have a reference to statistical data that conflicted with information shared in the 2018 Membership Survey. The purpose of the guideline, in general, is to provide a broad view of the information needed for a member seeking assistance when navigating within our Service Structure. As a result, the statistical reference was removed in the text under “Open Meetings” to reflect that “many members” are referred to Al-Anon by professionals.
- ♦ 2019 marks the 55th anniversary of the *Alateen Talks* newsletter and the 18th anniversary of the daily reader *Living Today in Alateen* (B-26). Alateen literature is Al-Anon literature. Consider having a discussion in your Al-Anon meetings about using Alateen literature. It may provide a different perspective on how Al-Anon members can support Alateen.

Staff Insight

“Group Services continues to be ‘information central,’ as we so lovingly refer to ourselves. As one of the many voices of the clearing-house, we remain committed to empowering members to seek solutions through the spiritual principles found in our 36 Legacies. We welcome the journey as we step out of the comfort zone in our efforts to serve you, so that Al-Anon and Alateen continue to be recognized as the primary resource for families and friends of alcoholics.

“We want to sincerely and humbly thank you for allowing us to serve you.”

International

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

“As the Associate Director—International at the WSO, I am responsible for communicating with and providing guidance to 36 General Service Offices (GSOs), 14 Service Boards, and local meeting contacts in 68 other countries where Al-Anon has a presence. I am the Staff Liaison to the International Coordination Committee, and I help plan the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting.

This update is a report of significant international activity that has taken place since the first of the year.

International Services

“The office manager at the Norway GSO has resigned. This is the third resignation of this position in the last year and it occurred after the employee had spent only four months in the position. She also noted that several positions on the Board were currently empty.

“Since last July, we have received four requests to reprint *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (B-33) (from Australia and South Africa [English], and Colombia and Mexico [Spanish]). We notified GSOs the *Just for Tonight* Bookmark (M-81) would be available in March in English, French, and Spanish, and let them know they could pre-order or submit requests to translate or reprint. So far, only South Africa has requested permission to reprint, but we expect more requests.

“The UK & Eire GSO recently used part of a bequest on an outreach project that has been quite successful and led to an increase in literature sales from both groups and individuals. They are also using some of the bequest money to redesign their website and implement a new toll-free help line.

“Russia requested and was provided with copies of Finance, Executive, and Policy Committee Guidelines. They are considering creating these Committees in addition to their Service Board.

“In January, we processed a ‘rush’ reprint permission order from South Africa for the pamphlet *Has Your Life Been Affected by Someone Else’s Drinking?* (S-20). They placed a local printing order for 3,000 copies for a public outreach project in schools.

“In January, the ‘Let’s Talk about Safety in Al-Anon Meetings’ document was shared with the international community via AFG Connects; members responded well to it.

AFG Records

“As part of my responsibilities, I also oversee the Records Department in the World Service Office, formerly called Group Records and now called AFG Records. As you’ll have noticed from the Annual Report, these Staff members do much more than process group records.

“Our focus in the first quarter of the year is always on welcoming and training new Area trusted servants, with a special emphasis on Area Group Records Coordinators (AGRCs) and Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs). We are experimenting with using new procedures for these and used web conferencing this year. We had some challenges and are learning a lot. We ended up archiving both presentations on AFG Connects and are considering pre-recording these sessions for next year so that the information is available sooner. This is so that we can better support the needs of the incoming panel of trusted servants at the beginning of their term.

“We are overhauling the information we collect through satisfaction surveys and self-assessments. In the past, a self-assessment was completed after the training. We are planning to move toward a pre-assessment and a post-assessment so that we can gain insight into the expectations of the incoming panel of AGRCs and AAPPs and measure the effectiveness of our training.

“Some of what we have learned so far includes:

- The majority of the AGRCs rated their comfort level with technology between average and high.
- A full 40% of AGRCs reported that they did not have a transition meeting or training with the outgoing AGRC.

- The AAPPs' comfort level with technology is very diverse; this points out that we need to adapt our training to an audience that has varied skills.
- Almost 40% of AAPPs reported they did not have a transition meeting or training with the outgoing AAPP.

"We expect to learn more over time, but even these few pieces of information are helping us adapt what we offer and when we offer it to be of the most value to the trusted servants we support."

Literature

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

"I have the great pleasure of serving as the Associate Director—Literature at the World Service Office. I am the Staff Liaison to the Literature Committee as well as to the Area Literature Coordinators and Area Newsletter Editors. As part of my responsibilities, I assist the Literature Committee Chairperson in providing the agenda and minutes for the Committee's quarterly web conferencing calls. When the World Service Conference gives conceptual approval for new pieces of literature or revisions to existing pieces, I orchestrate the process for developing Conference Approved Literature (CAL) with the Literature Committee, freelance writers who are Al-Anon members, Policy Committee reviewers, and all others involved—including the entire fellowship—so that we receive the necessary sharings to make it all possible. When the process is completed, I work with the Literature Coordinators to make sure that the fellowship is aware it exists. I am also responsible for reviewing all reprint permission requests for Conference Approved Literature. As the immediate supervisor of the Magazine Editor, I am also part of the monthly review process for *The Forum* magazine. In addition, I respond to between 150–200 correspondences a month from the fellowship and others regarding Al-Anon literature. I'm never bored, and my hands are never idle.

2020 Calendar Quotations

"For the last six years, the WSO has provided CAL quotations that service arms have been able to use in fundraising calendars without needing to seek written permission for them. In March, the WSO posted 20 quotations for use in 2020 calendars on the Announcements community of AFG Connects. If service arms submit reprint permission requests for use in calendars, they will be asked to select from the 20 quotations instead.

NEW DAILY READER (working title)

"We received nine proposals from Al-Anon members who are professional writers/editors who want to work on the NEW DAILY READER (working title). Staff is currently reviewing the proposals.

Upcoming 'Inside Al-Anon Family Groups' Articles

"The WSO frequently receives correspondence about literature. This includes some from members who do not understand the process for developing our literature and want their favorite piece of outside literature or a new memoir that they have written to receive CAL approval. In May and June, the 'Inside Al-Anon Family Groups' articles in *The Forum* will focus, consecutively, on how CAL is developed and the procedure for discontinuing CAL. We hope these articles will be helpful. They were inspired by the discussions among Literature Coordinators on AFG Connects.

Just for Tonight Bookmark (M-81)

"This new bookmark, given conceptual approval by last year's Conference, became available in March through local Literature Distribution Centers and the Al-Anon Online Store. An order form is being inserted into the April issue of *The Forum* and the June issues of *Le lien* and *en acción*. Conference members received a copy of the bookmark with the registration materials that were given to them in the hospitality room. Literature Coordinators will receive a copy to assist them in encouraging Area members to use this latest recovery tool."

Public Outreach to Professionals

Claire R., Associate Director—

Public Outreach Professionals (and Archives)

"My primary assignment is to increase awareness of and referrals to our program by making information about Al-Anon and Alateen available to students, researchers, professionals, national nonprofit associations, and government agencies. I also provide support to Areas and their service arms to help them increase their local outreach to professionals and state, provincial, and community organizations.

"My Staff role entails acquiring articles written by professionals for each *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine issue and encouraging members and service arms to participate in the *AFA* magazine outreach project.

"I supervise the World Service Office's Archivist and Editorial Quality Specialist.



Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism Magazine

"The exciting plan to allow for members to order the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) magazine throughout most of the year began as a simple idea; however, we soon discovered it was complex to implement. The fellowship will benefit from being able to order and replenish their supplies of the *AFA* outreach magazines for a longer period of time. The transition also eliminates deadlines, which have been a cause for confusion. This also helps the families of alcoholics; they can now receive *AFA* magazines at offices of professionals, libraries, and other public places on a continuous basis. The WSO online store is accepting orders now, and downloadable order forms are also available on the WSO website.

"In May, Area Public Outreach Coordinators and District Representatives will receive a PowerPoint presentation explaining the updated ordering process, along with PDFs of tear-off tab flyers and order forms. Announcements and order forms will also be released in May issues of WSO publications. The WSO will ship

AFA 2019 magazine orders as they are received, while supplies last. The WSO will notify the fellowship when AFA 2020 orders can be received.

Fact Sheet for Professionals (S-37ES and S-37EF)

"The revised and reformatted bilingual *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37 ES and S-37 EF) pamphlets, which allow members to give professionals an introduction to our program, are now available for order from the WSO online store. Free downloadable PDF files in three separate languages are also available in the Professionals section of the WSO website. The printed pamphlet or its electronic format can easily be included in members' mailings to professionals.

"The benefit of the revised *Fact Sheet for Professionals* is that it is timeless. It will not become dated. Professionals will be receiving current and accurate information from members who distribute the pamphlets in their local communities. Groups, Al-Anon Information Services, and Literature Distribution Centers are encouraged to order the new pamphlet printing. It is easy to identify the updated version because it is green and white instead of blue and white (like the old version).

Staff Travel

"Staff travel included a trip to the National Recovery Month Planning Partners and attendance at the Addiction and Behavioral Health Conference in January and February. Face-to-face interactions create new opportunities for cooperation with professionals and provide new ideas for communication on digital formats.

One Member Can Make a Difference

"Staff helped a member select handouts for a presentation he planned to give at a conference for Employee Assistance Professionals in US airlines.

"A member speaking anonymously as a professional requested support from the WSO; this member had hoped to receive help from the WSO in contacting other members (who were involved in local public outreach efforts) to participate in a 'Meeting on Wheels.'

Archives

"The Archives Department is giving high priority to digitally transferring materials into the cloud. Cloud storage improves searchability, expands capacity, and offers greater data redundancy, reducing the risk of any loss.

"The 'Most Meaningful Friendship' sharing, which appeared in the Lois W. memorial issue of the March 1989 issue of *The Forum*, has been posted in the Archives tab of the WSO website folder. The story was written by Hildegard V., a past *Forum* Editor. This article supplements other historical materials about Al-Anon and our Cofounders that are available online, for free, as downloadable PDF files. Members now have easy access to this article, as well as PDF files of *Al-Anon's Cofounders* (P-87, SP-87, and FP-87) and *Al-Anon: Then and Now* (AR-2, SAR-2, and FAR-2); these can be used as handouts when showing Al-Anon's two historical videos—*Lois's Story* (AV-1) and *Lois W. & the Pioneers* (AV-24)—to the fellowship."

Following the Staff updates, Conference members had these questions and comments:

- My Area is looking at how to attract new and younger members. Is there any research regarding electronic, phone, and Skype meetings attracting younger people?

Electronic meetings are attracting a lot of people with different lifestyles. We don't collect data regarding age. We are registering new electronic meetings on a daily basis.

- Members in some regions don't receive their issue of *The Forum* until the end of the month. Could the publication schedule be altered?

The publication schedule was altered several years ago and, yet, the situation persists. All copies of the magazine are mailed at the same time on or before the 20th day of the previous month via nonprofit standard mail, which we have been told is the equivalent in delivery time to First Class. Please consider directing inquiries to your Postmaster to find out why the magazine is not delivered when the Post Office receives it.

- Could Areas use the WSO guide instead of developing their own Meeting List Publishing policies?

The WSO is not creating a guideline. Areas are invited to use the Policy Committee Thought Force materials developed in 2012 when creating their policies. The WSO is happy to help and can review an Area's policy if asked. The WSO only needs to review an Area policy if it is asked by an Area to stop publishing certain meetings. The WSO provides its feedback on the basis of the spiritual principles outlined by the 2012 Policy Committee Thought Force.

- I come from a technology environment. I am impressed by the work accomplished by the WSO Staff. More work is done than in other businesses. I am excited about AFG Connects. It is an opportunity to do more business and Strategic Planning. AFG is becoming more relevant all the time.

- Will the organizational chart be available?

Yes, we will publish the WSO organizational chart as part of the Conference Summary. The organizational chart lays out administrative reporting structures within the Office. Decision-making authority and responsibility are now being distributed across the three leadership Teams described in this report.

- A member asked me about literature for the blind and how to access it. Do you have any information?

The WSO directs members to the State Department for information on materials for the blind because it has free resources that can support them.

- Why don't the PSAs say that the people in them are actors? Do we need a disclaimer?

The PSAs have never said that. So, we are being consistent with the previous approach. We have always used actors.

A motion to approve the 2018 Annual Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #2, page 83. The complete report can be found on pages 93–117.)

BYLAWS TASK FORCE

Norm W., Trustee, Task Force Chairperson | Vali F., Executive Director

Prior to the World Service Conference, Conference members were provided with amendments to the Canadian By-Laws that had been passed at the January 2019 Board meeting and changes to the US Bylaws that had been passed by the Board in March 2019.

The purpose of the session was to advise Conference members of the most significant changes to the Bylaws. The Bylaws are a legal document of the Board and, pursuant to Concept Seven, are within the sole province of the Board of Trustees.

The majority of the changes fell into four categories:

- Updates to reflect current standards and laws
- Updates to simplify language
- Clarification of language
- Clarification of practice

In addition, there are a few changes that are wholly new and a few that, we discovered through research, were updates to previous practices.

Background Information:

In October 2016, the Board of Trustees reviewed the process for amending the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This review was necessary due to the job title change from Director of Business Services to Director of Finance. These changes were presented to the 2017 World Service Conference (WSC). Following the 2017 WSC, the Board of Trustees was asked if there were additional updates or changes that it felt should be considered in relation to the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Although no specific concerns were identified, the Chairperson of the Board determined that a thought force of the Executive Committee At-Large members would be appropriate to review the By-Laws, since that would eliminate any possible conflict of interest or appearance thereof (related to any changes regarding Board makeup, numbers, etc.).

By-Laws Review Thought Force Charge: Review the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees on revisions/clarifications to improve governance and understanding.

The Thought Force results were presented to the Board of Trustees during the 2017 July Board meeting. As a result of the presentation and subsequent Board discussion, the Board of Trustees decided it was necessary to form a task force with the purpose of reviewing the recommendations received from the Thought Force for By-Laws review.

By-Laws Task Force Charge: Working from the recommendations of the By-Laws Review Thought Force, review the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and provide recommendations for revisions/clarifications to improve governance and understanding.

The By-Laws Task Force presented its recommended changes to the Board of Trustees beginning in October 2017. The Task Force took into consideration “best practices” for nonprofit organizations as related to duties and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees as a whole, Officers of the Corporation, the Secretary of the Corporation, and the Executive Committee. The revisions to the By-Laws are a compilation of 17 months of work by the Task Force and, ultimately, the Board of Trustees as a whole. To ensure

that all changes are in compliance and in accordance with US and Canadian governing laws, the renamed Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. were reviewed by legal counsel prior to the Board of Trustees’ final acceptance of them on March 5, 2019.

The substantial changes include:

Article III ~ Members

Paragraph 1 – Simplification of Language. The attorney substantially revised this Article to reflect the current AFG, Inc. Articles of Incorporation. The Articles of Incorporation are the governing legal document for the organization. In this Article of the Bylaws, “members” refers to the members of the corporation, not to the members of Al-Anon Family Groups (the fellowship).

Article IV ~ Trustees

Paragraphs 4 and 5 – Clarification of practice. We switched paragraphs four and five to make the order more logical and consistent.

Paragraph 10 – New. A sentence was added to allow a Trustee who has not served six years but has served two terms, e.g., a Trustee initially elected to serve the second or third year of a vacant term, to be appointed to fill a vacancy. The Board felt this allowed for the best utilization of a trusted servant while adhering to the spiritual principle of rotation.

Paragraph 11 – Clarification of practice. This process was entirely rewritten to add clarity, to place the steps in a logical order, and to ensure future Trustees are very clear on the proper procedure in this situation. It also clearly establishes that these major decisions are made by the Board of Trustees.

Article VII ~ Duties of Officers

Paragraph 1 and 4 – Clarification of practice. The Task Force reviewed the archives to understand what was intended by the early pioneers when they stated someone served in an ex officio capacity on a committee. The research indicated that ex-officio was intended to mean the member served with voice but no vote.

Paragraph 2 – Clarification of practice. Here we clarified the Vice President’s responsibilities in the case of absence or disability of the President.

Paragraph 2 – Clarification of practice. This paragraph clarified the legal responsibilities of the Treasurer as opposed to operational responsibilities of the Director of Finance & Operations.

Article IX ~ Meetings

Paragraph 1 – This paragraph relates to the Board’s annual meeting. The only change is that the annual meeting must be held “within twenty-four hours” of the closing of the WSC, rather than “the day following.” Ironically, this was the way the Bylaws used to read. This merely allows the Conference Leadership Team and the Office more flexibility with scheduling. The Board meets quarterly to conduct the normal business of AFG, Inc. The annual meetings have specific legal requirements that need to be met in order for us to maintain our compliance with applicable laws of the US and Canada.

Paragraph 7 – Clarification of practice. The Board saw that in order to best discharge its legal duties, it needs a mechanism for taking interim actions between regular Board meetings, so it created paragraph 7 to allow for interim actions that can be conducted in writing and electronically. This practice has been in place for several years.

Article XI ~ World Service Conference

Paragraph 1(a) – Clarification of practice. The language was changed to make it more consistent with the “Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter” and to add Bermuda, because it is a separate country. Puerto Rico and the Northwest Territories are, respectively, territories of the US & Canada.

Paragraph 1(d) – Clarification of practice. Subparagraph 1(d) was struck in compliance with current practice.

Paragraph 4 – Update to reflect current standards and laws. Al-Anon’s attorney indicated we needed to clarify the wording of this paragraph to reflect the legal versus traditional rights of the Board of Trustees and Conference, documented in Concepts Six and Seven.

Article XII ~ Committees

Paragraph 1 – Clarification of practice. The paragraph was corrected for accuracy since the Executive Committee has always consisted of eight members. The President has served as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee since its inception.

With the Bylaws corrected, the descriptive text of the Concepts of Service will need to be updated to ensure it, too, accurately reflects our structure and operations.

Paragraphs 1 and 2 – Clarification of practice. As with Trustees, the Board wished to ensure clarification of the process for removing Executive Committee members who are not performing.

Paragraph 1 – Clarification of practice. This paragraph was corrected to reflect the long-standing practice of including the Director of Finance & Operations as an ex-officio member of the Finance Committee.

Paragraph 1 – Clarification of practice. The practice of including, whenever possible, a Trustee from Canada on the Nominating Committee has been in the Committee’s guidelines for years. This change gives that guidance a legal effect.

According to 10d. of the “Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter” (page 228 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [P-24/27]), the Conference, in its traditional role, reviews the Bylaws. The Conference does not vote to approve the Bylaw amendments. The Conference may recall the amendments if any are disagreeable. In that event, the Board will review them again and present them to the Conference the following year for review.

See Appendix I on page 111.

See Appendix II on page 117.

CONCEPT FIVE TASK FORCE REPORT

Terry F., Trustee, Task Force Chairperson

The Chairperson thanked Conference members for the thoughtful questions and comments they submitted to the Task Force prior to Conference. Those suggestions were carefully considered.

She continued the report, saying, “The process was no different than talking to each other rather than first contacting the WSO. We used the links of service first. Concept Five does not refer to the timing or the charge.”

Background:

During the October 2018 meeting of the Board of Trustees, Board members discussed the need to update the descriptive text within Concept Five that describes the process for filing a minority appeal. The current Concept Five descriptive text has left some members of the fellowship with the understanding that any disagreement or dissatisfaction can or should be appealed directly to the Board of Trustees without first taking steps to talk to each other and reason things out.

Charge:

Improve the clarity of the appeal process currently outlined within the text of Concept Five. The revised descriptive text should clarify that members can appeal to the Board for consideration of an issue once all avenues of mediation with the service arm that made the original decision are exhausted. See pages 186–187 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

After reviewing the changes to the descriptive text, Conference members had the following comments:

- I have a fear that this change weakens the protection supported in the Concept. It is for our protection—the fellowship. My concern is the clarification of practice. Once they are out of the room, members are required to go through some sort of multi-step appeal before their concerns are brought to the Board. The discomfort I feel is that I don’t want every member calling to say they want to be heard. I will support the decision of the majority.
- I am confused about the process for changing the Concepts. Is it within authority of the Trustees to do so?

We—the Conference—are discussing making changes to the descriptive text. We are not discussing changing the Concept itself.

- I am thrilled with the clarification. In my Area, some members go from A to Z. Thank you, WSO. This might encourage members to start at the group level and use the links of service. It won’t stop some, but it will help educate our members.

Following the discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the revised text of the Concept Five descriptive text. See Motion #6 on page 83.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION UPDATES

2020 A.A. International with Al-Anon Participation

Suzanne M., Associate Director—

Conference, Program and Speakers Coordinator

Kerri K., Associate Director—

International, Welcome Committee and Staff/WSO Volunteer Coordinator

The presenters introduced the topic with a skit. The 2020 A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon participation in Detroit, Michigan, July 2–5, 2020, will celebrate A.A.'s 85th anniversary.

Al-Anon participation will include holding a variety of sessions during the day on Friday and Saturday. The preliminary 2020 A.A. International Convention Al-Anon program has been created. The Al-Anon program at the A.A. International Convention will occur at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center.

Al-Anon and Alateen members are welcome and encouraged to attend the A.A. Big Meetings on Friday and Saturday evening and on Sunday morning.

Online registration opens September 9, 2019 and is only \$115 US. On April 15, it will increase to \$140 US. There are plenty of hotel rooms at different price ranges. Those who register early will have better options.

Many attendees come early or stay late for a vacation. There are many fun things to do in Detroit—there are numerous museums and parks to visit in the area.

Did you know that, from Detroit, you can look south and see Canada? Detroit is the only major city along the US border where you travel south to cross into Canada. Bring your passport and we'll see you in Detroit!



2023 Al-Anon International Convention

Vali F., Executive Director, Convention Chairperson

The Convention Chairperson began by inviting Conference members and 5,000 of their closest friends to Albuquerque, New Mexico from June 29 through July 2, 2023 to attend Al-Anon's Seventh International Convention with A.A. participation.

She continued, saying, "Have you ever wanted to take a hot air balloon ride or to see a sunset across the beautiful expanse of the open desert of New Mexico? Albuquerque is a wonderful, cozy community, perfectly suited for Al-Anon Family Groups to meet and connect with our fellow members and share our message of help and hope with new members.

"A popular tourism site suggests that Albuquerque offers exciting attractions for all ages—for those who love history, culture, and outdoor adventures. In the historic section of Old Town, Native American and Spanish cultures come to life through old churches, quaint shops and piazzas, winding brick paths, and adobe benches. Browsers can spend a whole day making their way through the more than 100 stores, boutiques, and galleries that sell Southwestern goods, as well as unique products from around the world.

"But the history doesn't stop there. The Native American Pueblo Cultural Center and the Petroglyph National Monument offer a glimpse of old Native American customs and art. Families will find plenty to do at the Albuquerque Biological Park, which features a zoo, aquarium, and botanical garden.

"Now let's give you an idea of where the Convention will take place in the city: The beautiful Albuquerque Convention Center, with its two adjacent hotels, is located in the heart of downtown Albuquerque and will become 'International Convention central' for our Al-Anon program and the A.A. program, which we hope may be expanded with this Convention.

"The 2023 International Convention planning is still in its infancy. We are still in the contracting and logistics phase. The contract with the Albuquerque Convention Center has been signed. Although we are still years away from creating the program, we are excited to have our facility in place.

"We began working with the Albuquerque hotels this year. Several contracts are signed. Once hotel negotiations are completed, we will slowly ramp up to address the long list of other planning responsibilities. The Planning Committee—which consists of a core team of six people and a complete team of 17—has met and will begin a regular cadence of meetings occurring quarterly initially and accelerating to weekly and semi-weekly once we get closer."

The Chairperson explained that since the last International, titles, roles, and responsibilities of the Planning Committee for International Conventions have evolved. "With the creation and development of the Events & Special Projects team, we have been able to distribute Convention responsibilities more equitably and have updated titles and authority accordingly."

Welcome Committee

"This is the Committee formerly known as the 'Host Committee.'" The Chairperson continued, "One of the key planning tasks for both the 2020 A.A. International Convention and the 2023 Al-Anon International Convention is selection of Welcome Committee Chairs for these events. In our cooperation with A.A., we learned that their fellowship found that changing the name to 'Welcome Committee' helped clarify the primary responsibility of the local committee. As a result, we have adopted this nomenclature of 'Welcome Committee' for the committee of more than 400 volunteers who will welcome Al-Anon, Alateen, and A.A. participants to the area; help attendees find local area amenities; and greet attendees as they enter the Convention.

"We have also adapted another practice from A.A., which is to create a process for selecting the Welcome Committee Chair. As you can imagine for the A.A. International Convention—where the

Welcome Committee Chair has overall responsibility for coordinating 4,000 volunteers—selecting a skilled facilitator is imperative to success. While our numbers are smaller, it is nonetheless no small feat to coordinate 400 volunteers. So, for both the 2020 A.A. and the 2023 Al-Anon Internationals, the Planning Committee will be reaching out to the Delegate and past trusted servants from the Area that is welcoming the Convention to seek qualified candidates who can be interviewed for the Chair position.

“For the A.A. International Convention, this Chair selection process will begin shortly after Conference, as the Welcome Committee volunteer process kicks off approximately one year before the Convention itself. For 2023, the selection process will begin in 2022.

“We are looking forward to more exciting updates as the 2023 planning process continues. In the meantime, there are 447 days until the A.A. International Convention with Al-Anon participation and 1,536 days until the Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque. If the combined registration fees for the two International Conventions cost about \$265, it would be possible for members to attend both Conventions by saving a total of 36 cents a day until 2020 and then ten cents a day after that. We encourage you to start saving your change, and we hope to see you in Detroit and Albuquerque!”

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Rosie M., Trustee, Chairperson | John McL., Trustee, Co-Chairperson | Debbie G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board
Kerri K., Associate Director—International | Marsha W., Director of Programs | Vali F., Executive Director

“The International Coordination Committee (ICC) was formed in 1978 as an avenue of communication to support international growth and to perpetuate the worldwide unity of Al-Anon and Alateen. The ICC is an advisory committee to the Board of Trustees and is an active Committee. It reviews Al-Anon activities and policies as they relate to those individuals, groups, and service arms outside the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. As an advisory committee, the ICC makes recommendations to the Board about issues that affect Al-Anon worldwide, such as translation and reprint policies. The Committee meets three times a year during Board weeks and additionally via web-conferencing calls.

“A structure is a network of groups and local service arms responsible for organizing Al-Anon services. Many other structures exist outside the service area of the World Service Conference. A structure usually has permission to print Conference Approved Literature (CAL), has a paid or volunteer service staff, and has an elected Board of Trustees or other legally recognized service board that consists of Al-Anon members.

“There are several places to read more about the work of the ICC. The descriptive text of Concept Eleven in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) details the primary responsibilities of the ICC. The al-anon.org website includes an international page that provides information on the different kinds of structures supported by the World Service Office (WSO). The content of this page is currently under review. Recommendations for improvements are being developed and will be implemented later this year under one of the Strategies that supports the Public Goal of the Strategic Plan. The website has an archive of *International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Summaries* dating back to the first one in 1980. *World Service Conference (WSC) Summaries* include reports of IAGSMs, Zonal meetings, and international trips. These can be found on the al-anon.org website under the Members menu.”

International Trips

“The ICC supports the growth of structures worldwide by considering first-time requests for translation and reprint permission, by providing input during international site visits, and by coordinating and participating in international service meetings.”

Greece

Debbie G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board
Kerri K., Associate Director—International

“The immediate goals of the trip to Greece were to meet with members of Greece’s Public Outreach, Literature, and other standing committees, and to meet interested Al-Anon members. Discussions centered around how the WSO can support this evolving structure; determine the status of the Al-Anon Information Services (AIS) office registered in Athens; and meet with members of other European structures to discuss service-related topics, answer questions, and familiarize them with the WSO as a resource for them.

“Longer-term goals included:

- Informing members of the Structure about the resources available to them through the WSO, the WSO’s website, the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, and the Knowledge-Based

Decision-Making (KBDM) process to achieve an informed group conscience.

- Empowering members of the Structure to use these tools to solve problems, resolve conflicts, become more stable and organized, and better serve current and potential Al-Anon/Alateen members in Greece.
- Creating a long-term plan for the Structure, such as a plan for the AIS, a plan to move toward participation in the European Zonal Meetings, and plans to meet other goals identified by members of the Structure.”

The Chairperson continued, “Our initial contact with the members in Greece was through emails between the Associate Director—International and a member in Greece who, we understand, is one of the Al-Anon pioneers in Greece. Our first face-to-face meeting with her was through web conferencing. Prior to our departure, we exchanged numerous emails. Through the use of technology, we were able to establish an initial relationship with her and gain a perspective of her views regarding the members, the needs of the groups, and how the WSO could assist them in moving forward from maintaining 19 registered groups to forming Districts and an Area. It was during the web conferencing meetings that she presented a list of questions she had gathered from the groups. We developed an itinerary for the week, a list of the groups we would personally visit, and an agenda for a business meeting with members in Athens and surrounding areas.

“A local member in Athens met us at the airport. She was gracious and, as with all our international members, as excited to meet us as we were to meet her. We stayed in Athens that night. Early the next morning we met up with local members who had chartered a bus to travel to the Al-Anon Convention in Porto Heli. The members enthusiastically greeted us and, while only a few could speak English, they were all very much aware that we were from the WSO and greeted us with warm hugs, loving smiles, and the language of the heart. The year 2018 was the thirteenth year for this Convention. The theme was ‘Awareness, Acceptance, Action.’ Meetings were held in Greek and English and there was A.A. participation, too. One afternoon during a break, we met informally with several members from the Athens and Thessaloniki groups to discuss solutions to common problems. Our goal for attending the Convention was to begin establishing relationships with members in attendance and to learn more about their needs and how we could assist in strengthening their Structure. While we were introduced as guests from the WSO and treated as such initially, the opportunity to attend the Convention turned into a Higher-Power-given opportunity to participate as ‘members’ when we were both asked to share our personal stories. This, in turn, established a rapport and level of trust that may have otherwise taken much longer to build.

“Following the Convention, we attended three Al-Anon meetings at three different locations in Athens. During a two-hour working session, we answered 21 questions (which had been provided in advance). The meeting was skillfully facilitated to keep on track while allowing sufficient time for thorough answers and follow-up questions. Questions had been submitted by groups, members, and committees and included the following topics: translation/

publications, public outreach, Alateen/Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service, finances, committee selection and participation, participation in the European Zonal Meeting and WSC, group conscience, rotation of service, and other common group problems. More than 20 people attended the working session. An additional ten attended via web conferencing.”

The Associate Director—International shared, “By the time we had concluded our trip, we had met all of our immediate goals and laid the groundwork for the longer-term ones. We were able to determine the status of several pieces of CAL that were currently being translated and, over the last year, the Public Outreach Committee developed some Public Service Announcements for local air play. We determined that the AIS office operated more like a Literature Distribution Center. It was a stable location that was registered as an AIS for the purpose of providing a point of contact for the WSO and obtaining discounts on English-language literature. We also met with several members from other European structures at the Conference and later in Athens. For many, it was an opportunity for us to introduce them to the work we do at the WSO.

“Our visit helped the Structure empower members and encourage them to use available tools to solve problems, resolve conflicts, and become more stable and organized; this was part of the WSO’s long-term strategy for the Structure and part of establishing a long-term relationship between the WSO and Greece. Although Al-Anon has existed in Greece for more than 25 years and the members have worked hard to organize a Structure with different levels of services, they remain isolated from other groups outside the Athens area as well as the WSO. Saving funds to send a Representative to attend a Zonal meeting is often a fruitful first step in becoming a part of the worldwide Al-Anon service community, and the members of this evolving structure will continue to be encouraged to participate in this regard. The WSO is also committed to investigating new strategies for providing support, including through the use of technology, and expanding our thinking to confront new challenges.”

Norway, Finland, and Estonia

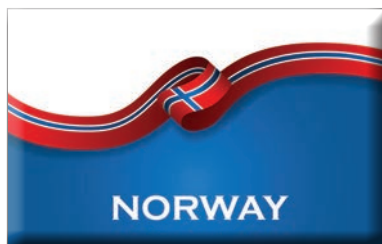
John McL., Trustee, ICC Co-Chairperson

Vali F., Executive Director

Marsha W., Director of Programs

Norway

“The initial decision to go to Norway was based on a request that the Associate Director—International received. The Structure was having issues related to high turnover with their Board and their office manager.



From there, we investigated which other structures we could visit to make the best use of AFG, Inc.’s resources.

“We began our three-country European journey in Sandefjord, Norway in August 2018, where we attended the Norwegian Al-Anon Summer Convention. This was the first Norwegian Al-Anon Convention that was not held in conjunction with A.A. The first evening, after a traditional Norwegian dinner, we listened to sharings on the slogan ‘Let It Begin with Me’ from four different cultures of members from Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the US. This was an

enriching experience. The next day, simultaneous meetings were held in Norwegian, Finnish, and English. The Swedish members were content attending either the English or Norwegian meetings. Later, we participated in a ‘Question Time – by the WSO’ session. The questions members asked were similar to those we ask at the WSC: How can we attract younger people? How can we encourage members to be of service? How should we use technology? How do we welcome newcomers?

“We shared our experience, strength, and hope about how our groups, Districts, and Areas work to solve these same issues. In discussing the crisis in the Board of Trustees of Norway, we referred them to the *Using Al-Anon Principles to Resolve Conflicts* Kit (K-70) and the Legacies to work through the issues. We reminded them that conflict means growth. We also emphasized that Board members should talk to each other and reason things out and that discussion will help them get to the roots of the problems and thereby help them find solutions. We suggested they have regular communication with other structures because isolation is not good for General Service Offices (GSOs), groups, or individuals. We reminded them that the WSO and the GSOs are partners. Following the Convention, we met with three members from Sweden. We discussed their Board, their committees, and realignment of their Districts. Sweden is a large country with some remote Districts that only have a few groups. They are working toward combining Districts in the hopes of garnering more consistent representation of Districts at meetings and Assemblies. The Norway Convention was three days of great fellowship, increased understanding, and new friendships. We are truly a worldwide fellowship working together.”

Estonia

“Although Al-Anon has existed in Estonia for over 25 years—their website indicates it started October 8, 1993—there are currently only two meetings registered in our database. One is an English-speaking meeting. Our contact, who spoke fluent English, met with us along with two other members in a restaurant



located in a mall. Once we settled in and established ourselves as members, not just Representatives from the WSO, the level of nervousness decreased. It is humbling to meet with members in countries that do not have access to literature in their native language, as it is a reminder of how fortunate we are to have the opportunity to select from many books, pamphlets, and other service resources. So spending time with these members in a face-to-face setting was educational and a privilege. Because of Estonia’s proximity to Finland, members in Tallinn can attend Finnish Al-Anon meetings in Helsinki and participate in some of the Finnish service meetings that have helped sustain their growth in recovery and service. Unfortunately, they do not share the support or cooperation of A.A. that many are familiar with in other countries. Their growth has been limited, in part because of their inability to share this service/cooperation relationship. However, it was encouraging to see the willingness, experience, and tenacity and feel the love of the program from the members we met. We came to know and to understand that because of their continuing efforts and those of many members over the years, Al-Anon has been able to maintain a presence in Estonia.”

Finland

"Al-Anon has existed in Finland since 1952, which is when the General Service Office indicates the first organized group first started. Prior to that time, the wives of many A.A. members had taken part in A.A. meetings and kept in contact outside the meetings as well. The General Service Office—the national office for the country—was established in 1966. The Service Structure sends a Representative to the IAGSM (they hosted the IAGSM in 2008), as well as to the European Zonal Meeting, which they have also hosted. As a result of their 60th anniversary celebration, they sent a special monetary contribution to the WSO to express their gratitude. So, our conversations with the members of their Board of Trustees and Staff were structured and purposeful. Most of their concerns are our concerns:

- lack of volunteer participation in service;
- how to attract newcomers;
- cooperation with A.A.; and
- how to attract more Alateens.

Most important to them was how to participate on social media platforms. Although Finland has had a website since 1998, their membership has begun to push them to have more of a presence on social media as it is seen as one of the public outreach opportunities to raise visibility and awareness about Al-Anon to families and friends within Finland. Much of our time was spent answering questions and sharing our experience regarding social media. Having the opportunity to listen and understand that many of the struggles they have in passing along the Al-Anon message of hope and recovery are based on the culture of their society. Our time with members was an opportunity to appreciate the work and dedication of many who have maintained this strong Structure over the years using the principles found in our Legacies."

Goals and Results: "The visit to Norway originally began after Norway informed us of the resignation of their Board and the challenges they had experienced. Staff and Volunteers set goals for the visit of helping to encourage healing through use of the Al-Anon principles, particularly communications tools available through the Traditions and described in the Conflict Resolution Kit. We hoped as a result of the visit, we could encourage Norway to rejoin the IAGSM and reignite their participation in European Zonal Meetings as well. The results we achieved in the visit were in many ways better than we had hoped.

"Norway hosted the Convention because of the WSO visit, which allowed Sweden Structure leadership to reconnect and Finland, Sweden, and Norway to enjoy fellowship. The Chairperson of the Board was inspired to consider attending the IAGSM, although in the end they were not able to attend for various reasons. "As a bonus, WSO Staff were able to provide experience, strength, and hope to Sweden as they look to reduce the number of Districts in their GSO due to dwindling numbers of meetings and participation in service. We also gave them guidance about literature translations and printing.

The Executive Director summarized, "Whenever the WSO plans international trips, we seek to best utilize AFG, Inc. resources by combining trips to different countries into one visit. On this trip, through the efforts of the Associate Director—International and



the Director of Programs, we were able to plan visits to Estonia—which does not yet even qualify as an evolving structure given they have only two meetings—and Finland, which is a very mature Structure seeking to find answers to many of the same questions facing the WSC Structure (such as how to handle social media and protect anonymity, how to maintain or expand participation in meetings, and many other similar topics). As the Director of Programs described, the visit to Estonia was inspiring for us. Our suggestion that the Estonia members connect with Finland was accepted immediately. We learned that they had reached out to the Finland contact before our ferry had arrived. Finland also seemed to find our visit helpful. The only thing missing on this trip was more time to answer questions. We were grateful for the opportunity."

The Executive Director concluded by saying, "The International Team is charged with the follow-up actions from our visits, such as continuing to encourage the Norway Chairperson of the Board to attend the IAGSM, to connect and offer encouragement to Estonia by answering their questions, and to connect with Finland on their social media progress when we visit the European Zonal Meeting in Slovenia later this year."

Highlights of the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting

Rosie M., ICC Chairperson | John McL., Co-Chairperson
Kerri K., Associate Director—International

IAGSM | WORLDWIDE UNITY

"The ICC coordinates the biennial International Al-Anon General Services Meeting. Two members of this Committee represent the WSC as Delegates at this meeting. Other Committee members attend in non-Delegate roles. The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through their Delegates. It encourages the growth of sound service structures while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of Al-Anon Traditions. It also represents an expression of a worldwide group conscience. Ultimately, this supports the primary purpose of Al-Anon as a whole—to seek the best way to carry the Al-Anon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics amid cultural and language differences.

"At the beginning of the meeting, structures with Delegates present placed their country's flag in front of a world map that shows all of the countries that make up the IAGSM. The flags of countries that were absent were placed on the table at the front of the room to be remembered in our hearts.

"Delegates from Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Guatemala, Iceland, India, Mexico, New Zealand, Poland, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland (German-speaking), United Kingdom & Eire, and the United States/Canada attended.

"The first on many Delegates' lists of highlights was the visit to the World Service Office. For the first time in several years, a visit to the WSO was scheduled as part of the IAGSM. All Staff were invited outside to welcome the Delegates—an activity that proved to be surprisingly emotional for everyone involved. The visit included a tour of the building, an opportunity to meet with selected Staff, and a chance to purchase literature. Unlike the World Service Conference, Staff who are not members of the ICC

do not attend the IAGSM. Therefore, this was the only opportunity International Delegates had to interact with Staff members other than the Director of Programs, Executive Director, and Associate Director—International.

“Delegates requested time to meet with Associate Directors for Conference, Digital Strategy, Literature, and Public Outreach and also requested to spend time in the Archives. One Delegate commented, ‘[It was a] wonderful experience to visit and meet the Staff, to see the workings of the WSO, and to understand how many different departments are involved in the work.’

“Among the highlights of the 2018 IAGSM were presentations by South Africa on ‘Global Access through Remote Participation,’ and presentations by Australia’s Representatives on ‘Creating a Culture Where Alateen Can Thrive.’

“South Africa is a large country with three Area Service Offices (Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban). Through our ongoing conversations with structures across the world and within our own Structure, we know that many service boards are challenged to find members who are qualified and have the time and enthusiasm to serve. Some structures have shown a willingness to experiment—to combine new technology with new thinking—to enable remote participation for Al-Anon members in service. Due to their large geographic size, the frequency of their service meetings, and the rising costs of travel and accommodation, South Africa has been experimenting with electronic meetings for a number of years.

“An overlay map of South Africa onto the US gave IAGSM Delegates an idea of the distance between Area Offices—for example, the distance from Cape Town to Johannesburg is similar to the distance from Chicago to Colorado or New Mexico. During the presentation, the Delegates from South Africa shared their Structure’s experience with a number of different web conference service providers, the positives and negatives of each provider, and some of their best practices for conducting meetings remotely. They searched for and found a method that would minimize loss of connectivity, near-constant software upgrades, and the associated delays of members all being able to join in for a meeting. The service they have been utilizing is intuitive, and it enables them to save meeting recordings to the cloud; offers meeting facilitator functions such as muting all participants; and is usable from a computer, laptop, tablet, or cell phone. In learning to conduct meetings this way, service members navigated through the technical challenges and have been able to host one of their three annual Board meetings remotely for a few years now. It was used for their General Service Conference for the first time in 2018. With the use of technology, the Structure has experienced savings of time and cost while still being able to collaborate on documents and work in teams. However, they continue to have a face-to-face Conference every second year because they know it is important to maintain relationships and fellowship and take the opportunity to meet in person with service members. “The ICC introduced the discussion, which centered around creating a culture where Alateen can thrive. The ICC, who plans the agenda for the meeting, specifically requested that the Alateen presentation *not* focus on how to attract more teens or how to encourage more adults to become Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service. The ICC felt that these topics had been adequately addressed over the years and wanted to initiate a new, broader conversation about how to support the Alateen program. The two Delegates from Australia delivered a presentation that answered the questions:

- What makes an Alateen meeting successful?
- What are some successful ideas to use in a meeting?
- What contributes to the demise of an Alateen meeting?

“They included quotes from local Alateen members who shared their thoughts about Alateen and how it has helped them. One said, ‘I’m surprised that Alateen is real,’ and another said, ‘I’m just happy that I can share my feelings.’ Even though this presentation came from Australia, many of the problems and solutions found in other structures around the world can be applied here. It was the hope of the Committee that the World Service Conference Structure would see this information as a resource.

“There were 23 voting members at the Business Meeting who voted by a show of hands.

- They discussed the bid to host the 2020 IAGSM. The UK & Eire Representative presented a bid to host the event in London, England with proposed dates of October 8–10, 2020. The motion to accept the bid carried.
- They also continued an ongoing conversation about achieving self-support through an Equalized Expense cost-sharing formula.
- They began a preliminary discussion of the question: Is there a need for interpreters at the IAGSM?
- They then discussed the following question, which a Delegate’s structure asked to be brought to the conversation: How can the WSC evolve to address perceived disparities in voting representation? The Delegate noted that almost 40% of registered groups exist outside of the World Service Conference Structure and yet they are strongly influenced by policies created there. A motion was made and later withdrawn, and the Delegates and ICC members resolved to initiate a set of KBDM questions on this topic.”

The ICC Chairperson shared, “Being a part of this event was on a different level. I was amazed to hear firsthand how countries like South Africa are using technology and how some countries’ structures are still in their infancy. We have such a wealth of literature offered to us today that it is hard to imagine having only one or two Al-Anon books in our own language. Some of my highlights included: working by email with a member from Poland on a workshop, just like she was across town; our beautiful bus arriving at the World Service Office; and feeling the excitement as we got close. I heard a Delegate say, ‘This is where the magic happens.’ It is hard to relay the full emotional impact of that day. At the end of the day, a Delegate came to me with tears in her eyes and told me she had found her mom’s handwriting; it was on the Alateen registration form, which was sent in 1972, for the Alateen group she attended when she was younger. Our Archivist made a copy for her that she could take with her. Wow! We had all our meals together, and this was our time to share heart to heart, when that spiritual energy flows from one Al-Anon to another. One member shared with me how she was struggling with the loss of her daughter from the disease of alcoholism. Structures supporting structures—on so many levels! I will never again be able to introduce myself as a member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon without feeling the unity and love I felt at my first IAGSM.”

A full report of all the presentations, discussions, workshops, reflections, opening and closing speakers, and of the business meeting are available in the *IAGSM Summary*.

Ongoing Work of the ICC

“As a result of the IAGSM, the ICC will do a KBDM to look at how we protect Al-Anon’s copyrights while supporting the needs of a global membership in regards to Al-Anon literature and service tools.

The Co-Chairperson provided the following background: “Since the 1960s, the WSO has granted Al-Anon structures outside of the World Service Conference Structure permission to reprint and translate Conference Approved Literature (CAL). Regardless of whether the Al-Anon structure that held the reprint/translation permission operated on a national level, its sales were restricted to the territory defined by its national borders. This practice, still in force today, has helped protect AFG, Inc.’s copyrights. Today, the WSO routinely receives requests from members and groups seeking to use our literature in ways not supported by our policy. The time has come for us to review the policy to determine if there are new ways to be flexible and supportive while maintaining our copyrights internationally. The ICC is relying on legal expertise as well as conversations with the Board and international structures to engage in a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process.”

International Trip Tool: “A new ‘Role of the Trustee and Staff on International Trips’ tool was developed to assist with trip preparation. The tool:

- establishes an overview and goals;
- encourages results reporting; and
- identifies follow-up actions and a timeline.”

Global Representation at the Conference: As the Chairperson reported, during the last IAGSM business meeting, a Delegate brought forth a topic for discussion that, ultimately, could not be decided during the meeting. The KBDM process will be followed, and input from the international structures will be gathered through AFG Connects. The goal is to be able to resume the discussion at the 2020 IAGSM. The conversation will be timely as it is closely related to some Strategies under the Organization Goal of the Strategic Plan.

Zonal Meetings

Zonal meetings are structured and organized service meetings that are less formal than the IAGSM. Attendance is open to national and evolving service structures. Zonal meetings are an opportunity for service structures and the WSO to meet face-to-face, hear reports, exchange information, and strengthen our mutual connections. They are hosted and attended by structures in Central America, Europe, and South America.

There will be three Zonal meetings later this year. The WSO attends these as a guest, meaning it does not participate in the planning of the meetings, but it does deliver presentations and participate in Question and Answer sessions. One Staff member and one Board member will attend each Zonal meeting.

The 2019 European Zonal Meeting will be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, September 20–22, 2019; the Ibero-American Zonal Meeting will be held in Mexico City, Mexico, October 26–27, 2019; and the Central American Zonal Meeting will be in Corinto, El Salvador, November 13–15, 2019.

The Chairperson closed the presentation by saying, “We had such wonderful collaboration amongst all the ICC members throughout the year. I was in awe and inspired to see how the worldwide structures supported and mentored each other at the 2018 IAGSM. The International Coordination Committee and Board of Trustees recognize how essential these international meetings are to Al-Anon’s growth and future, stretching around the globe. Attending the IAGSM gave us firsthand experience of the worldwide part of Al-Anon in action, exposed us to different perspectives, and increased our awareness of the struggles and successes other structures go through. I’m very grateful to have had this opportunity to greet and meet everyone and hear from all in attendance. When I take time for gratitude, I perceive better surroundings, and it opens my heart to be grateful for the gifts received. One of the gifts I received was the opportunity to serve on the International Coordination Committee as Chairperson. Page 167 in *Lois Remembers* (B-7) says, ‘We get something at these huge, unique gatherings that cannot be gained in any other way. The combined emotional impact of so many people believing and striving for the same ideals is felt by everyone and brings a rich kind of joy.’”

OPEN BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Debbie G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

Conference members had the opportunity to observe what the Board receives every month in a report from the Finance Committee, which includes review of literature sales, contributions, the Reserve Fund, intangibles (trademark costs), unearned income (World Service Conference and Convention income), and the statement of financial position.

The Chairperson then introduced the topic for discussion.

Would Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. benefit from basing representation on the Board of Trustees solely on merit and skills and eliminating the requirement based on Regional location?

The Chairperson provided the following background and context for the discussion:

“Three Regions were formed in 1969 in order to promote broader geographic representation on the Board. In 1977, six Regions were created to widen that representation and perspective. Expansion took place again in 1986, when nine Regions were created—six in the US and three in Canada.

“The purpose of expanding the Board was to have Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) represented by the fellowship’s diverse membership. Al-Anon members living in various geographical areas of the US and Canada provide a wide range of thoughts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles, giving the Board the all-embracing, diverse input necessary for making competent, inclusive group conscience decisions for AFG, Inc.

“Over the last three years, the Board has seen the need to improve members’ understanding of the Regional Trustee (RT) process within the Areas. Based on its discussions, the Board took the following steps:

- The 2018 World Service Conference (WSC) presentation and discussion (see *2018 World Service Conference Summary*, page 32) led to the formation of a task force charged with updating the communication process to support Area selection of RT candidates. The efforts of this task force resulted in the WSO Staff’s creation of the new WSO Volunteers page on the al-anon.org website, along with new communication handouts that will now be included in the Regional Trustee training packet.
- While the new web page and handouts are creative ways of ‘getting the message out,’ the Board is still experiencing difficulty filling all RT positions. In fact, this year there are two off-cycle Regional Committees on Trustees (RCTs) that are being formed to potentially fill these slots at the 2020 WSC and annual meeting.”

The following questions were presented for discussion:

- ♦ In today’s world where information is available at our fingertips, does the position of Regional Trustee fulfill the initial intent of providing a wide range of thoughts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles as noted in the 1986 Board decision to expand the Board from six to nine Regions?
- ♦ The Board of Trustees is made up of skilled, competent, dependable, committed, team players and communicators who can articulate the Vision, Mission, and Goals of the Corporation for the benefit of worldwide Al-Anon. Based on your experience on the Board, does geographic

location bring different perspectives to the skills needed to serve on the Board?

- ♦ Does the membership view Regional Trustees as “their” Trustee? And if so, how can we change that understanding given that the role of a Regional Trustee is no different than that of a Trustee at Large (TAL), with the exception of the résumé submission process?
- ♦ In what ways does focusing on Regional representation ensure that our Board is “filled with those of the greatest possible competence, stability, and industry?”
- ♦ What spiritual principles can we apply to this discussion not only for the Board but for the fellowship as a whole?
- ♦ What next steps can we, as a Board, take in continuing this discussion?

Board members responded as follows:

Geographic location and different perspectives

- ♦ I see a need to relinquish dedicated Regional representation, but I also see the need for different areas, not just one Region. I like the diversity we have. It brings perspective to our discussions.
- ♦ I know in today’s world I can bring perspectives from other places I have lived. Ideas get shared on AFG Connects. We share across borders. I have mixed feelings.
- ♦ I am amazed at how fast-moving technology is. It demands skill. It doesn’t matter what Region someone comes from.
- ♦ Can we poll the Board now so we know where the Board comes from geographically?
- ♦ Areas have good processes in place. We need to have Canadians on the Board. We do not want to lose that.
- ♦ Originally having people outside New York was important. The RT process is cumbersome and difficult, and Areas are about to pass the deadline because they have already had their Assembly. Timing of Assemblies is difficult. I have every confidence that if we didn’t specify Regions, we would still have a variety of people from around the US and Canada. With people, perspectives, ideas, etc., we would still have a geographic component there.

Viewing a Regional Trustee as “their” Trustee

- ♦ RTs are no different from TALs on the Board. It is a question of education and perception. For them, it’s exciting to have a Trustee in their geographic zone. It is up to the Board to make sure they understand all Trustees are at the same level.
- ♦ It brings pride to a Region when they have a Trustee. It is skill versus service experience. It is critical that we have people on the Board with knowledge and specific skills, but it is also important to have people from many Regions. There are ways to identify skills as the first level of identification, then look at all Areas in the Structure.

- Some segments of the membership have a different connection with the RT than the Trustees at Large. Areas invite the RT to the Areas to give reports.

Spiritual principles

- I am trusting the process regarding wherever this conversation goes.
- One spiritual principle members of the Board have to have is the courage it takes to admit what is needed.
- We should consider changing the RT process because personalities are involved in the process, which is not a spiritual principle; it is inequity. We need to strive for objectivity and fairness in all our elections.

Information about skills needed

- How does focusing on Regions provide “stability and industry”? How is it possible in the Regional process? How can an Area possibly understand what is needed by the Board two years from now? What next steps can the Board

take? I think about how I was elected. There were very clear needs. The Board needed me to help in setting a Vision and ensuring AI-Anon is here in 50 years as well as in creating and implementing a Strategic Plan. Some of the skills needed on the Board change.

- The RT process is hindering the information about the skills needed because of the timeline.
- The Board thinks strategically. AI-Anon in Florida and AI-Anon in California are very different. The Board can make sure all these voices are heard.

Following the discussion, time was provided for the members rotating off the Board to share briefly about their experience over their terms.

OPEN POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

Norm W., Trustee, Policy Committee Chairperson

An Open Policy Committee Meeting was held during the Conference so members could observe the Committee in action.

“The Policy Committee continues to review and update the ‘Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies’ contained in the *2018-2021 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). The intent is to add clarity to previous policy statements and to state the spiritual principles upon which they are based. When policy statements provide the reasoning or the ‘why’ behind a policy, the interpretation becomes easier to understand and apply in light of a particular Tradition or Concept. Policy statements are always broad and never black and white, but the Policy Committee is committed to making policy statements that encourage members to apply the Traditions and Concepts to questions and experiences that arise in the AI-Anon fellowship.

“Today, many groups and programs other than AI-Anon offer family recovery assistance, and professionals often include family recovery as part of their business practices. As early as 1961, the World Service Conference recognized the need to keep AI-Anon’s message focused on our primary purpose and to encourage AI-Anon unity by giving approval for Conference Approved Literature (CAL). CAL provides a unified view of the AI-Anon and Alateen program to members, professionals, other individuals, and outside agencies. Subsequently, other service tools were created to encourage AI-Anon’s unity and discourage dilution, among them *AI-Anon Spoken Here* (P-53) and *Why Conference Approved Literature?* (P-35). Dilution of the AI-Anon program can occur subtly, in a variety of ways.

“During the Policy Committee meeting, the Committee discussed whether the section of the Policy Digest titled ‘Dilution of the AI-Anon program’ on page 131 needs revision in order to keep the focus on AI-Anon’s primary purpose and address more current realities. It considered the following:

- ♦ Policy language is broad and does not provide specific examples. Given that this is the case, how can we

convey the message that terms used in meetings (labels) contribute to the dilution of the AI-Anon program? For example, some members use the word ‘qualifier’ without realizing that the term did not originate in AI-Anon and is not found in CAL.

- ♦ Today, family recovery may be a for-profit business. If professionals use their membership in AI-Anon and/or AI-Anon’s name for personal gain, what Legacies and spiritual principles can be considered to address this issue?
- ♦ How do Policy Committee members understand the opening statement of the paragraph on ‘Drugs/Narcotics/ Prescription Medications’? For example, what does the reference to ‘family members’ mean to them? Is more clarity needed?
- ♦ Which of the three influences listed above do you see as the biggest contributor to dilution of the AI-Anon program today? Why?”

Committee members discussed labeling in light of the Legacies:

- When we consider Warranty Two, Warranty Five, and Tradition Six, we should ask ourselves: Does it demonstrate mutual respect if newcomers are told they cannot come to a meeting because they don’t have the proper label? Are we remaining democratic in thought and action?
- What does the word “labels” mean? Is there a better way of communicating it?
- How are we going to deal with people coming to the program because of drug addiction and be faithful to the program without barring the door to anyone?

Some of the comments included:

- We have been so successful in rewriting with spiritual principles that we can flesh out the section in a different way. We can use other headings. We can put the focus on what we do best: spiritual principles. Then we can talk about being welcoming. When we describe and label, we put the focus on the alcoholic. It diverts us from our primary spiritual aim. When we start with spiritual principles, they will define the policy.
- Since our roots are in A.A., some labels came from A.A. We don't follow A.A. anymore but, while we are a separate entity, we do cooperate.
- We can't stop dilution by writing the perfect page in the *Service Manual*. We can lead with the spiritual principles of personal responsibility and the concept of 'Let It Begin with Me' when members use labels to have those individual conversations. Those members don't want to harm this program and will stop doing it when they understand.

- The Policy Digest sometimes includes procedures. It best serves the fellowship when it provides the 'why' behind the policies and explains how the policy evolved. Words are important because they can provide members clarity or lead to confusion about the program. The section on 'Professional Involvement' needs to be updated to match our understanding. At the time the section on treatment facilities was written, treatment facilities were mushrooming. It was written to help us as members know how and on what we wanted to keep Al-Anon focused, but there were no spiritual principles to help us understand how a member could help professionals. What are the spiritual principles that help members know how to help professionals?

There was agreement among the Committee members that the page needed to be rewritten to provide clarity, stay out of the procedural aspect, and focus on the spiritual principles involved. There was consensus to set up a Policy Task Force to review this section.

ROAD TRIP! YOU AND YOUR BOARD CONNECT WORK GROUP

Teri M., Trustee, Work Group Chairperson

The Work Group Chairperson began by providing some history of the event. "In 2014, this event was called 'Meet the Board.' The purpose of it was to give the fellowship an opportunity to meet Board members and learn what the Board does. In past years, the Newfoundland/Labrador, Alberta, Arkansas, Colorado, and Texas East Areas have been selected to host this event. This event has been well received and is evolving with success. It is a fun day of fellowship with a fast-moving agenda.

The Work Group Chairperson announced that Seattle, Washington will host the 2019 event. Delegates were encouraged to do whatever it takes to get to this year's Road Trip! in Seattle. It was rumored that the Washington Area is excited to be hosting it. There is more information on AFG Connects.

Nineteen Areas submitted bids for the 2019 Road Trip! Saturday, October 31, 2020 is the date for the 2020 Road Trip! Conference members received their invitation for 2020 bids; September 13, 2019 is the deadline for submission.

The Chairperson continued, "Previously the event was a trial that was set to continue until 2019. At the January 2019 Board meeting, it was decided that because of the success of the event and its value to the fellowship, we would continue the trial for another three years."

The Work Group recommended and the Board approved clarification and changes to the criteria for hosting the event. Areas that have previously hosted events will not be considered. Delegates were encouraged to read and understand the criteria listed in the bid, such as major airport access and a minimum requirement of 100 attendees. Consider hosting a Road Trip!



"The 2018 Road Trip! was held in Houston, Texas. A few of the comments from a survey after the event were:

- "Because of the unconditional love I receive in Al-Anon, I am able to give back unconditionally.
- "Service is not a chore; it is a lot of fun, and it fosters great spiritual growth.
- "Road Trip! is like Al-Anon on steroids."

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Sarah S., Chairperson, Panel 57, Missouri

"Fellow members of Al-Anon's World Service Conference, it is my pleasure, as Chairperson of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), to report to you the work of this year's Committee.

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

"Concurrent with the CCT process, the Nominating Committee scores each résumé for Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management. The Nominating Committee then meets during the October Board meeting and, using the information submitted by the CCT and knowledge it has of the current Board needs, selects candidates. The Nominating Committee then notifies the CCT of the potential candidates the Nominating Committee has selected. CCT members have the opportunity to file an objection to a potential candidate by December. The final selection of the nominees is decided by the Board at the January meeting. At the World Service Conference, the Trustee at Large and Executive Committee for Real Property Management nominees are given traditional approval by the Conference and may be elected by the Board at the annual Board meeting following the World Service Conference.

"In September 2018 we received nine TAL résumés. One member withdrew their résumé, so we reviewed eight résumés. We also received three résumés for the ECRPM. The CCT was composed of eight members who were dedicated to the process; their determination allowed us to meet the deadline in a timely manner.

"Last year the CCT Chair, Richard McC., Panel 56, Massachusetts, referred to the members of the CCT as silent servants. Richard was right! The CCT is not a glamorous Committee! The CCT members don't have the opportunity to hold conference calls or idea-generating sessions, or communicate between members. The CCT members have been charged with the responsibility of ensuring that Al-Anon Family Groups has potential candidates that can serve and protect the longevity of our fellowship. CCT members have one lifeline, and that is the connection with each of our Higher Powers. The information we receive is very personal and sensitive and we *must* honor our spiritual principles of anonymity and trust. Although our work is silent, it is imperative for the TAL and ECRPM process.

"Tradition Twelve states, 'Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.' We are each committed to honoring the process that was presented to us at the 2018 April Nomination/CCT meeting. Protecting the anonymity of the candidates is paramount to the process. I would like to share an excerpt from page 135 of *Al-Anon's Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions* (B-8), about Tradition Twelve:

There is no room in this important purpose for self-glorification and pride. There is much room for gratitude, humility, and willingness to serve. ... When we subordinate our will to the spiritual strength of the group, unity adds to the healing process. When we do not emphasize our uniqueness, we gain strength from being part of a group conscience that flows from a Power greater than ours alone.

"'Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone' The TAL/ECRPM process is a very spiritual process and I can promise you that the entire procedure is often uncomfortable for all involved. Congratulations to the nominees.

"It's now my privilege to introduce the 2019 CCT Chair, Jeff F., Panel 58, Pennsylvania, and the 2019 CCT Chair Elect, Wally C., Panel 59, Maritime Provinces.

"It has been an honor and privilege to serve the World Service Conference as the 2018 CCT Chair."

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmations

Thérèse S., Nominating Committee Chairperson

Before beginning the affirmation process, the Chairperson provided some background information and explained the purpose of the session.

"Before 1960, Lois and the Board of Directors wanted to link the groups to world services through a Conference. The first trial Conference was held in 1961.

"With the finalization of the Conference, the Board of Directors was converted to a Board of Trustees and a plan to add Regional participation on the Board was developed. The first Regional Trustee selection process began. As the Concepts of Service were developing, the process for the Conference to affirm nominees to fill vacancies on the Board of Trustees was established.

"In 1986, the Conference Committee on Trustees was created as a subcommittee of the Nominating Committee to provide input from Delegates for Trustee at Large candidates.

"Since 2010, following a Conference-approved revision to the Regional Trustee Plan, the Regional Committees on Trustees have provided the Nominating Committee with input for nominating Regional Trustees.

"Although the Board of Trustees is a self-electing Board according to the Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., traditional approval by the entire Conference gives the Board the direction and voice of the fellowship. Today, we will continue our tradition of affirming Trustee candidates as well as Board Officers and members of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM).

"Although the Conference gives traditional approval, the Board must legally elect nominees at its annual meeting following the Conference. These Trustees will serve Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Incorporated, as well as the fellowship as a whole.

"I'd like to thank the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), the members of the Regional Committees on Trustees (RCTs), and the Nominating Committee for their hard work throughout the last year. In reviewing and scoring the résumés and

responses to the additional question, they have worked conscientiously to rate the candidates and return the information to the World Service Office (WSO) in time for the October Board meeting. As a result, we have fielded another fine slate of candidates to serve AI-Anon Family Groups. The Nominating Committee has also proposed an excellent slate of Board Officers. In October 2018, the Nominating Committee found that there were no viable candidates for the Canada Central Regional Trustee two-year term. The Nominating Committee recommended, and the Board agreed, to leave the position vacant and fill the remaining one year of the term through the usual process. In January 2019, the Board did not nominate a US Southeast Regional Trustee. The Board decided to leave the position vacant and fill the remaining two years of the term through the usual process. Here are the steps that were followed to bring the nominated candidates forward:

Trustees at Large (TALs)

1. Trustee at Large résumés are solicited from the fellowship after the World Service Conference (WSC) each year so that three TAL positions can be filled. Delegates and Area Chairs receive a letter from the Executive Director in January and in June. Attached to that letter is a list of vacancies and deadlines for submission, along with copies of all of the résumé forms, including Trustee, ECRPM, and Executive Committee positions.
2. Trustee and ECRPM résumés are submitted to the WSO by August 15 of the year prior to possible election. Those résumés and responses to the additional written question are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking.
3. Delegates from the home Area of each member who submits their résumé are notified of the application and asked to confirm they have no feedback they need to provide the Nominating Committee with prior to the October Board meeting.
4. The CCT Chairperson tallies the scores and rankings from the CCT members and sends a report to the WSO.
5. At its October meeting, the Nominating Committee uses the CCT input and its own rankings to select a slate of up to six candidates to be invited to a January Board lunch for introduction to the Board. At that time, each candidate gives a ten-minute talk about their AI-Anon recovery and service experience before answering interview questions.
6. Using this information, the Board nominates up to three candidates at its January quarterly meeting.
7. Today, you will be asked to give traditional approval for the proposed nominees for a three-year term. All nominees receiving traditional approval may be elected at the Board's annual meeting.

Regional Trustees (RTs)

1. Candidates for Regional Trustee are selected through their Area's process. Their Area Delegate forwards their résumés to the WSO.
2. This year, the US Northeast, US North Central, US Southeast, and Canada Central Regional Committees on Trustees, consisting of the Regions' Delegates and

Out-of-Region Delegates who were chosen by lot, independently reviewed résumés and the responses to the additional written question that has been added as part of the process.

3. The comments and feedback from Delegates serving on these Regional Committees are submitted to the Nominating Committee.
4. The Nominating Committee combines their own independent review of the résumés and, considering the input from the Regional Committees on Trustees, selects up to two nominees per Region to join the Board and TAL candidates at the January Board meeting for lunch and the interview process.
5. After the nominees are selected, all Regional Delegates are notified by their RCT Chair and provided the opportunity to voice any objection.
6. After the interviews this year, the Board met and nominated one candidate each for the US Northeast and US North Central Regions. If the nominee receives traditional approval, then they may be elected by the Board at its annual meeting, as I previously explained.

The Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM)

The Executive Committee for Real Property Management was created by an amendment to the Bylaws—Article 12 made by the Board in 2012. This Committee, consisting of the AFG Treasurer, the Director of Finance & Operations, and three At-Large members, is designed to keep management of our headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of AI-Anon. Each At-Large member serves a three-year term, and the Chairperson is seated at the WSC with voice only in matters related to real property management. The nominating process is the same as that for Trustee at Large, except there is no additional written question and the candidate does not meet with the Board in January.

“Résumés for ECRPM are due by August 15 and are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking.

“Today, you are asked to give traditional affirmation of the nominees for Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee, as well as the nominees for the Board Officer and ECRPM At-Large positions. A candidate must receive a two-thirds majority to be affirmed.

“Each Conference member may ask questions or state any facts relevant to the candidacy of the person under consideration. Affirmation under the Right of Decision requires that each of us take our responsibility seriously. Likewise, the Bylaws of the Corporation articulate the Right of Decision given to the Board to elect or not elect an affirmed nominee.

“The candidate selection process begins with prayer. Members of the various committees pray to their Higher Power for guidance before they begin reviewing the candidates' résumés. By the time a Trustee candidate is brought to the Conference floor at least 30 people—a combination of Trustees and Delegates—have reviewed the résumés. In addition to the reviews, there have been interviews of the candidates that have been conducted by the Board of Trustees. The Delegate of the Area that the candidate is part of has had an opportunity to voice any concerns they have

about the candidate. A lot of time, prayer, and consideration has brought these candidates to you. We ask that you respect that work and remember the spiritual principle of trust when considering whether or not the candidates are acceptable to serve on the Board of Trustees.

The voting process was explained, and Conference members were given the opportunity to discuss all candidates. Any nominee present in the room was asked to leave during discussions of his or her candidacy.

The following Trustees, Board Officers, and Executive Committee for Real Property Management members were affirmed by the 2019 WSC:

Trustees at Large:

Lynette K., two years of first three-year term
Rosa (Rosie) M., second three-year term

Regional Trustee:

Marianne B., US Northeast, first three-year term
Jean L., US North Central, first three-year term

Board Officers:

Gail G., Chairperson
Rosa (Rosie) M., Vice Chairperson
Cynthia (Cindy) K., Treasurer

Executive Committee for Real Property Management:

Katherine (Kay) R., three-year term
Dennis G., three-year term

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2019–2020:

Debbie G., first one-year term, Chairperson
Karen W-P., first one-year term
Joan S., first one-year term
Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals

The Board announced the appointment of Sue C. as the ECRPM Chairperson for 2019–2020.

TOGETHER EMPOWERING AL-ANON MEMBERS (TEAM) RESTRUCTURING TASK FORCE

John McL., Trustee, Chairperson

The Chairperson began his report by providing some background on the event. He began, "In 2006 the Board began to look at all of the committee structures to determine if they were serving the needs of the fellowship in the best manner possible and, if not, what could be done to improve their effectiveness. Conference members who served on the various committees were given questionnaires to help them evaluate how the committees currently operated and what could be done to improve their connection to the fellowship. One of the committees to be reviewed was the Regional Service Seminar (RSS) Committee.

"The comments and ideas that came from the RSS Committee were reviewed by the Board of Trustees. Following a lengthy discussion, the Chairperson of the Board appointed a thought force whose charge was to generate ideas on what a dynamic, flexible, nimble, and task-oriented RSS would look like. Based on those ideas, and after more discussion by the Board, a task force was formed to create an innovative service event that would better meet the needs of the Areas and their members. From that discussion, Together Empowering Al-Anon Members (TEAM) events were born.

The first TEAM event was held May 1–2, 2010. The New Mexico/El Paso Area hosted the event. A total of 60 TEAM events (this includes six events scheduled for this year) have been or will be held by the end of 2019.

- Twenty-five Areas held one event
- Fourteen Areas held two events
- Three Areas held three events
- One Area held four events
- Forty-three of 67 Areas held events

The Chairperson, on behalf of the World Service Office (WSO) Volunteers and Staff, thanked every Area and member who participated in TEAM events saying, "You have made these events memorable and fun. Together we have helped each other better understand Al-Anon, one another, and ourselves. TEAM has let us know we do not have to do anything alone and help is just a phone call, email, or text away. We truly feel that we have been empowered by the interactions of members, Staff, and Volunteers and will hold memories of past events close in our hearts. Thank you again and again.

"In 2018, a Board task force was formed to look at restructuring TEAM events. The task force was made up of WSO Volunteers and Staff. During the time the task force was working on improvements to TEAM events, the WSO Staff was looking into ways to more efficiently use its resources. One of the ideas they suggested was to not have Staff members participate in planning TEAM events any longer. Given that there are up to nine TEAM events per year and Staff participates in all of them, it would free up Staff time for other valuable Al-Anon work.

"The Board discussed the Staff idea and thought it made sense. The Board also discussed holding TEAM events without the Staff and decided it would involve much more time on the Volunteers'

part and take away from other Board work. In the end, the Board decided to discontinue TEAM events and begin to look at options to work on a new way of interacting with members, Staff, and Volunteers.

"What will the 2020 vision look like? After the evaluation of the overall impact of TEAM events within our Service Structure, it has been decided that TEAM events will end in 2019. The last scheduled TEAM event will be on September 28, 2019 in Pennsylvania.

"In deciding next steps, we will use the experience gleaned from the Regional Service Seminars and the TEAM events, as well as what we have learned from Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect, as models.

"Today, we have access to technology that was unavailable when RSSs and TEAM events were originally launched. New platforms now provide an opportunity to consider an idea or a redesign for similar events that could reach or be accessible to wider audiences."

The Chairperson concluded his report by saying, "Now that we have shared information regarding the history of our TEAM events, we are planning for the future to see which direction to follow. At the 2020 WSC, the WSO Staff and WSO Volunteers will unveil our plan for the future. See you next year."

Following the report, Conference members had the following questions and comments:

- I would like the Board and WSO Staff to consider more involvement with the Area, similar to having a Welcoming Committee versus a Host Committee for International Conventions. Our Area had no ownership in Road Trip! because the WSO brought it. Involve the Area in events. Implement a Welcoming Committee to work with us directly.
- I can't downplay how effective our TEAM event was in getting people excited to be in service. Don't replace it with a virtual event. Having members come and see that the WSO are people just like us is valuable.
- Please have more events. They generate a remarkable member response.

We understand your connection to the WSO and Trustees. You can always invite a Trustee or Staff member to your Area event and ask them to present a workshop, share their personal story, or participate in a shared leadership session.

- Member involvement in service escalated after our Area TEAM event. We felt so connected when we could put faces to names. The Trustees will plan something new for us, and we have to trust them.
- I invite the Board to reach out to the Delegates through AFG Connects to consider our thoughts.
- TEAM events are the most powerful events I have done outside the WSC.

WARRANTY THREE HOUSEKEEPING CHANGES

Jennie McC., Trustee | Vali F., Executive Director

The Conference Chairperson and the Executive Director took a humorous approach to informing the Conference about an important housekeeping change. The change was made to the punctuation of Concept Twelve, Warranty Three, which can be found in version two (2) of the *2018-2021 Groups at Work* (P-24). The Conference Chairperson introduced the topic by sharing a personal story. “Six years ago, a new workbook was unveiled at the Al-Anon International Convention in Vancouver. Shortly thereafter, we began a new meeting in my town of York, Maine, where we study the Steps, Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties using that wonderful workbook, *Reaching for Personal Freedom* (P-92), as a guide. As an aside, the discussions are some of the best I have ever participated in over the decades of meetings I have attended. I highly recommend the book as a meeting guide.

“Anyway, we read all the Legacies every week at this meeting. As a proud member of the comma police at Conference as a Panel 42 Delegate, I would cringe every week when we read Warranty Three: ‘that all decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible by unanimity.’ Usually it is read as a ‘discussion vote.’ What is a ‘discussion vote’? I thought it was a typo. I hoped it was a typo. I made a mental note to mention it during an Executive Committee meeting so the reprint would be correct. Of course I would forget month after month. Finally, after one of my Thursday night meetings, I shot an email to Vali asking her to look into it. I think I was polite.

“Vali and the Staff did some research and delivered the bad news to me: ‘This change was actually part of housekeeping to bring the punctuation back to the original.’ Vali even commiserated with me, saying, ‘The original didn’t have a comma. I fought long and hard to say it should have one, but the fact remains it did not, and so we took it out.’

“Imagine my distress.

“I was a member of the 43rd World Service Conference in 2003 when a Board of Trustees presentation indicated that the Legacies had been modified over time by well meaning Staff. Much discussion by the Board and Staff concluded that we should be using the version of the Legacies that was actually approved by the Conference. As a Delegate, I was part of that discussion at that Conference. I could appreciate Vali’s point. For those of you who were reading the Traditions back in the early 2000s, that’s when and why Tradition Six changed from ‘Our Al-Anon Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name...’ to ‘Our Family Groups ought never endorse, finance or lend our name...’ It took me a while to get used to the ‘new’ reading of the original. Other changes were also made then because of that archival research. So I understood. Sort of.

“But I could not let it rest. As one of our guidance counselor members used to say, ‘I perseverated.’ ‘But it’s from the Charter!’ I protested. ‘We have no right to change the Charter from whence this language came!’”

The Executive Director then shared her side of the story. “‘Oh, no,’ I protested, ‘I have been down this path before.’ In fact, my first real opportunity—or so I thought—to influence the ‘discussion vote’ situation had occurred only months earlier when I reviewed

the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) before publication. Being Executive Director and therefore an ‘empowered’ member of the comma police, I was certain I could abolish the ‘discussion vote’ aberration. But no; I had been informed by Staff. This issue was settled, the original printing researched, and the ‘corrections’ put in place in accordance with the Conference motion.

“But Jennie’s tenacity encouraged me to reach out to our gracious Archivist, Joe. He carried out further research into the history of the Warranties as part of both the Charter and the Concepts back to their beginnings.

“The initial findings were disheartening as I discovered that approval of the Charter did indeed predate the Concepts, being adopted by Conference in 1965 ‘pro-tem’—because all the Areas were not yet represented—and then being formally adopted by the Conference in 1967. In both instances, the Warranties of the Charter were listed in one paragraph as a sequence of ideas separated by semicolons. The third idea, which would later become Warranty Three of the Concepts, appeared with no comma between ‘discussion’ and ‘vote’ in either presentation. Alas, the Charter had turned out to be not friend but foe, as it appeared this document—the first approved version of the Warranties as part of the Charter—had led Staff to remove the comma from all subsequent printings of the Warranties as part of the Concepts of Service in the *Service Manual* and all Conference Approved Literature.

“Oh, sigh... *But wait*, I thought, latching onto some slight glimmer of hope. *If the Charter came first and represented the ‘Warranties’ as one paragraph, then when did the Warranties become separate bullet points? Could it be that the Concepts themselves offered some salvation to the ‘discussion vote’ dilemma?*

“As it turns out, the answer is ‘yes.’ Thank goodness. Lois introduced the Concepts in stages, with the introduction being presented to Conference in 1968, the first eleven Concepts in 1969, and the complete Concepts being presented and formally adopted by Conference in 1970. In the 1970 version, the Warranties were identified by number and—drum roll, please—Warranty Three **had a comma** between ‘discussion’ and ‘vote’!!

“Hallelujah! Thank you, Lois! This was starting to look very positive.

“But I needed to confirm my logic. The intention of the Conference motion that led Staff to ‘revert’ the text to ‘discussion vote’ was to ensure the three Legacies—our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service—persisted in their form that was originally approved by Conference and were not innocently modified through housekeeping or grammatical changes. These Legacies, as we all know, are not alterable without a two-thirds vote of all Al-Anon groups worldwide.

“From the research it was evident that the first printing of Warranty Three as part of the Concepts of Service actually did include the helpful, delineating comma that Jennie and I both hoped to see.

“And, as it turns out, while the original Charter did not have a comma, ever since the Charter was amended and approved by Conference in 1971, it has always had a comma between ‘discussion’ and ‘vote.’ Since it is within the Conference’s authority to modify the Charter, unlike the Concepts, it is correct for Staff to include

a comma between ‘discussion’ and ‘vote’ in published versions of the General Warranties of the Charter as well.

“So with gratitude and relief, I wrote to Jennie to inform her of the salvation found in the archives.”

The Executive Director explained that it was easy to see how the error had occurred because the first publication of the Warranties—albeit part of the Charter—did not include a comma. “However,” she continued, “based on this research, it is apparent that Staff should not have ‘corrected’ Warranty Three of the Concepts in the *Service Manual* to exclude the comma between ‘discussion’ and ‘vote.’” She then invited Conference members to turn to page 18 of the new *Al-Anon/Alateen Groups at Work version two (2)* (P-24) printing to view the restored comma in Warranty Three.

The Executive Director went on to highlight another punctuation anomaly in the Legacies: the hyphen in Tradition Six. Al-Anon’s Tradition Six spells “co-operate” with a hyphen. Alateen’s Tradition Six excludes the hyphen. Research into the archives confirmed that these spellings were accurate when compared with what was approved by the Conference. The Executive Director ended by noting

that “since the standard now is to spell ‘cooperate’ without a hyphen, Al-Anon members must live in perpetuity with evidence that the Alateens are always a bit ahead of us.”

Conference members commented:

- I was the Staff member responsible in 2003 for having to make the changes at the direction of the WSC. For all these years, we have had it look like that and had to answer those questions.
- My gratitude to the Board.
- I am glad this came up. A member of my home group wanted to know what a “discussion vote” was. We researched, looking for “discussion vote,” but could not find anything.
- At my home group, someone goes through all the papers and puts a comma in. Thanks for the ride.

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE (2020)

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

The dates selected for the 2020 World Service Conference are Monday, April 20, through Friday, April 24, 2020. Delegates are scheduled to arrive on Sunday, April 19, and depart on Saturday, April 25. The Conference will be held at the Sheraton Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel, 3501 Atlantic Ave., Virginia Beach, VA 23451.

In searching for a site to hold the Conference, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, meal costs, and dates of religious holidays were taken into account.

2019 REGIONAL TRUSTEE NOMINATION PROCESS

Cindy K., Trustee, Regional Trustee Oversight Work Group Chairperson | Thérèse S., Trustee

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

The Out-of-Region Delegates selected:

REGION	VOTING	ALTERNATE(S)
US Northwest	Tim E., Panel 57, IL(S) Susan B., Panel 59, WIUPMI Lynn B., Panel 59, BC/YT	Jean H., Panel 57, SK Taaj J., Panel 57, NY(S)
US South Central	Kim C., Panel 58, DE Gail L., Panel 57, CT Theresa M., Panel 58, OH	Nancy D'A., Panel 57, NH Christine W., Panel 58, IL(N)
US Southwest	Jeffrey F., Panel 58, PA Joanne P., Panel 59, VT Angela D., Panel 57, NF/LAB	Ann M., Panel 58, MI Sarah S., Panel 57, MO
US Southeast	Wally C., Panel 59, MP Miriam B., Panel 58, IN Sharon F., Panel 59, AB/NWT	Fred H., Panel 59, MN(N) Lois H., Panel 59, MA
Canada Central	Céline G., Panel 59, QC(E)	Donna S., Panel 59, NJ

RCT Training/RCT Caucus

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

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

REGION	CHAIRPERSON	ALTERNATE
US Northwest	Kathy D., Panel 59, WA	John I., Panel 57, NE
US South Central	Kay C., Panel 58, TX(E)	Phil G., Panel 58, KS
US Southwest	Rosanna H., Panel 58, CA(N)	Patti P., Panel 58, HI
US Southeast	Sherry H., Panel 58, KY	Anu B., Panel 59, NC/BDA
Canada Central	Mintie G., Panel 58, MB/NWO	Sue G., Panel 58, ON(S)

BEING A TRUSTEE

During Conference, members listened to several brief talks led by Trustees. These sharings focused on the various aspects of serving on the Board. It was hoped that the talks would be informative to those who might consider serving as members of the Board of Trustees in the future. Trustees shared the following:

ALL MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ARE MEMBERS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

Judy K., Trustee

All members of the Board of Trustees are part of the Policy Committee, along with WSO Staff Conference members. I have attended Policy Committee meetings for six years and served as the Policy Committee Chair for three. My first “aha” moment as a new Trustee came when I realized that the Policy Committee is separate from the Board. The Policy Committee meets prior to the Board. Al-Anon modeled this approach after A.A., which began having a meeting before the Board meeting to exclusively discuss policy matters. This freed up the Board so that they would have time for other business affairs.

I remember my first year on the Policy Committee as a headache. Discussions felt slow, almost tedious, and one word or phrase could consume a 20-minute discussion. As you might guess, I needed a change of attitude, and my Higher Power intervened. (In fairness to me, I think the headache was jet lag.) Imagine my surprise when, in the February of my first year as Trustee, the Chairperson of the Board asked me if I would be willing to serve as Policy Chair for the coming year. I hesitated, thinking only of increased travel since the Policy Committee Chairperson attends the Executive Committee meetings every month. But mostly I didn’t feel ready personally. In the end, I agreed to do what I didn’t really want to do.

Amazingly, it was a perfect fit for me. I love words, thinking thoughts, and organizing ideas—figuring things out. Being on the Policy Committee is just that—mental acrobatics! In retrospect, I have gained a few insights into the Policy Committee process: Each individual’s viewpoint is valuable because it is different. Many voices strengthen the discussion because of varying perspectives that shed new light on old ideas—or new ones. Discussions provide an opportunity to be a better listener and to learn respect for the opinions of others. Here are some insights about policy itself: (It’s not a headache.) It’s about identifying a Tradition or Concept that may be applicable to a certain situation. It’s about interpreting that Tradition or Concept in a way that is reasonable and understandable. It’s very broad and provides statements that are consistent with our principles and loving in their interpretation. It’s much bigger than “yes” and “no” answers. Policy preserves Al-Anon’s unity and maintains our unenforceable boundaries. Policy is spiritual, a guide that imposes no conditions and no penalties. Policy helps us to think for ourselves and encourages us to seek our own solutions.

I truly enjoyed being a part of the Policy Committee and chairing it those three years. The more I paid attention, the more I learned. The more I engaged, the more I understood. Thank you, Higher Power, and thank you to the then-serving Chairperson of the Board who believed in me when, as the saying goes, I didn’t believe in myself.

HOW DO ROLES CHANGE ON THE BOARD?

Jennie McC., Trustee

By now you are all probably very familiar with how one becomes a Trustee. What you may not be as familiar with, if you are like me, is what happens after that. How does one become Finance Chair, also known as Treasurer, or Conference Chair, the position I have the privilege of filling here today?

In my opinion, we have a funny process for choosing Board Officers. The Board Officers include the Chairperson of the Board, the Vice-Chair of the Board, and the Treasurer. In the fall we are asked to fill out a self-nomination form indicating our willingness to serve in any of these positions. As with all positions I have stood for, someone suggested that I put my name in for Treasurer, so even though I had been a Trustee for only six months, I self-nominated and left it up to my Higher Power. Was I absolutely positive that I could travel to Virginia Beach every month? Not exactly, but I knew if it was my Higher Power’s will for me then I would find a way, one meeting at a time. Those self-nominations then go to the Nominating Committee, which puts together a slate, then the full Board votes on it in January for traditional approval at the Conference.

The term for these positions is one year, so each year I went through the same process, with the same humility and understanding that my Higher Power was in charge. At least one year I put my name in for all three positions because I was willing. I like to give my Higher Power stuff to work with. My willingness in many areas of my life has become a very valuable asset in my recovery. As for other positions—Chair of Policy, Chair of Nominating, Conference Chair—or other committee members, the Chairperson of the Board has the responsibility to fill them with the most qualified people possible.

Some of you may have noticed that at our last meeting after Conference, we are given our assignments for the next year. Remember, our year runs from Conference to Conference. Last April, I was preparing to sit in the back of the Conference room at the 2019 World Service Conference after being in the first row for four years as Finance Chair. Imagine my surprise when I read at that last meeting in April that I was to be Conference Chair for this World Service Conference. I think I had to look at the Committee Assignments paper three times before it sank in. It has been a true privilege serving Al-Anon in any way that I have been asked.

MENTORS AND ROOMMATES

Teri M., Trustee

When I filled out the résumé for a Trustee-at-Large position, I noticed it mentioned that I would be expected to share a room with another Trustee. I don’t recall giving it much thought until I received that call from my Mentor welcoming me to the Board. She explained her role as my Mentor. I wondered, *how could I have been so lucky, and how could the Chairperson of the Board (COB) know exactly what I needed?* (The COB is the one who assigns roommates and Mentors.)

I didn’t actually meet my Mentor for a couple of months; we met in the hotel room at my first Board meeting in July. I did feel comfortable because we had talked prior to that meeting. What I

thought I needed was someone who respected my privacy, only took one half of the bathroom counter, and understood how completely nervous I was. What I got was someone who taught me about the confidentiality and integrity of our work, and who was a perfect, gentle soul. She modeled the role of a Trustee and became a confidante and friend. We talked about organizing the emails and files, and about how many pairs of shoes I might need.

I was recently at a Toastmasters meeting, and the topic was “Mentors.” The speaker talked about what an honor it was to be someone’s Mentor. No truer words have been spoken. I felt blessed when I met my assigned Mentee. This time I was the hopeful model of what I had been shown. There has been a respect and intimacy that grows with the experiences we have at the Board meetings; by sharing a room with someone, we get to know them a little deeper. I did feel a little protective of my new Mentee and sat by her at our Board meetings, checked in with her between meetings, and made myself available if she needed anything. I kept in mind that with all the information coming to us, it would take a little time for her to understand everything and find her voice, and she has. One of the coolest tips I gave my Mentee was to set up hyperlinks to our Board agendas. What a time saver that is. We spend one year with our Mentors/Mentees, but I believe that, in spite of the short amount of time we have together, we form very special relationships that last.

SERVING AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD

Debbie G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board

For the past three years, I’ve had the honor and privilege of serving as the Chairperson of the Board (COB) of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. As with any service position I’ve ever held, I never envisioned myself as the COB. The Board Officer nomination process is self-nominating. If you are interested and willing, you notify the Nominating Chair in December. I submitted my name for consideration only after persistent nudging from current and past Trustees and past Board Chairs. I took their nudging seriously because I believe that accepting the God of my understanding’s will, for me, comes only through taking action, prayer, and meditation and leaving the results to my Higher Power.

My initial action was to assess my current skills and those I felt were lacking. I then reached out to past Board Chairs. I developed a list of questions and scheduled interview times. Knowing a job description is good. Knowing the “other duties as assigned” is important. The interviews were eye opening: Each past Board Chair shared their experience, strength, and hope, and their loving and encouraging belief in me. Each shared, “If you don’t submit your name, you’ll never know what God has in store for you and Al-Anon Family Groups.”

My experience serving as Chairperson of the Board has been both challenging and exciting, helping me grow in ways I never imagined and learn to deal with the conflict that occurs when working toward great change. It has helped me learn to let go. It has been an opportunity to further develop the skills required for merging a group of strong leaders with various backgrounds, experiences, and personalities into a cohesive group of forward thinkers, while still having fun and keeping the joy of service in the forefront. I’ve learned to demonstrate the courage required to make difficult decisions. I’ve striven to keep the Board informed,

engaged, and moving forward and to demonstrate respect for each Board member’s perspective.

Serving as Chairperson of the Board has given me the opportunity to set an inspiring tone, take a learner’s stance, value our Staff’s experience and input, and be vulnerable and transparent in assessing my own talents, strengths, and weaknesses. It’s been about looking around the room, envisioning our future leaders, and being enthusiastic about replacing myself. In other words, encouraging others to consider serving as COB, assessing what skills our future COB will need, and allowing the opportunity for Board members to further develop the skills required to serve. Since January, part of my role has been focused on ensuring a smooth succession for our incoming Board Chair and Officers.

In closing, I want to thank you for your service, and for demonstrating the vulnerability it takes to be courageous leaders. For being vulnerable enough to sometimes fail, dealing with uncertainty, and walking through those times when it’s just you and your Higher Power. And for the joy and enthusiasm that can come in making a difference.

TRUSTEE TRAVEL

John McL., Trustee

I am a grateful member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups. Currently I serve AFG as a Trustee at Large. I have been asked to share about Trustee travel. Trustees travel a minimum of four times a year, to three Board meetings and one World Service Conference (WSC). In addition to those four times we may travel to Together Empowering Al-Anon Members (TEAM) events, International Conventions, or Zonal meetings. We may visit service structures and emerging structures around the world and make Trustee visits to Areas.

During 2018 I traveled to Virginia Beach three times—twice for Board week and once for the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM), which is a meeting of Delegates from structures around the world. I also traveled to New York for the 2018 WSC; Baltimore, Maryland for the Al-Anon International; and Houston, Texas for Board week and Road Trip! I made a trip to the Delaware Assembly to share my story and talk about meeting list publishing. Last August, I traveled to Sandefjord, Norway; Helsinki, Finland; and Tallinn, Estonia to meet and share experience, strength, and hope with members from each of those countries.

Every trip brings me into contact with Al-Anon members who have suffered from loving alcoholics just as I have. Every trip reminds me that I am not alone, and that help is always available when I ask for it anywhere in the world. Sometimes the travel goes smoothly. Sometimes there are glitches. Delays due to weather or airline issues occasionally occur. I have found that, when things go awry, the God of my understanding reminds me that the Serenity Prayer will bring me back into focus, and it’s always important to have Conference Approved Literature to read while I wait. Al-Anon has taught me I can accept the situation and make the best of it by staying focused on my serenity. When travel goes well, which is most of the time, I am grateful. Traveling as a Trustee is a privilege. You have trusted that I’ll be able to show the best side of Al-Anon. I try to live up to your trust. Thank you for believing in me.

WHAT ARE THE "COSTS" OF BEING A TRUSTEE (EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL, FINANCIAL, SPIRITUAL)?

Joan S., Trustee

My sharing is about what it costs to be a Trustee (emotionally, physically, financially, and spiritually). The descriptive text of Warranty One says: "We can take comfort, too, from the fact that the cost of our world services is small in relation to the size of our fellowship." This can certainly be applied to my experience as a Trustee.

The costs of being a Trustee, for me, have been very small and the benefits have been considerable. Emotionally, I've experienced patience and impatience, assertiveness and submissiveness, forgiveness and resentment, and many other character traits in myself and in others. In true Al-Anon fashion, these continuing experiences have supported and enhanced my trust and my gratitude. Some days the cost of this emotional journey seems enormous, but when I look back I can only see my growth.

Physically, I'm pretty sure I have come out ahead, considering all the steps I've taken at the countless airports I've been able to explore. As for rest—my roommates over the years will easily confirm that I've gotten more sleep during Board week than I do at home because I get to turn off the lights earlier.

Financially, I am just one of many in a long line of trusted servants that the fellowship has transported, housed, and fed for a few weeks each year. This has allowed us to learn from each other and grow together. We have been appropriately reimbursed along the way. It is humbling to think of all the individual contributions that support my service as a Trustee. The only out-of-pocket expenses I've had were for side-trip experiences before or after meetings, when my travel assignments have taken me to places I'll never be able to travel back to.

Spiritually, my service as a Trustee has kept me grounded in the reality that our fellowship is enhanced by depending on the talents of members who are at different stages of their recovery. This service has kept me connected to the reason I came to Al-Anon originally: my husband's alcoholism. It has also allowed me to "right size" my current connections to the disease of alcoholism and to appreciate and share my own talents in my efforts to give back to the fellowship.

During my six years as a Trustee, I have served with 38 others whose stories are quite similar to my own. I believe I can speak for them by saying the physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual costs have been no match for the benefits received. Thanks for letting me serve and share this experience with you.

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

Full Conference Discussion

The Board of Trustees created a topic for discussion in the General Session. Gail G., Trustee, read the topic to the Conference members.

Topic: *Whether or not a group that has a period of meditation or quiet time as part of its format is following the Legacies.*

Does a group violate the Traditions when it includes meditation as part of its meeting format? Is holding a period of meditation as part of the meeting format an appropriate exercise of a group's autonomy through its group conscience? What can a group do to assist and advise newcomers should a group use meditation during their meeting?

Following a reading of the topic, the floor was opened for discussion. Conference members responded:

- Tradition Four says, "Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole." We had this issue when I was a District Representative (DR). There was concern that newcomers would walk in and see meditation as representative of Al-Anon as a whole. There is a great risk that they will think this is Al-Anon and not return.
- My first feeling is that I cannot hear experience, strength, and hope. I expect to hear that at Al-Anon meetings.

- Members who are into meditation endeavored to start a meditation group. They started with 15 minutes of quiet, then held a meeting. They tried to explain to a newcomer what they were, but also tried to address the newcomer's problems. It didn't work and the meeting folded. We tried to explain it was not in the spirit of unity and the Traditions, but that did not go over until they had the experience themselves.
- A group that is sensitive to the desires of the participants in a group and that opens and closes as a regular Al-Anon meeting is not doing anything negative to impact the Al-Anon name. Before coming to my group, a Sponsee went to two Al-Anon meetings ten years ago where the women complained about their alcoholic husbands. She found that more off-putting than ten to 15 minutes of silence. I had trouble with Step Eleven, and I probably need a few lessons in meditation.



- I agree with autonomy to a point. Balance is hard to achieve. Because of our lifestyles, when we come and sit down to start the meeting, we can't breathe. The group changed the wording of "Will you join me in a moment of silence" to, "Let's take a quiet moment to unwind from our day for one to two minutes." There is no direction for that time. Some may interpret it as meditation, but my group doesn't.
- At our meetings, we take a moment of silence to contemplate our reasons for being here. Is that meditation?
- I used to think Tradition Three, "...when gathered together for mutual aid..." was clear. Meditation is personal for me. I have been to meetings that use meditation and found the sharings to be deeper and my Higher Power to be nearer. I don't agree with it, but this is not a hill I want to fight and die on. So many things are worse than meditation.
- This is difficult. I was asked to do a meditation workshop. It was disturbing. I was told that because it's discussed in the Traditions, we are given permission to use meditation. They held a raffle that was full of meditation books. Are we practicing or endorsing an outside issue? Do we open the door too far and stray from our primary purpose?
- The *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), on pages 130 and 131, talks about being a spiritual program and then, on the next page, talks about dilution of the program. There is no mention of meditation. We have questions as opposed to answers. I got a notice from AFG Records about a meeting that just registered with the WSO. We have a convention and workshop on prayer and meditation coming up. Clearly this is a dialogue we need to have.
- I have difficulty between a moment of silence for 30 seconds and ten minutes. It is hard to draw the line. My Area also has an annual convention reunion with a meditation session available.
- Different meetings I attended at first had a consistency that I found reassuring. My concern is that had I come as a newcomer and found such a different approach from meeting to meeting, it would not have been helpful to me.
- I came to the fellowship kicking, screaming, and clutching my halo. It is a slippery slope. The day I tell you what works in your program, I should be careful. I believe our Higher Power takes care of that. I don't need to sit in judgment on it. If there is more than one meeting in town, it's okay. The slippery slope, where does it stop? Is this a fight we really want to be in?
- Are we moving into territory where meditation could be regarded as a religious practice? We have a spiritual program.
- One group is very fond of meditation meetings. They are not doing yoga there, but there has been a bell or candle that complements meditation. Tradition One is relevant. "Our common welfare..." It may be best for some coming to seek relief, but it is not for all. Personally, I see it as an impediment to group unity. I probably would have walked out if I had come to one. The issue is where to draw the line. I am glad we are having this conversation.
- Meditation is practiced one to three minutes in a number of meetings in my Area. We have a large population of members who come from a non-spiritual background and view meditation as a common practice.
- I am conflicted. Step Eleven says prayer and meditation. Public outreach is an outreach tool. A newcomer waiting for 30 minutes looking at a sign on the door?—I don't attend a group that does that because that is not Al-Anon. My Area is struggling. It feels like a slippery slope in both directions. Lois wrote the original meeting format. I use the original format; it is so rich and includes sharing. The business of Al-Anon is recovery. I think that is enough. I think they should not be registered, but it is not up to me.
- Tradition Five, "Each Al-Anon Family Group has but one purpose..." Meditation helps families of alcoholics. How do we do it? "by practicing the Twelve Steps of AA ourselves..." We can use meditation in Step Eleven. How can meditation help them? "By welcoming and giving comfort..." I am not sure meditation does that.
- Where does it end? This is a program of recovery. I came in because it was supposed to help me because I am affected. I can meditate at my desk. Lois was asked what she did with her moment of silence. It was a time to invite the *God of her understanding* to herself and pray. A moment of silence is the time for that and the real reason I come to these rooms. We were going to have meditation through yoga at our convention. It was dropped as a workshop. The Twelve Steps are for us to use personally.
- *As We Understood...* (B-11) is a wonderful book. Meditation is not what you think. A moment of silence is not meditation but rather clearing out the clutter. It occurs as part of a format that is meditation. Loving interchange is not meditation, and that is the reason I go to meetings.
- What I love about the program is that there is room for disagreement. I hold a different opinion of Concept Five. I occasionally attend a group that uses the meeting format out of the "Groups at Work" section of the *Service Manual*. We read Conference Approved Literature for ten minutes, then we have ten minutes of quiet time to connect with our Higher Power, then we share. It is a place where I get as close to my God as any other time. That is when I found my Higher Power. I help people understand there are other formats. Ten minutes of quiet time attracts others. There is a degree of flexibility. December 3 in *Courage to Change* (B-16) gives people ways to meditate.
- I am thinking about my first meeting. It was painful for me to listen to God and prayers at meetings. I was uncomfortable but found things I needed at meetings. I kept coming back. If a meeting wants a short period of meditation, a member can adjust or find another meeting. I think a period of quiet would serve us well. I think people talk too much.
- My Area delisted a meeting with 20 minutes of meditation. They have a topic on meditation for 20 minutes, then ring a bell and resurface. The Area did not feel like that was sharing experience, strength, and hope, which is what meetings are for. When they registered, they wanted to be called the mid-morning meditation meeting. Now mid-morning is an Eleventh Step meeting. That is also an issue.

- I used to attend a meditation meeting, and it saved my life. It defused my life. Participation in Concept Four responds to our spiritual needs. We all desire to belong. For me, I use the Serenity Prayer. A moment of silence tends to upset people. It is a personal thing for me to sit quietly for 15 minutes to get centered.
- Meditation is okay, except if it is guided. I look forward to the moment of silence to regroup and get ready to be a participant in the meeting. Guided meditation made me extremely uncomfortable.
- I appreciate the discussion and willingness to open the microphones. In my Area, when we have discomfort with meditation meetings, people want to talk about it at our AI-Anon parties. If we focus on the spiritual principle of mutual respect, tolerance, and goodwill when we talk, we will find our way through.
- My District has many meetings. I was supporting a friend who was starting a meeting. I was surprised to find it was discussion for 45 minutes and 15 for meditation at the end with candles. I was uncomfortable, and it was hard to do. Newcomers came and they were confused with a 15-minute meditation. It was too difficult for them. I could only think of the newcomer. It did not feel like AI-Anon. Less than a year later, the meeting closed.
- When I walked in the doors of AI-Anon, I was so angry and saw the word “God” in some of the Steps. I wanted to walk out, but couldn’t. There were so many people. I love the moment of silence because it allows me to bring in the God of my understanding today. I am not sure I would stay in a meeting if there was just silence and meditation. Meeting for an hour, it takes away from the topic and all the experience, strength, and hope that could be shared with a newcomer who really needs it. Some groups don’t read the Steps, Traditions, or Concepts. They think they are boring. We learned that reading the Legacies helps calm us. It might be a form of meditation to be able to start listening and paying attention.
- There is a fine line. It falls within the Legacies. Are we going to get into guided prayer? At Eleventh-Step meetings, I want to hear sharings about how they learned to pray and meditate, but not actually do it in meetings.
- Group autonomy comes with responsibility. Tradition Two, page 34 in the “Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual*, says that “...groups that practice specific therapies, such as guided meditation, are not in keeping with AI-Anon principles and do not qualify to be registered as an AI-Anon group.”

At the end of the session, the Conference Chairperson closed the discussion by saying, “The Board appreciates your input; this is the start of a discussion.”

Chosen Agenda Item Breakout Sessions

Thirty-eight Chosen Agenda Items were submitted by the deadline—three were submitted by Panel 56; two were from Panel 57; 21 came from Panel 58; seven were from Panel 59; two were submitted by Trustees; and three were from Staff. One Chosen Agenda Item was inadvertently omitted due to human error.

The Conference Leadership Team reviewed the 37 CAIs to determine whether any could be resolved using the *Service Manual* or explained by the WSO administrative Staff. As a result, 23 topics were omitted.

Of the remaining 14 topics, a Task Force comprised of two Delegates and the Conference Chairperson combined similar topics and provided topic names to identify the CAIs; a Task Force comprised of two Delegates and the Associate Director—Conference fact-checked the topics. The CAIs were reviewed for style and proofing.

Prior to Conference, members were invited to vote for the three topics that were most important to them. This approach is designed to identify the natural grouping of overall priorities.

All Conference members met in small group breakouts during Conference to discuss the two topics that received the most votes.

Topic: Electronic/Virtual Meetings



How can we step out of our comfort zone—in this case, face-to-face District and Area business meetings—and incorporate electronic participation?

Why this “Electronic/Virtual Meetings” CAI is important:

Currently, we have face-to-face District and Area business meetings. Allowing for participation through electronic media might increase participation in District and Area meetings and bring large geographical or rural areas together. Should we establish protocols for handling business meetings (e.g., roll call, voting procedures) that include Group Representatives that participate by voice call or other electronic media?

One Delegate from each of the six small groups recapped their group’s discussion:

- The challenges could be intimidating.
- There are benefits to rural areas.
- Do this on a trial basis.
- Ask for help—international structures have been doing it for a long time.
- It will be the normal way in a few years.
- We are concerned about confidentiality.
- Members could use electronic meetings as an option (for example, when they are sick or have to take care of their children) or a tool, not a replacement.

- A WSO Trustee could join us as a resource.
- This could break up isolation and would be easy to do in three pods.
- Protocol is necessary.
- Provide training for those who need technical help.
- Provide guidelines.
- This encompasses awareness.
- We need information on available technology.
- The Technology Coordinator conducts webinars on how to use the Area website and posts on the site to help override fears. Do it in small steps.
- Everyone would have the capability to hear and be heard.
- Include it in the budget to provide equipment to participate.
- Several Delegates could put together the procedures they use and post on AFG Connects.

Topic: Encouraging Service

Back to Basics—supporting group growth: The group is fundamental; it is the basic unit of our fellowship. What are some ways we can support group growth?

How to encourage service in your Area: How can we encourage older and newer members in our Areas to participate in service?

What are some ways we can increase new member participation?

How can we address the issue of gaps in the links of service?

Why these “Encouraging Service” CAIs are important:

The group is the basic unit of our fellowship. Sometimes, there is a disconnect in the link from the group to the District, which might account for some dark (inactive) Districts throughout the World Service Conference (WSC) Structure. This might affect Al-Anon as a whole. What can we do as a Conference to support these disconnected groups?

In my Area, there is a growing number of open District Representative positions as some people move from District Representative to positions in the Area. Why is this? I wonder why some people say “no” when asked to consider a new role in service.

How can we encourage new generations (younger members) to participate in service in the group, District, and Area levels, and on service boards? The volunteering or commitment to participate seems strong in those older than 60. Is it a generational issue? How do we get more participation, even a small amount, from younger members?

There are some Districts without District Representatives. We are looking for constructive ways to meet the needs of groups and members when there are gaps in the links of service. What responsibility does the Area/WSO have in these situations? Are there ways to fill these gaps?

One Delegate from each of the six small groups recapped their group’s discussion:

- Sponsors used to strongly encourage service.
- A personal invitation is the most powerful way.
- Share how important service is to recovery.
- Change the language from “I have to,” to “I get to.”

- There are lots of jobs in a group to encourage belonging.
- Spiritual principles require Sponsees to do service.
- Let members know about service sponsorship.
- Present workshops.
- Small groups are okay to leave service positions open.
- Keep it positive and fun.
- Get members into service when they are new.
- Encourage them to read the “Sharing Ourselves” (three-minute talks) in the *World Service Conference Summary*.
- To grow, invite them to an anniversary meeting.
- Emphasize Al-Anon is spoken here.
- Focus on the new, not the age.
- Get out of the way and let other people serve.
- Focus on attraction, regular business meetings. Use it as an opportunity, not work. Hold meetings in dark Districts.
- Take a survey; create “Ala-buddies”; get them engaged; look at barriers to service, such as babysitting.
- Ensure newcomers have Sponsors. Improve the newcomer meeting; share service experience. It may prompt others to be brave. Offer frequent little words of encouragement. We never know the impact. Reaffirm anonymity so the newcomer is assured. Help them find their voices.
- Ask members face-to-face to step into service.
- Group Representatives are leaders in training. Tell them that.
- Visit groups no matter the distance.
- Group Representatives and District Representatives are the cheerleaders.
- Bring *In the Loop* to the group.
- Sponsorship—get in car.

FINANCE COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Joan S., Trustee, Treasurer

The Treasurer began, “Building on the work done in previous Finance Committee presentations, this workshop is designed to help Conference members delve further into the information in the Finance Committee Report.

“I was reminded in earlier meetings that it is like peeling an onion. The more we learn about our finances, the better we can create culinary masterpieces.

“Money can create discomfort. But peeling layers of the financial report helps us grow to new levels of comfort. In these breakouts, you will be guided through a series of questions to find key information for your reports. It is an opportunity, with the support of others in the room, to begin an outline with relevant facts that will later help you deliver an informative report.”

Following the introduction, Conference members met in small groups. A Delegate facilitated each group discussion. The purpose of the workshop was to ensure that Delegates would be able to give a transparent and accurate account of how contributions by members are used wisely to provide services to Al-Anon and Alateen groups; support World Service Office (WSO) public outreach activities; and provide encouragement and support to countries with GSOs, those with evolving service structures, and those with very few meetings.

Groups reviewed the main elements of a report on the financial affairs of AFG, Inc. This gave Delegates the opportunity to become more familiar and comfortable with discussing the finances of AFG, Inc. by solidifying their understanding of the Audit and Budget Reports. Because the Finance Committee was aware that Areas have different interests and different amounts of time to report on AFG finances, sources of Revenue and Expenses for the WSO and important facts about the Reserve Fund were reviewed. A list of references in the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) about the spiritual principles of self-support and resources was provided to help them find answers when they get back to their Areas. The workshop also gave them a venue to ask questions and receive clarification on difficult topics such as the deficit budget and contributions that are lower than expected.

Following the workshop, in the final session, six Delegates gave short financial reports to the full Conference as examples of what they plan to report to their Assemblies. The intent was to hear the

message in a variety of ways and provide Delegates with ideas of how to deliver the message in their Areas with their own distinctive voices. While details varied, a common theme in the reports emphasized educating members about how AFG, Inc. uses their contributions to fulfill the primary purpose of Al-Anon and how in order for Al-Anon to grow, we need member contributions to continue.



Delegates shared the following in their reports:

- When members understand how much their service dollar delivers, they are willing and generous.
- A deficit budget is about investing in the future. What will we get in 2019? Strategic Plan Initiatives that include the first phase of the AFG mobile app, two new PSAs, the online store redesign, an upgraded meeting search, and this trilingual World Service Conference.
- Reaching our goals is only possible because of the financial contributions our members make.
- With all your abundant giving, the WSO served each of us in many ways.

The Treasurer thanked the Delegates who gave their reports for their willingness to participate with enthusiasm.

MEGA ISSUE: HYBRID CONFERENCE

Judy K., Trustee, Work Group Chairperson | Lynette K., Trustee | Rosie M., Trustee | John McL., Trustee

Background:

"In the past, the Board of Trustees typically presented a Big Question for Conference discussion. The sessions followed a traditional format: presentation of the topic in the General Session, discussion in smaller breakout sessions, and discussion in a final General Session. Topics included 'Anticipating AI-Anon's Future,' 'Service Leadership,' and 'Empowering Our Members in the Use of AI-Anon's Legacies and Policies.'

"In 2018, in response to the Delegates' request for increased participation at Conference, the Board chose to provide an opportunity for Conference members to participate in idea-generating conversations, much as the Staff, the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Committee do when a new issue is raised. Thus the Board adopted a more inclusive and innovative format in which members could identify and discuss ideas regarding needs and possible changes at the WSO in order to satisfy our WSC Structure and worldwide members awaiting Spanish- and French-language Conference Approved Literature (CAL). The discussion format for the Mega Issue, no longer referred to as the Big Question, became more spontaneous and less structured.

"The first session began with the Board seeking additional insights from Conference members in response to the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions. From these insights, the problem was refined. The second session included brainstorming and prioritization of potential solutions. The final session focused on identification of the potential benefits and risks of the solutions. To present these sessions, leaders used the 'Six Hats' thinking process to allow Conference members to better separate their thoughts into six clear functions and roles. Each thinking role was identified with a colored, symbolic 'thinking hat.' By mentally wearing and switching 'hats,' Conference members easily refocused or redirected their thoughts during the spontaneous conversations.

"The 2018 WSC evaluations revealed (and the Board agreed) that the Mega Issue discussion format was very dynamic and successful. As a result, the Board agreed to use the Mega Issue format again in 2019.

Context:

"The Mega Issue topic for 2019 originated from the Conference Leadership Team (CLT). The idea was generated during a conversation about Chosen Agenda Items (CAIs) and recurring topics. The CLT began inquiring about the possibility of holding a Hybrid Conference. A Hybrid Conference is defined as a 'live' in-person event at a physical location with a 'virtual' online component.

Relevance:

"The Board felt an idea-generating discussion about a Hybrid Conference would be both beneficial and insightful. This year's Mega Issue aligns with AI-Anon's Strategic Plan to explore delivering barrier-free access to information for members. One goal of the Board's envisioned future for AI-Anon is to increase access to knowledge, resources, and the program. This year's Mega Issue conversation focuses on exploring an opportunity.

"Keep in mind the spiritual principles expressed in AI-Anon's three Legacies and be assured that no decisions about holding a Hybrid Conference will be made based on this Mega Issue discussion. Changes to the Conference will never occur until the Conference has engaged in extensive, exploratory conversations that are both thoughtful and comprehensive. These Mega Issue discussion sessions at the 2019 World Service Conference provide an opportunity for Conference members to participate fully in a mega-conversation, one designed to encourage everyone's best thinking about future possibilities. Change takes time."

The Conference discussion regarding a Hybrid Conference was held within three, one-hour sessions.

The format for the first session began with seeking additional insights from Conference members in response to the KBDM questions in an initial brainstorming session. From these insights, the Work Group refined and revealed several key components related to a Hybrid Conference.

The second session included prioritization of potential solutions. Using an abundance of creative minds, we expanded our vision; we came up with ideas of how a Hybrid Conference might look and how barriers could be overcome for existing members who struggle with overwhelming time commitments and the next generation of members, some of whom are working and may have less available vacation time to commit to attend Conference.

The final session focused on identification of the benefits and potential risks of the solutions. We evaluated the ideas that were generated. It is now up to the Board to determine which next steps—if any—will be taken. The Work Group and the entire Board appreciated the enthusiastic participation by so many in this Mega Issue discussion of a Hybrid Conference.

POLICY DISCUSSIONS

ALATEEN TEXT

Norm W., Trustee, Policy Committee Chairperson

Judy K., Trustee, Alateen Policy Task Force Chairperson

Prior to the World Service Conference (WSC), Conference members received a copy of the proposed revised language for the “Alateen” section of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” on pages 93–97 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27).

The Task Force Chairperson reported, “The intent of this revision is to help readers find the guidance they seek when consulting the Policy Digest for Alateen information. The revised language includes information that was not previously provided, greater clarity in wording, and more logically ordered subsections. Additionally, it more fully explains the basis of the policy, while providing the spiritual principles that underlie the policy.

“Some highlights regarding the major revisions to the text and the rationale behind them are:

- The Policy Committee has removed the word ‘Note’ and accompanying italicized text from the first section of Alateen Policy text (at the top of page 93) because the information in the Note is important and not ‘extra.’ It is policy. Information on where to locate the complete 2003 Alateen Motion passed by the Board of Trustees is also included.
- The title ‘Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements’ was removed from above the word ‘Note’ and moved to the section title for the paragraphs that address these Alateen requirements.
- Previously the Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP) was mentioned, but the role was not fully explained. The AAPP text has been expanded to include a definition and description of the role of an AAPP.
- All Alateen Sponsor information is now unified under one title.
- Some section titles were expanded to identify additional information that is also discussed in that section of the text.

“These types of changes are not changes in the actual policy; they are only changes in wording and ordering of ideas to reflect more unity, with similar ideas being grouped together for coherence. Ideas are now presented in an understandable, logical order.

The Policy Task Force Chairperson noted that all of the comments, questions, and suggestions from Conference members were carefully considered and the comments led to helpful discussions. The proposed text was the result of one-and-a-half years of work by the Policy Task Force.

Conference members were asked to share their ideas on the content, in accordance with Concept Three, so that the Conference as a whole could be informed in making its decision.

In considering a motion by the Policy Committee to amend the text of the “Alateen Policy” section of the Policy Digest on pages 93–97 of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) in accordance with the changes recommended by the Policy Committee, the Policy Task Force Chairperson then asked Conference members to address the following questions:

1. Is it clear & accurate?
2. Is it consistent with our spiritual values?
3. Can you live with it?

Conference members asked the following questions:

- Will limiting the AAPP to certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) make it more difficult for an Area to fill a position?

While limiting it to certified AMIAS may make it more difficult for the Area to fill the position, it is up to the Areas to determine whether the AAPP needs to be a certified AMIAS. The Committee felt this issue was best left to Area autonomy.

- You added the word “active.” I will be getting questions regarding the word “active.” Does the Committee have an idea for guidance to give to my Area? We have an Alateen Coordinator issue. The Coordinator has decided what “active Al-Anon member” means.

This is left up to Area autonomy, so it needs to be discussed locally. “Active” is defined under the Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements as an Al-Anon member who regularly attends Al-Anon meetings and has at least two years in Al-Anon in addition to any time spent in Alateen. What is regular? It is weekly for some, for others it is more. It is not something we can delineate.

- Is requiring training for Alateen Sponsors an Area responsibility? Consistency in training is an issue for my Area.

Alateen Coordinators are responsible for training AMIAS. They are supported by Group Services, which provides the service tools that are necessary for conducting the training.

- Regarding recommending two Sponsors, is there a way to word it so that it is up to the Area or District? My Area doesn’t want to require two, but a District has a requirement of two Sponsors.

The policy is broad, so it is something to talk about within an Area in order to have consistency in adhering to the Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

- “Currently attends and is an active Al-Anon member for at least two years.” “Currently attends” and “active” seems redundant. Do we need “currently attends”?

“Currently attending” and “been attending actively” for at least two years were in the original text from the 2003 Alateen Motion, so both were needed.

- Our Area policy requires two Sponsors be present for an Alateen meeting. Is that in conflict?

You can go above and beyond. These are minimum requirements. An Area has autonomy to make it stronger.

- I need more clarification regarding “Al-Anons do not serve as personal Sponsors to Alateen members.” My experience tells me that often teens can’t give away what they never got in the first place. Can a teen member of Al-Anon, who is also a member of Alateen, have an Al-Anon member as a Personal Sponsor by virtue of their Al-Anon membership?

It is not appropriate for an adult Sponsor in an Alateen meeting to be a personal Sponsor to an Alateen. I don’t think the policy would prohibit an Alateen member who also attends Al-Anon meetings from having an Al-Anon Sponsor, but that situation is not really addressed in this paragraph of the policy.

- There has been a mistaken impression that an Alateen member could only attend an Al-Anon meeting if Alateen was not available. The Policy Task Force felt it is more appropriate to say, “In accordance with Tradition Three, any person affected may attend regardless of age.” It would eliminate confusion.
- We need to be careful. All teens are not Alateens. Alateens belong to and participate in Alateen groups. I have three teens at home, but they are not Alateens. They are teens at home.
- Alateens are Al-Anon members. They are under the umbrella of Al-Anon. If Alateens want to become AMIAS, are they required to go to Al-Anon meetings for two years?

This participation section makes it clear that any person affected by the family disease of alcoholism can go to an Al-Anon meeting. The policy is designed to be written broadly, and not just limited to Alateen.

The minimum requirements in the 2003 Alateen Motion state that they cannot include their time in Alateen.

- Designated trusted servants may occasionally attend as a resource to the group. Who would decide who falls into that category?

Deciding who falls into that category is a matter of Area autonomy. Alateen policy is written broadly because the Area is familiar with its own circumstances.

- Regarding the Alateen meetings and participation section, I need clarification of Alateen meetings only Alateen members, prospective members, and Alateen Sponsors affiliated with the meeting attend. In the previous section, we say an Alateen, Alateen Group Sponsor, or certified AMIAS must be present. I understand if they are not an AMIAS affiliated with the group, they are not necessarily a Group Sponsor.

All Alateen Group Sponsors are AMIAS, but not all AMIAS can come into a group. Those Group Sponsors associated with that particular group can attend, otherwise they have to be invited by Alateens. Group Sponsors are very specific.

- Teens are trying to get around the Safety and Behavioral Requirements by attending conventions (A.A. with Al-Anon participation) as Al-Anon members or sometimes nothing specific to Alateen. Is it possible to add wording to cover what our responsibility is for teens attending as Al-Anons? Convention-level families are dropping teens off at conventions and they are running amok. I know Al-Anon is responsible at Al-Anon conventions.

It is important to remember that the Alateen name is used only in conjunction with Alateen activities overseen by the Area and connected to the Area.

- Some are deliberately not using the Alateen name and are coming as Al-Anons, so minor Al-Anons are attending our convention. What are our responsibilities to minor Al-Anon members attending conventions with Al-Anon participation?

The Area is responsible for coming up with a plan for anyone attending the event. If minor children are required to be under the supervision of an adult, the Area is responsible to ensure that happens. The Area needs to have a plan and can require adults to be responsible for supervising minors that they bring to the event.

- The policy says only a Group Sponsor can attend. That bothers me. What about a Group Sponsor substitute?

When talking about an Alateen meeting, the only people in an Alateen meeting are Alateen members, prospective members, and Sponsors. The group must be registered with a Current Mailing Address who is a certified AMIAS. We don’t want anyone coming to an Alateen meeting just because they are a certified AMIAS. When a group needs a substitute, an AMIAS is invited to come and act as the Group Sponsor so that the meeting can be held. Additionally, an Area trusted servant who might be a resource, such as a District Representative, Group Inventory Facilitator, or Public Outreach Coordinator, may request to attend the meeting. They don’t have to be certified AMIAS, as they would not conduct a meeting.

Who those designated members might be and who those substitutes would be—that can be addressed in Area requirements. A group can have a plan for how and who those people who substitute from time to time are going to be.

- Our Area Safety and Behavioral Requirements were approved by the World Service Office (WSO). An Area task force is updating them now. We were asked to stop until after the World Service Conference (WSC). Will we be able to operate under the current requirements until we can get your updated ones?

This is all still part of Area minimum requirements. Area requirements are still in effect. Look at modifications in your Area requirements to see if they are in keeping with the minimum requirements set in the 2003 Alateen Motion.

- Our Assembly passed an “age-out” motion. Where do we send the revision and updates to our Area Safety Requirements for review? They are time sensitive. They need to go to the WSO before our Assembly approves them.

Send them to the Associate Director—Group Services. Please pass them through an attorney first to make sure they comply with local laws before submitting them to the WSO for approval. Once approved by the local counsel and the WSO, they can be submitted to the Area for a vote.

- When will the new policy text go into effect?

After the Board’s annual meeting. The online version will be updated as soon as possible.

- What has changed and what should I bring back? Alateen Area Coordinators have not seen the changes and will have questions. What should I say is important regarding the clarifications?

Call attention to the fact that the content is more orderly and the headings are clearer. The AAPP role is defined in the heading and is expanded upon, as is the AMIAS section. Two paragraphs are key to those positions. Group Services clarified the content according to current guidelines and services, and the content is now in alignment rather than haphazard. We know more and are clearer about our direction.

Following discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried. See Motion # 3, page 83.

See Appendix III on page 123.

ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

J.P. M., At-Large Executive Committee Member, Work Group Chairperson

The Policy Committee Electronic Meeting Work Group introduced the topic with a skit so that Conference members could gain an understanding of the reasons members may attend online electronic meetings. The skit gave insight into the barriers that prevent many members from attending face-to-face meetings and the reasons people use electronic meetings. This was followed by a video of Work Group members demonstrating a mock phone meeting.

Background:

The discussion began during the Open Policy Committee meeting at the 2017 World Service Conference (WSC). (See *2017 World Service Conference Summary*, page 22.)

The Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG) was charged with gathering background information related to electronic meetings. Members of the Work Group began with a review of all Policy Committee discussions and previous EMWG material related to electronic/virtual meetings in order to gain a better understanding of the following:

- Who they are
 - What they want from the World Service Office (WSO) and why they want it
 - What they need to fulfill their primary purpose
- On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the Work Group was further charged to:

- Evaluate whether electronic meetings held using social media, such as Facebook, adhere to the principles of anonymity and confidentiality.
- Provide guidance to the Staff in this regard as they seek to protect the AI-Anon trademark.
- Prepare a presentation for the 2019 WSC on the information gathered by the Work Group.

The Chairperson reported, “Some Work Group members were leery of electronic meetings but joined a meeting to get a more accurate understanding of them. We found that, in the meetings we joined, members shared experience, strength, and hope; protected AI-Anon; and urged other members to attend face-to-face meetings. This made us believe they are serving the fellowship. We discovered electronic meetings are more here than we realized, and they are thriving.

“The electronic meetings share regard for anonymity and confidentiality and provide barrier-free access to meetings. There are 214 registered electronic meetings with thousands of members. Page 32 of the ‘Procedures for Starting an Electronic AI-Anon Meeting’ of the ‘Groups at Work’ section of the *2018-2021 AI-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) says, ‘Electronic meetings can introduce the potential newcomer to AI-Anon Family Groups, can support those without access to a local meeting and are available to any member.’ The WSO registered these meetings with the understanding that the meeting would abide by the Traditions, protect AI-Anon, and not endorse or lend our name to any outside entity.

“The Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs) of the registered electronic meetings were invited to attend a conference call with members of the Work Group. Thirty attended. We learned that electronic meetings can meet the needs of people who cannot attend face-to-face meetings. They have evolved as a primary source for recovery. For some, these meetings are their only access, and for others, the electronic meetings are their first choice rather than face-to-face meetings. Some want 24-hour access to virtual meetings. CMAS on the call asked for more interaction with the WSO monthly or quarterly. Some reported issues of dominance and not adhering to the Traditions. Remote access and virtual meetings were also discussed.

“During one conference call, we asked if electronic meetings would like a platform to share. They also expressed a desire to support each other and foster communication where there can be an exchange of ideas. As a way to highlight how the meetings work, we suggested they could ask members to submit short articles to *The Forum*.”

The Chairperson reported that as a result of the CMA conversations:

- WSO Staff launched an AFG Connects Electronic Meetings community for online meetings. CMAs of the registered meetings and Policy Committee members are the members of this community. The Current Mailing Addresses have begun to exchange items of interest and some items are of interest to this Work Group. Providing this community to the meetings has been very well received.
- The Registration Form and accompanying instructions were updated to allow electronic meetings to choose from multiple platforms. The WSO checks to make sure the meeting is adhering to Tradition Eleven. Once the WSO finishes its checking, the meeting is listed on al-anon.org.

- The WSO created a survey and sent it to all CMAs of registered electronic meetings to inquire into what name to use when referencing all types of these meetings. There were 136 responses consisting of electronic, digital, and remote access meetings. Sixty-four percent chose electronic meetings.
- The Work Group created a list of resources that provide guidance on anonymity in electronic meetings (see below).

Anonymity in Electronic Meetings

“They are similar to face-to-face meetings adhering to Tradition Eleven. We have to trust they will respect our Legacies and spiritual principles. Members can create a profile that does not use their real name.

Anonymity Using Facebook

There are different types of Facebook groups.

- A Public Group: Everyone can see that you are a member and read your posts.
- A Closed Group: The content of the closed group is not visible to people outside of the group. Only members of the closed group can see who the other members are and what is posted in the group by the members. Closed groups are searchable but someone who wants to join the group must receive approval to do so.
- A Secret Group: The content of the secret group and the group itself are not visible outside the group. Secret groups can only be joined by invitation from someone, as they cannot be searched.

You must request permission to participate in a Facebook Messenger meeting. Only members of the Messenger meeting can see who attends and what has been posted. There are social media platforms other than Facebook.

During the presentation, Conference members participated in a “Myth Busting” exercise about electronic meetings.

A letter to all social media groups, particularly Facebook groups that use the Al-Anon name, has been drafted to invite them to register their meetings or to stop using our trademarked name. The attorney clarified that the letter needs to be very specific about consequences in order to prove due diligence in protecting our trademark. Work continues with the attorney to finalize the language in the letter.

Anonymity in Electronic Meetings: Resources

2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27), page 32
Electronic Al-Anon Meeting Guideline (G-39)
Fact Sheet for Electronic Meetings (S-60)

Conference members responded to the following question: What part do electronic meetings play in our Al-Anon structure and/or Al-Anon as a whole?

- I am a regular daily attendee of several electronic meetings. According to the Al-Anon World Service Conference Structure chart on page 171 of the *Service Manual*, they are not part of a District. We are meetings, not groups, because these meetings have no geographic location. Some meetings are dominant, some follow the Tradition of self-support, and some are lovely. I started a phone line with another member.

There are a few healthy meetings, but many less-functional ones. They don’t fit into the Al-Anon service structure, but they do fit into my life. I think of them as supplemental. I want to see this developed more.

- Having moved to a more rural area, this was a wonderful supplement to my program. I am glad to see us exploring this; I hope more comes of it and it is passed along to members.
- I have never taken part, but I answer the phone in our Area Information Services. When I get callers, I encourage them to go to electronic meetings. After this presentation, I am more comfortable with it.
- What are they talking about in business meetings? How are they attended? Are they well attended? What do they discuss? What are the issues and what will they be supported in?

Their meetings are just like ours. They welcome newcomers, tell them about literature, change the format of the meeting, talk about how they are going to remind people to be supportive of and contribute to the WSO, and discuss the ways we share information with them. They are asking the WSO to provide information on how meetings are conducted, whether on a phone or on online platforms. They have not requested to become part of the WSC Structure, but are asking, “Where do we fit in?” They fit because they are Al-Anon members. We can compile an important message to share with them in our conversations.

- I am speaking globally. Our mission is to help families and friends of alcoholics. It doesn’t say in a physical way. How many times do you talk to your Sponsor on a phone? Virtual meetings are going to exist. We need to extend the hand of Al-Anon anywhere and help.
- I am beyond moved to be here and see our Structure bringing spiritual principles to life with what is created to live and look at this.
- This Work Group might be most the important group Al-Anon has had in a long time. I get messages from Italy, India, etc. They are giving me messages of help and hope when I ask, “Is anyone there?” It is like out-of-town meetings on steroids. How can we help? I don’t know how to access them. Zoom meetings have a sponsorship list. Make electronic meetings overly distinct. Not being included decreases the chance that meetings will be healthy.
- I got an email from an electronic meeting that was having an issue. I didn’t know what to do. I couldn’t dial the WSO fast enough. I found I didn’t have to do anything. I am not responsible for them and am grateful the WSO can take that responsibility.
- They play the same part face-to-face meetings play. It is good that they are on AFG Connects. Is it possible to create e-Districts? It is a whole new world electronically, and I am glad we are embracing it.

- I love that we are doing this. I traveled to Asia a lot. I joined a group I found through AI-Anon, and it helped me a lot. What do we know about sponsorship in these groups? How active is it? How well done?

It can be a topic of discussion depending on the format. Some phone meetings have an after-meeting for fellowship, similar to what members do after a face-to-face meeting. With online meetings, it varies. It is part of the discussion and they are encouraged to find someone they are comfortable with depending on what they heard in a sharing. GRs are connected to a physical meeting group through their Area, District, and AIS—through the Structure. Electronic meetings do not have a District. The CMA is the point of contact and gets the Appeal Letters and any information coming from the WSO to a group. There is no GR because these meetings are not groups and they occur without a geographic location. There is only the point of contact.

- How many in this room have used electronic meetings?

Over half of the Conference members raised their hands.

- Are there any Alateen meetings online? It seems to be a good connection for kids.

The WSO does not currently have registered Alateen meetings online other than Alateen chat meetings because they cross multiple Area boundaries and laws differ from state to state. The WSO is looking at this and trying to find a more flexible app, but we have to be safe and in keeping with the Alateen Motion because we don't want predators. Alateen Chat has a registration process that teens need to go through to access meetings. It is not direct access. There is a hybrid meeting in Alaska. They are only connecting remotely there. It was a conference call coordinated with a physical meeting.

- I never thought about the Seventh Tradition and electronic meetings. Can we track contributions if they put their group number on it?
- Sometimes it feels like face-to-face meetings have difficulty seeing AI-Anon globally. Encourage them to get on so they can start to see AI-Anon globally.
- The WSO will be sending letters to the electronic meetings inviting them to register, and, when registered, these meetings will be able to be listed on the WSO website. If they don't register, they will be asked to no longer use our name. It is part of protecting our trademark. The Board and our lawyer reviewed the letter, so it is a mechanical operation now.
- For meetings that choose not to participate, what is the worst-case scenario? How do we resolve this with meetings that do not want to join us?

It is important to know that in the Board's legal authority, we have had to take action in the past to protect the AI-Anon name and trademark. We can't project a timeline, but the fellowship would be informed.

- I am glad to see we are taking that action to protect our trademark and not have it become generic. The Road Trip! opened the eyes of the groups to those calling themselves AI-Anon and gave them a wider understanding.
- How many letters are being sent? How many out there are not registered at this time that we know of?

The number of meetings registered changes regularly. The meetings we know of which are not yet registered are primarily Facebook groups. There are 12–15 now, but there are other platforms where people have created websites called AI-Anon and are hosting meetings. The number will grow as we continue to expand.

- If the WSO reaches out to Facebook in our Area, will the Delegate be apprised? Is it meetings or pages?

We are looking at Facebook groups and Facebook pages. Both have AI-Anon meetings that are not attached to a structure. The letter is an invitation, expressing that in the past we did not have a way for groups to register meetings, but we do now and we want to work with electronic meetings to get them to be part of the worldwide fellowship in accordance with the "Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies." Our experience is that many times when we reach out, we find people want to participate. We want them to understand there is responsibility if they are using our name.

Conference members are encouraged to remind people that the place to find electronic meetings is on the WSO website, not on Google search. Encourage members to come to our website. These are the meetings tied to the WSO, so we would not have Delegate to inform. You are all informed now that we are having this conversation and we will let the international community know, too.

- I requested a social media guideline at one point for a District that wanted to do a page.

The current social media guideline was taken down. A description of how to create a page will be revised this year with current information.

- People might say a lot of mean things about the organization and groups. How does that get managed when AI-Anon could be given a bad name because of a disgruntled person online?

We are exploring that. Really, what should be registered are electronic meetings that provide confidentiality and anonymity within the meeting, so only members of that meeting would have access to that posting.

The Chairperson thanked the Conference members for their insights.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Scot P, Associate Director—Digital Strategy

To provide background on the topic, the Associate Director—Digital Strategy explained that, “Historically, the Public Outreach Committee has worked with the Associate Director—Public Outreach Media to develop the target audiences for the PSAs. After his retirement last year, the Digital Strategy Team assumed responsibility for the development of our Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

“As part of the transition process, the World Service Office Senior Communications Specialist and I met with the CEO of our PSA vendor. The vendor has created many PSAs for other clients, including the Ad Council, in addition to us. During this conversation we asked the vendor to share experience with us about best practices today and to assess our current PSA efforts. We were surprised at the feedback we received. We learned that our message did not resonate well through the PSAs. It was explained to us that the viewer needs to view the entire PSA and pay close attention to understand it. It was explained that we need to consider someone who is not familiar with Al-Anon and add in the distractions a viewer encounters during the commercial break (restroom, kitchen, text messages).

“We concluded that it would be best to revisit the PSA strategy and make some adjustments. We wanted to use this as an opportunity to learn and determine how effective our PSAs really are.

“TV and radio reach a broad audience, so the development shifted focus to what was best for both versions to have a broader appeal. According to our most recent membership survey, our most common newcomer demographic is 40-something white females concerned about their spouses’ drinking. The PSA follows a format similar to the PSAs we’ve used in the past; we lovingly

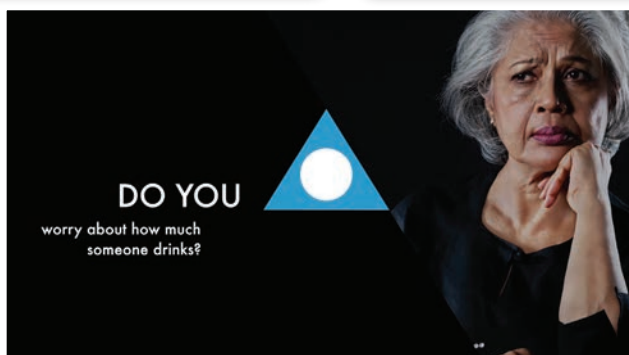
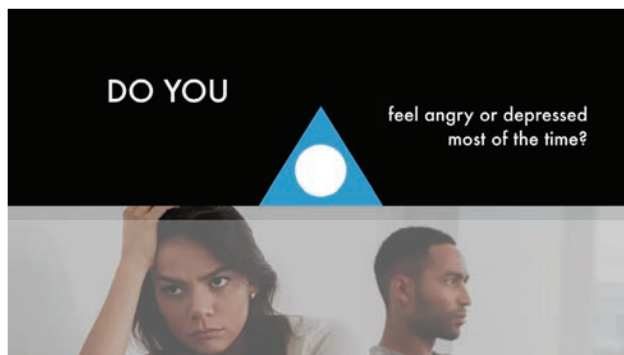
refer to it as the ‘Champion.’ The new concept, the ‘Challenger,’ is based on questions from the 20 Questions (found in the *Fact Sheet for Professionals* [S-37], *Has Your Life Been Affected by Someone Else’s Drinking?* [S-20], and *Did You Grow Up with a Problem Drinker?* [S-25] pamphlets).

“A special, unique website address and toll-free phone number appear on each of the two PSAs. These take the visitor directly to the Newcomers page of the website, where they can learn about Al-Anon, view the Frequently Asked Questions and 20 questions, and search for a meeting. It also lets the WSO know whether the newcomer is visiting because they viewed the ‘Champion’ or the ‘Challenger’ PSA; this allows us to determine which PSA is more effective at driving website visits and calls to the toll-free meeting line.

“Both versions will be available in English, Spanish, and French in three lengths—60 seconds, 30 seconds, and 15 seconds.”

Conference members then viewed the PSAs in all three languages. The Associate Director—Digital Strategy concluded the session by saying, “I want to thank the Public Outreach Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Executive Director for supporting this new direction. I hope you all enjoyed watching and listening to the PSAs as much as we enjoyed putting them together!”

Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone! Following the Conference, the WSO will send information to Area Public Outreach Coordinators through AFG Connects so they can prepare for the distribution of these PSAs in August. Delegates are reminded that the success of the PSAs depends on members contacting local radio and TV stations and asking them to play our PSAs.



TASK AND THOUGHT FORCES

THOUGHT FORCE: WELCOMING POTENTIAL MEMBERS

Miriam B., Thought Force Chairperson, Panel 58, Indiana

During the 2017 WSC, one of the Chosen Agenda Item breakout sessions was titled “Welcoming Potential Members Dealing with Drug Addiction in a Family Member or Friend While Keeping True to Our Primary Purpose.” The report-back indicated a clear consensus that there would be value in continuing the discussion in the form of a thought force.

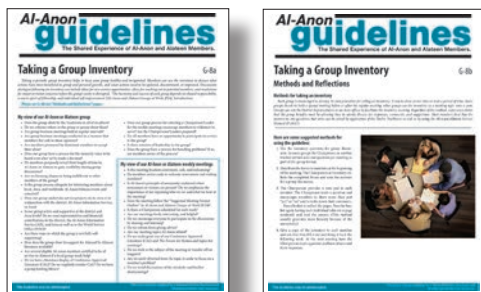
The Thought Force: Welcoming Potential Members was created to brainstorm barriers to and strategies for welcoming those potential members. The members of the Thought Force began with a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process to identify various aspects of this issue, in addition to the principles within the Legacies involved. The Thought Force offered some helpful materials for Delegates to take back to their Areas for further discussion.

The 2018 Membership Survey says, “while 35 percent of members first came to Al-Anon because of a loved one’s drug use, 65 percent of those who came because of drug addiction joined because of a child’s addiction.”

Thought Force members presented a skit that was set in a business meeting. The group had a number of newcomers who came because their loved one was addicted to drugs. Some members felt uneasy and asked to have a conversation about how they welcomed all newcomers while maintaining Al-Anon’s primary purpose.

The Thought Force provided the following suggested questions and strategies for member outreach.

What are some ways to encourage discussion and clarify the idea of “welcoming newcomers to our group” for our members, many of whom are of the belief that allowing families and friends of drug addicts to attend Al-Anon meetings violates our Traditions?



Strategies:

- Consider suggesting that your group do a group inventory (see the *Taking a Group Inventory* Guidelines [G-8a, G-8b]) to discuss ways in which all newcomers are welcomed, including those of drug-addicted loved ones.
- Consider asking newcomers who attend because of drug addiction or alcoholism in a family member or friend if they felt welcomed when they first came, and if they have any suggestions about how the group can improve to make others feel welcomed.
- Suggest that your group discuss Traditions Three and Five, in light of recent membership survey results, to get

comfortable with the idea that those potential members might be welcomed in spite of not having obvious alcoholism in a family member or friend.

- Consider having a group business meeting to discuss what message the group wants to give to newcomers, keeping in mind the health of the group, its purpose, and the importance of welcoming potential members.
- Consider having a beginners meeting (see the *Beginners Meeting Guideline* [G-2]) and inviting all those who are interested to attend.

How do we gracefully and gently let those newcomers, potential members, and members from other programs know that it is not necessary to let the group know (or talk about) the drug-addiction experience?

Strategies:

- Emphasize the importance of keeping the focus on ourselves.
- Consider using the *Al-Anon Focus/Declaration* Table Card (S-24), which can be referenced during the meeting, or read it as a reminder during the opening.
- Consider having a rotation of members available after the meeting to discuss any concerns the newcomer may have.

What might a group do to ensure newcomers feel welcome while maintaining our primary purpose?

Strategies:

- Consider having a Greeter service position to welcome members and potential members and ensure that newcomers receive introductory literature and a meeting schedule.
- Consider encouraging group members to make contact with the newcomer after the meeting to see if they have any questions or comments, and encourage them to “Keep Coming Back.”
- Consider reading one of the four optional readings from the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), on pages 21 through 25.
- Consider allowing time in the meeting format when a newcomer is present for a member to briefly share about why they came to Al-Anon and how Al-Anon is helping them.

Conference members also received a list of suggested literature references that groups could refer to when discussing this topic.

Conference members responded to the discussion question:

How does your group welcome potential members who are coming in for some reason other than a loved one’s alcoholism?

- I went to our Literature Distribution Center and talked with a longtime member who answers the meeting line. I discovered that his home group actively discourages people by saying it’s a “closed” meeting. We have work to do in my Area.

- In my time in service, I most regret that I fielded a call from a family dealing with a drug-addicted child. I read the Tradition and told them that although they might be welcome at meetings, Al-Anon is not really for them and they should find other avenues of help. After hanging up, I thought about what I had just done. I thought it was the right thing at the time. Since then, I have gone over this question in my head and will never do it again. Al-Anon is a welcoming place where people can find help and hope.
- Let the newcomer know the focus is on alcohol. If another issue brought you, please stay around and decide if you want to stay. Groups in my Area openly talk about making sure people are welcome if someone is there because of another's drug problem. We are looking at how to approach them, how to be inclusive without being defiant, and how to keep the focus on Al-Anon.
- Skits are a valuable tool because we have groups that march to a different drummer in another universe. Several groups have been around for a while and are proud to use a sign-in page and have you sign in on a clipboard. I didn't sign, and they said I was supposed to. Another tells A.A. members they are not allowed to speak in meetings. My hope is that if one GR gets something from this discussion and brings it to their group, or sees it in a skit and brings it back, we are successful.
- A woman came to a meeting saying, "I don't know if I'm in the right place, but I have a son with an addiction." I saw the pain in her face. I told her what I have been told: Come to a few meetings and decide. How do we know what her history is? There may be alcoholism all over the place. We don't check credentials at the door. We don't know by looking who has a problem in the family. If someone had said that to me, I wouldn't be here now.
- We have a Greeter at every meeting. We take the newcomer out for a basic orientation and share what our spiritual principles are and that we keep the focus on ourselves, not the person whose actions brought us to the meeting.
- A Thought Force member in our discussion talked about dignity and giving them the dignity to decide for themselves. In my Area, there is calcification around a newcomer meeting without rotation of leadership. It is important to get this message to them.
- I might be a slow learner, but I came because of my primary alcoholic who also abused drugs. In my denial, I didn't realize there was drug use, too, and it took me more years to realize my father was an alcoholic. Now, I have concerns about my son. We have a number of rural areas and no other options. I was given empathy, and I am able to understand they need to come back long enough to figure it out—not just a few meetings. I had to go several years before I figured it out.
- When I saw the devastation of drug addiction in my family, I thought, "I need Al-Anon meetings." I only focused on the drug abuse, not the drinking. At my home group, I felt welcome. No one told me I didn't belong. It was drug addiction that brought me into the rooms, and then, I realized they all had an alcohol problem, too. I need a place to feel warm, welcomed, and loved. Al-Anon taught me that.

- We shouldn't have barriers in this program when people reach out for help. It is up to longtime members to keep the program going in the right direction. I don't want to dilute it with drug addiction, but want to keep it pure for everyone.
- My life has been affected by all types of addictions. They intertwine. I was a "mama bear," determined to save my child. My experiences made me aware of people with opinions who don't allow others to figure out for themselves whether they belong. It is no one's place to tell me. Thank goodness I had 12 years in the program to stand up for myself. It is devastating if someone comes up and tells you Al-Anon is not for you.
- When I suggested that a person go to Al-Anon when he discovered his daughter was using, he didn't speak to me for a year. When he experienced enough pain, he called me. He couldn't stand waking up to someone with a needle in her arm. Pain is pain.
- We remember to keep the focus on Al-Anon. An email from a GR concerned me. A group conscience was questioning changing words to "users," etc. and asking, "Where does it stop?" But we can be welcoming to other people with other issues. I hope the conversation will continue.

Following the session, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members where they wanted to go from here. There was a consensus to continue the conversation regarding welcoming potential members.

TASK FORCE: WORLD SERVICE HANDBOOK ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF LANGUAGE

..... Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference, Chairperson

Background

Following a Board discussion regarding organizational changes and subsequent implementation of those changes, Staff were asked to identify the places in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* booklets that referenced Associate Directors being Al-Anon members and members of the Conference.

Staff determined that changes needed to be made to the "World Service Handbook" section of the *Service Manual* to provide clarity regarding administrative Staff.

According to the *2012 World Service Conference Summary* discussion related to the trial to disband the Admissions/Handbook Work Group, the responsibility to recommend changes to the "World Service Handbook" resides with a task force appointed by the Chairperson of the Board.

The Chairperson of the Board created, appointed, and charged the Task Force: World Service Handbook Administrative Staff Language with improving clarity regarding those Staff members who are voting members of the World Service Conference.

The Task Force submitted the recommended text changes (see below), which the Board of Trustees reviewed and approved, to provide clarity to the Conference for consideration.

["World Service Handbook," page 139]

World Service Office Administrative Staff Paid employees of the World Service Office who coordinate activities and projects for the service functions of the department to which they are assigned. Directors and Associate Directors who fill certain Staff roles are voting members of the World Service Conference and therefore must be Al-Anon members.

["World Service Handbook," page 139–140]

World Service Conference (WSC) Al-Anon's annual business meeting, which is attended by all Delegates from the World Service Conference Structure, representatives from other countries, members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, voting members of the World Service Office (WSO) administrative Staff, and other WSO personnel. The Conference provides guidance to the WSO on service matters that are brought to its attention.

["World Service Handbook," page 168]

The WSO Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all the members of the Board of Trustees, the members of the Executive Committee, and the voting members of the WSO administrative Staff. It meets quarterly in advance of the meeting of the Board of Trustees.

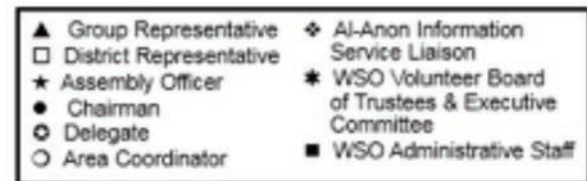
["World Service Handbook," page 168]

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is the administrator of the World Service Office. The Board of Trustees has granted it legal authority to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the World Service Office. Its eight members, one of whom serves as Chairperson, are appointed by the Trustees. They include the Executive Director;

one voting member of the administrative Staff; the Chairpersons of the Board of Trustees, the Policy, and the Finance Committees; and three Al-Anon members elected by the Board of Trustees who contribute experience in specific fields and situations.

["World Service Handbook," page 171]

Add the words "Voting Members of" the before "WSO Administrative Staff"



Prior to the Conference, the recommended changes were sent to all Conference members so that they could review and ask questions about the changes before coming to the Conference. Their comments, questions, and suggestions were addressed by the Task Force members prior to Conference.

Following a brief discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to approve the changes. See Motion #7 on page 84.

PANEL 57 DELEGATES

Terry T., Alaska

My heart is filled with gratitude and humility for this opportunity to serve my Area and Al-Anon as a Delegate. The day I was elected, a past Delegate told me I was in for a life-changing experience. She was right. It's like someone poured Miracle-Gro on my program! My knowledge of how the structures of Al-Anon work, and how our Legacies and spiritual principles work, is now richer and quite profound. Participating in this World Service Conference, along with listening to, learning from, and working with everyone here, has been an honor. I have been rewarded with joy along with some valuable challenges.

I experienced the first half of our Conference theme—"Action Is Attraction"—at my very first meeting: hearing others tell my story, learning I was not alone, and finding a place I belonged. Those members' actions of attending a meeting and sharing attracted me. That little seed of hope and the attraction of wanting serenity like theirs kept me coming back. I cried the first time I heard the Al-Anon Declaration. It launched me on my service journey. I was so grateful to this program for helping me save my life; I knew I wanted to do what I could to make sure the hand of Al-Anon would always be there. Service has brought me more growth, more insights, and a deeper relationship with my Higher Power than I ever could have

imagined. It offered new opportunities to put my program and our Traditions into practice.

Service tested many of my character defects, like impatience and the desire to control things. Not all my service positions seemed positive; our attempt to start Alateen in my District was unsuccessful. I'm still sad about that. However, my Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service position led me to serve at the District level and at my first Area Assembly, where I was introduced to a new level of service. There it was again—more attraction! I was attracted to members with strong programs, Districts that were hosting recovery events, and new stories to listen to.

As a Delegate, I've learned a lot about the other half of our Conference theme, "There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone." At my first Conference I was bewildered, out of my element, and way outside my comfort zone. My insecurities and doubts washed over me. But I knew I could ask for help, so I did. With your friendly, loving encouragement and my Higher Power, I stepped outside my comfy hotel room, settled into my seat at Conference, and found courage I did not know I had. You believed in me: It was time I started believing in me, too. Words cannot begin to express the appreciation and love I have for our program. Thank you all for being part of my journey.

Gail F., Arkansas

When I arrived at Al-Anon, I was an angry, unhappy woman with a small child and a spouse who drank too much. I had spent years trying to convince him to do things my way, sure that I knew what was best. Nothing I tried had any lasting effect. I had reached the end of my rope when I ended up in an Al-Anon meeting.

I identified with the sharings of the members, feeling that I had found the right place for me. For those few minutes while I was in a meeting, I experienced some peace and comfort. But I couldn't stay in a meeting all the time. I wanted more. I decided to get a Sponsor, and that decision marks the beginning of this amazing spiritual journey. With my Sponsor's guidance, I began working through the Steps. Each action brought with it progress and faith in the process. I experienced a relationship with a Higher Power that I had never known before. I asked for and received help from this Higher Power as well as other members. I seemed to be granted just enough willingness and courage to do what came next. As I progressed through the Steps, I began to experience gratitude and joy. Al-Anon was showing me a new way to live.

After spending most of my adult life as an active member of Al-Anon, I retired from my job and moved with my husband to a retirement community. I found an Al-Anon group, made it my home group, and settled in. The group was small, and every member had served as Group Representative (GR) at least once. When asked if I was willing to serve, I agreed. I had served as a GR before and I knew what to expect. What I did not expect was a renewed vitality and desire to be of service. After that term as GR, I served as Area Secretary and Alternate Delegate. Every time I took on a new responsibility, I was rewarded with a sense of joy and purpose.

When I was elected Delegate later on, I was definitely out of my comfort zone. But by then I knew what to do when I was uncomfortable. My experiences had taught me that I should be comfortable with my discomfort, because growth would follow. Today my heart is filled with gratitude. The best way for me to express my gratitude is through action. By continuing to practice the principles of Al-Anon in my life and carry this message to others who have been affected by the disease of alcoholism, I will continue to grow and give back.

Gail L., Connecticut

"Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone." I didn't feel that way when I first came into Al-Anon. I wanted action, but not the work involved in action. I didn't expect there to be any attraction.

But I found out very early in the program that there is no growth in the comfort zone. In those days people took the newcomer under their wings. I was asked (really told) to travel here and there to many meetings. I was introduced to service very early in the program, starting with the groups. Then within a short few years to the District and the Area.

To this day, I look back and realize that my Higher Power was in charge, not me!

You showed me where to serve and how to let go of fear so that I could serve in many capacities in this program. I worked over the years on many committees, workshops, and conventions. I also acted as an Alateen Sponsor. The one responsibility I never desired or wanted was to be Delegate. Not my cup of tea! But then one day, at an Area Assembly, I even felt encouraged to stand up at the podium and announce that I was standing up for Delegate. There was truly no growth in the comfort zone.

Without Al-Anon I would not have been able to handle my father's cancer and death, my daughter's crash with a drunk driver, my son's early problems with alcohol, my husband's threats over attending Al-Anon meetings and his drinking problem, a divorce, my own bout with cancer, my mother's Alzheimer's and death, and the loss of a few close friends in Al-Anon. You name it! It happened!

Thank you to all my past and present Sponsors and Al-Anon friends; you kept and continue to keep me close, and you have always encouraged me. "Action Is Attraction – There Is no Growth in the Comfort Zone." Truth be told, this has been a life-changing experience.

Kathy B., Idaho

I've been in Al-Anon since I went to my first meeting in October of 1980. That first meeting was a disaster, to put it mildly. It wasn't the group or anything anyone said. It was me. The meeting brought up all the old miseries, the pain, the broken promises, and the lost childhood I was trying to forget.

But Al-Anon has healed me. We live in a rural area and often there has been no meeting close enough to attend consistently, so I became a Lone Member Contact and wrote to Al-Anons from Canada. Al-Anon has always found a way to keep me connected and growing. After starting numerous meetings, I now have a home group, and we have four regular members.

For the last ten years or so I've been a member of our Area Committee as a District Representative, *Forum* Coordinator, Literature Coordinator, Newsletter Editor, and Delegate twice. I can't believe how these experiences have changed me. I was not comfortable with public speaking, but slowly I started by taking chances with my presentations, making PowerPoint slides, and putting purple and green in my hair. Then I ditched the podium and got a cordless mic so I could walk about. I love bright clothes now and am known in Idaho Al-Anon circles as the "Crazy Pants Lady." All of this is possible because of you.

You gave me stuff to do and then helped me do it. You listened to my frustrations, my obstacles, and fears and sent me out to try it anyhow. Always just a phone call away. I realized quite suddenly that I was a better me because I took action, albeit with you all holding my hand. I learned that I didn't have to talk all the time. I could listen, too. I learned that my best was good enough and that I had to do my best, not cobble something together at the last minute. In other words, it helped me be more organized. I learned that I could make mistakes, and the world would not end, and people would still like me, and I could try again. I realized that I could take chances and be silly in some skit or other and you would laugh with me, not at me. Somewhere along the way my actions attracted others who wanted what I had to give, and, because of you, I had something to give!

"Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone!"

Tim E., Illinois South

When I started attending District and Area meetings, I saw how opportunities presented themselves just as in everyday life. I have always had to question if this service position was something I wanted to do. Would it be beneficial to me in a way that seemed attractive? Would I be an asset? Is someone else better suited for the job?

Al-Anon taught me that my Higher Power had the final say in what was to happen, yet I had to do my part. For me, the first thing I had to do was become willing. Was I truly willing? Sometimes, but

sometimes not. So what was I to do? The first thing was to pause. After that, I had to pray, and then proceed. I repeated the first two until I reached an answer. Sometimes my character defects want to kick in. The worst one is procrastination, and then coming in a strong second is rationalization, which is followed by justification. Defects can have good qualities. I have learned that my Higher Power will get me to where I am supposed to be regardless of what decision I make. So now I have to do my part: Decide. I ask myself one question: Do I have a reason not to stand? Then I follow it with the thought that by my standing, I might give someone else the courage to stand.

Of course, this is what happened when I stood for Delegate: No one else stood up. Even after I openly invited anyone to please stand. The result as I see it today, is that I am doing the worst job as Delegate that my Area has seen in some time, maybe ever. Maybe this fact will help someone through some situation. I know that I have grown from this experience.

Beth K., Iowa

Before Al-Anon the only actions I took were to play it safe, to conform, to not rock the boat; if you were happy, I'd be happy. This caused a slow and painful downward spiral. I was trapped in a never-ending cycle of verbal abuse and fear of abandonment. The reading for October 18 in *Hope for Today* (B-27) says, "[I was] often struggling to manage events that were beyond my ability to influence, let alone control. Such behavior usually led to mental, physical, and emotional fatigue as well as feelings of depression, failure and worthlessness." I wasn't attracting anyone!

In 1992 I checked myself into the psychiatric ward. It was the worst day of my life. I didn't realize the action I was taking was the First Step: admitting I was powerless. As a part of my aftercare I attended a codependency class. I identified and verbalized feelings I didn't know I had, in front of people I didn't know. This was so far out of my comfort zone. I didn't realize I was taking a Fourth and Fifth Step.

I started Al-Anon on January 1, 1993. I found a home group committed to the principles of the program. Their actions attracted me so much that I became willing to even dump ashtrays. Their actions encouraged me to serve as Treasurer. I was so grateful to this group that I did whatever I could. I asked a woman to be my Sponsor sight unseen. I spoke to her on the phone once the year before. The conversation we had attracted me enough to allow me to trust someone I hadn't even met. I was so desperate to change that I did anything she suggested. She consistently challenged my thinking. Because she was involved in Area service, I attended Assemblies and Area events. I was exposed to so many involved in service; their stories amazed me. If they could move from their tragedies, so could I.

Saying yes to service was scary. I was able to grow in gratitude, willingness, and confidence by stepping out of my comfort zone of fear, insecurity, and self-doubt. I was also able to develop a deeper relationship with my Higher Power. We have many discussions about what I should or shouldn't be doing! Admittedly, I have a life I never dreamed of.

In closing, Lois was reluctant to take on the creation of Al-Anon because she wanted to enjoy life at Stepping Stones, tending her garden. What would have happened to all of us if Lois had not stepped out of her comfort zone? But her strong sense of service prevailed. Like her, we can use our actions to attract others, to help them move from their comfort zones and grow within the program.

Carmen O'M., Louisiana

"Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone!" One of the first times I found and read the *Service Manual* I saw a line that said: "There is no standing still without retrogression. ... You are either going forward or backward but there is no standing still!" Perhaps my words or understanding impacted my recovery. I was attracted to three Area Delegates' recovery stories, and two of them became my Sponsors. At the time, I wouldn't have even dreamt that one day I would be serving as Delegate, since my service journey did not follow a direct path. My path, instead, was filled with boulders that became stepping stones to further my recovery; they grew from despair to hope, and fear to faith, sprinkled with acceptance. They grew into gratitude, compassion with love, and forgiveness.

And the rewards that come from taking that path have been overwhelming. My autistic, paraplegic son was able to experience recovery by living two minutes at a time. The fear I used to have has been replaced with courage; now I am able to risk rejection talking to a stranger, to meet my half-brother that I knew of but did not know growing up. These are just two of the gifts I have received in recovery.

In January at my home group, no one signed up to be Chairperson. So I filled in. As members read from the distributed cards with the Steps and Traditions, I held up *Groups at Work* (P-24) and placed hardcover books around the meeting room. Folks picked up books that they were attracted to, then bought more Conference Approved Literature.

At my first Conference we received an Area banner. When this happened, I felt like I was realizing my childhood dream of being Miss Louisiana, which, when I was young, had been squashed by the criticisms I heard growing up with a problem drinker. White hankies greeted us on the trip to the World Service Office—which is a Louisiana thing, you know—and this welcome could only be topped by the dream come true of experiencing Stepping Stones in person. For that second year our Area World Service Committee danced with black top hats in New York, New York to bring home the spirit of Conference.

I will cherish this experience as Delegate and the folks I meet in this worldwide fellowship of recovery. It has been an amazing journey. I am grateful for my spouse, who supported and encouraged me; my home group and District for letting me remain a member in recovery; and Panel 57 Rockin' Step Eleven. To welcome Panels 58 and 59, and put faces to names of World Service Office Staff...this experience will forever be etched in my mind and heart, for this is how we help one another in Al-Anon. There is no graduation from Al-Anon, not even a recess! I am waiting for the God of my understanding to show me where I will grow next!

Sonya M., Maine

By the time I got to Al-Anon, I had left a marriage because I could not tolerate the drinking any longer and had exhausted all resources to get my teenage daughter to stop drinking. I tried so hard and for so long and failed miserably at controlling the situation. I confided in a friend about why my marriage ended, not knowing she was an A.A. member. She educated me on alcoholism and took me to my first Al-Anon meeting.

I still remember that the topic was "Keep It Simple" at my first meeting. I also remember that I didn't like it at first. But I heard the words "peace" and "serenity" and saw joy and contentment on the

faces of the other meeting members. I bought *Courage to Change* (B-16) and reluctantly went until I declared it my home group. My Higher Power did for me what I could not do for myself.

The early years were difficult as I could not put my feelings and thoughts into words. I listened and learned and finally had the courage to get a Sponsor. I was nudged into my first service position: Literature Chair. From there I did more at the group, District, and then the Area levels. Most importantly, I made quality friendships and was no longer distraught about my family situation.

I remember my first fall Assembly as a new Group Representative. A Trustee had attended and done a workshop on leadership. I absorbed every word of that workshop and it was then I realized I wanted all that this program could offer. Public speaking terrified me ever since college. But I broke out of the fear of public speaking when I started bringing the message of Al-Anon to Family Day at our local hospital, which has anywhere from ten to 40 people there every week. I shared my experience, strength, and hope, and was always pleased to see family members from Family Day attend my home group meetings. I took other positions at the Area and District level, thoroughly enjoying every single one of them, and I finally felt confident in standing for Delegate.

As I applied all the Legacies to my life, I was pleasantly surprised when my daughter finally walked into the halls of A.A. on her own and began her own journey of recovery. I will forever be grateful to this program that taught me how to keep the focus on myself and not be fearful of taking on leadership roles. As I leave Conference this year, I plan on embracing this year's theme: "Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone." I can't wait to experience growth, peace, and serenity as I continue my journey in Al-Anon.

Sarah S., Missouri

I have spent time thinking about the words "comfort zone." Can you get too comfortable in Al-Anon service? Yes. A few years ago, I found myself in the Al-Anon service comfort zone. When I operate inside the comfort zone, complacency sets in. The more complacent I am, the less connected I am to you and my Higher Power. I become self-reliant and begin to think I know more than I really do. My actions change from spiritual actions to actions rooted in fear. The process, which is spiritual in nature, becomes less important, and my self-will and self-reliance—my survival skills—take over.

In 2013, I faced my most painful situation to date in Al-Anon service. I stood for Delegate for the first time. When the elections began, I was right in the middle of my comfort zone. I knew that I would be elected the Panel 54 Delegate. I wasn't ready, but my ego convinced me I was. To my surprise, I wasn't elected, and my survival skills kicked in. I lashed out and did what I knew how to do best: gossip and criticize others. Little did I know, another member overheard me. I received an email that stated, "Al-Anon is a purely voluntary program, especially for those in service. No one has the right to gossip and criticize anyone. After the Assembly we overheard a newly elected Officer gossip and verbally bash one of our fellow members. We heard that a personal program should be in order before we get to the service level. We are saddened. We challenge the 'gossipers' and 'criticizers' to try giving away some nice words. Be the people that God wants you to be." I was devastated. My comfortable behavior caused harm to others and AFG. I was finally uncomfortable enough to allow the protective fortress to crumble around me.

Living in the comfort zone shielded me from the ability to take risks, ask for help, connect with my Higher Power, dream, and

grow. Time passed by and I realized that in order to grow, I needed to be a little uncomfortable. Today, with my Higher Power's help, I remain teachable. We have no idea who is watching us. The spiritual, selfless actions of others encouraged me to grow in ways that have absolutely changed my life. Over the last three years, I've had the privilege of serving as the Panel 57 Missouri Delegate. Another dream realized because my comfort zone was shattered. How appropriate the theme is for me: "Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone." Thank you.

John I., Nebraska

Although I grew up in an alcoholic home, I never felt affected by alcoholism until the day my daughter came to my wife and me and said she had been drinking and drugging for two years and wanted to quit. Her treatment center counselor suggested Al-Anon to my wife and me.

As an agnostic, I struggled with the "God" Steps. But the members of my home group told me that Al-Anon would still work for me. They said, "Keep Coming Back." And I did. I started doing service by making coffee, setting up chairs, and cleaning up after meetings. An Al-Anon friend suggested I use the group as my Higher Power until I could develop a concept of my own. So, I started to chair meetings where I could select the topic. I would discuss what was troubling me; that was my prayer. My meditation was listening to what the group had to say.

As I continued doing service at the group level, my recovery program expanded. I got better by becoming the "cake lady" who made sure someone brought treats to celebrate Al-Anon anniversaries. I became Group Treasurer, Alternate Group Representative, and Group Representative (GR). My role as GR led me to District and Area meetings, where my recovery continued to expand, and I got better. Over a ten-year period, I acted as the District Telephone Answering Chair, Archives Chair, Alternate District Representative, and, finally, District Representative. When I got involved in Area service, I had an opportunity to expand my recovery again, and I got better. I served on numerous committees, thought forces, and work groups. I was the Area Treasurer, Website Coordinator, Alateen Coordinator, Alternate Delegate, and, finally, Delegate.

I share this service tale with you today because not once did I think I was capable or worthy of holding any of these service positions. I always felt less than and not a part of. But you told me I was wrong. Someone in Al-Anon always pushed me into service and told me I could do it, and that if I needed help I could simply ask. You convinced me that I was worthy, and I did belong. And each time I took a risk and stood for a position, my personal recovery grew and I felt more confident; I got better. Had I not believed and taken those risks with the encouragement of my Sponsor and fellow Al-Anon members, I would still be back at the beginning: Feeling less than. Feeling not a part of. But through this journey of service, I have truly learned that there is no growth in the comfort zone. Thank you.

Janet P., Nevada

When I moved to Nevada, I didn't know anyone living there except the members of my household. This presented the perfect opportunity for me to isolate. Although I was unable to recognize it at the time, I was most certainly becoming irritable and unreasonable. My behavior was adversely affecting many lifelong relationships. I felt lost and wondered, *what could I do to change the increasingly negative thoughts and feelings I have about others and myself?* The

community newspaper I read each week listed an Al-Anon meeting that was only minutes away from my home. After many months, I finally called the contact number and spoke with a friendly, upbeat woman who encouraged me to attend my first meeting.

While I worked the Twelve Steps, a kind, gentle, and loving Sponsor listened patiently as I struggled with denial and arrogance. Our shared love of Conference Approved Literature guided us through many hours of study and self-discovery and through a growing awareness of the spiritual principles found in the Legacies. Taking action helped me restore damaged relationships. Strengthening the relationship I had with my Higher Power became a priority. Slowly, my attitudes began to change in positive ways.

Becoming active in service seemed like a natural way to show gratitude for the help that I was receiving. Broadening my horizons, I attended my first Area Assembly as a Group Representative; my appreciation for members active in service grew. Their actions attracted my attention and respect. Service has kept me immersed in a new way of thinking and living. The role of a Delegate was certainly outside my comfort zone, but it has offered me an opportunity to grow in ways that I could not have imagined. It has helped me focus on my personal recovery in consistent, rewarding ways. Although I always felt the persistent nudge and support of my Higher Power, this service role required me to take leaps of faith that were unimaginable prior to my Al-Anon journey. During this time, I have received more love and support and experienced more joy and gratitude than I thought possible. Experiencing judgment and criticism—real and imagined—has taught me to listen more carefully with an open mind. Observing firsthand the presumption of goodwill at the World Service Conference has transformed the way I look at differing opinions. Applying this spiritual principle to all aspects of my life brings me peace and quiets my mind. It has been a privilege to serve as a Delegate.

Angela D., Newfoundland/Labrador

This year's World Service Conference theme, "Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone," reminds me that when I do service in Al-Anon, even when I'm fearful, I will benefit and grow in the program. Over my years in Al-Anon I've had lots of opportunities for growth at the group, District, and Area levels. I am still fearful at times, but I am very grateful for the growth that seems to come when I work my program and depend on my Higher Power, who usually works through my Sponsor and other members.

I am so very grateful for my first Sponsor, who always told me, "If I've helped you in any way, it's your Higher Power working through me." I say the words "my Sponsor," as if it was easy for me to ask someone to sponsor me when, really, it was the hardest thing I ever did—even harder than going to my first meeting. Thank God someone offered to sponsor me long before I had the courage to ask someone. When I finally did work up the courage, I cried like a baby. I think it just went against my nature back then, admitting I needed help.

Early in Al-Anon, I was encouraged to attend lots of meetings, Assemblies, workshops, and open A.A. meetings and to get involved in service. Whenever I was asked to do something, I was told I'd grow from it. I remember the first time I was asked to speak at an open A.A. meeting in a nearby community. First, I was excited, thinking, "I must be doing something right if they're asking me to speak!" But on the way to the meeting reality set in, and I realized I was still very angry and upset. So, I said, "I'm not sure I can do this." And my friend said, "That's okay, you'll be fine." Then I said, "Well,

I may pass out or throw up." She laughed and said, "That's okay, you'll grow from it." It was quite a shock to realize I wasn't asked to speak because I was better; I was asked to speak so I would grow. Besides wanting my husband to stop drinking, I wanted the serenity and happiness that some of the members seemed to have. I soon realized they were the ones heavily involved in service, who talked a lot about the Steps and Traditions and Concepts. I've been affected by the family disease of alcoholism and will always need the tools of the program, but stepping outside of my comfort zone has helped me grow so much already.

Nancy D'A., New Hampshire

Wow! What an incredible three-year adventure! At the beginning of my first year, I was full of fear, trying to figure out how I was going to fill the role of Delegate with the job I had. I put it in God's hands and two weeks before I came to my first Conference, my job was eliminated. I had plenty of time to devote, and I have never looked back.

My role in the family disease had been one of the peacemaker and fixer. I was the kid that stood outside and looked in the window but never participated. I came to Al-Anon at 20 years old, married and a mother of an infant. Alcoholism brought me to my knees in despair, which led me to Al-Anon and into the loving arms of members who, like me, were learning about the disease of alcoholism. I have learned through those members how to live the Legacies, and it has given me a whole new life.

Members taught me that service was critical to recovery. I have always stepped up to service because, frankly, I have never figured out how to say "no" to my Sponsor. I truly treasure the World Service Conference leadership that I had the privilege to be a part of. You have opened up the door of Al-Anon service to another level and shown me again that "I am enough." You taught me that my voice is important and that with practice, going to the mic with my *Service Manual* will get easier every time. I saw "principles above personalities" in action in our session discussions. When disagreements, dissension, and differing opinions were shared, the result was better clarity and understanding. Our Higher Power brought us through to the solution once again. It seemed like magic to me; in my family of origin nothing ever got resolved, mostly because it was never talked about.

Here are my definitions of Panel 57 "Rockin' Step Eleven": Fun, laughter, and hard work on thought forces and task forces. Camaraderie and love in action. "Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone."

I know that although my term as Delegate has come to an end, I will continue in service as my Higher Power leads the way. I have always received more than I have given and learned much more when I am not in my comfort zone. Thank you to my Sponsors, Area 35 New Hampshire, and past Delegates for their trust and support. Thank you, World Service Office, for your time and service to our Family Groups. Thank you, Trustees and Conference participants, for your knowledge, commitment, wisdom, patience, and time, and for continuing to reinforce our Legacies and the use of the *Service Manual*.

Stephanie S., New Mexico/El Paso

The theme of our Conference, "Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone," got me asking, "What is my comfort zone?" Here are a few synonyms for comfort zone: familiar place,

worn path, easy way, known area. When I first came into the program, I had my favorite worn paths—the ways I reacted from my emotions, how I spent my time in the future and the past, a feeling that I wasn't good enough, to name a few. Al-Anon has taught me so much about how not to act in my easy, old, deeply known ways; how to move into a new life and a new way of thinking; and how to become more aware of myself and others. Still, I have to choose to let go of some familiar territory.

The Al-Anon program, for me, is about practicing new, small actions that are often uncomfortable at first, like gratitude. On page 78 of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-32), the section titled “Gratitude” has this to say about cultivating a gratitude practice: “We replace our victim mentality with an attitude of gratitude. Instead of feeling drained, overwhelmed and stressed by the circumstances we encounter, we begin to feel empowered, and capable of coping, even flourishing because we have learned that our Higher Power can use every situation, every relationship, every experience to enhance our lives and foster strength, faith, and personal growth. Thus, everyone and *everything* has a special gift to offer us. We need only open our eyes to see it.” What is described here is a paradigm shift—an awareness of a new world. All of this from making a conscious, simple choice to practice gratitude.

The actions that the Al-Anon program teaches me to take are not drastic or demonstrative. They are not grandiose public proclamations. It turns out, the growth that the program offers me is not complicated and does not require a herculean effort. It is the practice of taking small, daily actions that grow my ability to see my world in a new way. It is as simple as accepting that my life is good—even wonderful—and getting better every day. It is as simple as believing that “*everyone and everything* has a special gift to offer [me],” and I need only open my eyes to see it. The world is no longer a hostile environment, set at odds with my own desires, wishes, and goals.

The profound and life-altering growth of the program, for me, is in choosing to view the world as a loving, supportive place. Now, I see the world as a place where I know I belong and am empowered to open my eyes and see the many gifts around me. I came to know this place in the rooms of Al-Anon.

Taaj J., New York South

On the day of my first Delegate Report after the World Service Conference, I received a text from my “sick and suffering” sibling saying, “If I died tomorrow, you probably would not care.” I broke down immediately, ten minutes before giving my report. I did what Al-Anon has taught me to do—to make gold out of coal—and I shared her text as my first sentence, tearfully. I explained, “That’s the family I came from.” Al-Anon has saved my life, and I’ve learned that there is no growth in the comfort zone.

Last year, I left a project, which began with a halo and ended with abuse, as often is the case in the disease of alcoholism. This year, my manager, also 18 years in recovery, said she thought it was a good idea to go in when they called me to do a new project. I trusted in the Third Step, asked for help, and followed her lead. God in skin. It was wonderful, and my new level of detachment allowed me to keep the focus on myself, and just do a really good job. While I did not understand what path it would take, I trusted.

My college sweetheart, who drank and had other behaviors that bothered me, and whom I could not stay with but remained true to, took ill two years ago, and I was able to steward him to his death

in November. I did it with all odds against me, and it was battled by many, but there is no growth in the comfort zone. It was one of the most spiritual journeys I’ve ever taken. I did that because of this God-given program. There is no growth in the comfort zone.

Last night, I learned that a partner of mine from my early acrobatic troupe passed into her angelhood. We had not worked together for some time, but when we were both asked on to a project a couple of years ago, she said, “God brought us back together.” This time I knew what she meant. This magical program gave me that.

Al-Anon has given me an estimable life, and I’ve learned that there is no growth in the comfort zone.

Debbie C., Ontario North

My journey to Al-Anon transformed my life about 11 years ago. At that point in my life I was desperate. My life was unmanageable; I was dealing with an older son with serious drug addictions and mental health issues. The stress of his dual disease was destroying my well-being.

When I first entered the program, I became conscious of the fact that I had become a caregiver to everyone but me! I worried more about others’ well-being than my own.

When I first entered the rooms of Al-Anon, I felt a peace and calmness that seemed to elude me in my personal life. I knew I was a “lifer” from the moment I left my first meeting.

I immediately volunteered for the public outreach position. A few years later, I became the Group Representative (GR) for my home group. I felt immensely at ease chairing group meetings. I enjoyed the calmness, respect, and flow of the meetings. The Al-Anon program enabled me to become more aware of my thoughts, feelings, and opinions. I learned from listening and sharing my experience, strength, and hope.

Once I finished my three-year term as GR I submitted my Al-Anon résumé for the District Representative position. I was thoroughly interested in how such a simple program was transforming my life—whether it be my work life, personal life, or my spiritual being.

Last year I submitted for the Alternate Delegate position. I assumed I had three years to prepare myself for the job. Little did I know that within the first year, two Delegates would step down for personal reasons.

The Ontario Delegate opportunity propelled my Al-Anon education full steam ahead. When I arrived at last year’s Conference in New York City, I was both excited and nervous about the experience. It’s bittersweet to be reaching the end of my last year. I have developed more confidence in my ability to serve this wonderful organization, yet I am sad to retire my Ontario North Delegate position.

When I attended the Canadian Delegates’ meeting, I was asked what one-year position I would like. I remember one of the previous Delegates informing me not to volunteer for anything.

Al-Anon is clever in how it encourages you to volunteer into each new position and guarantees it will get you out of your comfort zone. Before I knew it, I was acquiring all these new skills and building my self-confidence.

Lastly, my fellow members: Open your heart and soul and share your story; become an inspiration to others who still suffer from the effects of their loved one’s disease and embrace your own journey in recovery!

Mabel M., Puerto Rico

Al-Anon's Twelve Steps help me understand that I have to try new things and be fearless, bold, and courageous to change the things that I can change. I need to be daring and believe that I can accomplish more. I have to push myself and do what needs to be done. In Al-Anon, I understand that everything I want is on the other side of fear; great things never come from comfort zones, and if I want something I've never had, then I have to do something I've never done.

When I spend time stepping outside of my comfort zone, two amazing things happen. First, I become like a magnet, attracting people into my life who can help me in my journey toward attaining my goal: being a better person. Second, I can help others grow; consciously or subconsciously, I become a role model—a mentor. I become a flashing beacon for others to follow and aspire to. I make a positive impact on the lives of others.

If I talk to others about leaving the comfort zone behind and taking a leap of faith into something new, I have to be an example with my actions.

Al-Anon saved my life, and because of it I am a new person today. I am happy, and I understand that the joy I feel moves me toward my potential. Now I'm trying new things! Now I'm not afraid! I just need to make efforts to improve, have some patience, and maintain lots of faith in my Higher Power to never be stuck in my comfort zone.

Jean H., Saskatchewan

My first Al-Anon meeting was on a snowy Monday night in February. I had spent the day in fear and isolation, knowing that going to an Al-Anon meeting would be making a public declaration of a problem I had spent months trying to hide. I don't remember much of what was said at that first meeting, but I left with a feeling of hope; I felt like I'd found people who knew and understood me, even if I didn't know who or what I was.

I went to my first Assembly four months after I started attending meetings. I was assigned a roommate who was a past Delegate. I didn't know what a Delegate was, but what I did know was that I was in the company of a kind, gentle, and caring individual. At the end of the Assembly she handed me her *Service Manual* and said that someday I would need it. Deep inside I embraced the hope there might be a plan for my life, beyond what I even thought possible or imaginable.

I see how my Higher Power had a hand in that weekend; I was attracted to what I saw and felt—serenity, joy, peace, hope, and gratitude. Being a Sponsor and having one; participating in service at the group, District, and Area levels; and attending and sharing at meetings have all led me to the understanding that I can trust in my Higher Power, feel my feelings, and experience spiritual clarity and guidance. My service journey has given me the gift of trust in myself and others.

As I took on new roles, I learned that this is a “we” program; I was always supported and encouraged. I also learned that action is attraction. As I travel throughout Saskatchewan, I see that, while not everyone shares my enthusiasm, some of it has rubbed off! Our Conference theme reminds me of the gifts I have received serving as Delegate. I have learned to be open-minded and willing; I am challenged to let go of my fear and to have trust; I am reminded that this is not a part-time program—there is no growth if I become complacent. And service is key to my spiritual growth; when it pushes me out of my comfort zone and challenges me beyond my

limits, I experience growth. As I finish my term as Delegate, I realize that I am forever changed. I pray that my actions reflect gratitude for having shared an experience outside of my comfort zone.

David B., South Carolina

Stepping outside of my comfort zone is supposed to feel uncomfortable because I'm in new and unfamiliar territory. But being uncomfortable is a sign of success, not of failure! So, if I am uncomfortable outside of my comfort zones, that means I am growing! And *that* is cause for celebration: It means I have found treasure!

Ultimately, as my journey at the World Service Conference (WSC) draws to an end, I realize that I have discovered the treasure was right where I started. I recognize that my trek through the world of Al-Anon has filled me with wisdom and a great deal of knowledge about the people I have met along the way. My journey has not been a waste of time, for I have gained much from my experience in search of my treasures: serenity and growth. I am reminded that every action, every step, and every so-called failure draws me closer to my treasure. Nothing has been wasted. No effort has been in vain. My actions are hopefully an attraction to those who are still suffering. There is a rhythm and timing to the universe I must abide by. I wish to realize my potential and get out of my comfort zone.

With that in mind, stepping out of my comfort zone may be slightly paralyzing to me, since there is a level of anxiety associated with uncertainty. I have become accustomed to the familiar comfort zone; rocking the boat destabilizes my equilibrium. This is where I learn and grow. I am reminded that “life begins at the end of my comfort zone.” Dealing with uncertainty and change can be debilitating in terms of my self-imposed stress, yet it seems that to live a compelling future one must step out of the familiar to reach new horizons. This is where attraction changes me. I become a better person who is more able to help others.

In closing, I wish to thank my Panel 57 members. They have become like family to me. I will remember everyone at the WSC with great esteem and honor. I will forever live with the many memories of getting outside my comfort zone. Your actions have been an attraction, convincing me to always grow and learn.

Sue C., South Dakota

Before attending my first Al-Anon meeting, my comfort zone included fear, confusion, and secrecy. My first home group studied Steps and Traditions, and I was certain I would leave the program before doing Steps Four, Five, and Nine; they were beyond my understanding and certainly beyond my comfort zone. But the more I saw and heard members who had peace and serenity—who all shared their Step experience, strength, and hope in front of everyone at the meetings each month—the more I was drawn to the meetings. The honesty of these members was scary, but also attractive.

Two years into the program I did my first Fourth Step. My Sponsor encouraged me to take the Fifth-Step action, so I did that, too. Since then, my recovery in Al-Anon has grown in direct proportion to my willingness to get outside my comfort zone. Action is attraction; I witnessed this truth in others, then and now.

I appreciate the spiritual foundation I find at Al-Anon meetings and the plan for living they give me, which includes honesty, openness, and confidence. One day, about a year before Area elections, I mentioned to my Service Sponsor that I might be willing to submit a résumé for Delegate. That willingness lasted about five

minutes. But her memory outlasted my willingness; closer to the deadline, she prompted me to submit my résumé. She told me just because a résumé is submitted, it does not mean a person is boarding the plane to Virginia Beach. Once again, fear took over and I secretly prayed someone else would be elected. Would I be able to do a good job as Delegate? I have three-tiered social awkwardness: I don't know what to wear; I don't know where to sit; and I don't know what to say. But then I learned that the World Service Conference (WSC) has a dress code and seating chart, and that any comment made concerns a specific topic and has a time limit. Woo-hoo! I watched other Delegates share at the mic and even got in line myself.

“Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone.” Today, my goal is to walk alongside other members when I can offer assistance and continue to step outside of my comfort zone so I can grow spiritually. Thank you to every 2019 WSC participant and to all those who have gone before me.

Nancy W., Utah

My journey to becoming the Utah Area Delegate began many years ago. I was born to a young mother and a problem-drinker father. They divorced shortly after my birth. I had the good fortune of seeing my mother remarry almost four years later to a saint of a man. He and his extended family taught me so much about unconditional love.

How I wish I had found Alateen as a teenager and had the chance to learn my father's problem was a disease, not a personality deficit. But it took many more years for the pain to get bad enough for me to find the rooms of Al-Anon, and still more years to get involved in service above the group level.

Now let's look at my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God. He is the same God I had as a five year old. Al-Anon taught me to communicate as often as needed, and that He has the ability to listen to all His children 24/7, and that the answer isn't always as quick to come as I expect, and to keep listening.

The first paragraph of Step Eleven, page 110 in *Paths to Recovery* (B-24), says:

The relationship we have with the God of our understanding ... is now more powerful as the result of our experience in working Steps One through Ten. In Step Two we “came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” ... In Step Six we became ready to have Him remove our “defects of character,” and finally in Step Seven we “asked Him to remove

our shortcomings.” ... In Step Eleven we can maintain our growth with new energy through prayer, meditation, and knowledge of His will.

I love you all!

Madeline S., Wyoming

As a child, I lived with an angry dry drunk. I grew up and married an alcoholic, in part because of beliefs from my childhood experiences. Over the next decade my marriage and life deteriorated because of my reaction to life with an active alcoholic. Just when I was out of hope, my husband started recovery and I was directed to Al-Anon. In spite of my misgivings, I went to an Al-Anon meeting. I don't remember what they said at that first meeting, but I felt better when it was over, so I went back.

Within the first year I took service positions in the group because they said they needed help and I knew that I could help. That time in my recovery is a blur. I knew little about action, attraction, or comfort zones. I was often miserable and still reacting to the effects of alcoholism. For many years I stumbled along, only going to one meeting a week and doing service work at the group level. I was growing, but very slowly.

My husband left after several years in the program and my whole life changed. I was compelled to take action: I got busy. My new Sponsor was very involved in service at the local level. I still did not consciously link service with growth, but in the years following the end of my first marriage I had many program adventures, did lots of service in Al-Anon, and eventually, my Higher Power led me to represent Wyoming as a Delegate on Panel 57. I never aimed to be a Delegate, but that has been my path.

Just like all of you, I have those days when I wonder if I have grown at all. Service has helped me learn to turn reaction into thoughtful action, identify my motives, and grow as a person. I have been given a blessed life as a member of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon. I spend most of my days growing in the comfort zone, content with what my Higher Power has given me because of the risks you helped me take. I make decisions in consultation with my Higher Power, my Sponsor, other members, and my friends. I have learned that waiting is sometimes the answer. The action I observed at that first meeting has sustained my growth throughout my Al-Anon journey. Thank you to all of you who loved me before I could love myself. I believe these gifts are to be shared as long as I live, with “anyone, anywhere who reaches out for help”—my hand, along with the hands of my fellow Al-Anon members, will always be there.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

María M., Mexico

Hi! My name is Lulú, and I'm the International Representative from Mexico.

I remember what it was like to be surrounded by alcoholism in my home. Picture this: It is dark outside, I'm eight or nine years old and my older brother, who's 14, isn't home yet. My mom is walking from one side to another in the living room, praying, worried, with a pained face and tears in her eyes. Her hands are clenched. And my

dad...he's angry. He hits his fist against the palm of his hand and says loudly, “He did it again!”

I can't sleep; my hands are sweating, my ears are focused on the noises I hear in the street, and I think, *I hope it's him*, but if I hear bumps in the house late at night then I pray it's not my brother...the more he is late the bigger the crisis is; my parents blame each other, they don't even notice that I'm awake, and all the attention goes to the alcoholic teenager...Finally, he gets home! My mother wants

to protect him, my dad wants to beat him, and the more my mom protects him, the more my dad gets angry and my brother babbles swear words...these scenes are repeated more frequently as the years go by.

My brother gets in trouble and is arrested by the police. He goes to jail. My mother suffers because of her son, and she sends me every day to get him things he needs. Nobody cares about how I feel, my fear, how ashamed I am, my anger, and what being a teenager is like for me, or how I'm in a great risk when the policemen inspect me. I learn that the alcoholic's needs always come first and the feelings and needs of everybody else disappear. I have mixed feelings: I love my brother but I hate that I have to pay the consequences of his behavior; I love my mom but I hate that I have to do what she wants me to do; and I love my father, but I hate him because he beats my brother in an inhuman manner.

When I came to Al-Anon, I learned that alcoholism is a disease, and learned that I hate the consequences of it, but I still love those who are sick, and I love those who are affected by it. My parents are already dead, and they didn't have the chance that I have—to treat the alcoholic as a sick human being. My brother is still an active alcoholic, but today I accept him and I love him.

2019 Projects in Mexico

- Public Outreach Committee: The second volume of the magazine "Facing Alcoholism Together" was printed. A company was hired to position Al-Anon as a brand that helps the families and friends of alcoholics.

- Alateen: There is a project we plan to work on called "Rallyteen," which consists of following clues to answer questions that are sent to the members. It's intended to encourage members to read Alateen literature.
- Archives: A flipchart for volunteers was made in order to motivate the members to volunteer for archive service and preserve our history.
- Publications: This project consists of a virtual catalog where all our publications will be recorded, along with a motivational legend to help members read each of the pieces.
- The National Healthy Groups Project: Two members of the Board of Trustees visit three Areas (chosen by lot), to motivate and reinforce the structure of services from the groups, following the District and Area Committees.

The main problem that we have faced at the Office is the decline of our Office, whose property has reached the end of its useful life. Our Office is also, unfortunately, located in an area that is at medium risk for earthquakes. The physical space is insufficient for our growth; we realize we need to relocate to a safer area. This project to change Offices was unanimously authorized in the XLVI Assembly Conference of National Service.

Currently we have 2,506 Al-Anon groups, 426 Alateen groups, and 226 Al-Anon Adult Children groups registered: 3,158 groups in total.



OPENING DINNER SPEAKER

Paula B., Executive Committee Chairperson

Since I was born on the fourth of July, I was always referred to as "Miss Independent." I was blessed with an analytical mind and strong reasoning skills, and I attempted to apply these to all aspects of life. This didn't serve me well in relationships or when I first came into Al-Anon. I was reluctant to get a Sponsor. I thought I could understand this program by doing a "deep dive" into the literature. I quickly learned that the shared experiences and collective wisdom found in meetings would provide abundant guidance and give me the courage to step out of my comfort zone.

My few memories of childhood are running away from home around age five, being left at a gas station for many hours when on a family trip, my parents joking that I was adopted, and being very shy. When I became a teenager, I recall Dad frequently falling asleep in his chair and criticizing my brother, my sisters, and my mom. I only had a few close friends because I was a loner and assumed nobody would understand me. I never brought friends over to our home because I was afraid of what my Dad would say once he began drinking. After one particularly bad night of my parents' arguing, I begged Mom to divorce Dad. She said she was staying with him for the sake of the kids. I decided to graduate from high school early, leave for college, and escape from the arguing. I

didn't want to be a reason for her to stay in what I judged to be an unhappy marriage.

I went away to college at 17 and graduated at 20. I went to graduate school while working full-time. As I pushed myself to take control of all aspects of my life, I had difficulty maintaining relationships. My first marriage lasted three-and-a-half years and, after it ended, I immediately went into another relationship with my current husband. I was attracted by his humor, but I never felt "enough"—good enough, pretty enough, or smart enough. Although this significantly tapped into my self-esteem deficits, I was grateful that he wanted to marry me.

After we married, his drinking intensified. I tried to control it and frequently took punitive actions. During this period I kept a calendar and recorded the number of drinks he had. After all, "what gets measured gets managed." I was tracking the data to prove to him his drinking was progressing. I also used a red X to designate whether or not it was a "good day" for me. A good day meant that I wasn't verbally abused. Sadly, on October 6, I scribbled a large, red X because that is the day I hit my bottom and recognized my insanity. My husband came home from work drunk and began verbally abusing me. I was so angry that, without thinking about my safety, I slapped him in the face. I ran upstairs and locked myself in a bedroom. He came to the door and told me to unlock the door or he'd break it down. Another example of my insanity is that I was more concerned about the door than my safety. I opened the door. He then slapped me and told me to come downstairs to bed. I did. I had no boundaries and thought I deserved this treatment.

The one thing I can say about the calendar is that I know when I came into Al-Anon—October 7, 1987—because that was the day I called A.A. I didn't know about Al-Anon Family Groups. The A.A. member referred me to the local Al-Anon Information Services (AIS) and I was given directions to my first meeting. The meeting was in a treatment center and as I entered the meeting and throughout the meeting, I cried because of the shame I felt. I wasn't offered a tissue, given literature, personally greeted, or spoken to after the meeting. Instead, those that attended the meeting went to see their loved ones who were in treatment. I never went back to that meeting. Today I reflect back on how I felt at this first meeting and make a point to have personal contact with the newcomer while offering comfort and support.

The next day I attended another meeting, this time at a detox center. Gratefully, we stayed on Steps One, Two, and Three month after month, which provided me a good foundation in this program of recovery. After three months I began attending additional meetings and learned about one of our most important tools: sponsorship. I got a Sponsor whom I called every morning at 6:30. We talked about what happened the day before and how I felt. This was very hard for me because, growing up, I wasn't encouraged to speak about my feelings and I had built up a wall from people. I was encouraged to do the opposite of my initial impulse since my best thinking was distorted from growing up in an alcoholic home. I started working the Twelve Steps and establishing boundaries. At meetings I listened for the similarities in member's stories and not the differences. I recognized that I wasn't unique. Through work with my Sponsor I learned about trust, spirituality, prayer, and meditation. I was given permission to develop a loving relationship with the God of my understanding, whom I call HP. I pray for guidance and acceptance of HP's will for me and feel Her abundant love.

After about 14 months in the program, I stepped out of my comfort zone with courage and coordinated an intervention through the

guidance of my Sponsor and HP. While my husband was in treatment, I found out he was bragging that I was a member of Al-Anon. When we met with the couples counselor, he questioned the number of meetings I attended each week, whether I had a Sponsor, and how often I spoke with her. When I informed him I was attending seven, eight, or nine meetings a week and called my Sponsor daily at 6:30 am, he recognized my commitment to recovery and decided we only needed one session. Before he left treatment, we established a relapse plan; I could identify his behavior that concerned me, then I was to call my Sponsor, and then go to a meeting.

During his aftercare, I did my Fourth and Fifth Steps with my Sponsor so that I would keep the focus on my recovery. Although my Fifth Step took two days, I felt unconditional love. I felt like the albatross of shame had been removed. I began individual counseling because of my anxiety and issues that stemmed from growing up in an alcoholic home. I came to Al-Anon because of my husband's drinking, but it was my father's drinking and my mother's reaction to his drinking that had a greater effect on me. Later in my journey, when I became an Alateen Sponsor, I had the opportunity to work through many of these issues. I recognized that my mother was doing the best she could and my resentment about how my father treated us was related to his disease. He truly loved us.

Prior to moving from Atlanta to Charlotte, I was able to make direct amends to my husband, ex-husband, most of my family, and several friends. In Charlotte I became a Group Representative and began to study the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts of Service with the help of a dedicated Sponsor. I started sponsoring others. It was during this time that my husband stopped attending Alcoholics Anonymous. Gratefully, my recovery didn't depend on his attendance and I became more active in service.

Service work has given me many opportunities to work on my character defects. When I was a Newsletter Coordinator, I got to work on my procrastination and perfectionism. It also forced me to learn new things, such as how to use a computer and hone my writing skills.

Next I became an Alternate District Representative and then District Representative. This helped me practice reaching out for help, delegating authority, and using leadership skills. As an Alternate Delegate, I improved my listening and communication skills. As a Delegate, I experienced much spiritual growth as I learned to trust the process and presume goodwill. Through the grace and guidance of HP, I moved to New Bern mid-panel. After serving as Delegate, I became the Area Chairperson and had many opportunities to "Q-TIP"—Quit Taking It Personally. I recognized that being a vulnerable leader isn't a sign of weakness. I learned to actively listen to other people's perspectives as ideas were discussed.

I had never considered being a Trustee until I was at the 2008 International Convention. I had many Trustees encourage me to submit a résumé. I was humbled and honored when I was selected. I developed a level of courage and strength that surprised me, and I have gained a deeper understanding of the spiritual principles behind our Legacies. I love this worldwide fellowship and am grateful to those who have so willingly shared this journey with me.

Reflecting back on my World Service Conference (WSC) experience, I am amazed at the life lessons along the way. My first Conference was in 2004 and the theme was "Dynamic Groups Today—Building Blocks for Tomorrow." This was the first Conference after the passage of the 2003 Board motion related to Alateen. When the Conference began, I could feel the tension. Some members were in support of the requirements and some

weren't. Some were upset that the Conference wasn't consulted one more time, although it became clear that the Conference had been consulted year after year, and the Board had taken legal action to protect our future—Alateens. Ultimately, the World Service Conference affirmed the Board motion in the spirit of unity. A building block was placed.

During this Conference I learned about humility and mutual respect. First, I recognized the importance of bringing back to my Area not only the Conference decisions, but also the discussions, so the Assembly would better understand the "why" behind the decisions. To effectively do this, I needed to ask the Area World Service Committee for more time on the Assembly agenda, since one hour was insufficient to truly capture four days of discussions. Second, during the Open Policy Committee meeting, every thought I had related to the topic was expressed. Obviously, my voice wasn't needed in every conversation. During the discussion, a Trustee respectfully expressed a contrary opinion to the majority of the Policy Committee members. He was heard. Although the group conscience decision was contrary to his opinion, he knew HP and the collective wisdom of the members is in every decision. Exemplary of mutual respect, he supported that group conscience decision when he entered the Conference room.

The 2005 World Service Conference theme was "Energize Al-Anon—Expand, Explore, Experience!" The Conference began with the Chair of the Board making amends related to the Board's 2003 decision and their intention to take action. There was recognition that we worked together—Delegates, World Service Office (WSO) Volunteers, and Staff. We had a "clearing of the air" to discuss concerns from the previous year's Conference. The Conference was introduced to a communication consultant to help with improved communication between all Conference members. This was an introduction to the principles of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making to reach an informed group conscience.

The Director's presentation was on "Creating a Culture of Trust." We discussed ways to ensure consensus on what constitutes success: having confidence in the competence of our trusted servants/leaders and ensuring that all decision makers have access to the same information. Having grown up in an alcoholic home, I thoroughly embraced these concepts as they supported the principles of trust, honesty, and respect.

That year I was one of two Delegates selected to introduce a Chosen Agenda Item. The topic was as follows: *Twenty-first century communication is direct and timely. Is the WSO's system of relying on Delegates and Area Coordinators obsolete in terms of reaching Districts and groups in an expedient manner? Is relying on one person to carry important messages to an entire state or province still feasible in a world of now and immediate communication?* As electronic means of communication have evolved, it's exciting to read conversations on AFG Connects and the information shared with our fellowship via *In the Loop*.

The 2006 World Service Conference theme was "Shared Leadership—Moving Forward with Confidence, Collaboration, and Clarity." We recognized that we never have to do service alone. The previous year's consultant returned and assisted the Conference members in further understanding our roles and shared leadership, and in using the process of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making. There was a discussion about Regional Service Seminars, which later resulted in a new vision: Together Empowering Al-Anon Members, or TEAM. Conference members voted on a revision

to the process of electing Regional Trustees. Thus, the Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) was formed. Conference members trusted the Board of Trustees to carefully consider the RCT input while vetting the candidates and the needs of the Board before bringing the Trustee nominees for traditional approval. When I gave my three-minute talk and said, "I have grown in confidence through collaborating and seeking clarity," I never imagined I would return to Conference for nine more years.

I was elected as the Southeast Trustee at the annual Board meeting in 2010, so I returned to Conference in 2011. The theme was "Expanding our community of *hope* by embracing:

- Yesterday's foundations
- Today's successes
- Tomorrow's possibilities"

We had a workshop titled "Cultural and Linguistic Competence: A Strategy Towards Diversity and Inclusion." We heard that values are "a collection of guiding, usually positive principles; what one deems to be correct and desirable in life, especially regarding personal conduct." Our first task was to identify our personal and service values. So it comes as no surprise that, when the Board, Staff, and Executive Committee worked together in 2018 on the Strategic Plan, our Core Values were:

- Spiritually based: adhering to our Legacies
- Honest: treating all equally, with integrity and respect
- Transparent: sharing process, content, and information
- Self-supporting: refusing outside funding

I participated as a newbie in a skit regarding property ownership. After much discussion throughout Conference, I was moved during the reading of Motion #6. This was a momentous occasion and a step forward in ensuring Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.'s future.

The theme for 2012 was "Our Spiritual Journey: We Get as We Give." We had a comprehensive conversation about electronic literature and its impact on AIS/LDCs. Fears were expressed about the future of these service arms and about change. There was a task force presentation on strengthening communications between the AIS, Areas, and Districts. I was reminded of Bill's essay on leadership and that "God has endowed human beings with considerable capability for foresight and evidently expects us to use it" (2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual [P-24/27], page 198). Our leadership session on communication and dealing with difficult situations is as relevant today as it was then. As Policy Chair, I framed the discussion around Do Not Refer policies for groups that Areas believed were operating outside of the Legacies. Isn't it interesting that what is old becomes new again as we evolve? Even then we emphasized using spiritual principles to guide the discussions and determine next steps.

2013's theme was "Our Legacies: The Spiritual Journey of Changing 'Me' to 'We.'" An exciting part of the "we" was approving some Area name changes so that the new titles better reflected their constituency. I worked with my fellow members of the Finance Committee to provide more insight into the spiritual connection between services provided by the World Service Office and our members. Gratefully, I was reelected as the Southeast Trustee. I continued in the role of Policy Chairperson and the Committee brought three policy items to discuss: memorial contributions, anonymity, and public relations, which became public outreach.

“Our Spiritual Principles in Action” was the theme for 2014 as we pondered the Board’s big question about “How can we as service leaders anticipate the future and Al-Anon’s place in it, ensuring that the necessary resources are available, with our spiritual principles as our guide?” We discussed practices or procedures within the Al-Anon fellowship that could limit forward movement and future thinking. We talked about the future of Al-Anon in 2051—100 years of our program. When the Conference discussed the use of computers, it became clear that note-taking styles varied and thus they were approved on a trial basis. The Finance Committee provided a great tool for groups to utilize on money matters.

The Policy Committee brought forward text for memorial contributions and service by Al-Anon members who are also members of Alcoholics Anonymous. The spiritual principles behind Tradition Five (singleness of purpose) and Tradition Six (cooperation while maintaining Al-Anon as a separate entity) ensured there was no appearance of a conflict of interest. The new text was approved and more clarity was provided.

At the annual meeting, I was elected Chairperson of the Board. This was a position to which I never aspired. However, I was moved by comments from the Nominating Committee Chairperson and allowed my name to be considered. This was a significant moment of vulnerability for me because I knew that if I was selected, it meant that change was in my future. In 2014 my job was eliminated with the sale of my company. I began to grow as a leader in ways I never imagined.

In 2015 we were “Living Our Spiritual Principles: Expanding Our Vision” while celebrating 55 years of the World Service Conference. That year we had a report on the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting that took place in Virginia Beach in October 2014. The topics were varied, and I was moved by the dedication and commitment to each participant’s structure and the worldwide fellowship. I am still connected with many of these incredible members. I was honored to be the US Representative and prepare a general session on incorporation. Conference members heard more about the migration from e-Communities to AFG Connects. Today the various communities talk to members in the same service positions around our Conference Structure. The Board Big Question was: “How do we envision responsible service leadership in Al-Anon, a vision that inspires today’s members to be tomorrow’s leaders who are motivated by spiritual principles?” I believe our Conference theme this year provides a very helpful tool: stepping out of our comfort zone. We discussed the practices that demonstrate a healthy, thriving group and how spiritual principles can be applied to money discussions. I was reelected Chairperson of the Board. Today I know I was the right person at that time, working alongside an incredibly strong group of leaders. Change was in the air.

The day before the 2016 WSC began, Conference members met the interim Executive Director and immediately knew the World Service Office was in great hands. Our theme was “Realizing Our Spiritual Potential” and the WSO was poised to move forward into its next exciting chapter, which included organizational restructuring to streamline activities and increase communication between departments. Our roles at Conference were explained through the Twelve Concepts of Service and we passed a torch between the Delegate, Trustee, Executive Committee At-Large member, and the new Executive Director. The “Memorial Contributions” text was approved after three years. It is inclusive and consistent with our spiritual principles of support and comfort.

The 2017 theme was “Our Members: Our Hope for the Future.” This time we heard the announcement about the search for our future Executive Director. We had great task force presentations on spirituality in group, District, and Area money discussions. Who knew that, as we practice trust, faith, and abundance in our personal life, we can also apply them to money discussions as we look to the future and dream? We had a Chosen Agenda Item on welcoming and supporting newcomers dealing with drug addiction while staying true to our Legacies. We will continue this conversation through a thought force presentation at this Conference. There was a thought force presentation about increasing Delegate participation and involvement with the agenda. This was implemented in 2018 and has been again this year. At the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, I was elected Chairperson of the Executive Committee.

Of all the Conferences I’ve attended, 2018’s was my favorite. The theme was “Al-Anon – There Is No Standing Still!” and we didn’t. Conference members met the new Executive Director and immediately recognized this dynamic, collaborative leader as a team player and facilitator of inventive, forward thinking. We took a leap of faith with a Mega Issue that brought Conference members into the early phase of a discussion about translation needs across the worldwide fellowship. Conference members engaged in some gamification with the Attendify app and had lots of fun trying to stay in the lead.

This year promises excitement as we affirm that “Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone.” I’m looking forward to our discussions and to seeing where these conversations will lead us.

As my journey in recovery has led me to this Conference and this amazing collection of leaders, I realize that I’ve never been alone. There has always been a Higher Power—a guide if you will—that knew my spiritual potential long before I came to recognize it. I’ve been surrounded by people who encouraged and supported me because they had vision. In trusting them, I came to trust myself and move past my old feelings of inadequacy. That’s a gift of this program—realizing that we are part of this immense knowledge that provides us the strength and courage to take the next step.

It’s good to look back, but not to stare. Among the many gifts of the program, I now have a relationship with a loving Higher Power who encourages me to grow through triumph and adversity. I’ve been married 32 years, and have a very close relationship with my mother. I was able to heal the relationship with my father prior to his death in 2012. I am no longer “Miss Independent.” I understand the deep spiritual connection of reaching out to my Higher Power and others for help. I continue learning on this journey.

SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Sarah S., Panel 57, Missouri

It is an honor and privilege to stand before you this evening as a spiritual speaker. Thank you for offering me the opportunity to do this. When I received the email invitation, I was flooded with a variety of feelings and emotions. Initially, tears filled my eyes and I was overwhelmed with disbelief that my peers would ask me to be of service to the World Service Conference in this role. My recovery has been a series of peaks and valleys. I began to wonder, *what would you think if you knew the rest of the story?* The invitation felt unmerited, unwarranted, and unearned. For a brief moment, I felt like a fraud. At times, my participation in Al-Anon has been self-righteous, self-justified, and self-serving. But, through prayer and meditation, I learned God was presenting me with an opportunity to be honest and vulnerable, and to carry a message that no longer causes feelings of shame.

I grew up affected by a parent's drinking. I didn't have the ability to understand that my parents' behaviors were a result of drinking or reacting to the drinking. I desperately wanted my parents' attention, but they were too distracted by the disease of alcoholism. At eight years old, I moved in with my grandmother, who provided me with love and nurtured me—well, at least as much as I would allow. By this time, I had decided that if you can't beat dysfunction, join it. In order to survive the disease, I developed some unacceptable behaviors. Through the inventory process I learned that these behaviors (survival skills) were actually assets that masked themselves as defects of character.

I was angry at the world. At times, my anger would seep out of my pores. I often found myself in trouble at school. I was so miserable I began to cause harm to other people. When I hurt others, I felt better. I felt a sense of relief and believed for a split second I was ok. I knew my survival depended on my ability to be in control of my surroundings and others at all times. I excelled at athletics, but over time my desire to control and protect myself cost me what I loved the most—sports.

When I was a freshman in high school, I spent time in the in-school suspension room because I couldn't get along with anyone. I couldn't trust anyone. I believed no one was safe. My freshman year, I met a girl that I connected with. She became my best friend. I spent time with her at her home because I had too much shame to bring her to mine. Her parents started to witness our negative behaviors. They introduced us to this program called Alateen.

On January 14, 2001, I was dragged through the doors of Alateen. I had no "desire" to be there and was very angry and bitter that I was forced to come. My friend and I started to call the program "Alacrap." But I quickly learned that if I wanted what you had, I needed to learn how to take suggestions. I was told to get a Sponsor, so I did. I got an adult Sponsor. Another teen could not have handled me. For full disclosure, this was prior to the Alateen motion in 2003.

Initially, I did what my Sponsor asked me to do. She let me know immediately that service was part of recovery. Service wasn't an option. I was quickly introduced to the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts. She shared things with me like, "You can't keep it if you don't give it away." She told me that service was our third Legacy and, like a three-legged stool, my program would be unbalanced without it.

My first Assembly was rapidly approaching. She told me to show up at her house on a Saturday morning with one suitcase. I asked why. She told me, "To get in the car!" I showed up with two suitcases and she promptly reminded me she said one, so I combined my suitcases. She told me that there were others who needed to get in the car and needed space for their luggage. She taught me accountability and discipline.

Once we arrived at the Assembly, we sat in the back row. I sat close to my Sponsor so she could keep an eye on me. The Panel 39 Delegate gave her Delegate Report. The role of Delegate sounded really important and I immediately was attracted to the position. All of my life I was attracted to obtaining titles and credentials because on the inside I felt I was never enough. I instantly realized that I had a new dream. The dream of becoming a Delegate. Now remember, this was my first Assembly and I couldn't possibly even know what that meant. And then, as I listened to the Delegate, the dream became diminished by my negative self-talk. I had the conscious thought, *I will never be capable of becoming the Delegate.* I knew my survival skills would prevent me from a role of this magnitude.

My service journey began and over time I lost the foundation that I was given. Participating in Al-Anon service became way more important than the spiritual principles that Al-Anon is built on. Today, I've been presented with an opportunity to be incredibly honest and vulnerable with you about how that happened. I got to a point where service was all I knew. My recovery program had taken a back seat, and I realized I was in big trouble. How did this happen?

As I said before, I never felt like I was enough. I showed up looking for validation and love from everyone. When I got extremely active in service and exceled by leaps and bounds, I felt important—like I was truly making a contribution to the world. I was invited to speak as an Alateen in many Areas and states. I served on the Alateen Advisory Committee at the WSO. After my term on the Advisory Committee ended, I realized how this made me feel. I felt like I was in charge of Al-Anon Family Groups. I felt important, and others started coming to me for answers. My ego was fed and God was edged out. You all knew this was an illusion, but I didn't know it was.

So, when something felt good, I needed more of it. I couldn't wait to become more active in service. By the time I was elected the Alternate Delegate, I believed that I had all the answers for Al-Anon. My actions were driven by many forms of selfishness, self-centeredness, and self-will. My focus was service only. I was going to meetings, but not actively working a program. My emotional bank account was dry because I was constantly making withdrawals and not making any investments. My identity became service!

After a fall Assembly I received an email from a member who created an anonymous email address so they could protect their identity. In part, the email lovingly stated, *"We in Al-Anon, who have been called to share our gifts in service positions, can choose to own the responsibility that goes with the service or not. The responsibility is to be a good example, but also to practice unconditional love for those who may not have all our gifts in service. For me, the example may help foster someone's learning the position that our Higher Power has put them in. I think I heard the word 'mulch' at the Assembly. Mulch is a fertilizer, not a pesticide. When we criticize each other in service, we are like pests and weeds to*

the Assembly. This will either do its duty in attracting those that are the weeds versus those that are willing to carry the loving message of Al-Anon in all we do and say. The challenge for you in the program today is to be the best examples you can be. You can choose to be bitter and angry about whatever's happened in your life, or try to see that God's will is in everyone around you. In order to let God's will happen, sometimes you need to see it happening in other people. Open your eyes and stop trying to hurt people around you. You might be surprised what you will attract if you sincerely treat others in a loving way through your words and actions."

I was furious. Initially, at the member that sent it to me. But I knew she was right. The anger turned into sadness, because I caused harm to another member and AFG. I sought guidance from members who didn't judge me or stroke my ego, but were willing to speak truth in love. A member I reached out to told me I was hiding out in service. Once again, I was offended. I wanted to retaliate, but I knew she was right.

With my Sponsor's help, I spent a good year reevaluating and inventorying my behavior. My Sponsor informed me that with the behaviors I was displaying, I wasn't Delegate material. The program is the Twelve Steps, not service. The Twelve Steps created an awareness of the spiritual principles that I had chosen not to apply. My life was drastically changing for the good. I began to pray that God would give me an opportunity to say "thank you" to the member who had the courage to share truth with me that would change my life. If it wasn't for that letter, I wouldn't be standing here today. One day I was having a conversation with someone and realized I was talking to the person who sent me the letter. I was able to tell them that their courageous, priceless gift changed my life. It's the most spiritual experience I've ever had. In the meantime, there were some decisions made at Conference that I didn't agree with and I determined that if I was ever Delegate, I would go to the WSC and change those things.

Let's flash forward a couple of years. In November 2016, the Panel 57 elections were held. My Sponsor encouraged me to submit my name for Delegate. I submitted my name and was elected. My dream had been realized. I was overwhelmed with fear and emotion. How could a kid like me, who never thought she was capable of anything, have been elected to the position of a World Service Delegate? In service, the members trusted me even when I may not have been trustworthy.

In April 2017, I headed to my first WSC with overwhelming support from members, enthusiasm, excitement, fear, colorful sports jackets, some high heels, and a resentment. I had a few items on my agenda that I felt needed to be talked about and I had every intention of bringing those up. Every time a previous Delegate would come back from Conference, they would talk about this spiritual presence that graced the meeting room. The very first morning of Conference, I felt that spiritual presence. I knew what they were talking about. It's an unexplainable feeling.

I found my seat and realized that the God of my understanding had a sense of humor. My seating assignment was located in the center of the Board of Trustees. I was surrounded. Was it a coincidence that I was placed there? No: I experienced firsthand how passionate our Board of Trustees is about Al-Anon service. I witnessed our spiritual principles in action. I began to understand why they didn't make the decisions I thought they should have made a few years earlier. My vision of AFG expanded. I finally understood that the WSC and Board of Trustees protected and continue to protect AFG. My Higher Power loved me enough to place me in the

middle of the very people who I was resentful of. My resentment was squashed and replaced with gratitude for the dedication and contributions of the members who give so much time to protect our fellowship.

My Sponsor shared a story with me. She talked about the significance and insignificance of grains of sand on the beach. The beach is incomplete without each grain of sand. The WSC isn't any different. The Conference is incomplete without each member. The WSC taught me to be "right-sized." It reaffirmed that my opinion was one of many and that all of the many opinions were necessary. My opinion didn't hold any more weight than anyone else's, but like every grain of sand on the beach, the Conference would be incomplete without each member.

I have known about this talk for a while and honestly, I have struggled from the time I was asked to share. I struggled because I knew I needed to be gut-wrenchingly honest. I used to feel shame centered around my journey in service. However, I have come to appreciate all the very special gifts and experiences Al-Anon service has given me. If it would have been an easier, softer way I may have missed the message altogether.

I love being a WSC Delegate! I've met so many people at the WSC who hold a special place in my heart today. I love sharing with our membership about AFG and getting others excited about service! My role as Delegate is to invest in our membership like others continue to invest in me. I can't keep it if I don't give it away. I know that I will never be able to repay what the WSC and all of you have given me.

Al-Anon has given me more than I even knew to ask for. Through the application of the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts, and active participation in Al-Anon service, every day I get a little closer to the woman I hope to be and that God intends for me to be. Al-Anon service is a beautiful legacy! When I live in the middle of recovery and participate in service, my recovery is rocketed into the next dimension. Service is not à la carte. I know today my participation in the Service Structure is dependent upon the quality of my recovery program.

The last three years have been a dream come true. I will be forever grateful for the privilege of serving as a World Service Conference Delegate. Each of you has blessed my life and I will always have fond memories of the time we shared. This is the last time Panel 57 will rock Step Eleven at the WSC. Panels 58 and 59, we are passing the torch on to you. Our literature reminds us that we are guardians of the Traditions. Tonight, I will walk out of here for the last time as a Delegate knowing that my HP has strategically placed each Conference member to continue to protect AFG. AFG has a very bright future.

It has truly been an honor and privilege to serve the World Service Conference as the Panel 57 Missouri Area Delegate. Thank you for loving and supporting me. I love all of you.

Terry T., Panel 57, Alaska

I was raised in an Indianapolis suburb in the 1950s and 60s. It was a comfortable life. My parents were social drinkers; they regularly went to cocktail parties, so I grew up thinking that drinking socially was normal. My family had plenty of dysfunction. I was the middle child, the peacemaker. Hmmm, was this where I first learned about people-pleasing? My father had a fierce temper, which both my sister and I inherited. Angry people scared me. My sister was an extremely difficult child and many of her behaviors I later recognized

in my alcoholic loved one. I always had trouble making decisions. It took me forever to decide what I wanted to order at a restaurant. When food arrived, I was never satisfied with what I ordered; everyone else's looked and smelled more delicious than mine. I now realize I wanted to make the perfect decision. I didn't know as a child that there is no such thing as a perfect decision.

Fast-forward to 1980. I fell in love with a talented, intelligent, articulate, funny, athletic, and alcoholic person. We lived, sailed, worked, laughed, cried, and fought together for 23 years. (We didn't fight *all* 23 years!) Of course, I didn't know she was an alcoholic when we met. I was 30; my friends all drank. Okay, so I did see some red flags in the beginning, but I chose to ignore them. I was blind to them, lured by our exciting life of sailing and adventures over reality. And I was in love. We lived together on a sailboat for the first ten years of our relationship. It was a perfect setup for codependents. It's a physically small space with no privacy. I wanted a more autonomous relationship, but I didn't know how to express my needs/desires; I was very immature. The sailing lifestyle, especially in Alaska—where we would be out in the wilderness for weeks at a time—was both isolating and exciting. And what do sailors love to do next to sailing? Sit around together, telling salty tales over alcohol!

We both wanted to sail off into the sunset. We planned and saved money for a sailing trip to paradise. Before we left and along the way, I begged her to quit drinking. I remember distinctly walking down this big hill in Dana Point, California, rehearsing in my head what I was going to say this time to get her to stop. After all, I had pleaded with her to quit smoking, which had worked. I thought all I had to do was ask enough times, ask the right way, ask at the right time... Couldn't I get her to stop? I joked about the books I would write about our ocean-sailing experience: *How To Fix & Find Parts for Your Old Diesel Engine on the West Coast of North America*, and *Where To Find Alcohol in the Middle of the South Pacific Ocean*! Yes, it is paradise out there, and yes: There is plenty of alcohol and plenty of alcoholics in paradise! I'm talking about a tiny atoll where the tallest thing is a palm tree and the next closest island is 800 miles away!! When we arrived in Hawaii, I was very depressed. She thought I was depressed because we still had 5,000 miles of ocean to sail across to get home. That wasn't it at all. I was depressed because I felt like I had been robbed of the trip I had expected, places I wanted to explore. I spent too many mornings sitting on the boat waiting while she slept off her hangover.

We returned to Alaska, moved into a house, and started a sailing charter business. It was my idea partly because I recognized that she treated me nicer around other people. In the evening, I would take the guests exploring on shore while she remained on board preparing dinner. And as you can imagine, drinking. Perfect. Oh boy, *what* was I thinking? Well, as her drinking progressed, my anger started coming out sideways. I looked like the crazy one, yelling at people in public, clerks at stores, strangers. They were safe. I remember one of those crazy incidents. I can't tell you why I was yelling at a stranger, but I remember standing in the boat harbor parking lot. I probably had my "parking police" hat on. I was yelling at some guy who leaned out of his car window, shook his head, and said: "You can catch more bees with honey than vinegar." That stopped me in my tracks.

On the outside it looked like we had a great life and a wonderful relationship. People would say: "You're so lucky." And our response was, "Oh no, it's not luck; it's the choices we've made!" What did I really know about choices? Certainly not much about *healthy*

choices. We had many good times in our relationship. However, those last five years were mostly miserable, and I'm amazed we both survived the last two. It was at that time I agreed to buy a house out-of-state. It needed a lot of work and she was going to go fix it up. Yeah, she would go away! I could have some peace of mind and not live in fear. While she was away, I told my closest friends that I thought my partner was an alcoholic. Best confession I ever made, because they recommended Al-Anon. Nine months later, I found my way into the rooms of Al-Anon.

I was broken, depressed, living in fear, suicidal. Fear, anger, and pain ruled my life. My fear came from my partner's anger. Most evenings I was the verbal punching bag. Even the dog, a 90-pound chow mix, was afraid of her behavior! The pain I felt from the emotional abuse was overwhelming. I was oblivious to the fact that I had become a victim. Me, the independent woman who left home at 18 and never looked back, got a good career, moved to Alaska, crossed an ocean...who me, a victim? Yep! It was a shock to me when my veils of denial started to lift and I learned I was a victim of abuse. Emotional abuse is very insidious. It slowly happened to me when I was looking the other way, when I was living in denial. All my decisions were based on what I thought others wanted. I did not know anymore that I counted. I could not speak my truth because I didn't have one. I could not express what I felt/needed/wanted because I didn't know anymore.

I found myself walking home slower and slower, trying to put off the inevitable. I would rack my brain for any shred of a discussion that would not start a fight. It didn't matter because my partner would find fault with everything. My job as a television director and editor was to make decisions and tell people what to do. How perfect for a control freak, for someone who had no control at home. I so much wanted to control things that if the toilet paper was put on the roll "the wrong direction," I would take it off and turn it around. That's how crazy I was! My career was very successful, winning awards and receiving lots of kudos. But at home I couldn't celebrate my success because of her intense jealousy. She would criticize my workplace and my coworkers. She would find something to argue about. I understand now it was her low self-esteem that would lead to these tirades.

How many times had I said to myself: I'm done; this is the beginning of the end?

I crawled into my first Al-Anon meeting February 22, 2005. From that first meeting I found hope and peace learning I was not alone. I will always cherish those precious gifts. Smiling, happy faces telling my story definitely attracted me! I wanted to work the Steps. I wanted what they had. I got a Sponsor. How grateful I am to this wonderful woman. She helped me save my life; I could not have done it without her. Her patience and listening ear were my lifeline. She did not judge me. She reflected back what she heard me say and reminded me of Al-Anon principles and slogans. I will never forget the day my Sponsor was patiently listening to my woes, and she asked if I wanted feedback. Boy, did I ever. She wisely said: "It sounds like you are in love with the potential of your relationship." Wow. That opened up my eyes. That was my first spiritual awakening. It was also an opportunity to put awareness, acceptance, and action to work. I was now aware and, by accepting my reality, I could start to change.

I had been living in denial for many years. I came by denial honestly. I learned from an early age to deny who I really was, what I thought, how I was feeling. Children were seen and not heard in my house. I thought for years that my father was an optimist. He rarely

complained. He'd be in the hospital and I'd ask him how he was. He'd say, "I'm fine. Can't complain; it won't do any good." I learned in Al-Anon that that was not optimism. That was denial.

I had told my loved one that I was going to Al-Anon meetings. I was regularly attending a Tuesday noon meeting. It was convenient and best of all it wasn't on my loved one's radar. Then my Sponsor suggested I go to the Monday night Fourth-Step meeting. She called it "a real kick-ass meeting." I got up the courage to tell my loved one I was going. I loved that great kick-ass meeting. We worked out of the *Blueprint for Progress* (P-91). I learned so much about myself in those meetings. But they were not easy to attend. My loved one would seem fine when I would leave for the meeting, but when I got home, she had consumed quantities of alcohol and her evil twin was awaiting me. It was not pretty. There was always some argument, and something was always my fault. All my Al-Anon euphoria dissipated in a hurry. I had some Al-Anon tools, but I was still pretty new at using them. One Monday afternoon we were painting the exterior of our house. I wanted to go to my meeting and was having a hard time getting up the courage to tell my loved one that I needed to stop painting so I could get to the meeting. I was standing on the top of an extension ladder about 20 feet above the ground, painting the peak of the house, trying to get up the courage to tell her. The irony of this did not escape me. Later I told my Sponsor about it. She is so wise. She said to me: "Well, of course you're brave enough to climb up to the top of the ladder but too afraid to say you want to go to a meeting. You don't want the ladder to love you!"

By using the tools of the program, reading Conference Approved Literature, going to meetings regularly, and talking with my Sponsor, I learned to stop fixing everything, to care *about* not *for* others, to stop people-pleasing, to recognize what was my business and, most importantly, what was not! Today, I am a mature person. I wake up feeling good about my life. I know there is a difference between the love I learned in my family and healthy love. I've learned to treat others with respect and to respect myself. I have a better awareness of my character defects and, with that awareness, I have been able to make changes in my behavior. I have choices now. I can express how I'm feeling and what I want/need instead of trying to manipulate people in order to get those things. I've stopped responding how I think others want me to. I've learned to be more honest with myself, not try to fix everything, not rescue or be responsible for everybody or every stray dog I come across. I no longer live from crisis to crisis. That fierce temper I inherited from my father? I have learned to control it—to "change the things I can." I am proud today to say that I rarely lose my temper; I don't have much anger now, and when I do, it doesn't have to come out sideways.

The first time I heard the Al-Anon Declaration, I cried. It took me years to be able to say it without crying. I took the Declaration to heart and believe in it fiercely today. That's one reason I'm here tonight. The Declaration is about loyalty. My character trait of loyalty did jump the fence in my past and cause me big problems. I still have to be careful not to be so loyal to the point that it becomes detrimental to me. Some relationships are not meant to last. I've had to learn when and how to let go. The Al-Anon Declaration is the essence of our Conference theme: "Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone." Being a District Representative taught me a lot about this. I was there to lead the District meetings and not control them. That was hard. I learned to listen, keep my mouth shut, and let go of outcomes. I learned I could set an

example, and that was the closest I could come to making anyone do anything.

There is no growth in the comfort zone. Denial is in the comfort zone. Acceptance of the present, the reality of my existence today, allowed me to see that I had choices. I could stop being a victim. I could respond thoughtfully instead of reacting. I could change. I could forgive my loved ones and myself. We were all doing the best we could at the time. My changed behaviors and my actions will have effects on others. If I'm careful and thoughtful about my actions, they can have positive effects. Acceptance is growth. Growth is one of the rich rewards of Al-Anon service. Service gave me back the self-assurance I had lost in the 23 years I spent living with an active alcoholic. Fourteen years ago, I would have said you were nuts if you told me one day I'd be a Delegate and stand up in front of dozens of people telling my story! It's opened other doors outside our program to me, ones that I never even dreamed of. I've learned a lot about myself. I never would have believed that from so much pain this amount of growth, transformation, and beauty would arise. Thank you all for being part of my journey.

WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE TAKEAWAYS

Prior to the Closing Session, Delegates and other Conference members were invited to share what they would be “taking away” from Conference—the topics they want to be sure to include in their report.

- I am used to being in business meetings. Here, I felt the presence of God. In Al-Anon, translations are a valuable part of the fellowship. I was not prepared for how much love I felt.
- Now I better understand the importance of encouraging others to submit a Trustee résumé. I will talk about virtual meetings. The budget scares me, but I know people in my Area who know numbers. I will ask them to present it. I can ask for help.
- I hope to reach young people by sharing information about electronic meeting growth. I was happy to order Spanish-language material; I am going to a Spanish-speaking District this week and will be able to deliver material that is written in Spanish.
- When I give my report and mess up, people will still love me. I don't have to fix anything in my Area, just be of service.
- I learned so much that will be helpful. It was like going to a new meeting without knowing anyone, and after a few minutes, feeling at home. It happened here.
- The discussion on the affirmation process was painful for me. I saw a lot of emotions and viewpoints. In the end, I realized that our process does work.
- Unlike Areas in this Structure, General Service Offices can create service tools, but they also have the option of translating whatever exists in English. There is a logic to it. The more stable the structure, the more it looks to service tools, whereas evolving structures and countries with collections of groups are focusing on recovery information, reading the Steps, and seeing how Al-Anon works. Wondering how to support international structures? Support the Board. It is indirect. We appreciate all the questions and comments and willingness to continue to support worldwide Al-Anon.
- I have been writing to my Area nightly. I wrote, “Last day of Conference—feelings of relief to grief, gratitude, love, exhaustion.” I consulted widely and learned that things are not always as they seem. I was suspicious, resentful, inexperienced. I learned not to check my brain at the door. There was a lot to learn daily. Not once did I feel worthy or qualified for this service position. One Delegate spoke to me and told me I was wrong.
- I will take the Chosen Agenda Items to my Area and use them as breakouts. We have service positions open and maybe this will help. I thought I didn't know anything, but I learned a bit. I thank the World Service Office (WSO) for providing Mentors. I knew someone would be looking for me and know my name. I am in a room with equals. I am inspired by your heart for this program.
- I have appreciation for the WSO Staff and Board. A previous Delegate told me there was a lot of love in the room. She was correct. Impatience is a character defect. The affirmation process tested me. It was kind of like doing it in my Area.
- I am excited to take back the finance report, which is infused with spiritual principles and transparency. The experience of being in a room with the rumbling of interpretation reminds me that this fellowship is worldwide.
- I had the opportunity to sit with fellow members who love and care about this program.
- I felt trepidation about coming. I felt like I was not good enough. I was worried about facilitating a financial presentation breakout. Why do I put myself out there like that? I was told, “When asked to do something, say yes.” There is a lot of growth in doing things we don't feel competent doing. Today, I am feeling good enough. I have one hour for my report and I was going to do it the way it has always been done. I had an epiphany—my report is going to be different this year!
- Thank you for the transparency. The Director of Finance & Operations makes it fun. I know how my culture is affected by this disease. When I hear the interpretation and the sharings of experience, strength, and hope in Spanish, I know Puerto Rico and Mexico are taken care of. They need to be taken care of back home. We are a trilingual organization. Now I can take that back in my presentation.
- There is no replacement for an individual Al-Anon member carrying the spiritual message of the program.
- I am excited because I feel the program is in good hands.
- Style & Proofing returned my beloved Oxford comma!
- I am taking the spirit of inclusivity and the first trilingual WSC to my Area.
- The Mega Issue is part of an incredible experience for my takeaway.
- It is unusual to be treated so special. I appreciate such concern about the history of Warranty Three. The spirit is here. Everything I ever wanted is on the other side of fear.
- Look to the future of Al-Anon. I understand the financials a bit better this year. We have been doing translation for a few years in my Area. I wondered for the past few years why the WSO didn't have translation at Conference. I am glad it is here.
- The 2018 WSC was not an anomaly. I pushed myself last year to take advantage of what came my way. I said yes to a lot of things. Rotation gives me three years. I will bring back “Welcoming Potential Members” and the ideas around that. The Conference theme—“Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone!”—has never been brought as a topic. To me it is a simple, relatable topic the worldwide fellowship gets to have for a whole year.

- The first three days were uncomfortable because of my seating assignment. I love having interpreters and a trilingual Conference. I have slight hearing loss, and I couldn't hear. I was forced to lean on my program and ask my Higher Power for help. On day three, I began to notice a difference; my brain was focusing on the Conference, not the murmur of the interpretation.
- I have forged friendships from different areas of service. Last year, I appreciated the Board including us in the Mega Issue. This year, we are trilingual.
- The Literature Committee is my greatest delight and challenge. It taught me to trust the process. We are dedicated servants doing the best we can do.
- Thank you for your contribution. Participation is the key to harmony.
- I am grateful to have witnessed the first trilingual World Service Conference. It is the first time in 50 years that the Area was able to choose a member for service, rather than be forced to pick one because they spoke the English language. Thank you all for supporting this three-year pilot project. The Delegate's skills and her willingness to learn will bring growth to the Area.
- I am jealous of English-speaking AFG Connects. I've received 30–40 messages that I cannot understand because English is not my first language. They wanted to let me know they are proud to be members. This is where love and respect reigns.
- I had breakfast with the International Representative from Mexico. Talking with her through the interpreter, I shared that I was at the California South Spanish Convention and I had an interpreter. I was truly grateful to have been there. They shared they had not had a Delegate visit for some time.
- I am very excited about being part of the first Conference that was held in three languages. I was worried because we needed to speak slowly. What we cherish is always remembered and kept in the heart.
- Part of the magic is that Panel 57 members have become family to me. In the span of five days, I feel that. I appreciate their wisdom, support, and encouragement. The French/English interpreter jumped in and helped make the Panel 59 theme sign in three languages!
- I try not to put people on pedestals, but I experienced warmth and felt welcomed. It felt like I was walking with giants.
- I left the other day with a heavy heart, wondering if decisions in the affirmation process would cause harm and be punitive. I am grateful I can leave knowing our Conference has trusted the process that has been put before us, and it works year after year. The process does work.
- The WSO invests in interpretation and Mexico invests. Now, my responsibility is to bring back quality from being here.
- I came to Conference before as a Delegate in 2009. The more I come back, the less I know. When I come here, I check my ego and pride and put myself in an open position.

CLOSING SESSION

Debbie G., Trustee, Chairperson of the Board | Jennie McC., Trustee, Conference Chairperson

The 2019 World Service Conference theme, “Action Is Attraction – There Is No Growth in the Comfort Zone,” provided a goal for the week. On the last day of the Conference, the Chairperson of the Board shared the following thoughts and observations:

“To paraphrase Bill W.’s opening statement to the 1961 World Service Conference:

“No matter what happens, your presence will ensure the maintenance of the linkage. Each one of these yearly meetings is really an insurance policy that can guarantee the future unity and function of our society.”

“For me, this year’s Conference was exactly that. We learned through yet another year of trying to get that Regional Committee on Trustees process right that if you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you always got. Perhaps we are now ready to get out of our comfort zone and take action in moving the Delegate selection of our Regional Committees on Trustees outside of the World Service Conference (WSC).

“While the discussion may have been initially uncomfortable, during our affirmation process we learned we have more work to do in educating our Conference members on the processes involved in selecting our Trustees and the affirmation process during the WSC.

“Perhaps our collective Higher Power was at work when five Regional Committees on Trustees (RCTs) were established this year, requiring 51 of our 67 Delegates to participate in the RCT process. This number does not include our Conference Committee on Trustee (CCT) members, who will participate in the Trustee at Large process.

“We made history as we began the first year of a three-year trial to provide simultaneous interpretation in French and Spanish.

“Our second year of presenting a Mega Issue demonstrated we are not afraid to get out of our comfort zone.

“We demonstrated ‘Progress Not Perfection’ with the initiation of new electronic voting. We saw that our imperfections are not inadequacies, but a gentle reminder that we are all in this together.

“And finally, we got to know our fellow Conference members through one-on-one conversations, sharings from the microphone, breakout sessions, conversations over our meal time together, and the use of our Conference app. Our interactions and discussions were a living demonstration of the cherished spirit that is the World Service Conference.”

The Conference Chairperson commented, “This is my ninth and probably my final World Service Conference (WSC). They have been getting better and better. This one is the best.

“It is the best because we brought our best selves and a loving Higher Power, just as our First Goal, ‘the spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of Al-Anon’s core principles in action,’ says we should.

“I saw this in action. We exhibited honesty, integrity, love, respect, trust, gratitude, encouragement, responsibility, participation, willingness, compassion, tolerance, patience, inclusion, joy, appreciation, support, cooperation, and harmony, to name a few. We stepped way out of our collective comfort zone to discuss the

idea presented during our Mega Issue session. We were trilingual. We clarified our Alateen policy with grace and respect. We practiced patience, tolerance, and acceptance as we coaxed our voting devices.

“We hope you are successful and feel you understand what we have done here and can share with confidence with your Areas. I hope it was as productive, informative, and fun for all of you.”

With a tap of the gavel, the Conference Chairperson brought the 2019 World Service Conference to a close.

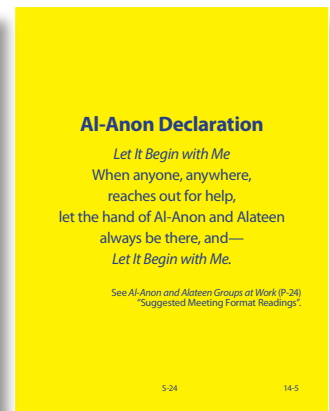
That evening, the Conference Chairperson opened the Closing Dinner with the Serenity Prayer. She remarked, “I hope you found this Conference as spiritual, fulfilling, and, at times, uncomfortable as I have.”

Guests were welcomed, including the Chairperson of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Following dinner, outgoing Panel 57 Delegates, outgoing members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, and the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) were presented with scrolls of appreciation for their service to Al-Anon Family Groups.

The Conference Chairperson remarked, “The fellowship, I know, is grateful for such dedicated trusted servants. This gratitude has been obvious with the abundance of cards, love gifts, and special treats that have been sent to us this week. We are lovingly supported by those we serve.”

The Spiritual Speakers, chosen by the previous year’s Conference—Sarah S., Panel 57, Missouri, and Terry T., Panel 57, Alaska—then shared their stories. (See pages 76-79).



At the close of their talks, members and their guests made a circle around the perimeter of the room and closed with the Al-Anon Declaration.

2019 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

MOTION #1

(94 YES, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

That the following persons be seated at the 2019 World Service Conference.

With voice, but no vote:

Niketa Bailey

Director of Finance & Operations, Non-Al-Anon Member

Scot P.

Associate Director—Digital Strategy, Al-Anon Member

María M.

International Representative—Mexico, Al-Anon Member

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

Thomas B.

Chairperson, ECRPM, Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to Finance Presentation Breakouts, but no vote:

Monday, April 15, 2019 and Tuesday, April 16, 2019

Mary Davis

Accounting Manager, Non-Al-Anon Member

That the following World Service Office Staff members be seated to observe at the 2019 World Service Conference as designated, with no voice and no vote:

Sunday, April 14, 2019

Yadi McCoy

Administrative Assistant (Spanish), Non-Al-Anon Member

Monday, April 15, 2019

Maya Chesley

Editorial Quality Specialist (Spanish), Non-Al-Anon Member

Nathalie Lym

Executive Administrative Coordinator (French), Non-Al-Anon Member

Daviana Wright

Executive Assistant (Spanish), Non-Al-Anon Member

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

Bob H.

Webmaster, Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2

(93 YES, 0 no, 1 abstention, 0 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2018 Annual Report.

MOTION #3

(91 YES, 3 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

To amend the text on pages 93–97 in the “Alateen” section in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) as follows:

(See Appendix III on pages 123–124.)

MOTION #4

(94 YES, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2018 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #5

(93 YES, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void) – CARRIED

To approve the 2019 Finance Committee Report.

MOTION #6

(91 YES, 3 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

To amend the Concept Five descriptive text on page 186–187 in “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; bold and underlined indicates new text; moved text is only underlined)

Concept Five

The rights of appeal and petition protect minorities and insure that they be heard.

The Rights of Appeal and Petition aim to protect and make the best possible use of minority feeling and opinion.

In the principle of the Right of Appeal, all minorities—whether among ~~the membership~~, ~~our the WSO sStaff~~, Executive Committee, ~~selected committees or Trustees~~, **or selected committees**—should be encouraged to file minority reports whenever they feel a majority to be in considerable error. When any minority considers an issue to be so grave that a mistaken decision could seriously affect Al-Anon as a whole, it has the actual duty of ~~presenting to present~~ **a minority appeal to the body that made the decision.**

This traditional Right of Appeal acknowledges that minorities can be right; **and** that even when they are *partly* or *wholly* in error, they still perform a valuable service by asserting their Right of Appeal and compelling a thorough debate on important issues. The well-heard minority, therefore, is our chief protection against an uninformed, misinformed, hasty, or angry majority.

The traditional Right of Petition permits any ~~person~~ **Al-Anon member**, in our service structure including World Service Office (WSO) employees, members of the Executive Committee, ~~selected committees or Board of Trustees~~, to petition **the Board of Trustees** for the redress of a ~~personal grievance~~ **after having exhausted all avenues of resolution, beginning with the service arm that made the original decision and working through the links of service.**

World Service Office (WSO) employees, members of the Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees, or selected committees may also petition for the redress of a grievance, carrying the complaint, if desired, directly to the Board of Trustees. One should be able to do this without prejudice or fear of reprisal.

However, ~~the~~ The Board of Trustees has the right to delegate the consideration of any and all petitions to another body that it deems appropriate. Though in practice the right to petition the Board of Trustees will seldom be exercised, its very existence will tend to restrain those in authority from unjust use of power.

~~Surely our workers cheerfully accept the direction and discipline that go with their jobs, but all should nevertheless be confident that they need not silently endure unnecessary and unfair personal domination. For all our paid workers at the WSO, the Board of Trustees has established a clearly defined process for the redress of a work related grievance. This process is outlined in the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of the World Service Office.~~

MOTION #7

(91 YES, 1 no, 1 abstentions, 0 void) – CARRIED

To amend the text on pages 139, 140, 168, and 171 in the "World Service Handbook" section of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; bold and underlined indicates new text; moved text is only underlined)

["World Service Handbook," page 139]

World Service Office Administrative Staff Paid employees of the World Service Office who coordinate activities and projects for the service functions of the department to which they are assigned. The Directors (with the exception of the Director of Finance) and Associate Directors **who fill certain Staff roles are voting members of the World Service Conference and therefore** must be Al-Anon members and are voting members of the World Service Conference.

["World Service Handbook," page 139-140]

World Service Conference (WSC) Al-Anon's annual business meeting, **which is** attended by all Delegates from the World Service Conference Structure, representatives from other countries, members of the Board of Trustees and Executive Committee, **and voting members of the World Service Office** (WSO) administrative ~~s~~Staff, and other **WSO** office personnel. The Conference provides guidance to the WSO in **on** service matters **that are** brought to its attention.

["World Service Handbook," page 168]

The WSO Policy Committee is composed of a Chairperson, all **the** members of the Board of Trustees, **the** members of the Executive Committee, and the Conference **voting** members of the WSO administrative ~~s~~Staff. It meets quarterly in advance of the meeting of the Board of Trustees.

["World Service Handbook," page 168]

The Executive Committee which meets each monthly **and** is the administrator of the World Service Office. **The Board of Trustees has granted it legal authority to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the World Service Office,** with legal authority granted by the Board of Trustees to conduct its daily affairs. Its ~~seven~~**eight** members, one of whom serves as Chairman~~person~~, are appointed by the Trustees. They include the Executive Director, one **voting** member of the administrative ~~s~~Staff, the Chairmen~~persons~~ of the **Board of Trustees, the Policy, and the Finance Committees,** and three Al-Anon members, **preferably not Trustees,** elected by the Board of Trustees who contribute experience in specific fields and situations.

["World Service Handbook," page 171]

[add the words

Voting Members of the

before WSO Administrative Staff in the boxes below.]



▲ Group Representative	❖ Al-Anon Information Service Liaison
□ District Representative	★ WSO Volunteer Board of Trustees & Executive Committee
★ Assembly Officer	■ WSO Administrative Staff
● Chairman	
○ Delegate	
○ Area Coordinator	

2018 World Service Office Annual Report

ADMINISTRATION

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE OVERVIEW

In the field of world service, the **Board of Trustees** assumes primary leadership. The Board of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) meets quarterly and is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the World Service Conference (WSC), establishing business policies of the World Service Office (WSO), estimating revenue, administering services to the membership, publishing and distributing Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and approving the Annual Reports submitted by the Executive Director and WSO Conference Staff.

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is empowered to act on behalf of the Trustees between Board meetings. The Executive Committee has been given legal authority by the Board of Trustees to oversee the day-to-day affairs of the WSO, and it receives weekly service updates from the Office's Directors, Associate Directors, and Executive Director.

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. was incorporated in February 1999 under the Canadian Corporations Act and has since continued under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act. It is a registered charity under paragraph 194(1) of the Income Tax Act of Canada.

The Executive Director is responsible for overall supervision of the WSO Staff (which currently consists of 49 full-time employees and one temporary employee) and for administration of the organization's policies. The Directors, Associate Directors, and Managers who make up the Staff Leadership Team (SLT) collaborate on office-wide projects, provide direct input on budgeting for the departments, and serve as a resource for each other and the Executive Director.

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 (including pregnancy), age, disability, religion, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, genetic information, status as a veteran, or any other characteristic to the extent to which it is protected by applicable federal, state, or local law. Every effort is made to maintain a work atmosphere that is free of harassment.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Debbie G., Chairperson

The Trustees, along with members of the Executive Committee, direct the business operations of the WSO in accordance with the Bylaws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board acts as the chief service arm of the WSC, as it guards the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship and controls the organization's finances. The Board serves as the guardian of Al-Anon's Twelve Traditions, its Twelve Concepts of Service, and the "Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter."

To aid members in better understanding the actions and duties of the Board of Trustees, it is important to make clear that Trustees, Executive Committee members, and employed Staff have a fiduciary duty to the organization of AFG, Inc., and that this duty includes principles of Care, Loyalty, Obedience, and Foresight. In short, this means they are required to act reasonably, prudently, and in the best interests of the organization to avoid negligence and fraud, to prevent conflicts of interest, and to look continuously toward the future.

Duty of Care

- Exercise ordinary and reasonable care in performance of duties
- Exhibit honesty and good faith
- Make decisions based on information, not opinion
- Act in the best interest of the fellowship
- Listen to experts when necessary
- Be knowledgeable about the fellowship
- Show up and ask questions

Duty of Loyalty

- Offer undivided commitment to the fellowship
- Express faithfulness
- Be accountable
- Look after the interests of AFG, Inc. as a whole, rather than a single Region's or group's
- Support any group conscience decision, despite personal opinions

Duty of Obedience

- Adhere to laws and regulations
- Comply with financial responsibilities
- Tend to legal issues
- Adhere to the Articles of Incorporation
- Obey Al-Anon's Bylaws

Duty of Foresight

- Make plans that have Strategic legitimacy
- Exercise Board stewardship
- Display a readiness to learn

The Board approved Interim Actions of the Executive Committee:

- To approve At-Large members for the Literature Committee, Audit Committee, Public Outreach Committee, and *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee
- To approve the change of deadline for At-Large Committee résumés to January 1
- To accept revised guidelines for the Finance Committee, Policy Committee, Strategic Plan Oversight Work Group, Audit Committee, International Coordination Committee, Literature Committee, *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee, Nominating Committee, Conference Committee on Trustees, Conference Leadership Team, Executive Committee, Public Outreach Committee, and Compensation Committee
- To accept updates and revisions to the WSO Employee Manual
- To approve the translation of the Lois W. Memorial Issue of *The Forum* into Spanish and to post it in all three languages in 2019
- To formally inactivate the Lone Member Correspondence Service and remove references in CAL as editions are updated, except as historical notations
- To formally discontinue *Area Highlights* for the WSC Structure

The Board, in its legal and financial capacity, took action:

- To approve the 2017 Annual Report
- To approve the 2017 Auditor's Report
- To comply with the Audit Committee's recommendations to accept the Dixon Hughes Goodman audit firm and letter of engagement for audit services for the financial year ending December 31, 2018
- To approve the 2018 WSC motions
- To approve the banking resolution for AFG, Inc.
- To elect three Trustee at Large nominees, five Regional Trustee nominees, the At-Large member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM), as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee At-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and ECRPM
- To approve the Committee Chairperson appointments for 2018-2019
- To accept the resignation of the US Southeast Regional Trustee
- To approve the revised 2018 Budget
- To approve the 2018 Budget Report descriptive text as presented (as a handout to the 2018 WSC)
- To approve that the Equalized Expense amount for the 2019 WSC be \$1,308.00 US. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the 2019 WSC is \$1,982.00 US.
- To accept the Investment Philosophy as presented
- To retain the firm of Dixon, Hughes & Goodman LLP for audit services for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2018

- To approve a special project to provide professional interpretation, when required, to support Spanish- and French-speaking Delegates who attend the WSC. The project will start in 2019 as a three-year trial, with the annual net Conference cost of over \$100,000 to be transferred from the Reserve Fund.
- To direct the WSO to send a statement informing all registered groups of the importance of discussing and creating safety guidelines
- To direct WSO Staff to utilize the Policy Committee criteria presented at the 2012 WSC to ensure that an Area has established a fair and balanced "Do Not Refer" and "Re-Refer" policy. These criteria allow the WSO to support Area "Do Not Refer" group conscience decisions by removing group meetings from the WSO meeting list. Groups not being referred by the WSO remain active and registered.
- To accept the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee's recommendation to replace *The Forum* Statement of Purpose with the wording from the Suggested AI-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps that says: "a fellowship of relatives and friends of alcoholics who share their experience, strength, and hope in order to solve their common problems."
- To approve and accept the new Conflict of Interest Policy and the Conflict of Interest Statements
- To approve the annual meeting with Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP on February 24, 2018, held virtually via web conferencing and with video technology, as a one-year trial. An assessment by the Audit Committee, Director of Finance, and Dixon Hughes Goodman LLP was completed in September 2018. The Audit Committee report to the Board in October 2018 included a recommendation concerning the meeting format for 2019.
- To approve the Strategic Plan dated October 17, 2018, with Objective 2 under the Goal for Members being resubmitted in January 2019.
- To approve revisions to the Bylaws of AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

The Board, in its oversight capacity, took action:

- To approve the following as the 2019 WSC theme:

Action is Attraction – There is No Growth in the Comfort Zone
La acción es atracción – No hay crecimiento en la zona de comodidad
L'action, c'est l'attrait – Il n'y a pas de croissance dans la zone de confort

- To approve the Conference Leadership Team's recommendation to offer professional interpretation, beginning at the 2019 WSC. This interpretation will be provided for a three-year trial period, and it will be aural interpretation, not written translation of documents or presentations.

Strategic Planning, Board of Trustees

Terry F./Judy K., Chairpersons, Strategic Plan Oversight Work Group

As the descriptive text of Concept Nine states, “We often must try to think months and years ahead.” This is the ongoing work of Strategic Planning, an essential role of the Board of Trustees.

In order to accomplish one of the Board’s 2018 goals of personally connecting with Areas, one of the Trustees attended Al-Anon service events (such as Assemblies) in six Areas: New York South, North Dakota, South Dakota, Quebec East, Delaware, and Puerto Rico. These Areas were identified as locations that had no WSO Staff or Board of Trustee contact in the last five years. The goal behind the Board’s Strategy was to reconnect with these Areas in an effort to strengthen the Service Structure. As Concept Nine suggests, “If an idea seems good, we try it experimentally.” Feedback on these visits will be evaluated by the Board to determine whether or not the outreach resulted in measurable, positive outcomes for the Areas and for Al-Anon as a whole.

Because the Board determined that working with a professional would provide guidance and further direction to the Strategic Planning process, the Board of Trustees, At-Large members of the Executive Committee and WSO Conference Staff members attended a collaborative session with a Strategic Planning consultant. The goal of this session was to exercise foresight in thinking about Al-Anon’s service needs and estimating the future—an essential activity at the World Service level, as described in Concept Nine.

Prior to the Strategic session, the Board, Executive Committee, and Staff members completed an extensive environmental scan in order to share perspectives and opinions on world events and how those changes might affect Al-Anon Family Groups. The survey addressed demographics, the economic climate, legislation and regulations, technology and science, and politics and social values. For each of the five arenas of change, individuals were asked to reflect on current conditions, trends, and assumptions about the future. These arenas were important to consider because Strategies for the future will be based on how the WSO chooses to respond to a changing environment.

The survey responses provided the stimulus for the consultant-guided discussion. Together, Board, Executive Committee, and Staff members reviewed the wording of the current Mission and Vision Statements and formulated new forward-thinking Goals and Objectives. Subsequently, the Staff formulated specific Strategies to meet the Goals and Objectives. These Strategies are closely linked to the prudent allocation of Al-Anon’s resources and have been deemed feasible and appropriate, based on the WSO’s capacity and the annual budget.

As a result of the Strategic Planning session, AFG, Inc.’s Mission and Vision were modified to more clearly state who AFG, Inc. is and what our organization does, even though Al-Anon’s primary purpose remains unchanged. A common theme in the planning process was the word universal: “universal access to tools for recovery” and “Al-Anon as the universally available resource.” The Goals and Objectives address aspects of a rapidly evolving technological environment and the diverse needs of current and potential Al-Anon members.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.’s Updated Strategic Plan:



CORE PURPOSE

Helping families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.

MISSION STATEMENT

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences.



CORE VALUES

- **Spiritually based:** adhering to our Legacies
- **Honest:** treating all equally, with integrity and respect
- **Transparent:** sharing process, content, and information
- **Self-supporting:** refusing outside funding



ENVISIONED FUTURE (2024-2029)

- AFG, Inc. is a global organization with technology-based operations that support the delivery of on-demand, barrier-free access to the program, information, meetings, and Sponsors.
- The research-validated effectiveness of the Al-Anon/Alateen program in addressing the family disease of alcoholism is recognized by professionals, schools, and religious leaders. Their recommendations to this program increase membership and expand its outreach.
- Society as a whole benefits from reduced health care costs, lower levels of incarceration, and increased graduation rates.
- Families and friends of alcoholics benefit from greater connectedness to support, no matter their location or language.

GOALS (2022-2024)

- **Goal: Members**
AFG, Inc. provides universal access to tools for recovery from the family disease of alcoholism.
- **Goal: Public**
Both the public and professionals recognize alcoholism as a family disease, and Al-Anon as the universally available, effective, and sustainable resource for those affected.
- **Goal: Organization**
AFG, Inc. has one global structure, increasing access to knowledge, resources, and the program.



The Strategic Planning process used by the Board, Executive Committee, and Staff now provides a systematic procedure for future planning—one that focuses on impact and opportunity. This step-by-step guidance in addressing Al-Anon’s future revitalized the work of the Board, Executive Committee, and Staff in envisioning a future that ensures Al-Anon’s continued relevance and increased viability in a complex environment.

Together Empowering AI-Anon Members (TEAM)

Due to the 2018 AI-Anon International Convention, TEAM Events were not held in 2018. The following Areas will hold TEAM Events in 2019: Nevada (February 2), Quebec East (May 25), New York South (June 2), Maritime Provinces (May 30), South Carolina (June 7), and Pennsylvania (September 28).

Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect

The 2018 Road Trip! You and Your Board Connect event was held in Houston, Texas on Saturday, October 20, 2018. This was a successful event, bringing in 55 registrants. The event received very positive feedback from the evaluation forms, the Area Delegate, and the Board and Executive Committee members in attendance.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Paula B., Chairperson

The Executive Committee, which meets monthly, is the administrator of the WSO; it has legal and financial authority to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees between quarterly meetings. This Committee reports all actions to the full Board for final approval no later than the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.

The seven members of the Executive Committee include: the Executive Director, a member of Senior WSO Staff (currently the Director of Programs), the Chairpersons of the Policy and Finance Committees, and three At-Large AI-Anon members who are elected by the Board of Trustees. The Chairperson of the Board participates in the meeting with voice to communicate the perspective of the Board, but does not vote. The Chairperson of the Executive Committee is elected by the Board from among the three At-Large members.

In accordance with Concept Eight, the Board of Trustees has assigned these responsibilities to the Executive Committee:

- To approve the minutes and actions of the Finance Committee (including the monthly, unaudited Financial Statement)
- To approve special projects for the Board and Staff that involve day-to-day operations
- To receive weekly updates on departmental activities from the Executive Director, Director of Finance & Operations, and the Director of Programs. These updates contain progress of Project Approvals and Proposals to Study (submitted by the Staff), and insights into how the activities are related to the Strategic Plan.
- To review additions, updates, and corrections to policies and procedures for the Employee Policies and Procedures Manual of AFG, Inc.
- To approve Committee Guidelines
- To approve résumés for At-Large Committee (*Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee, Public Outreach, Literature, and Audit) members and certain thought and task force members
- To review presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference
- To review the annual letter from the WSO's copyright lawyer regarding current trends in copyright laws and the internet to ensure that AI-Anon's copyright and trademarks are vigorously protected

- To approve discontinuance of a pamphlet based on recommendations from the Literature Committee
- To review the progress of the Staff Strategic Plan implementation efforts each quarter and report major changes to the Board
- To perform other duties assigned by the Board

The following actions were approved by the Executive Committee and presented to the Board of Trustees:

- To approve the change of deadline for At-Large Committee résumés to January 1
- To approve the translation of the Lois W. Memorial Issue of *The Forum* into Spanish and to post the issue in French, Spanish, and English in 2019
- To formally inactivate the Lone Member Correspondence Service and remove references in Conference Approved Literature as editions are updated, except as historical notations
- To formally discontinue *Area Highlights* for the WSC Structure
- To approve that the quotation on page 223 of *One Day at a Time in AI-Anon* (B-6, B-14) be corrected to replace the word "truth" with "wrath"
- To accept replacement of the nomenclature of "Do Not Refer" and "Re-Refer" policies with either "Meeting List Publication" or "Publishing" policies. The final wording to be determined after the current nomenclature is reviewed by WSO Translation and Style & Proofing Staff.
- To approve the use of the wording "Families and Friends Only" and "Families, Friends, and Observers Welcome" to replace "Closed" and "Open" in identification of meeting attendees on the AFG Electronic Meeting Registration/Update Form. This new wording will be used for a trial period of six months prior to making a recommendation to the Board regarding the implementation of this change on the AI-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1).
- To approve the transfer of surplus 2018 operating budget funds, less \$2,000, to the Reserve Fund prior to the close of the audit year.

POLICY COMMITTEE

John McL./Norm W., Chairpersons
Bruce F./Joan S./Gail G., Co-Chairpersons
Kerri K./Sue P., Secretary Designees

The Policy Committee is the second-largest group conscience representing AI-Anon as a whole, after the World Service Conference. The Committee is comprised of members of the Board of Trustees, WSO Staff who are WSC members, and At Large members of the Executive Committee. The Policy Committee ensures that the "Digest of AI-Anon and Alateen Policies" (Policy Digest) contains clear and concise policies that are based on AI-Anon's Traditions and spiritual principles. If the Policy Committee determines that more clarity on a topic is necessary, the Committee then makes a recommendation to the Board of Trustees. If the Board approves any recommended change to the Policy Digest, that change requires approval by no less than a two-thirds vote at the WSC.

Topics at the quarterly Policy Committee meetings are generated by members of the fellowship, Delegates, and members of the Committee. The Policy Committee can exercise authority over issues or projects that involve Al-Anon policy, public relations, the Traditions, or the Concepts of Service, as these may arise in other WSO committees. It is empowered to consider any issues or projects submitted by an Al-Anon member or to reconsider a decision that has already been made, if any part of the fellowship dissents. The Policy Committee makes recommendations and reports minority views to the Board of Trustees.

During 2018, the Policy Committee completed its review of the “Alateen” portion of the Policy Digest. The Policy Committee recommended revisions of this section to the Board of Trustees. The proposed changes provide more clarity and reflect the spiritual principles members apply when they adhere to the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. The Board accepted the changes and recommended they be presented for consideration by the 2019 WSC in April.

The Policy Committee continued its discussions regarding electronic meetings; these conversations began at the 2017 WSC Open Policy Meeting and led to the formation of the Electronic Meetings Work Group (EMWG). The Work Group was charged with exploring ways to reach out to electronic meetings and finding ways to allow them to fully participate in the fellowship. At the 2018 WSC, the EMWG gave a presentation on electronic meetings. The EMWG is to review existing archival material about this topic so that it can determine how to improve the WSO’s understanding of electronic meetings’ needs and wants, and how the WSO can help the members in these meetings achieve Al-Anon’s primary purpose. Given the enormity and breadth of this subject, the EMWG will continue to focus on gathering additional information about electronic meetings.

At the Open Policy Meeting during the WSC, the Policy Committee discussed the topic “Meditation as Part of a Group Meeting.” Discussion focused on how to balance a group’s autonomy to set its own format with its responsibility to uphold Al-Anon’s spiritual principles, along with how to avoid affiliation and create a welcoming environment for friends and families of alcoholics, as set forth in the Traditions. This discussion led to the formation of a thought force charged with conducting a knowledge-based discussion at the October 2018 Policy meeting. Due to the great variation in the forms of meditation or “quiet time” practiced at meetings, no resolutions were reached at that time.

The Policy Committee created a thought force to assist it in its consideration of whether a procedure is needed to present Policy Committee motions to the WSC between annual meetings (aka Interim Conference Actions). The Policy Committee used the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions in reviewing the issue. The Committee will continue its work on this question.

At the July Policy Meeting, the Policy Committee approved the Executive Director’s request to invite the Associate Director—Digital Strategy to attend the Policy Committee meetings as a resource for a trial period of one year, beginning July 2018.

Throughout 2018, the Policy Committee continued its review of the “Membership and Groups” portion of the Policy Digest, with the goal of describing the spiritual principles upon which the provisions are based, in addition to making any appropriate updates. Since the October Board meeting, two task forces have been created to begin reviewing and updating two other sections within the Policy Digest. The first is working on the “Local Services” section. The second is working on the section titled “Conference Approved Literature and Service Tools/Materials.”

ADMINISTRATION & DIGITAL STRATEGY

Vali F., Executive Director

Strategic Planning

A key Staff responsibility during the second half of 2018 was converting the AFG, Inc. Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives that were approved by the Board into short-term Strategies and action plans. While the Objectives outline direction for the organization in the next three to five years, Strategies represent the one- to two-year implementation plan supporting those Goals and Objectives. After participating in the Strategic Planning session, Staff created task forces with WSO Volunteers to define the Strategies necessary to achieve significant progress toward the Goals and Objectives. The Staff Leadership Team then prioritized the Strategies and built action plans for those that were labeled “critical” (needing to be accomplished within 2019) or “high” (needing to start in 2019). The SLT also calculated the budget and capacity requirements necessary to complete each Strategy. Since capacity is limited, Staff also identified current activities that could be automated or optimized through process improvement to reduce workload. The results of these efforts were presented at the Executive Committee meeting in November. The Executive Committee was asked to confirm whether the completion of these actions would bring about substantial progress toward the Goals; the Committee provided confirmation.

Based on this guidance, Staff incorporated costs for accomplishing the Strategies into the 2019 preliminary budget proposal, which was presented at the December 2018 Finance Committee meeting. The SLT then finished the year by developing the detailed tasks necessary to meet each Strategic milestone, starting with those being delivered before the 2019 Conference.

Staff was successful at implementing a critical priority Strategy before the end of the year; this Strategy consisted of streamlining the current semiannual process for creating and distributing *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)*. Staff considered frequent requests from professionals and links of service to replenish *AFA* inventory late in the year, the impact of twice-a-year order deadlines and deliveries on Customer Service and Warehouse Staff, and cost impacts of placing smaller orders and maintaining inventory. Staff then decided to shift *AFA* from a semiannual ordering and shipment process to an annual inventory system. Each new *AFA* will become available for order in December of the year prior and will be available for order through November of that year.

Staff Leadership Team

Throughout the year, and particularly in anticipation of added Strategic Plan responsibilities, the SLT sought to reduce the number of steps involved in completing routine and special projects. The goal of these changes was to give the WSO more time to answer member questions; to focus on public outreach efforts across social media, traditional Public Service Announcement (PSA) tools, and the professional community; to support WSC Delegates at Conference and International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) Delegates at their biennial meeting; and to produce the exciting Sixth International Al-Anon Convention in Baltimore. The SLT accomplished these changes by applying the principles of the Al-Anon program found in Al-Anon’s Legacies; its members sought unity in their decisions by talking to each other and reasoning things out, so that they could uncover the group conscience in their biweekly meetings.

The Project Calendar was implemented early in the year, to improve both efficiency and communication across departments. It visually demonstrates potential bottlenecks in the processing of ongoing and one-time projects, such as *The Forum* magazine production and the International Convention. As the year progressed, it became apparent this calendar was insufficient to support the number of projects being simultaneously executed by WSO Staff across departments. A Staff task force evaluated and presented a recommendation for a next-generation project management tool to the SLT, which approved the recommendation. Implementation began in December; pilot projects will include action plans for the Strategic Plan Strategies.

Service Manual

When Staff discovered errors in the first version of the *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27), they carried out a thorough evaluation of their processes for revision, editing, and translation. As a result, new technology was implemented to give Staff adequate control over additions and revisions to the file. Access to the document was limited and a tight protocol was applied to ensure the final design version matched the master document. Responsibility for future *Service Manual* editions was transferred to the Events & Special Projects Team, which is skilled at coordinating multiple projects. Their expertise will facilitate the difficult process of updating all four sections of the *Manual* simultaneously.

Additionally, Staff created a process for generating and identifying versions of the *Service Manual*, given it is now possible to publish interim electronic and printed copies between formal edition changes. Staff have implemented all these changes and controls in their development of version two (2) of the *Service Manual*. The first section that they revised in version two (2) was “Groups at Work”; edits to this section were completed in December.

Given the issues discovered, the changes that needed to be implemented, and the WSO’s desire to ensure the same *Manual* material is available in all languages, the decision was made to delay publication of the Spanish and French *Service Manuals* until version two (2) is available, starting with publication of *Groups at Work* (P-24).

Executive Director Updates

Mid-year, Staff detected a potential security concern at the WSO. Actions were taken to ensure the safety of the Staff and, fortunately, investigation into the situation confirmed the perceived threat was, in fact, harmless. Nonetheless, the Executive Director and Executive Committee agreed that an operational security audit and risk assessment would be appropriate to identify any potential concerns for Staff safety and to obtain suggestions on best practices. The audit was performed in December. Staff will review the report and implement appropriate changes in 2019.

At the direction of the Board of Trustees, Staff undertook the process of creating a safety document that would encourage groups to talk about safety in Al-Anon meetings and develop plans for addressing any issues that might arise. Building on the example of other fellowships, Staff drafted the document, the Executive Committee reviewed the content, and General Counsel validated the language to ensure it protected Al-Anon as a whole. This document was published to the WSC Members community on AFG Connects at the end of the year.

Staff and the Structural Transition of the World Service Office

The WSO’s organizational structure continued to evolve in 2018 with the distribution of teams across three departments: Administration & Digital Strategy, Finance & Operations, and Programs. Given their scope, the Digital Strategy and Events & Special Projects Teams began reporting directly to the Executive Director, while the Translation Team became part of the Finance & Operations Department.

Accompanying this change, the retirement of the Associate Director—Public Outreach Media in June provided the WSO the opportunity to transfer responsibility for public outreach media and communications to Digital Strategy. This change ensures a consistent message of help and hope for families and friends of alcoholics is delivered across both traditional public outreach tools, such as PSAs, and digital tools, such as social media. Given the added responsibility, the Digital Strategy Manager position was redefined as Associate Director—Digital Strategy.

The SLT Task Force continued its work of evaluating all administrative positions. Staff titles were reviewed and updated to increase WSO attractiveness in the job market: administrative clerk positions were eliminated in favor of generalist positions, and clerks, representatives, and secretaries became assistants. When resignations occurred, job descriptions were revised and skills updated, often reflecting increased use of technology to improve efficiency. Staff names and streamlined titles were posted at desks to improve new employee orientation and to help WSO Volunteers and visitors get to know the Staff.

Another outcome from the Task Force discussion was the development of an “administration as a service” concept across the departments. Administrative assistants are assigned to managers who may only direct a portion of their daily workload: for example, the Executive Assistant (Spanish) reports to the Director of Programs, but spends more than 50 percent of her time working for Administration and Finance & Operations. When this approach is used, administrative capacity is shared and employees enjoy the variety that comes with working across departments. Staff leaders tap into capacity by bringing unusual or peak-time administrative needs to the SLT meeting for resolution. So far, several urgent requirements have been addressed, making Strategic use of WSO talents and resources.

The WSO improved the Staff performance review process this year, implementing a talent calibration process to create fair and equitable ratings across departments. Salary increases were then linked directly to ratings, imbedding the spiritual principles of accountability and responsibility in the Staff evaluation model. Recognizing the benefits of fitness to employee morale and organizational health, the WSO introduced a stipend to offset costs for Staff who demonstrate consistent participation in a gym, yoga or other organized program. Additionally, Staff were offered reasonably priced training opportunities, such as local leadership workshops, to support their growth and contribution to the organization.

Human Resources

Bill Piersol, Human Resources Manager (Non-member)

2018 Staff turnover rate was 20 percent, which is consistent with a 19 percent average recently reported for businesses¹ and non-profits.² Ten new Staff members joined, including the Accounting Manager, two Shipping Clerks, Group Records Agent, Spanish Translator, Administrative Assistant (Spanish), Programs Generalist, Webmaster, and Receptionist. Additionally, the SLT recognized the need for a specialist who could refine public and fellowship communications and created the Editorial Quality Specialist position, which was filled early in the year. In anticipation of the retirement of our longtime Senior Group Services Specialist, a selection was made from six applicants to fill the revised Group Services Specialist—Meetings member position.

In an effort to ensure the WSO could hire and retain the most qualified Staff, options were extended for flexible working hours (when those options aligned with the WSO employee policies contained in the AFG, Inc. Employee Policies and Procedures Manual). Additionally, the Translation Team was expanded to formally include French- and Spanish-speaking contractors working across the globe.

Evolution of the structure led to opportunities to promote talented staff, several of whom have considerable longevity at the WSO. In Finance & Operations, the Customer Service Manager, who has spent over 28 years working for the WSO, was promoted to the new Associate Director—Customer Service and Shipping position, created to streamline processes across customer service and the warehouse. This change produced the opportunity to promote the Customer Service Assistant Manager to Customer Service Coordinator. As well, the Translator—French was promoted to the newly created Translation Project Coordinator position, responsible for overseeing all WSO translations and completing French translations. Meanwhile in the Programs Department, a relative newcomer to Staff with only two years in the Office, the Programs Generalist, was promoted to Senior Group Records Agent.

General Counsel

The WSO continued its practice of keeping a local General Counsel on retainer so that it could address the operational topics and issues that inevitably arise in the usual course of business (such as human resources concerns and copyright violations).

In 2018, Al-Anon's General Counsel reviewed two key items for the Board: revisions to the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. Bylaws as approved by the Board; and the Conflict of Interest statement, which was only signed by WSO Volunteers prior to 2018 but, starting in 2018, was also signed by Senior Staff.

Trademarks & Copyrights

Re-registration of the three Al-Anon trademarks (Al-Anon, Alateen, and the Al-Anon [triangle] logo) continued in 2018 for countries where Al-Anon literature is translated and reprinted. The following registrations were completed and received:

- Costa Rica, El Salvador, Russia, South Korea, Ecuador, Norway, Peru, the UK, and Guatemala.

Travel & Administration

The Executive Director joined a Trustee and the Director of Programs for a visit to three countries: Norway, Finland, and Estonia. Norway experienced a significant change in the makeup of its Board of Trustees and was seeking experience, strength, and hope for starting again. In anticipation of the WSO visit, Norway arranged the first Nordic convention to be held in its country: members from Sweden, Norway, and Finland attended the event and WSO Staff had the opportunity to meet with all attendees to discuss the challenges facing their Structures. A similar conversation occurred in Finland, a long-established Structure, where the WSO met with members of the Finland Board and staff to discuss topics such as social media. The WSO also visited Estonia, which has two groups—one that has been meeting for 20 years and another that was established in January 2018. Members of these groups spoke with the WSO visitors about websites, translations, and attracting new members. The visit offered the Executive Director a wonderful opportunity to personally empathize with how similar the issues faced by established structures are to those faced by the WSC Structure, as well as how difficult the challenges faced by evolving structures that do not yet have a single translated book can be.

The Executive Director was also invited to attend several events within the WSC Structure: a convention in South Carolina; an Assembly in Northern Illinois; an Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) Convention with Al-Anon participation in Orange County, Southern California; and the Pennsylvania Assembly. At each of these events, the Executive Director shared her personal story and led a workshop or gave a presentation about the work and evolution of the WSO. Those in attendance expressed appreciation for the WSO Staff's efforts to expand the message of help and hope to the family and friends of alcoholics, particularly their attempts to reach the next generation of those who are suffering.

Working with the Areas

Staff completed the process of reviewing three Area Meeting List Publishing Policies. Areas had created these policies to address the challenge of working with groups that do not adhere to Al-Anon principles in their meetings. Staff utilized the principles outlined in the materials that the Policy Committee Thought Force on "Do Not Refer" presented to the 2012 WSC in their review. Conversation is ongoing with the three Areas that have submitted policies.

Events & Special Projects

Jacqueline Gursky, Events & Special Projects Manager (Non-member)

This year the Events & Special Projects Team expanded their role in support of conventions and conferences to allow the Programs Department and Digital Strategy Teams to focus on content and public outreach efforts. This Team, composed of professionals trained in event planning as well as project management, has been assigned overall project coordination and event logistics responsibility for International Conventions and International Al-Anon General Services Meetings, in addition to their current responsibility for WSC logistics planning. As part of Conference this year, this Team supported the Associate Director—Literature and the Associate Directors—Public Outreach and Digital Strategy in utilizing web conferencing to include At-Large Public Outreach Committee and Literature Committee members in their Committee meetings held at Conference. Web conferencing enabled the At-Large Chairs of

¹ Society of Human Resources Management, 2016 Human Capital Benchmarking Report.

² Nonprofit HR, 2016 Nonprofit Employment Practices Survey.

these Committees to facilitate the meetings and all At-Large members to fully participate, where in past years they had not been able to contribute.

Part of the role of the Events & Special Projects Team is to look ahead. By the end of the year, the Team had secured the contract for the 2020 International AI-Anon General Services Meeting in London, brought the 2023 International Convention contract to its final stage, and begun planning for the Anniversary Dinner in 2021.

DIGITAL STRATEGY

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

The Digital Strategy Team worked with a digital agency to resolve ongoing server error issues that were causing a poor user experience. The effects of these issues were temporary and the visits to the WSO website continue to grow each month.

Conference members tested a social stream feature in the mobile app to determine its viability for use in the International Convention app. They reported that they enjoyed being able to interact with each other using the Conference mobile app. Conference members seemed particularly appreciative of the opportunity to share pictures in a manner that protects anonymity. Staff were able to run a test during Conference of the polling feature of the app, as a means of determining its viability as a replacement for current electronic voting tools.

The Digital Strategy Team developed a mobile app for the International Convention; the app contained a scheduling tool that allowed members to create personalized schedules of sessions they wanted to attend. It was downloaded over 2,000 times. Members in the Convention mobile app had over 48,000 interactions, which included sharing over 2,060 photos with fellow Convention participants.

The Team conducted several one-on-one video interviews with members at the Convention, making sure to protect members' anonymity. Editing of these videos is underway. These videos will be published on the website as part of public outreach to professionals and potential members.

Many members stopped by the new Digital Lounge at the International Convention to ask questions and get assistance with the mobile app.

With the retirement of the Associate Director—Public Outreach Media, the Senior Communications Specialist—Media was given responsibility for communications with AI-Anon's PSA vendor. She worked with the vendor to relaunch two popular radio and TV PSAs. The Senior Communications Specialist—Media and the Associate Director—Digital Strategy met in person with the CEO of TV Access, the PSA vendor, to discuss impact and best practices for PSAs. His experience suggests the AI-Anon PSA message no longer resonates well, so he provided ideas that were shared with and considered by the Public Outreach Committee. Because of that feedback, two PSAs are now in development; they will be distributed in 2019. One uses the traditional AI-Anon PSA format, while the other builds on the 20 AI-Anon Questions. The Digital Strategy Team also automated the PSA request process, allowing members to send PSAs directly to their station contact when requested.

The Associate Director—Digital Strategy and the Publications Manager attended the Digital Book World conference. At the event, industry leaders spoke about audiobooks, digital books, and e-books, and about using voice assistants such as Alexa, Siri,

and Google Assistant to enhance the reading experience. Staff learned that while sales from top e-book publishers seem to have plateaued, independent e-book publishers are continuing to expand. By offering guidance on how to navigate the quickly changing publishing environment, the conference helped Staff become better prepared to serve AI-Anon members across many different publishing platforms.

AI-Anon has been approved for a free nonprofit subscription to a website optimization software platform that will help Staff understand how the WSO website is being used, so that they can improve user experience.

Data Analysis

The Data Analyst worked with the Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals to launch the 2018 Membership Survey and ensure that all responses would be collected for future analysis and reporting. The Data Analyst finalized the presentation of the Membership Survey results and these have been published via AFG Connects to the Conference and International General Service Offices (GSOs). The key focus has been data visualization—essentially, turning numbers into pictures so that results are easier to understand.

Website Conversion

The Digital Strategy Team, along with the Senior Communication Specialist—Media completed the transfer of the content from the "old" Members website to the newly designed AI-Anon website.

Digital Strategy also developed a new AI-Anon Slogans page that lists all 16 Slogans and shows snippets of CAL literature supporting each. The page is available in all three languages: <https://al-anon.org/for-members/members-resources/literature/al-anon-slogans/>

In the Loop

In the Loop celebrated its first full year in circulation. During 2018, Staff updated the style of *In the Loop* articles to make them more appealing to time-pressed members, condensing the writing to deliver news and ideas in brief snippets. Additionally, Staff expanded the focus to include not only "news from the WSO" but also helpful ideas for groups, such as the Newcomer Preparedness Checklist. A survey was conducted to understand how members felt about the publication and 64 percent rated it "very good" or "excellent." The most-enjoyed content has been literature and WSO-specific information. It was also found that 68 percent were aware that any member can subscribe to *In the Loop*, and 84 percent indicated they were likely or highly likely to recommend that their group and other AI-Anon members subscribe.

Meeting Search 2.0

The Associate Director—Digital Strategy worked with the WSO Group Records Coordinator and the Software Engineer to develop a new meeting search, which was launched on January 11, 2018. The search features a map view and the ability to search by radius, and it includes results regardless of city or zip code. It also includes filters to allow searches for AI-Anon meetings and Alateen meetings on the same page. Bilingual members no longer need to switch pages to switch languages. The new search includes several advanced filters, such as handicap accessible and other descriptors

like men's meeting, to help people find the right meeting for them. The tool also allows people to easily report problems with finding a meeting, for instance, when there is no meeting at the location. This feature automatically sends a notice to Group Records for follow-up.

Members were taking advantage of the online meeting search's "Report a Problem" feature to update their meeting information. However, it is suggested that members submit a Group Change Request form to their Area's Group Records Coordinator to address meeting changes. To encourage members to submit changes rather than report a problem, an option for "Outdated/Incorrect Information" was added to the Report a Problem Form. Members trying to correct the old information are now directed to complete a Group Update Form.

The Associate Director—Digital Strategy received a call from the Web Coordinator from Alberta, who stated the Area previously had a robust meeting search that looked a lot like the new WSO Meeting Search. The Area had decided that, going forward, it would be better to link directly to the WSO Meeting Search rather than maintain a separate meeting database. Similarly, the Web Coordinator from Texas West stated the new Meeting Search was better than anything they would be able to create and that Texas had decided to link to the WSO Meeting Search instead of the AI-Anon Information Services (AIS) meeting listings. These shifts represent an important opportunity to improve overall meeting list accuracy for newcomers and members searching for meetings across the Structure.

2018 Stats

- Website Visits – 3,550,883 (21% higher than 2017)
- Online Meeting Searches – 1,486,396 (122% higher than 2017)
- Social Followers – 93,135 (25% higher than 2017)
- Toll-Free Calls – 16,481 (39% lower than 2017)

Public Outreach & Communications

With the organizational realignment that followed the retirement of the Associate Director—Public Outreach Media & Group Records, public outreach responsibilities (excluding public outreach to professionals) were transferred to the Digital Strategy Team. The scope of responsibility was also expanded to include not only outreach but also inbound public communications (for example, support for member comments on social media and the website). The Associate Director—Digital Strategy and Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals collaborated closely as responsibilities were transitioned. Details of the Public Outreach & Communications efforts are described under Programs, Public Outreach & Communications later in this report.

PROGRAMS

Marsha W., Director of Programs

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

2018 International Convention

Baltimore, Maryland, July 6–8, 2018

Vali F., Chairperson | Marsha W., Coordinator
Suzanne M., Co-Coordinator

Day of Connecting

Prior to the start of the Convention, the Board of Trustees hosted 21 workshops, presentations, leadership talks, and roundtables on a variety of service-related topics. More than 1,200 people registered for the event. Participants expressed very positive responses to this Day of Connecting and gratitude for the WSO Volunteers' efforts.

Attendance

There were 4,029 registrees for the Convention; 49 were Alateens and 271 were Alcoholics Anonymous members. Also included in this total were 122 members who identified as Spanish-speaking and 37 who were French-speaking. Represented countries outside the continental US, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda were: Australia, Austria, Belgium, the Cayman Islands, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Ecuador, El Salvador, England, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Qatar, Scotland, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, and Uruguay.

Program

Over 330 members volunteered to participate in the program, which was held in English, Spanish, and French. Approximately 120 Spanish-speaking members participated in Al-Anon meetings at the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore, and the French-speaking members participated in their eight-session program. Each meeting had a speaker and a moderator. Feedback was positive regarding meeting topics.

The Big Meetings offered Sign Language, Spanish, and French interpretation. The social stream from the attendee-only Convention app displayed throughout the hall as members found their seats and waited for the Big Meetings to begin. Members responded to this new means of sharing their experience by snapping pictures and posting snippets for their fellow Convention attendees to enjoy on the big screens. At the first Big Meeting, the Board of Trustees presented a Resolution of Gratitude and *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon 50th Anniversary* (B6-50) to the General Manager and Chairperson of the Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Members showed great enthusiasm for representing their Areas and countries in the Language of Love Parade. The 500 parade participants carried signs indicating the languages they speak, and the countries, states, and provinces they call home.

A.A. Meetings

A.A. held all their daytime meetings in the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel. A.A.'s Convention Coordinators reported positive results from their chosen speakers and leaders.

Alateen Meetings

Alateen held all their daytime meetings in the Baltimore Convention Center. Over 35 Alateens were registered. Between 25 and 35 young people attended each of the six Alateen workshops, and the open meetings that were held filled the room to capacity. A total of 39 Alateens pre-registered. Four additional Alateens who were younger than 13 participated. Each Alateen was presented with a love gift to tie onto their identification tag. Certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) were also able to take a love gift to identify themselves as an AMIAS and express their love for Alateen. The meeting room was decorated with love gifts sent to the WSO from Alateen conferences and recent and past WSCs, previous issues of *Alateen Talk*, and sharing sheets for anyone who wanted to put their ideas on paper.

Host Committee

Close to 400 people volunteered. Members stood on street corners to give directions and were available at several transportation venues and throughout the Convention Center to welcome travelers. The local members were delighted with the participation and believe that holding the International Convention in their city helped strengthen and bring together all the local groups.

World Service Office Staff and Volunteers

After the WSO pre-Conference dinner meeting on Wednesday night, the more than 40 WSO Staff members and Volunteers worked at a variety of locations conducting workshops, coordinating sessions, directing members, supporting session moderators, and personally greeting each attendee at registration. Their hard work and enthusiasm, along with that of Host Committee members, was much appreciated.

World Service Conference Homecoming

Past and current WSC members met onboard Baltimore's Inner Harbor Spirit Cruise Ship to reconnect during the WSC Homecoming. Past Delegates and the current Maryland/DC Delegate were invited to participate in the event program. The venue was the perfect location for attendees to connect with one another while sightseeing, playing a game of foosball, or dining.

Pioneer Luncheon

Prior to entering the Baltimore Convention Center Ballroom, Pioneer Luncheon attendees enjoyed a visual timeline of Al-Anon Family Groups, which featured nine large posters. During the luncheon, guests heard two longtime members share their experience, strength, and hope. Several other longtime members also shared what Al-Anon was like when they first started attending meetings. All guests received a complimentary copy of *Many Voices, One Journey* in English (B-31), French (FB-31), or Spanish (SB-31).

Evaluations

An electronic survey was sent to English-, French-, and Spanish-speaking Convention attendees. Preliminary responses indicate that the Convention was an overall success and that many are planning to attend Al-Anon's Seventh International Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico in July 2023.

2020 A.A. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION WITH AL-ANON PARTICIPATION

Detroit, Michigan, July 2–5, 2020

Vali F., Al-Anon Convention Chairperson

Suzanne M., Program & Speaker Coordinator

Kerri K., Welcome Committee & Staff/WSO Volunteer Coordinator

Jacqueline Gursky, Convention Manager (Non-member)

Staff enjoyed the opportunity to both continue and improve their cooperation with A.A. through their collaboration with the A.A. planning team for the 2020 A.A. International Convention (2020 IC) in Detroit. The Al-Anon Convention Chairperson and the Program & Speaker Coordinator joined A.A. on its kickoff site visit to view and select Al-Anon's meeting space and meet with the 2020 IC liaisons to Al-Anon. Staff were excited to learn that A.A. opening festivity plans include an event in the Al-Anon meeting location. The opening plans also include events in other locations across the International Convention "campus." Safety concerns at such a large gathering—the 2020 IC is expected to attract between 50,000 and 60,000 attendees—in today's environment will result in some changes in process, such as adherence to the stadium "clear bag" rules for Big Meetings.

After receiving input from the WSO Volunteers, the A.A. planning team selected Al-Anon session titles. Sessions will include a variety of formats—book study, next pick, speaker, panel, and workshop—as they did in Baltimore at Al-Anon's 2018 International Convention. Typically, approximately the same number of Al-Anon members attend Al-Anon's sessions at the A.A. International as the Al-Anon International Convention, so the planning effort is quite similar.

2023 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Albuquerque, New Mexico, June 29–July 2, 2023

Vali F., Convention Chairperson

Suzanne M., Program & Welcome Committee Coordinator

Kerri K., Speaker & Staff/Volunteer Coordinator

Jacqueline Gursky, Convention Manager (Non-member)

Although 2023 seems a long way out, Staff began planning in November with an initial meeting to discuss roles of the International Convention Planning Committee. The Events & Special Projects Manager was named the Convention Manager and was assigned responsibility for planning coordination. At the kickoff, Staff were encouraged to review the retrospective ideas gathered from participants, Staff, WSO Volunteers, and the Host Committee shortly after the 2018 International concluded.

CONFERENCE

Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

AFG Connects

The Associate Director—Conference, with the help of the Programs Assistant and the Administrative Assistant, facilitated the AFG Connects communities for Area Chairs, District Representatives, and past and current WSC members. AFG Connects is the online system the WSO uses to communicate with trusted servants. In addition, trusted servants initiate discussions with each other in their various communities.

The **Area Chairs** have been discussing: Area/Convention liability insurance; districting and redistricting Areas; guidelines for trusted servants who are not fulfilling responsibilities; whether Area Alateen Process Persons (AAPPs) are Coordinator or Officer positions and whether AAPPs are elected or appointed; and the "age-out" date of Alateens in the Areas.

The **District Representatives** (DRs) have been discussing: birthdays and raffle tickets; DR requirements; timing of District meetings; rent vs. donation; spending money on District outreach; as well as who votes at District meetings.

The **Past and Current WSC Members** have been discussing: the cost of the Area Assembly; special-project funding; financial reimbursement for past Area Delegates to attend Regional Delegate meetings, Area World Service Committee (AWSC) meetings, or Assemblies; past Delegate involvement in the Area; and how Assemblies are organized.

The **WSC Members** have been discussing: liability insurance coverage for the Area; requirements for Officer and Coordinator positions; Area insurance for groups; the role of the Alternate Delegate; whether or not an Area's Delegate is required to be an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service; as well as computers for AWSC members.



Conference Logo

Staff created a logo for the World Service Conference, and it was a hit! The logo was used in the Conference app, packet, poster, and Summary.

2018 Conference

Ninety-two voting members attended the 58th WSC in West Harrison, New York, April 16–20, 2018. Alternate Delegates represented the Alabama/Northwest Florida and Montana Areas; the Area Chair represented Quebec West; shortly before the Conference convened, the WSO learned that the West Virginia Area would not be represented. Mexico and Denmark sent a General Service Office Representative to attend Conference; the GSO in Mexico also sent a translator to assist its Representative.

The Conference was held near Stepping Stones in Katonah, New York. During Conference, all members visited Stepping Stones, which was the personal home of Lois and Bill W. (the Cofounders of Al-Anon and A.A., respectively); Stepping Stones also served as the initial location of the Clearing House. Prior to the visit, Conference members heard a bit of the history of the home, answered some trivia questions, and shared their expectations with each other. Following the visit, Conference members were invited to share their thoughts about the experience.

Members utilized a Conference app for the second time. The 2018 app included the Conference schedule, hotel map, seating chart, bus assignments, and the *Service Manual*. There was an interactive tool on the app that allowed Conference members to post messages and pictures to a social stream. There was an overwhelming response to this year's app as Conference members favored it over last year's. Conference evaluations indicated that the Conference was very successful. In reflections shared during Conference, two members commented:

“Thank you for listening to the Delegates, involving us, and increasing our participation and input.”

“I had many people tell me how amazing Stepping Stones would be. I heard wonderful things and wondered if I would be disappointed. But in the end, I found myself in the house of someone who was very special to me. At the top of the stairs it hit me; I was home.”

2019 Conference

The Conference comes back to Virginia Beach, Virginia in 2019. Conference will be held in a new hotel between April 13 and 17. The Events & Special Projects Team implemented logistics changes to facilitate Delegate travel planning, providing them access to 24/7 travel interruption support.

In response to the Board’s July 2018 motion to approve a special project to provide professional interpretation, when required, to support Spanish- and French-speaking Delegates who attend the WSC, Quebec East elected a non-bilingual, French-speaking Delegate who will require the assistance of interpretation. The bilingual Spanish-speaking Delegate from Puerto Rico also requested the assistance of Spanish interpretation at the 2019 WSC.

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Judy K./Jennie McC., Chairpersons | Teri M./Cheré F., Co-Chairpersons
Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference

The Conference Leadership Team (CLT) has the responsibility to prepare a WSC Agenda that facilitates the active voice and effective group conscience of Al-Anon’s fellowship. The CLT is comprised of a Volunteer Chairperson and Co-Chairperson who are members of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board, the Executive Director, the Director of Programs, and the Associate Director—Conference. The Events & Special Projects Manager attends meetings by virtue of her role, as it relates to planning the logistics of the Conference.

In the initial planning meetings for the 2019 WSC, the CLT unanimously agreed on (and the Board approved) the 2019 Conference theme, “Action is Attraction – There is No Growth in the Comfort Zone.” To ensure the essence of the theme is translatable into French and Spanish, the Translation Project Coordinator attended that portion of the meeting.

The CLT created five task forces of Delegates to increase Delegate participation in the WSC Agenda. The Delegates were charged with creating presentations and presenting the Board’s Goals for the Conference, the Conference Voting Procedures, the Conference Theme, Conference Etiquette, and the Conference Purpose, Makeup, and Roles.

At the 2018 WSC, five Trustees were invited to give three-minute talks on the following topics:

- travel;
- roommates/Mentors;
- time management/filing;
- the résumé/interview process; and
- the experience of holding different roles.

Because these talks were beneficial, the CLT agreed to continue offering this valuable resource at the 2019 Conference; it has invited six Trustees to give three-minute talks on the following questions:

- How do you end up where you end up?
- What does it cost to be a Trustee? (emotional, physical, financial, and spiritual labor)
- How do you get to be the Chairperson of the Board, and what it’s like?

In addition to the above questions, the Trustees will address the topics below:

- Board members as members of the Policy Committee
- Trustee Travel—within and outside the WSC Structure
- Mentors/Roommates

GROUP SERVICES

Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services

The primary responsibility of the Group Services Team is to connect with and share experience, strength, and hope with Al-Anon and Alateen trusted servants and members within the WSC Structure. Through daily calls and correspondence, Staff supported members as they discussed solutions to the following common concerns:

- Crosstalk
- Group insurance
- Group bank accounts
- Resolving group concerns
- Use of the Alateen name in events that are not connected to an Area
- Concerns with family members who have problems other than alcohol
- Use of literature that is not CAL in Al-Anon meetings
- Service participation by Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A.
- Use of Conference Approved Literature that is no longer in print
- Use of gender-neutral language in CAL
- Use of donations to groups from non Al-Anon members
- Safety in Al-Anon meetings (with topics including sexual harassment, stalking, and openly carrying firearms)

WSO Staff encourage members to utilize service tools in addition to the *Service Manual* so that they can discuss matters in a principled-based manner. Group Services also provides articles to *The Forum* and *In the Loop* that offer “how to” suggestions for addressing these topics.

In response to this last topic, Staff share that some groups have created a “Behavior Contract,” which they read as part of their meeting opening; it is similar to what Alateen groups use in their meetings. Staff also remind callers that “Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are not above the law.” (*Service Manual*, page 41)

Alateen

Staff held a new Alateen Coordinator conference call in February to help incoming Panel 58 Coordinators transition into their roles: ten participants attended (which represented an 81-percent participation rate). During a call, it was noted that two Area Alateen

Coordinators were not certified Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), even though it was required by both Areas' Safety and Behavioral Requirements. The Associate Director—Conference and the AFG Records Coordinator responded by collaborating to update the AWSC Form for Area positions with this requirement.

The WSO has received ten Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements for review.

The six Alateen Chat meetings continue to be regularly attended. WSO Alateen social media posts share links to the Alateen Chat registration page and the "Find an Alateen meeting" page to encourage participation. Staff verified that Chat Room Alateen Group Sponsors were AMIAS once the Annual Area Recertification was completed.

Alateen Talk was redesigned with a new masthead, full color, and a new tagline that reads: "The quarterly publication from Al-Anon Family Groups' teen and younger members worldwide" to improve attraction. Additionally, its subscription form was added to the on-line store and posting of *Alateen Talk* on the website was increased from two to four times a year.

Several members and non-members have asked that discontinued Alateen literature be considered for recirculation. The first item of interest is the discontinued book *What's Drunk, Mama?* (P-44), which the Alateen Work Group (now disbanded) had previously considered updating. WSO Staff inform members that the Literature Committee decided not to update this book because Al-Anon literature is intended to be written by and for members. *What's "Drunk," Mama?* (P-44) was written to be read to a younger child, and the scenarios are not reflective of present-day family dynamics of mother, father, and children. Staff guide members to *Alateen Talk* as well as the Teen Corner of al-anon.org for materials for younger members. The second piece of literature requested is *A Guide to Alateen Sponsorship: An Unforgettable Adventure* (P-86), which was discontinued because it does not meet the parameters set forth in the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. Members are encouraged to use service tools (such as Alateen Training Modules, the Alateen Service e-Manual, and the various guidelines that relate to Alateen meetings and service) that replace the information found in P-86.

The **Area Alateen Coordinators and AAPPs** have been discussing Al-Anon group liability for an Alateen group meeting at the same time, responding to medical emergencies, how to create a list of important community resources for Alateens, when to use permission forms for Alateen meetings, mandatory child abuse reporting laws, and the challenge of transgender youth participation in Alateen conferences and at Al-Anon/A.A. events with Alateen participation.

Staff were excited to learn that Alateen members in Alaska participated remotely with Alateens in attendance at the Northern Mid-Atlantic Alateen Assembly and Conference (NOMAAC) and the Eastern Seaboard Alateen Conference (ESAC) by using a web conferencing system. Area Alateen Coordinators came up with the idea when they met at the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore. Alaska uses this technology in three Alateen meetings to extend meeting participation to teens across its vast Area. Group Services Staff participated in a meeting to understand the process: The conference is initiated from the physical Alateen meeting with the Alateen Group Sponsor in attendance. Teens then call into the meeting and participate in discussion.

Spanish-Speaking Members

Six new phone meetings—one bilingual Spanish meeting on web conferencing (Zoom) and three instant messaging (Skype) meetings—have registered and posted on the al-anon.org website.

A Spanish-speaking member informed the WSO of an issue with the 2018 Membership Survey in Spanish. Group Services Staff collaborated with Public Outreach and Digital Strategy to resolve the problem and then contacted each Spanish-Speaking AIS listed on "Worldwide Al-Anon Contacts" by phone or by email to encourage the members to participate in the survey.

Al-Anon Information Services

The Group Records Team mailed the AIS and AIS/LDC Annual Update to 193 entities in August. In total, 103 responses were received (53 percent):

- 90 AISs and AIS/LDCs did not respond (47 percent)
- 2 Updates were returned as undeliverable (1 percent)
- 63 of the respondents are AIS/LDCs (67 percent)
- 72 of the respondents publish a local meeting list (78 percent)
- 67 of the respondents publish an online meeting directory (71 percent)
- 63 of the respondents maintain a website separate from the Area (67 percent)
- 44 of the respondents publish a newsletter (47 percent)
- 69 of the respondents collaborate with the Area Group Records Coordinator to maintain up-to-date meeting information (73 percent)
- 68 of the respondents hold periodic meetings with Information Services Representatives (72 percent)
- 56 of the respondents have an office (60 percent)
- 33 of the respondents have paid staff (35 percent)
- 49 of the respondents have volunteer support only (52 percent)
- 62 of the respondents provide a Liaison to the Area Assembly (66 percent)
- 75 of the respondents respond to Twelfth-Step phone calls (80 percent); this is a major concern as this is a requirement for registration as an AIS according to the Policy Digest.

Staff have discovered many AISs that are actually Districts, and are slowly differentiating and properly updating these on the "Worldwide Al-Anon Contacts" page, found on al-anon.org.

AFG Connects

Less than half of the AISs and AIS/LDCs log into AFG Connects as a resource. The Team is investigating how to encourage participation.

Electronic Meetings

At the end of the year, the WSO listed 213 registered electronic meetings, on phone, email, chat, blog, bulletin board, instant messaging, and web conferencing platforms. Following discussions with the Policy Committee Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG) and database changes, Staff became ready to register meetings

occurring on apps and social media platforms. A total of 111 phone meetings occur in English and Spanish. Online meetings in Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian (six new meetings this year!), Danish, Estonian, Farsi (new this year), French, German, and Spanish are currently available.

The Phone Meeting Annual Update was mailed to 104 English-speaking and nine Spanish-speaking phone meetings in February, along with the invitation to participate in the Annual Phone Meeting Conference Call in March. Because of the geographic breadth of electronic meeting participation, these meetings do not have Group Representatives (GRs); WSO Staff represent their voice at the WSC.

Staff held the Annual Phone Meeting Conference Call to gather information on phone meeting needs so they could present these needs to Conference, and to share information on the EMWG and new WSO registration procedures. Participants shared that for many of them, phone and online meetings have evolved; they used to be supplemental, but are fast becoming members' primary meetings. Subsequently, members of the EMWG, including Staff, held their first-ever conference call with the Current Mailing Addresses (CMAs) from each registered electronic meeting in the WSC Structure. The call was attended by 30+ members who represented various electronic meeting platforms. Participants were excited about the idea of participating in regularly scheduled business meetings with WSO Staff. Staff plan to schedule separate conference calls for phone and online meetings to collaborate on how to keep meetings healthy, inviting, and vibrant.

Miscellaneous

Staff recommended to the Executive Committee that the Lone Member Correspondence Service (LMCS) be disbanded for the WSC Structure. The service began in 1959 and initially connected Al-Anon members throughout the world via mailed letters. With the introduction of the internet, Al-Anon members began conducting meetings online and interest in the LMCS waned. Staff had received no new requests for this service in over ten years. Al-Anon international structures, where internet access is less reliable, continue to utilize the LMCS. Members who contact the WSO seeking to give service through a letter-writing campaign are invited to participate in the Inmate Correspondence Service; there continues to be a need for Al-Anon member contacts who can perform Twelfth-Step work with incarcerated members.

Staff updated and posted the guideline *Starting an Al-Anon Group* (G-12) online and submitted the revisions to the Translation Team.

AFG RECORDS (FORMERLY GROUP RECORDS)

Pat Q., Associate Director—Public Outreach Media & Group Records
Kerri K., Associate Director—International

The Group Records Team was renamed AFG Records, to more accurately reflect the scope of the Team's work (as responsibilities go beyond just groups). The Department's responsibilities include registering and updating global groups and electronic meetings; maintaining Al-Anon Information Services (AIS), Literature Distribution Center (LDC), and AIS/LDC data; and updating Al-Anon Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) and WSC Structure trusted servant listings. This name change was also extended to the Team members and the Team's email address, AFGRecords@al-anon.org.

Group Records Conference Calls and Training Sessions

The new Area Group Records Coordinator and Area Alateen Process person web conference calls, which included PowerPoint presentations, were held on January 27. Eighty-seven percent of the Area Group Records Coordinators (20 Areas) and 48 percent of the AAPPs (11 Areas) participated. All participants successfully accessed the web conferencing platform to view the presentations and asked questions using the chat feature. A self-assessment survey was sent to establish a baseline so that training and resources could be tailored to the audience.

Two WSO Online Group Records web conference training sessions for incoming Area Group Records Coordinators and AAPPs occurred in February. An average of ten Area Group Records Coordinators and five AAPPs attended each training session. All the sessions were recorded and posted on AFG Connects.

The Alateen Annual Recertification web conference call took place on March 17, 2018. The goal of the discussion was to review the recertification process for Online AMIAS Recertification in 2018. Nineteen Areas participated in the call. Several participants couldn't access the web session because of space availability restrictions. Staff apologized for the inconvenience and posted a recording of the session on AFG Connects right away. The matter was resolved for future calls.

Nineteen AAPPs attended the Online AMIAS Recertification web conference training session held in March. The training sessions provided a platform for the AAPPs to ask specific questions and address their concerns about the Area 2018 Online AMIAS Recertification. The recordings of the sessions were posted on AFG Connects so that they could be viewed on demand.

Group Records Updates

Professional inquiries about starting Al-Anon meetings stayed steady, ranging from two to three monthly. An increase in the number of inquiries by university counselors who wanted to start young-adult meetings was noted in the fall. Inquiries originated from the Universities of Maryland, Arizona, and New Mexico.

An estimated 200 groups' complimentary *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24) were returned to the WSO. A significant number of the groups that reported not receiving the new edition had experienced a change in the CMA after the mail had gone out. In accordance with current procedures, the affected groups were asked to retrieve the new *Groups at Work* from the previous CMA.

World Service Office Online Group Records Application

In response to Online Group Records users' requests, links to the Online Group Records application and al-anon.org were added to the District Representative Community in AFG Connects. This change makes it more convenient for users to locate these resources.

A new tool was developed to improve the transparency in the changes the WSO makes, and to improve timeliness in delivering this information because of the limitations of the Change Log Report. Staff opted for an email notification, as Area Group Record Coordinators (AGRCs) requested a similar format. The email serves as an alert, letting AGRCs know of the most recent change and prompting them to check the affected group records. The response was very positive; the modifications were seen as substantial improvements.

Online Group Records Forms

On AFG Connects, AGRCs shared concerns about the newly released online Group Records Change Form, which replaced the Al-Anon Registration/Group Records Change Form (GR-1), and possible duplication of effort between the Areas using the module and the WSO. The Associate Director—International reassured the AGRCs that the WSO heard their concerns and that any issues would be addressed.

Staff posted frequently asked questions about the Group Records online forms on the Area Group Records Coordinator community to clarify the new process. The WSO asks the Area Group Records Coordinators to update the group information since the group changes are redirected to them to support their Area process. WSO Staff processes the submitted new Al-Anon group registrations since they are accessible for review on the WSO Online Group Records application.

The total number of Al-Anon & Alateen groups worldwide in 2018 is 24,498:

- US/PR/BDA Al-Anon: **12,503**
- US/PR/BDA Alateen: **845**
- Canada Al-Anon: **1,159**
- Canada Alateen: **44**
- International Al-Anon: **9,028**
- International Alateen: **919**

The number of Alateen groups grew significantly from 2017 due primarily to an increase in meetings in one structure. This structure accounted for 87% of the total increase. Discounting the effect of that one country, however, the growth from 2017 to 2018 was still a robust 20%.

The total number of electronic (social media, digital, and phone) meetings increased a net eight percent in 2018 to 213:

- Social media (includes instant messaging and apps): **33**
- Digital (includes email, chat, and bulletin boards): **53**
- Phone: **127**

Alateen Annual Recertification for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS)

The deadline was extended to July 13 due to lack of availability of the Online AMIAS Recertification page starting June 30. A significant number of Areas were still working on their Online 2018 Alateen Recertification after June 30. The AFG Records Team sent reminders and contacted AAPPs personally, to offer further assistance to Areas that had not yet started their online recertification. Staff reevaluated the current process to identify possible enhancements to the existing procedure.

The Newfoundland/Labrador Area notified the WSO that their remaining Alateen groups disbanded due to lack of participation. To date, three Areas—Newfoundland, North Dakota, and Ontario North—no longer have Alateen meetings but have certified AMIAS available.

- 4,358 AMIAS were certified in 2018.**

WSO Online Meeting Search

The Team's efforts to encourage Areas to use the WSO Meeting Search on their website gained momentum this year. Eight Area Group Records Coordinators shared positive comments on AFG Connects about the WSO Meeting Search on AFG Connects. Some Coordinators pointed out the benefits of listing uniform meeting information on all Al-Anon websites and the reduction of the Area Group Record Coordinator's workload. Discussions about using the WSO Meeting Search are taking place with the Web Coordinators and Technology Committees.

AFG Records processed an average of 130 "Report an Issue" submissions monthly from the feature on the al-anon.org Meeting Search tool. A significant number of reports was about disbanded groups that had stopped meeting many years ago. Other common issues were missing location instructions (which made it difficult for newcomers to locate the meeting room) and no one being present at the meeting location. Staff is continuing its effort to educate the fellowship on this important issue, asking members to "think like a newcomer" when they update their meeting information.

Area World Service Committee Members Roster

The format of the AWSC Members Excel List, sent to the Area Delegates biannually, was revamped. The document is now a PDF roster, and it has been renamed "AWSC Members Roster." The new format is more aesthetically pleasing and legible. The Area Delegates' feedback was positive.

INTERNATIONAL

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

Al-Anon/Alateen Internationally

The Associate Director—International is responsible for answering correspondence with members and structures outside of the WSC Structure. The position is the primary point of contact for news and information coming in from international structures and is the channel for information that flows from the WSO to support the structures. Specific areas of support include literature (overseeing the process of translation and reprint) and policy (providing guidance and materials). More general topics include logos, contributions, literature, group problems, technical questions about websites, and other subjects. Where appropriate, these categories are used to help classify the information presented below.

Africa

South Africa

In correspondence throughout the year, the Associate Director—International and the General Secretary of the South Africa GSO discussed procedures for listing Alateen information on websites, the WSO's procedures for maintaining anonymity on its completely public-facing website, and the use of video conferencing for business meetings. The General Service Conference in South Africa meets face-to-face every other year. In the intervening years, the Delegates gather together in one location and the Service Board meets at the office. The Conference is conducted using web conferencing technology.

The GSO invested in a website re-design in 2018 and is preparing to reprint *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) and *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (B-33). These are the first books to be reprinted within the Structure in many years. Doing so will make them more affordable for members. The GSO requested and was provided with a PDF of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2019* for local printing and distribution.

Europe

Greece

The Associate Director—International Services and Chairperson of the Board coordinated a visit to this Structure last May. They attended an Al-Anon convention May 11–13 in Porto Heli. Members from the UK & Eire, Spain, Belgium, Italy, and the US (not including the WSO) were present. The WSO Representatives met informally with several members from the Athens and Thessaloniki groups in May to discuss solutions to common problems.

After the close of the convention, the WSO Representatives spent time in Athens and attended three Al-Anon meetings at three different locations. The WSO team answered 21 questions (provided in advance) during a two-hour working session that was held on Wednesday, May 16. The meeting was skillfully facilitated to keep on track while allowing sufficient time for thorough answers and follow-up questions. Questions had been submitted by groups, members, and committees and included the following topics: translation/publications, Public Outreach, Alateen/AMIAS, finances, committee selection and participation, participation in the European Zonal Meeting and WSC, group conscience, rotation of service and other common group problems.

More than 20 people attended the Wednesday meeting, representing Athens and groups from the surrounding Areas. There were an additional ten or more members who attended via web conferencing; they represented the groups from the northern cities of Katerini, Larissa, and Thessaloniki. There was one Lone Member who participated.

Iceland

Iceland was close to completing a translation of *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) when it discovered what appeared to be discrepancies in the Traditions and Concepts. Research assistance from the WSO helped determine that the Traditions and Concepts of Service translations were never updated to reflect the corrected wording of the English versions, which had been modified in 2003. Research was also carried out by the WSO to determine the gender of the original author of the sharings that were submitted for the book. Although CAL represents all genders and sometimes avoids the use of gender-specific references, this can be difficult to avoid in certain languages where noun and verb endings are gender specific. In these cases, the WSO will help resolve the ambiguities so that the translation can be grammatically correct. These issues were all resolved, and work proceeded on the translation.

Kazakhstan

A member of a group in Kazakhstan has sent in questions about how to obtain reprint permission in their country.

Latvia

A member in Latvia has written to the WSO to request permission for their group to be recognized as an Al-Anon community, or what would be considered an evolving Structure.

Lithuania

A member of a group in Lithuania has sent in questions about how to obtain reprint permission in their country.

Malta

Malta is beginning a translation of *How Al-Anon Works* (B-32). This will be the first piece of CAL translated into Maltese since 1998.

Norway, Estonia, Finland, and Sweden

The GSO in Norway experienced significant turnover in staff and volunteer leadership in 2018. In its role as the senior worldwide Structure, the WSO shared experience and suggestions for how to resolve some of the conflicts that arose during this time of change. As part of this guidance, the WSO Executive Director, the WSO Director of Programs, and a member of the Board of Trustees visited the GSO in August. This was a tremendous opportunity to connect with several stable and long-standing Structures, such as Norway, Finland, and Sweden, as well as some evolving ones, such as Estonia.

While in Norway, the WSO Representatives attended a service meeting and met with members of Norway's Board of Trustees, members of Sweden's Board of Trustees, and International Delegates from Finland. The Representatives also spent a day meeting with active members in Estonia. Discussion topics at these meetings included translation, service roles, and the worldwide nature of Al-Anon's fellowship. The WSO Representatives encouraged all the Structures to continue to stay connected and, if possible, to participate in available international service meetings such as the European Zonal Meeting and the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting.

Portugal

The GSO completed the second edition of their *National Service Manual* and presented it to their Conference in April. In their *Conference Summary*, they noted that with this "very useful tool" they will be able to "share responsibility and fulfill their great purpose."

The GSO had to discontinue the operation of their website for a period of time because they lacked sufficient funds to update it, but it is once again operational.

In response to questions from the GSO, the WSO provided clarification of the terms "open" and "closed" with respect to recovery/sharing meetings and public outreach meetings. Staff also offered guidance on how to hold open recovery meetings.

Russia

The Russian Service Board hosted a 30th anniversary celebration in November. More than 200 people attended each day of the two-day event. Members traveled to St. Petersburg from many different locations in Russia, Belarus, Latvia, and the Ukraine. The first day of the event focused on questions and presentations on service. The second day was a celebration of recovery. For this event, the Service Board requested and received permission from the WSO to print the 50th anniversary edition of *One Day at a Time* in Russian.

UK & Eire

The WSO has communicated frequently with this Structure throughout the year. The upcoming departure of the UK from the European Union (Brexit) will have an impact on business operations since Eire, which is part of the Structure, will remain in the EU. The Executive Director is following up with the General Secretary on this issue and the Associate Director—International Services is providing support as needed.

International Reprint & Translation Requests

The WSO received requests in 2018 to translate or reprint the following pieces of CAL. Please note, publication of the translated work does not always occur in the same year that the request was

made; therefore, this is not a list of completed works, but rather works in progress.

2018 Translation and Reprint Permissions		
English CAL	Catalog No.	Structure
<i>Paths to Recovery</i>	B-24	Russia
<i>Hope for Today</i>	B-27	Finland
<i>One Day at a Time in Al-Anon 50th Anniversary</i>	B6-50	Russia
<i>Welcome Newcomer!</i>	K-10	UK & Eire
<i>Just for Today</i> Bookmark	M-12	Italy
<i>So You Love an Alcoholic?</i>	P-14	Finland
<i>Three Views of Al-Anon</i>	P-15	Italy & Russia
<i>To Parents of Alcoholics</i>	P-16	Russia
<i>The Twelve Steps and Traditions</i>	P-17	Italy
<i>Youth and the Alcoholic Parent</i>	P-21	Russia
<i>Alcoholism, a Merry-Go-Round Named Denial</i>	P-3	Italy
<i>Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?</i>	P-33	Russia
<i>Facts about Alateen</i>	P-41	Russia
<i>Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism</i>	P-48	Italy
<i>The Concepts—Al-Anon's Best-Kept Secret?</i>	P-57	Russia
<i>Alateens Share with Adults in Their Lives</i>	P-67	Russia
<i>Service Sponsorship: Working Smarter, Not Harder</i>	P-88	Russia
<i>How Can I Help My Children?</i>	P-9	Russia
<i>Al-Anon Focus/Declaration Table Card</i>	S-24	Finland
<i>Information for the Newcomer</i>	S-4	Italy
<i>Al-Anon Family Groups Welcome Adult Children of Alcoholics</i>	S-69	UK & Eire
<i>Loving Interchange to Resolve Conflict Wallet Card</i>	S-71	Finland
<i>Conflict Resolution Using Our Twelve Traditions</i>	S-72	Finland
Spanish CAL	Catalog No.	Structure
<i>Un día a la vez en Al-Anon</i> <i>One Day at a Time in Al-Anon</i>	SB-6	Perú
<i>Alcoholismo, contagio familiar</i> <i>Alcoholism, the Family Disease</i>	SP-4	Perú
<i>Una guía para la familia del alcohólico</i> <i>A Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic</i>	SP-7	Perú
<i>¿Cómo puedo ayudar a mis hijos?</i> <i>How Can I Help My Children?</i>	SP-9	Colombia
<i>Si tus padres beben demasiado</i> <i>If Your Parents Drink Too Much...</i>	SP-22	México
<i>¿Qué es Al-Anon?</i> <i>This Is Al-Anon</i>	SP-32	Colombia Perú
<i>Cuaderno de ejercicios, Senderos de recuperación</i> <i>Paths to Recovery Workbook</i>	SP-93	Colombia Perú
<i>Esperanza y comprensión para los padres y los abuelos</i> <i>Hope & Understanding for Parents & Grandparents</i>	SP-94	México Perú
<i>Declaración de Al-Anon</i> <i>Al-Anon Focus/Declaration Table Card</i>	SS-24	Perú

UK & Eire (continued from page 100)

This Structure was successful in their bid to host the 2020 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting. The WSO is looking forward to working with the planning committee starting in 2019. (The IAGSM is held every other year; every other meeting, when feasible, it is hosted by a GSO.)

The GSO recently updated their public-facing website. This vibrant new site includes landing pages for members and professionals, meeting directories, and an online store (for the purchase of CAL). The Members page does not require an additional password.

Asia

India

In April, the Public Information & Website Committee of India participated in its first-ever national public outreach campaign. From April 4 to 11, volunteers met with and distributed service tools and literature to representatives of government, public health, education, and law enforcement agencies; recovery professionals; local business owners; and the general public. Members of the Committee spoke six languages. (India has 11 official languages.)

The WSO provided policy guidance to the GSO regarding local financing of printed literature.

Israel

Contact information for Israel was added to the Worldwide Al-Anon Contacts page of the WSO's website. Israel is a small, evolving Structure and this is the first time its contacts have been published online.

South Korea

South Korea completed a translation of *Hope for Today* (B-27). This is only the third book to be translated into Korean. It is also the only book to be translated into the language since 2004.

Turkey

For the first time in many years the WSO has been in communication with members participating in an Intergroup in Turkey. This Intergroup is interested in updating its meeting registrations, providing contact information for the Worldwide Al-Anon Contacts web page, and renewing its translation activity.

Australia/New Zealand

Australia

Correspondence with the GSO in Australia this year covered a variety of topics, including safety policies and safety in meetings, meeting publication policies, conflict resolution service tools, and Equalized Expense calculations for AFG's respective Service Conferences.

New Zealand

The previous General Secretary informed the WSO that he would complete his term in June. New Zealand is nearing the end of a six-year trial wherein their Structure has had a part-time paid office manager and an elected General Secretary volunteer. The General Secretary can serve a maximum of two, three-year terms. Staff spoke with the outgoing General Secretary in May and greeted the incoming Secretary in June.

The General Secretary and Board Chair of New Zealand invited the Associate Director—International and Executive Director to make opening remarks via web conferencing at their General Service Conference on June 8. While the time allotted was brief, the planning was a secret and there was a great cheer of excitement

and surprise when it was announced to the room that representatives from the WSO would briefly join the Conference. It was a moving experience for the WSO Staff who participated.

The Americas

Brazil

Early in May, a fire in a nearby building resulted in irreparable damage to the GSO in Brazil. Although much of the inventory of literature was able to be recovered, most of the office equipment and supplies could not be saved and the building itself was closed by civil authorities. The GSO has been renting office space and continuing to provide services to the best of their ability. Their membership and leadership have rallied together to support the office through this difficult time. Due to these unforeseen circumstances, Brazil was not able to attend the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting this year.

Cayman Islands

Members in the Cayman Islands are continuing to develop their Structure with assistance from WSO Staff. This year, they focused on opportunities for public outreach in the public transportation market by placing local Al-Anon information on taxis and at bus shelters.

Zonal Meetings

A Zonal Meeting is an informational meeting held every two years for countries with GSOs or evolving service structures. No Zonal Meetings were held in 2018.

Central American Zonal Meeting

In 2019, the GSO in El Salvador will host the Central American Zonal Meeting, which is usually held in October or November.

European Zonal Meeting

The evolving Structure in Slovenia will host the European Zonal Meeting. It will be held September 20–22, 2019 at the Slovenian Red Cross Youth and Health Resort Debeli rtič.

Ibero-American Zonal Meeting

The GSO in Mexico City, Mexico will host the Ibero-American Zonal Meeting October 26–27, 2019.

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Karen W.-P./Rosie M., Chairpersons

Rosie M./John McL., Co-Chairpersons

Kerri K., Associate Director—International

The primary accomplishment of the International Coordination Committee (ICC) in 2018 was the planning and hosting of the 19th International Al-Anon General Services Meeting, October 3–6, 2018, in Virginia Beach, Virginia. As the host Structure, the ICC was responsible for planning the agenda, chairing the meeting, communicating with all attendees, arranging finances, coordinating with the facility, and preparing a written summary.

Twenty-three Delegates from 16 GSOs attended the meeting. The agenda included eight general session presentations, four workshops, a Big Question discussion, a keynote speaker, a spiritual speaker, and a business meeting.

Ongoing activities of the ICC include:

- A Task Force that is charged with clarifying the roles of Trustees and Staff on international trips and developing tools to facilitate tracking goals and outcomes for trips
- Research into the history of translation and sales of literature across national borders
- Follow-up on outstanding items from the IAGSM Business Meeting and planning for the 2020 meeting

In November, GSOs were informed of the availability of professional French and Spanish interpreters at the 2019 WSC. This service is only provided when interpretation is required by a Delegate member of the WSC; however, for 2019, it has been determined that there will be a need for both French and Spanish professional interpretation for at least one WSC Delegate. Because of this, the French and Spanish interpretation service was extended to other Structures who may need this language support.

LITERATURE SERVICES

Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

Literature

[Hope & Understanding for Parents & Grandparents \(P-94\)](#)

This new 24-page pamphlet was introduced at the 2018 WSC in English, French, and Spanish. Order forms were included as inserts in *The Forum* as well as in all literature orders.

[Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships—A Collection of Personal Al-Anon Stories \(B-33\)](#)

Titling, indexing, design, and printing of Al-Anon's latest book took place prior to its introduction at the Al-Anon International Convention in July 2018. Order forms, notices, and articles about the book were distributed in *The Forum* and *In the Loop*. French and Spanish translations are scheduled for completion in early 2019. Staff provided the WSO Archives with all the original sharings and any other important information from the development of this book.

[One Day at a Time in Al-Anon 50th Anniversary \(B6-50\)](#)

Designs were reviewed and approved for the cover of this classic book, as was the wording for the commemorative bookplate, which was given out with the book at the International Convention in July. This printing was available in English, French, and Spanish. The text of the book remains as it has since shortly after it was first printed.

[Just for Tonight Bookmark \(M-81\)](#)

After the Literature Committee approved it and members of the Policy Committee reviewed it for adherence to Al-Anon policies and Traditions, this bookmark was designed and translated into French and Spanish. WSO Staff plan to introduce it to the fellowship in early 2019.

[NEW DAILY READER \(working title\)](#)

Requests for sharings were sent to Literature Coordinators and featured in WSO publications throughout the year. This work in progress includes sharings on each of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service. The WSO is currently in the process of finding an Al-Anon member—a freelance writer/editor—who can begin compiling this book from the more than 1,400 sharings that were submitted.

[THE FORUM BOOK \(working title\)](#)

Members have submitted over 800 titles and publication dates of *Forum* articles that they consider the best of the last ten years. Because most suggestions were received prior to 2017, there were very few recent articles. Therefore, two workshops were held at the Al-Anon International Convention in July, bringing in over 100 more articles from the last two years.

[Literature Coordinators](#)

Regular literature updates were posted throughout the year on the Literature Coordinator community of AFG Connects. In October, two hour-long conference calls were held with Area Literature Coordinators to continue enhancing communication and cooperation regarding their role.

Magazines

[The Forum—Now in Full Color](#)

Throughout its 64-year history, *The Forum* has continued to grow and change. In January, the magazine began production in full color. Comments from the fellowship have been very positive.

[“Talk to Each Other”](#)

This department of *The Forum* made a comeback in the August issue, in which a member sought input on what other members considered to be “principles of the program.” Readers were encouraged to send in responses, several of which were included in the December issue. The author of the question received all responses.

[“Inside Al-Anon Family Groups”](#)

The June issue of *The Forum* included an “Inside Al-Anon Family Groups” article by the Magazine Editor. The article described the process, people, and timetable involved in developing *The Forum* each month. Because the article was also posted in the Member Resource section of the website and linked from *In the Loop*, it received several comments, all of them very positive. One commenter wrote, “I have wanted to submit writings but hesitated because I did not understand the process...I will write now that I feel I can ‘Let Go and Let God’ after reading this submission.”

[Forum Coordinators](#)

Regular updates were posted throughout the year on the *Forum* Coordinator community of AFG Connects. A revamped *Forum* Sales Report was posted to the community at the beginning of every month starting in January.

[Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism](#)

Content curation for member sharings and editorial responsibilities have shifted to the Magazine Editor, who will be collaborating with the Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals.

Service Materials and Reports

[Conference Approved Literature Quotations](#)

Once again, 20 quotations from a variety of CAL appeared in the Announcements community of AFG Connects. Areas and other service arms could use these in their 2019 fundraising calendars without having to obtain written permission.

World Service Conference Report

Through the combined efforts of the entire office, the *News from the 2018 World Service Conference* bulletin, which detailed highlights from the Conference, was posted in English, French, and Spanish on the website. A link to the article was also included in the June and July issues of *In the Loop*, *Le Messenger*, and *En Contacto*. An ad for the article appeared in the July and August issues of *The Forum*. In the years preceding 2016, this annual overview of the WSC was included in the July and August issues of *The Forum*. Prior to 2006 it also appeared in the special Conference edition of *Inside Al-Anon Xtra*.

2019 CAL Catalog

Because no new material would be introduced until the summer, there was no 2018 edition of the CAL Catalog. Instead, the 2019 Catalog was designed and printed in time for it to be included as an insert in the August issue of *The Forum*. Staff was excited to present this streamlined, full-color edition to the fellowship.

Revised Information and Tips for GRs as Forum Coordinators (F-2)

Staff updated the document with current information on ways that GRs can encourage their group members to subscribe to *The Forum*. Once designed, the guideline was posted to *Forum* Coordinators on AFG Connects as well as on the Al-Anon Online Store.

Revised Area Forum Coordinators Guideline (G-32)

Staff created an updated version that reflects current practices and offers additional suggestions on how Coordinators can encourage Area members to read *The Forum*. This update has been submitted for approval.

The Forum PowerPoint

Upon the request of several *Forum* Coordinators, Staff completed a new PowerPoint presentation highlighting the benefits of subscribing to *The Forum* magazine. It has been posted on the *Forum* Coordinator community of AFG Connects.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Stuart H., Chairperson

Tom C., Staff Liaison, Associate Director—Literature

Bruce F./Gail G., Trustee Liaisons

The Committee currently consists of eight Delegate members, three At-Large members (including the Chairperson), the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Trustee Liaison. It continues to meet quarterly by conference call, with intermediate correspondence occurring via email and via AFG Connects discussion boards.

After the 2018 Conference gave conceptual approval for a “Just for Tonight” bookmark, inspired by an article in the August 2016 issue of *The Forum*, the Committee began fine-tuning the piece and unanimously approved a final draft. Staff worked quickly to progress this final draft through the approval process and send the CAL piece to the vendor within the year.

The Committee continued last year’s discussion of a suggestion for a piece on Al-Anon’s spiritual principles. After completing the KBDM questions on the topic, the Committee agreed to recommend the development of a blog or electronic discussion board, so that members of the fellowship could share input on the topic.

The Committee received 16 suggestions for new literature or revisions to existing literature from the fellowship. Although it held

discussions on several of these ideas, it did not decide to make any recommendations to the 2019 Conference.

The Committee also continued to discuss the development of the NEW DAILY READER (working title). Additionally, it addressed ideas for structure-wide or Area-wide literature projects (for Literature Coordinators and others) that would increase awareness of the wide variety of available CAL.

The five candidates for the two open At-Large positions on the Literature Committee participated in web conferencing meetings with voice but no vote. It was hoped that, through this experience, they would gain a better sense of the Committee’s responsibilities, and, at the same time, the Committee would get to know them better. Résumés for two of the candidates will be presented for approval by the Executive Committee so they can begin serving in the spring of 2019.

FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Brian R., Chairperson

Mark S., Staff Liaison, Magazine Coordinator

Joyce B./Lynette K., Trustee Liaisons

The *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee (FEAC) currently consists of five At-Large members (including the Chairperson), the Magazine Coordinator (who serves as the Staff Liaison), and the Trustee Liaison. This year, two Associate Directors also served as Interim Staff Liaisons until the Magazine Coordinator position was filled. The FEAC continues to meet quarterly by conference call, with intermediate correspondence shared via email and via AFG Connects discussion boards.

The Committee welcomed a new FEAC Trustee Liaison, Lynette K. She replaces outgoing Liaison, Joyce B. The Liaison serves as a link between the Committee and the Board of Trustees, with voice but no vote.

Each FEAC member receives 50 unedited sharings to review and score every month. The Editor uses those scores, along with the accompanying notes, to determine which are suitable for publication in *The Forum*. To ensure that every possible sharing can be used, even sharings given too low a grade to be published in their entirety are examined for any small nugget of wisdom, especially for the “One ‘Quote’ at a Time” section of the magazine.

Near the end of 2017, the Magazine Editor and the Design Department began making stylistic changes to *The Forum* by adding more graphics and color. At the beginning of the new year, the magazine went to full color. Both the Committee members and readers overwhelmingly approved of the change.

The Committee also discussed how best to proceed with THE *FORUM* BOOK (working title), approved by the 2015 WSC. Because over 800 articles from past issues have been collected so far, the Committee recommended that Staff seek an Al-Anon member who is also a professional freelance editor. The editor will be responsible for reviewing and categorizing the sharings, along with choosing an organizational structure for the work as a whole.

The Committee members also made a recommendation to update the tagline from the older “strength and hope for the friends and families of problem drinkers” (in the “Statement of Purpose” at the beginning of every issue of *The Forum*) to the current “help and hope for the families and friends of alcoholics.” The entire Committee agreed that the second option sounds more inviting and positive.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Professionals

Claire R., Associate Director Public Outreach—Professionals

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism

The *AFA* magazine continues to be the largest public outreach project with fellowship participation in the WSO's Service Structure. Members ordered 208,050 copies of the *AFA 2018* second-printing magazine. A total of 219,025 copies of the *AFA 2019* magazine were ordered for the first printing. This was 1,000 copies less than the *AFA 2016* first printing, which was the largest to date for the 12 issues of the magazine produced.

Staff encouraged participation in the project by creating *AFA* articles, ads, order forms; tear-off tab flyers; print and electronic publications in English, French, and Spanish; and AFG Connects community postings. Members were invited to submit stories for the publication via print and electronic means, including the easy-to-remember link al-anon.org/sharing.

As with the 2018 issue, the *AFA 2019* cover design emphasizes the purpose of the Al-Anon program rather than the year of its publication. The *AFA 2019* magazine includes a member's story from the Czech Republic, which was submitted to the WSO via Facebook Messenger. This is the first time a sharing has been received from a member who is only able to attend Al-Anon because of social media.

Members' stories and four professional articles have been selected for the *AFA 2020* magazine issue. Professional articles were written by a psychiatrist, a psychologist, and a pediatrician. For the first time, a parole officer has submitted an article; it could pair well with the sharing from an incarcerated Al-Anon member.

Al-Anon Membership Survey

Members were invited to participate in the WSO's 12th Conference-approved survey from January 10 to February 27, 2018. The survey questionnaires were available online in English, Spanish, and French. For the first time, members had the option of using mobile telephones or tablets in addition to personal or laptop computers to complete the survey.

A record-breaking 13,395 members completed the survey (in comparison to 8,517 members in the 2015 study). Members in the continental US and Canada comprised 88.7 and 11.2 percent of the survey participants, respectively. One tenth of a percent of the respondents were from Bermuda or Puerto Rico.

Spanish- and French-speaking member participation increased significantly from:

- 36 Spanish-speaking members in 2009 to 139 Spanish-speaking members in 2018
- 71 French-speaking members in 2009 to 275 French-speaking members in 2018

While the numbers may appear small, they represent an almost 400 percent increase in participation. Staff are examining options for increasing participation in 2021.

The WSO began distributing articles, announcements, and information about the 2018 Membership Survey in October 2017 and continued through March 2018, when members were thanked for their participation in the study. The fellowship was also notified when the report was posted on the WSO website on August 1, 2018.

Members also had the option to share how Al-Anon has benefited their lives. More than 8,000 members responded. Although most

comments came from English-speaking members, 209 responses were received from French-speaking members, and 100 were received from members who are Spanish speakers.

Since the US and Canadian members' results were statistically comparable, new and notable findings included:

- Fifty-six percent of the survey participants were between the ages of 25 and 48 when they first attended Al-Anon.
- Seven in ten members have been affected by alcoholism that spans two or more generations.
- Al-Anon members who are adult children of alcoholics are 68 percent more likely to be diagnosed with a mental health disorder than a spouse of an alcoholic.
- The average member reported an 88 percent improvement in his or her mental health within two to three years of continuous membership in Al-Anon.

Al-Anon's survey is a snapshot (an environmental scan) of its fellowship for a specific and limited period of time. The substantial number of survey participants increases the credibility of the findings and reflects the fellowship's willingness to be of service to Al-Anon.

Communication and Cooperation with Professionals/Professional Inquiries

Most professionals call or send email messages to the WSO to request literature and *AFA* magazines. An electronic form for professionals is available on the updated WSO website. It provides a welcoming newsletter with essential information about Al-Anon. However, Staff noted that the form was underutilized; only 214 inquiries had been submitted during the year.

Requests for new Al-Anon or Alateen groups in a specific community and for ongoing supplies of literature are referred to Area Public Outreach Coordinators for local follow-up. The WSO supports Area and local service arms by providing an introductory supply of literature until local members can respond to the requests.

Outreach to Professionals—Let's Be Friendly with Our Professional Friends Workshop, 2018 Al-Anon International Convention

A series of 12 questions related to the effects of alcoholism on the family, family treatment/counseling, and ongoing recovery were posed to a panel composed of one Canadian professional and three US professionals practicing in the fields of psychology and psychiatry. One of the professionals supervises psychological services for a county school system and offered insight into the recovery of children and teens. This workshop was incorporated to expand public outreach during the International Convention. Due to the success of the workshop, the format and questions were provided to Area Public Outreach Coordinators and District Representatives so that they could replicate the workshop with a panel of professionals from their communities.

Student Requests for Interviews

Junior and senior high school and college students contacted the WSO to interview Staff for their class projects. They were asked to submit their questions in advance so that research could be done if necessary. In addition to questions about the effects of alcoholism on children and families, they asked about Al-Anon as an organization, e.g., the number of employees, the year in which it was founded, its organizational structure, the number of Al-Anon groups or members (estimates are provided from average number

of members per group data, which can be found in the annual updates provided by groups). Some students shared that they chose the subject of Al-Anon because they were or are affected by a parent's drinking. Others contacted Al-Anon because their class assignment is related to alcoholism or addiction in general.

Staff Travel

The Association for Addiction Professionals (NAADAC), Houston, TX

The Associate Directors—Professionals and Digital Strategy attended the conference. The program consisted of sessions focused on addiction and treatment and recovery for family members. Staff networked with exhibitors from treatment facilities and presenters as well as attendees. Topics included cultural and linguistic competence, treatment of the family unit, helping families manage daily stressors, the therapeutic process of forgiveness, the brain science of addiction, elderly addiction and its effects on caregivers, telehealth for rural and frontier communities, recovery peer support services, ethics, and social media. Al-Anon received recognition from presenters in family-focused workshops, which helped Staff converse with both attendees and presenters.

Mental Health for All Conference, Montreal, QC

The Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals attended the third annual conference hosted by the Canadian Mental Health Association (with additional sponsorship provided by the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction) for the third consecutive year. This event gives Staff the opportunity to communicate with Canadian professionals and attend workshops, which are also known as “best practices,” in the fields of mental health and addiction from across Canada. A similar change of terminology is occurring among Canadian professionals and government agencies, and in the US. This conference provided Staff with updated statistics and research reports from the mental health and addiction fields in Canada.

Cooperation with US Government Agencies/Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT), National Recovery Month Planning Meetings

Staff continued to represent families of alcoholics and Al-Anon Family Groups at National Recovery Month planning meetings. The January and September face-to-face meetings afford the WSO the opportunity to share information with the Executive Directors of Nar-Anon and the National Association of Children of Addiction (NACoA). In addition to Al-Anon, these two organizations are the primary advocates for families and children affected by alcoholism or drug addiction. Attending meetings and learning about the activities of other nonprofit organizations in the addiction and mental health fields gave Staff the opportunity to maintain open lines of communication with these organizations. Requests for *AFA* magazine and Al-Anon information tables at local or state Recovery Month events are forwarded to Area Public Outreach Coordinators.

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) Liaison Council Meetings, Rockville, MD

Staff observed scientific presentations three times per year at the NIAAA Council meetings. The Liaison session for public and nonprofit organizations provides an opportunity for Staff to give updates about Al-Anon activities, such as the Membership Survey, and to interact with other nonprofit organizations. A.A. GSO's Cooperating with the Professional Community Coordinator also attends these meetings, which means that A.A. and Al-Anon Staff

have time to interact, ask one another questions, and update each other on current activities.

One of the sessions featured a joint council meeting of NIAAA/NIDA (National Institute on Drug Abuse)/CRAN (Collaborative Research on Addiction) for the first time. The highlight was an opportunity to hear the Surgeon General of the United States discuss the Report on Addiction.

PUBLIC OUTREACH & COMMUNICATIONS

Pat Q., Associate Director—Public Outreach Media & Group Records

Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

Public Communications

In April, the Senior Communications Specialist—Media began directly reporting to the Associate Director—Digital Strategy. Prior to this, the position reported to the Associate Director—Public Outreach Media & Group Records, although approximately 50 percent of her workload was supporting Digital Strategy efforts.

The Senior Communications Specialist (non-member) was interviewed this past October by a reporter for *The Review*, the independent student newspaper at the University of Delaware, for information about Al-Anon.

Staff provided background information on the Al-Anon program, including data from the 2018 Membership Survey and other topics such as Al-Anon's purpose, the nonprofessional nature of the program (which explains why members do not give advice), and anonymity.

The article, “Hope and healing: Al-Anon supports those impacted by alcoholism,” was published online and can be accessed via internet search. The article includes several quotes from a Staff member; she was able to provide her surname and title because she is a non-member. This detail encourages the media to cite the article.

Al-Anon has been referenced in the media in 2018. TV shows *Mom* and *Face the Truth* and the advice column *Dear Abby* all mentioned Al-Anon in the past year. The Al-Anon name was also cited in *The Kominsky Method*, a series that is currently available on Netflix.

Writing Guide for Incarcerated Al-Anon Members

Fifteen sharings were submitted by Al-Anon members attending groups in correctional facilities. The WSO now has 38 stories from inmates as a result of the creation and distribution of the Writing Guide for Incarcerated Al-Anon Members. One of the six stories reviewed by the *Forum* Editorial Advisory Committee was selected for the January 2019 issue of *The Forum*. Because many families of alcoholics are concerned about a relative facing a sentence or a loved one who is currently incarcerated, the Magazine Editor is evaluating a sharing from an Al-Anon member in prison for the *AFA 2020* magazine issue.

Native American Fellowship of the Spirit Conference, Bloomington, MN

The WSO arranged with the Minnesota South Area to staff an Al-Anon information table at the conference hosted by White Bison, Inc. Staff expressed appreciation for the Area's prompt response to the request. The WSO provided *Al-Anon's Path to Recovery* (S-67) pamphlets for the event. As a result of participation in this event, White Bison, Inc. invited Al-Anon to set up an information table at a training workshop that will take place in Portland, Oregon in 2019.

Social Media

The Social Media Specialist has coordinated several web conferencing interviews with professionals. There is a lot of enthusiasm; Sis Wenger, President/CEO of the National Association for Children of Addiction (NACoA) has agreed to be interviewed and has stated she will talk to other professionals, including Jerry Moe, about participating as well.

Following a social media discussion at the April Policy Committee meeting, the Digital Strategy Team began “unhiding” comments posted on Facebook that Staff determined to be appropriate and consistent with Al-Anon’s message of offering hope and help to the families and friends of alcoholics. All comments are blocked initially; however, comments that adhere to Al-Anon principles, including anonymity, are unhidden so other website visitors can see what has been shared. Sharing comments increases search engine confidence in the helpfulness of the Al-Anon message, improves the visibility of Al-Anon pages, and expands the WSO’s ability to reach those still suffering from the family disease of alcoholism.

Staff Travel

Facing Addiction with the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD), Alexandria, VA

Staff attended workshops and shared *AFA* magazines at an Al-Anon information table between workshop sessions. Al-Anon’s display table offered Staff an opportunity to network with 60 NCADD affiliates in communities across the US. The theme of the event, “Having Our Voices Heard: Raising an Effective Voice in a Changing and Challenging World,” was educational and timely for Staff because of its emphasis on effective use of social media.

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Maria N., Chairperson

Pat Q., Staff Liaison, Associate Director Public Outreach—Media & Group Records

Claire R., Staff Liaison, Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals

Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy

Norm W./Arlene M., Trustee Liaisons

The Committee includes Delegates from Panels 56, 57, and 58; an At-Large Chairperson; and one At-Large member from Saskatchewan. Although the Canadian At-Large member opted not to continue serving on the Committee for the service year of June 2018 to June 2019, three additional At-Large members from the US volunteered to serve on the Committee. A fifth At-Large member, preferably from Canada, is being sought.

The Committee met three times in 2018 instead of four. Staff experienced a period of adjustment during the transition of media-related assignments to the Associate Director—Digital Strategy in June. In addition, two hurricane warnings prevented rescheduling of the Committee meeting in September and October.

The Committee’s thought force charged with developing culturally sensitive public outreach materials completed its KBDM process. The thought force made two recommendations to the Public Outreach Committee:

- Develop a strategy for informing Al-Anon members about culturally specific public outreach materials that are already in existence. It was noted that the American Community Surveys, which update the US Census, show that the Hispanic/Latino population is the fastest growing in the country.
- Survey Spanish-speaking Al-Anon groups, asking them how they attract and retain newcomers.

Subsequently, the Committee agreed to form a task force that would survey the ten Areas in the WSC Structure with the largest number of Spanish-speaking Al-Anon groups.

The Committee also proposed creating a task force that would be charged with selecting quotes for WSO social media posts from CAL recovery books and pamphlets. Staff evaluated the recommendation and concluded this activity was adequately managed by Staff, proposing instead a discovery process that would offer the Public Outreach Committee greater opportunity for evaluation and decision-making. The Committee was invited to review members’ responses to the optional question on the 2018 Membership Survey, about how Al-Anon has benefited their lives. WSO Conference Staff confirmed that members’ identities are safeguarded because those who participated in the survey did so anonymously. In addition, the introduction of the survey questionnaire informed members that survey findings would be used to enhance and increase the WSO’s communication with the public and professionals.

The Task Force for Development of a Public Outreach Tool for Incarcerated Al-Anon Members and Families of Alcoholics Being Paroled or Discharged from Correctional Facilities developed several options after responding to the KBDM questions: Members could distribute *AFA* magazines for parole and pre-release programs at facilities and recovery sharings from incarcerated Al-Anon members collected by the WSO could be published in *AFA* or *The Forum*. Subsequently, sharings were selected to be forwarded to FEAC and sent to be considered for inclusion in the *AFA 2020* magazine issue. The Task Force also discussed the idea of an online business card template with WSO contact information so that incarcerated individuals can use the WSO’s online meeting locator or toll-free number for meeting information when they are released. This Task Force will continue to meet to complete its charge.

ARCHIVES

Joe T., Archivist

Digitization of Archives Collection

The Archives continued to preserve materials in a digital format. This is essential because the WSO Archives have limited physical space for paper documents and “other than paper printed” holdings are now routinely produced. For example, annual snapshots of the WSO social media memes; quotations posted on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter; and the content of the website are captured and preserved for Staff reference and historical perspective. The outcome is that digital transfers are increased and transfer of paper documents, with the exception of original sharings from members for books and pamphlets, are reduced. A secure cloud platform is under review.

The WSO Mail/Copy Clerk continued to assist the Archivist with specialized scans of materials, which increased the number of digitized images in the collection. The remainder of *Forum* magazines not digitized last year were scanned. This helped the Archivist and Mail/Copy Clerk create a list of missing issues for the first time. The *Inside Al-Anon* and *Inside Al-Anon Xtra* newsletters in English, Spanish, and French; half of the World Directories and WSO leases; and all of the photos were imaged. The WSO Archivist contacted the US Government’s National Archives as a resource; they aided him in finding ways to correctly identify tiny paper photos that were incorrectly labeled as paper negatives.

An easy-to-complete Request for Research (AR-9) form was posted on the WSO website. As the year progressed, the number of inquiries increased because of the form's availability. The electronic form has helped Staff better serve the fellowship by forwarding group or member concerns to Group Services for responses that reflect current policies and experiences rather than dated historical perspectives.

A GSO requested sharing details so it could identify the gender of a member whose sharing appears in *Paths to Recovery* (B-24). In many languages, an author's gender influences how his or her work should be translated. As a result, the WSO Archives modified their policy for retaining original member sharings from ten years to permanently. Staff implemented the new procedure first with the storing and digitization of the member sharings for the *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (B-33) book and *Hope & Understanding for Parents & Grandparents* (P-94) pamphlet.

Permission to research the early Family Groups, children, and adult children of alcoholics in Al-Anon's formative decade (the 1950s) was granted to a college university professor who has a Guggenheim fellowship and is hoping to write a book on these subjects.

Several inquiries from members challenged the current Conference-approved motions appearing in the Policy Digest section of the *Service Manual* regarding the exclusive use of CAL at Al-Anon meetings. The Archivist and Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals began graphically compiling discussions and motions from *Conference Summaries* and the text that was subsequently added to the Policy Digest section of the *Service Manual*. This format shows the progression of WSC discussions and motions regarding the use of A.A. and other outside literature at meetings. Experience has shown that clarity and a historical perspective are best provided when research and WSO responses include references to the *Conference Summaries* (which are posted on the WSO website) and the Policy Digest section of the *Service Manual*.

A former Staff member volunteered to sort several cartons of materials, which were donated by the family of a deceased past Trustee and former Delegate, for the WSO Archives collection. The year-month-day [YY-MM-DD] format continued to unite the collection so that digital and paper content over multiple decades were not replicated in the donated materials and missing items could be electronically accessioned to the collection.

Over the years, Archives has moved many announcements into the holdings by using the document and publications codes that are assigned by Publications. The code-to-carton storage technique served the Archives well, but the retrieval of the content became cumbersome. A decision to populate all announcements by year began in the fourth quarter. The process includes digital and paper units. It saves Staff time when they need to retrieve information and improves the Archivist's speed of research.

AFG Connects

The **Area Archives Coordinator** community continues to serve as a clearinghouse and resource for Area Archive Coordinators to share their ideas about scanners, computers, cloud storage, etc. Area Archives Coordinators whose collections are stored as documents exchanged information with each other about archival storage folders, scrap books, etc. Some Area Archives Coordinators have converted and stored their collections in digital formats. The Coordinators using digital technology discovered a one-size-fits-all guideline would be too general to be useful, due to the wide variety of electronic equipment used by Archivists. So, the idea of creating a technology guide was abandoned.

Al-Anon Then and Now (AR-2)

Translations into Spanish and French were completed. This pamphlet can be used as a handout to introduce and summarize Al-Anon's history or can be distributed to the fellowship during viewings of *Lois's Story* (AV-1, SAV-1, or FRAV-1) or *Lois W. and the Pioneers* (AV-24, SAV-24, or FRAV-24) DVD film rentals. The pamphlet is available as a free download in English, Spanish, and French on the WSO website, and on the WSO's online store. Special website addresses can be used to easily access and download the pamphlets: al-anon.org/18thenandnow (English); al-anon.org/18brevehistoria (Spanish); and al-anon.org/18brefhistorique (French).

Al-Anon's Cofounders (P-87)

Translations into Spanish and French were completed. The fellowship will be able to access the pamphlet via free electronic download in all three languages beginning in 2019.

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

Niketa Bailey, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

In 2018, the Finance & Operations Departments worked on various projects during the year to help streamline operations and increase efficiency throughout the organization. Together, their Teams:

- added a Canadian PayPal option on the website to allow members to make contributions in Canadian currency;
- designed the cover of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon 50th Anniversary* and the 2018 International Convention bookplate;
- implemented electronic card readers to accept credit cards at the 2018 International Convention;
- updated the newsletters *Le lien* and *en acción*, to be offered in full color;
- implemented PayPal as an additional payment option for literature purchases on the website;
- redesigned and streamlined the Conference Approved Literature catalog; and
- designed the cover of *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships—A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Stories* (B-33).

TRANSLATION

Colette Norman, Translation Project Coordinator (Non-member)

The following items were translated into French and Spanish in 2018:

Book

- *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships* (B-33)

Magazines

- *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2019* magazine, order forms, and marketing tools
- *Le lien*, a French-language publication compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues)
- *Al-Anon y Alateen en acción*, a Spanish-language publication compiled from *Forum* articles (six issues)

Pamphlets/Service Tools

- *Hope & Understanding for Parents & Grandparents* (P-94)
- *Fact Sheet for Professionals* (S-37EF; S-37ES)
- *2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*
 - ♦ *Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work* (P-24)
 - ♦ *Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies* (P-25)
 - ♦ *World Service Handbook* (P-26)
 - ♦ *Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service* (P-27)
- *Does She Drink Too Much?* (P-62) [French only]

Web-Based or Digital Media

- 2018 Al-Anon International Convention: theme, program, website registration information, housing information, audio podcast release, audio release agreement for participants, special event registration information, and surveys
- *Le Messenger* and *En Contacto*—French and Spanish electronic newsletters published monthly
- *Alateen Talk* excerpts published online
- Vanity URLs for website pages
- CMA letter for electronic meetings
- Website content updates

Other Items

- Appeal Letter to members (quarterly)
- Appeal Letter to members (update of information on the back of the letter)
- Chairperson of the Board letter (quarterly)
- *News from the 2018 World Service Conference* bulletin
- 2019 World Service Conference theme for use on posters, letterhead and other materials
- *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon 50th Anniversary* Book Plate
- 2019 CAL Catalog
- *Resolution of Gratitude to Alcoholics Anonymous*
- *Just for Tonight* (FM-81) [Bookmark]

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SHIPPING

Camille Peters, Associate Director—Customer Service & Shipping (Non-member)

The Customer Service & Shipping Department accomplished the following items in 2018:

- Redesigned the warehouse to streamline operations and increase efficiencies
- Renegotiated new shipping rates with UPS
- Labels for *Le lien* and *en acción* are processed in Customer Service
- Processed and shipped 422,000 copies of the *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* magazine

2018 Stats

- Total literature orders placed: 17,451
- Total contributions entered: \$1,953,460
- Total *Forum* subscriptions ordered: 18,220
- Canadian orders placed: 630
- Overseas orders placed: 112

Finance Committee

Jennie McC./Joyce B./Joan S., Chairpersons
Niketa Bailey, Director of Finance & Operations (Non-member)

The Finance Committee meets monthly and reports to the Executive Committee immediately following the Finance meeting. During the Conference, the Finance Committee reports directly to the Board.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee include monitoring expenses and 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 AFG, Inc. remains solvent.

The Committee reviews the financial feasibility of proposed projects that are not currently included in the budget, taking into consideration the goals and desired outcomes, cost-effectiveness, timing, and the project's relationship to the Strategic Plan. Additionally, it sets prices for new or existing literature. The Finance Committee reports its actions and recommendations to the Executive Committee.

Other routine functions include:

- Approving the letters for the quarterly appeal to members
- Reviewing handouts on the previous year's contributions (received from the US and Canada) that will be distributed at the WSC
- Recommending to the Board of Trustees the Equalized Expense amount for the WSC (the amount the Board requires each Area to send as their contribution toward the expenses of their Delegate)
- Reviewing, revising (when appropriate), and submitting recommendations for the Investment Strategy Goals to the Board of Trustees for approval
- Reviewing each department's budget with the Director of that service when preparing the Preliminary 2018 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January
- Reviewing the Audit Report and Management Letter
- Reviewing Investment Philosophy
- Reviewing the 990
- Reviewing Finance Committee Goals and Objectives
- Reviewing the Investments in the Reserve Fund
- Reviewing packing and shipping charges to ensure fairness and validity
- Meeting with the investment managers twice a year

Non-routine actions included:

- Working on the Finance Committee presentations for the 2018 and 2019 WSCs and discussing various ways to make it more meaningful and helpful to Conference members
- Recommending that the Board of Trustees print *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships—A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Stories* (B-33) in softcover format and setting the price at \$11
- Recommending that the Board of Trustees offer *Courage to Change: One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II* (eB-16), *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (eB-22), *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (eB-3) and *Having Had a Spiritual Awakening* (eB-25) eBooks in English and in Spanish and French where available, and to offer the electronic version of *The Forum* through the Google Play Store at a selling price that is equivalent to its selling price on other platforms
- Establishing a task force on Area reserve funds to help Delegates at the 2018 WSC understand the purpose of their Area's reserve fund and how decisions are made
- Reviewing the draft of the Eighth ECRPM Triennial Report prior to presentation at the 2018 WSC
- Recommending that the Board of Trustees print the *Just for Tonight* Bookmark (M-81) at an initial quantity of 50,000 and set the price at \$0.10 per piece
- Approving pricing of *AFA 2020*

BYLAWS OF AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

Effective April 30, 1988

ARTICLE I ~ NAMES

The name of this Corporation, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, is Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (referred to herein as the "Corporation" or "World Service Office").

1. As used in these BYLAWS:

- a. Al-Anon group means a group of relatives and friends of alcoholics formed and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
- b. Alateen group means a group of teenage relatives and friends of alcoholics formed and functioning in keeping with the principles and Traditions of the Al-Anon fellowship.
- c. World Service Conference means the body described in Article XI of these BYLAWS.
- d. Trustee means a person who is or becomes a Trustee pursuant to these BYLAWS.

ARTICLE II ~ PURPOSES

- 1. The purposes for which the Corporation was formed, as set forth in its Certificate of Incorporation, are: "To encourage, assist and serve the families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with the problems concerning and attendant on alcoholism; to reinforce their efforts to understand the alcoholic and to foster his or her restoration to normal life; to disseminate information in relation thereto and to conduct, and participate in, any other classes of service to assist families and friends of alcoholics in dealing with their problems."
- 2. In furtherance of the purposes set forth in the Certificate of Incorporation, the World Service Office will:
 - a. Coordinate policy among the Al-Anon and Alateen groups throughout the world;
 - b. Assist Al-Anon and Alateen groups in the conduct of their activities;
 - c. Provide relatives and friends of alcoholics with information about the principles and Traditions of Al-Anon;
 - d. Provide information about the locations of Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - e. Assist in the formation of new Al-Anon and Alateen groups
 - f. Publish literature of interest to Al-Anon and Alateen groups;
 - g. Bring Al-Anon and Alateen to the attention of the public;
 - h. Provide information and other assistance to persons for whom regular attendance at meetings of Al-Anon or Alateen groups is difficult or impractical;
 - i. Establish and maintain national and international public outreach; and

- j. Establish and maintain policies for the work of the World Service Office.

ARTICLE III ~ MEMBERS

- 1. The Corporation shall have no members.

ARTICLE IV ~ TRUSTEES

- 1. The Directors of the Corporation shall be the persons who are the Trustees of the Corporation. Each Trustee shall become a Director upon becoming a Trustee and shall cease to be a Director upon ceasing to be a Trustee. For the purpose of these BYLAWS, the term Director and Trustee shall be deemed synonymous and interchangeable so far as necessary to conform to the Certificate of Incorporation of the Corporation which contemplates, and refers to, Directors.
- 2. The Board of Trustees shall consist of not less than seven nor more than twenty-one persons with the following classifications: Trustees at Large, Regional Trustees, Lifetime Trustees, and a Sustaining Trustee, as those terms are described in these BYLAWS. The actual number of Trustees and the composition of the Board among the classifications described herein shall be as established by the Board from time to time with guidance from the World Service Conference.
- 3. Trustees at Large are Trustees whose nomination originates with, or with the consent of, the Board of Trustees. The total number of such Trustees shall be set by the Board of Trustees from time to time and shall always be a number evenly divisible by three. One-third of the number of Trustees at Large shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees and shall take office on the day following such meeting.
- 4. Regional Trustees are Trustees who live in geographic areas of the United States and Canada designated as official regions by the World Service Conference. Their purpose is to bring a regional perspective to the Board. They do not represent the members of the region, nor are they responsible to the region. The total number of Regional Trustees shall be a number evenly divisible by three and one-third of the number shall be elected each year at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees to take office on the day following such meeting. The Areas within the Regions participate in recommending Trustee candidates through the Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) to the Nominating Committee.
- 5. The Nominating Committee is charged with submitting nominations for Trustees to replace those whose terms will expire. The Nominating Committee shall provide written notice of such nominations to the Board of Trustees no later than thirty days prior to the annual meeting at which the vote is to be taken on such nominees. In the event a nominee for Trustee is not elected by the Board of Trustees,

the nominee shall be withdrawn, and the position declared vacant. The position may be filled in accordance with Article IV, paragraph 9.

6. The Sustaining Trustee is the person employed by the World Service Office established by AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. to hold the office of Executive Director of the World Service Office. The term of office of the Sustaining Trustee shall be for the same period as the person is employed by the World Service Office as Executive Director.
7. Lois W. and Anne B., the co-founders of AI-Anon, were Lifetime Trustees who served as Trustee as long as each lived.
8. Any Trustee may resign by sending written notice to the Secretary of the Corporation.
9. Any vacancy in the office of a Trustee at Large or Regional Trustee which occurs in any year between the annual meeting and the next World Service Conference may be filled at a meeting of the Board of Trustees by a majority vote. Any such person appointed by the Board of Trustees to fill such vacancy shall serve until the next annual meeting.
10. The length of time any Trustee at Large and Regional Trustee may serve on the Board is two three-year terms which may be consecutive. However, a Trustee who has served two terms but has not served a full six years may be eligible for appointment by the Board in accordance with Article IV, Paragraph 9.
11. Any member of the Board of Trustees may be removed for just cause by a vote of at least two-thirds of the Board of Trustees at a regular or special meeting. Just cause may be found to exist by the Board of Trustees based on: i) the member's absence from two or more meetings during any twelve-month period without the Board of Trustees' prior approval; ii) a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment violation involving the member; or iii) the member's failure to adhere to any written policies and procedures of the Board of Trustees.

Upon a finding of just cause by the Board of Trustees, the Secretary of the Corporation shall send written notice of the proposed removal to such member at his or her last recorded address on file with the Corporation at least fifteen (15) days before final action is taken on such removal. At any time after such finding by the Board of Trustees, the President or Secretary, or both, may meet with the member to discuss the Board of Trustees' finding concerning such member.

The member may submit a written statement to the Board of Trustees regarding the proposed removal not less than five (5) days before any final action on the proposed removal. Prior to any final action, the Board of Trustees shall review any such statement submitted and determine the mitigating factors, if any, contained therein on the proposed removal before the final vote by the Board of Trustees to remove such member. Upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the Board of Trustees to take final action

on such removal at a regular or special meeting of the Board of Trustees, the removal will become effective as of the date of the meeting, or at such later date as may be determined by the Board of Trustees at such meeting, and the member shall be notified in writing by the Board of Trustees of its decision.

12. Trustees shall serve without remuneration, but they shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.

ARTICLE V ~ POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE TRUSTEES

1. The Board of Trustees shall control and manage the affairs of the Corporation.
2. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Board of Trustees shall have the following powers:
 - a. To establish and maintain the policies of the World Service Office;
 - b. To control the property and finances of the World Service Office;
 - c. To establish plans and conduct the operations of the World Service Office;
 - d. To authorize expenditures;
 - e. To elect the officers of the Corporation;
 - f. To elect the at-large members of the Executive Committee and appoint members of other committees in accordance with these BYLAWS;
 - g. To appoint and remove an Executive Director and a Director of Finance and Operations for the World Service Office; and
 - h. To take such measures as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the World Service Office.
3. Any Trustee having a substantial financial interest in any contract or transaction requiring authorization by the Board of Trustees shall not vote on the matter.

ARTICLE VI ~ OFFICERS

1. The Officers of the Corporation shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Treasurer and a Secretary, and such other officers as may be deemed necessary from time to time by the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director serves as the Secretary of the Corporation.
2. The President, the Vice President, and the Treasurer shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees from among the Trustees for a term of one year each.
3. The President shall also serve as the Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Chairperson), and the Vice President shall also serve as the Vice Chairperson (and is sometimes herein referred to as the Vice Chairperson).
4. Any Officer vacancy may be filled for the unexpired term by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees.

5. Any Officer may be removed from office by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE VII ~ DUTIES OF OFFICERS

1. **THE PRESIDENT.** The President shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees, and shall perform all the necessary duties, and exercise all the customary powers, incident to the office of President, including the appointment of committee Chairpersons, with the exception of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. The President shall have general supervision of all of the affairs of the Corporation and shall serve in an ex officio capacity on all committees, except the Audit Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property Management, and in that capacity may participate in committee discussions but not vote on any committee matters.
2. **THE VICE PRESIDENT.** The Vice President shall assist the President, as assigned or requested, in the performance of the President's duties and/or the exercise of his/her powers. In event of the President's absence or disability, the Vice President shall promptly call a special meeting of the Board of Trustees for the purpose of determining whether the President's absence or disability prevents the President from serving in that office. The Board of Trustees shall make such determination in its sole discretion. In the event the Board of Trustees determines that the President is unable to serve because of such absence or disability, the office shall be deemed vacant and the Board of Trustees shall elect a successor. Until such time as a successor is elected, the Vice President shall perform the duties and exercise the powers of the President.
3. **THE TREASURER.** The Treasurer shall be the financial officer of the Corporation and shall provide advice to the Corporation with respect to general financial policy and ancillary matters subject to such directions as may be given by the Board of Trustees. The Treasurer may be an authorized signatory for the disposition of funds of the Corporation on deposit in banks and other holding accounts. The Treasurer shall not be individually responsible for accounting procedures, security of funds, books of accounts or financial records, but does have general oversight authority respecting these matters.
4. **THE SECRETARY.** The Secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings of the Corporation, shall be the custodian of books and records of the Corporation and shall perform such other duties as may be delegated. The Secretary shall serve in an ex officio capacity on all committees, except the Audit Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property Management, and in that capacity may participate in committee discussions but not vote on any committee matters.
5. The Officers of the Corporation shall each perform such other duties as may be delegated to them by the Board of Trustees as well as such other duties as shall pertain to their respective offices.

ARTICLE VIII ~ FINANCES

1. The fiscal year of the World Service Office shall begin on the first day of January and end on the 31st day of December thereof.
2. Checks shall be made in the name of the Corporation and shall be signed by two Officers or employees as may from time to time be designated by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE IX ~ MEETINGS

1. The annual meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be held within twenty-four hours of the closing of the World Service Conference in April of each year at such place as is designated by the Board of Trustees, except when special circumstances warrant a change of date of the Conference.
2. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees shall be held in January, April, July and October at a time and place designated by the Chairperson.
3. If all the Trustees consent thereto generally or in respect of a particular meeting, a Trustee may participate in a meeting of the Board or of a committee of the Board by means of such conference telephone or other communications facilities as permit all persons participating in the meeting to hear each other, and a Trustee participating in such a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting.
4. Special meetings of the Board of Trustees may be called by the Chairperson at any time. In addition, the Chairperson shall call a special meeting as soon as reasonably practical upon the written application of three Trustees or upon the written application of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for the transaction of such business as may be described in such application. The written application hereunder may be made by electronic means.
5. Notice of each meeting of the Board of Trustees shall be given to the Trustees at least fourteen days before such meeting if given to the Trustees by postal mail or forty-eight hours if given by electronic means. Trustees may waive notice of meetings by executing appropriate waivers.
6. A majority of the Trustees present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at such meeting. Each Trustee shall have one vote. The vote of the majority of the Trustees present at the time of the vote, if a quorum is then present, shall be the act of the Board of Trustees, except as otherwise provided by law. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the Trustees present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is obtained.
7. Interim actions of the Board of Trustees may be taken without a meeting with the unanimous consent of the Trustees. Such consent may be written or electronic. Interim actions shall be formally approved at the next meeting of the Board of Trustees.

8. Any member unable to attend any meeting of the Board shall give advance notice of the absence to the Chairperson or Secretary of the Board and indicate the reason for the absence. Any member who fails to attend two or more meetings per year for reasons deemed inadequate by the Board shall be subject to dismissal by the Board as described in Article IV.11. For the purposes of this paragraph, the Board of Trustees' meetings during the World Service Conference shall be deemed to be one meeting.
9. Unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson, the order of business at all meetings shall be as follows:
 - a. Calling of roll;
 - b. Approval of minutes;
 - c. Report of Treasurer;
 - d. Committee reports and communications;
 - e. Elections (if such action is scheduled for such meetings);
 - f. New Business.
2. The World Service Conference shall be the permanent body empowered to express the conscience of the Al-Anon fellowship.
3. The Board of Trustees shall consult with the World Service Conference and, when required, accept its decision. However, the Board of Trustees shall continue to be vested with the full legal powers and responsibilities for the World Service Office.
4. Three-fourths of all authorized participants registered at the Conference may bring about a reorganization of the World Service Office as or when it is deemed essential. They may request the resignation of the entire Board of Trustees and the nomination of a new slate of Trustees. In this regard the annual election of Trustees shall be subject to the understanding of each Trustee, that his resignation may be requested by the Conference, subject to the further understanding that prior to any such resignation becoming effective each Trustee shall be requested to vote for the successor slate of Trustees presented by the Conference. For the purpose of bringing about a reorganization of the World Service Office, the number of World Service Office participants voting shall be limited to one-fourth of the total Conference vote.

ARTICLE X ~ INDEMNIFICATION

1. Each individual serving or having served as Trustee or Officer, or both, of the Corporation shall be indemnified in the circumstances and to the full extent permitted by law, against any and all costs, expenses and financial consequences of whatever nature, including legal fees actually incurred in connection with any action, suit or legal proceeding of any kind in which such an individual is a defendant by reason of serving or having served as an Officer or Trustee, or both, of the Corporation. This indemnification shall also extend to any individual made a party defendant to any actions, suits or legal proceedings referenced in the preceding sentence by reason of the fact that his testator or intestate served as Trustee or Officer of the Corporation.
2. The foregoing indemnification shall apply also to each individual serving or having served (in his individual capacity, and not as a Trustee or Officer) as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees or of any special committee as may be authorized from time to time by the Board of Trustees.

ARTICLE XI ~ WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

1. The World Service Conference consists of the following persons:
 - a. State, provincial and territorial Delegates from the United States, Canada, and Bermuda;
 - b. Trustees of the Corporation;
 - c. Al-Anon members who serve as Directors and Associate Directors of the World Service Office;
 - d. The persons comprising the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees; and
 - e. Such other persons as deemed necessary for Conference business and representatives from countries not served by the World Service Conference Structure may be admitted by Conference vote. These persons may participate but not vote.

ARTICLE XII ~ COMMITTEES

1. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.** The Executive Committee is comprised of eight members. The Board of Trustees shall elect four members at each annual meeting. The elected members of the Executive Committee shall include three Al-Anon members, preferably not Trustees ("At-Large Members of the Executive Committee"), and an Al-Anon member of the administrative staff of the World Service Office. In addition, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, the Chairperson of the Policy Committee, and the Executive Director of the World Service Office serve as members and the President as an ex-officio member of the Executive Committee by virtue of their positions. The Executive Committee shall meet at such times as the Board of Trustees may direct and shall have the power to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees in the intervals between meetings of the Board of Trustees.

The Committee shall report all such action to the full Board no later than the next meeting of the Board. The Board of Trustees shall elect one volunteer member of the Executive Committee as the Chairperson. The Executive Director is the Secretary.

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees and in that capacity may participate in Board discussions but may not vote on any Board matters.

The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee in that person's absence.

Any At-Large Member of the Executive Committee unable to attend any meeting of the Executive Committee shall give advance notice of the absence to the Chairperson

or Secretary of the Corporation and indicate the reason for the absence. Any At-Large Member of the Executive Committee who fails to attend two or more meetings per year for reasons deemed inadequate by the Executive Committee shall be subject to dismissal. In the event the Executive Committee determines that dismissal of an At-Large Member is appropriate for this reason, it shall recommend to the Board of Trustees such At-Large Member's dismissal. The Board of Trustees may then take action to dismiss such At-Large Member and appoint a new At-Large Member to serve until the next annual meeting.

2. **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR REAL PROPERTY**

MANAGEMENT. The Board of Trustees shall appoint at each annual meeting the necessary members to complete an Executive Committee for Real Property Management consisting of five persons. The Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall include the Director of Finance and Operations, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and three AI-Anon members who are not Trustees nor At-Large Members of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall meet at such time as the Board of Trustees may direct but at least twice per year. The Board of Trustees delegates to the Executive Committee for Real Property Management the oversight and the management of the real property owned by the AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. in accordance with Motion 6 of the 2011 World Service Conference. For the purposes outlined in Motion 6, the Executive Director and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees are not ex-officio members of this Executive Committee and may not attend its meetings unless invited to do so. The nomination of the three AI-Anon members, who are not Trustees nor At-Large Members of the Executive Committee, for the Executive Committee for Real Property Management will be conducted by the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Conference Committee on Trustees. After said nominees receive traditional approval by the Conference, the Board will elect them.

The Board of Trustees shall elect annually one of the volunteer members, who are not Trustees nor At-Large Members of the Executive Committee, as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management.

The Chairperson of the Finance Committee shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management in that person's absence, or, once an opening has been declared, until a new Chairperson is appointed.

Any vacancy in the office of an At-Large Member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management which occurs in any year between the annual meeting and the next World Service Conference may be filled until the next annual meeting by another AI-Anon member appointed to that position by the Board of Trustees.

3. **FINANCE COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Finance Committee consisting of the following members:

The Treasurer of the Corporation, the President of the Corporation, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee, one other Trustee designated by the President, and the Executive Director. The Director of Finance and Operations shall serve in an ex officio capacity, and in that capacity may participate in committee discussions but not vote on any committee matters. The Treasurer shall be the Chairperson of the Finance Committee. The Executive Director is the Secretary. The Finance Committee shall plan the yearly budget of the World Service Office and shall render such other services as may be requested by the Board of Trustees.

The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Finance Committee in the absence of the Treasurer.

4. **POLICY COMMITTEE.** The Board of Trustees shall appoint a Policy Committee consisting of the following members: Trustees, At-Large Members of the Executive Committee, and the Conference members of the WSO administrative staff. The Chairperson of the Policy Committee shall be appointed by the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The Policy Committee shall consider AI-Anon policies particularly in relation to AI-Anon's Traditions, make recommendations to the Board of Trustees, and render such other services as the Board of Trustees may request.

The President shall perform the duties of the Chairperson of the Policy Committee in that person's absence.

5. **NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** At each annual meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Chairperson of the Board appoints the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, with Board approval. After the annual meeting, the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Board, appoints current Trustees to serve as the members of the Nominating Committee. Whenever possible, at least one of the members must be from Canada.
6. The Board of Trustees may form and appoint such other committees as they may from time to time determine appropriate.
7. Committee members with the exception of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management shall hold office for a term of one (1) year. Executive Committee for Real Property Management members shall hold office for a maximum of one three (3) year term or part thereof.
8. Committee members shall serve without remuneration but shall be entitled to payment of reasonable expenses.
9. Any Committee member may be removed from office for cause by affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

ARTICLE XIII ~ AMENDMENTS

The Board of Trustees shall have the power to amend or alter these BYLAWS in whole or in part by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees.

Amended: March 7, 2019

Presented to the 2019 World Service Conference

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS (CANADA) INC.

(the "Corporation")

BY-LAW NO. 2

Pursuant to the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* (S.C. 2009, c.23) and the continuance of the Corporation from the *Canada Corporations Act* (R.S.C. 1970, c. C-32) to the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*, this By-law No. 2, being a by-law relating generally to the conduct of the affairs of the Corporation, replaces all by-laws of the Corporation under the *Canada Corporations Act* and the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act*.

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SECTION 1 – GENERAL

1.01 Definitions

In this by-law and all other by-laws of the Corporation, unless the context otherwise requires:

- a. "Act" means the *Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act* S.C. 2009, c.23 including the Regulations made pursuant to the Act, and any statute or regulations that may be substituted, as amended from time to time;
- b. "articles" means the original or restated articles of incorporation or articles of amendment, amalgamation, continuance, reorganization, arrangement or revival of the Corporation;
- c. "board" means the board of directors of the Corporation and "director" means a member of the board;
- d. "by-law" means this by-law and any other by-laws of the Corporation as amended and which are, from time to time, in force and effect;
- e. "meeting of members" includes an annual meeting of members or a special meeting of members;
- f. "ordinary resolution" means a resolution passed by a majority of the votes cast on that resolution;
- g. "Regulations" means the regulations made under the Act, as amended, restated or in effect from time to time; and
- h. "special resolution" means a resolution passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast on that resolution.

1.02 Interpretation

In the interpretation of this by-law, words in the singular include the plural and vice-versa, words in one gender include all genders, and "person" includes an individual, body corporate, partnership, trust and unincorporated organization. Other than as specified in section 1.01 above, words and expressions defined in the Act have the same meanings when used in these by-laws.

1.03 Corporate Seal

The Corporation may have a corporate seal in the form approved from time to time by the board. If a corporate seal is approved by the board, the secretary of the Corporation shall be the custodian of the corporate seal.

1.04 Execution of Documents

Deeds, transfers, assignments, contracts, obligations and other instruments in writing requiring execution by the Corporation must be signed by any two (2) of its officers or directors, subject to the following: the board may from time to time direct the manner in which and the person or persons by whom a particular document or type of document shall be executed. Any person authorized to sign any document may affix the corporate seal (if any) to the document. Any signing officer may certify a copy of any instrument, resolution, by-law or other document of the Corporation to be a true copy thereof.

1.05 Financial Year End

The financial year end of the Corporation shall be determined by the board.

1.06 Banking Arrangements

The banking business of the Corporation shall be transacted at such bank, trust company or other firm or corporation carrying on a banking business in Canada or elsewhere as the board may designate, appoint or authorize from time to time by resolution. The banking business or any part of it shall be transacted by an officer or officers of the Corporation and/or other persons as the board may by resolution from time to time designate, direct or authorize.

1.07 Annual Financial Statements

The Corporation shall send to the members a copy of the annual financial statements and other documents referred to in subsection 172(1) (Annual Financial Statements) of the Act or a copy of a publication of the Corporation reproducing the information contained in the documents. Instead of sending the documents, the Corporation may send a summary to each member along with a notice informing the member of the procedure for obtaining a copy of the documents themselves free of charge. The Corporation is not required to send the documents or a summary to a member who, in writing, declines to receive such documents.

1.08 Borrowing Powers

The directors of the Corporation may, without authorization of the members,

- a. borrow money on the credit of the Corporation;
- b. issue, reissue, sell, pledge or hypothecate debt obligations of the Corporation;
- c. give a guarantee on behalf of the Corporation to secure performance of an obligation of any person; and
- d. mortgage, hypothecate, pledge or otherwise create a security interest in all or any property of the Corporation, owned or subsequently acquired, to secure any debt obligation of the Corporation.

SECTION 2 – MEMBERSHIP

2.01 Membership Conditions

Subject to the articles, there shall be one class of members in the Corporation. Membership in the Corporation shall be limited to the directors of the Corporation and each director shall be a member of the Corporation for the period of time they serve as a director. Each member shall be entitled to receive notice of, attend and vote at all meetings of the members of the Corporation.

Pursuant to subsection 197(1) (Fundamental Changes) of the Act, a special resolution of the members is required to make any amendments to this section of the by-laws if those amendments affect membership rights and/or conditions described in paragraphs 197(1)(e), (h), (l) or (m).

2.02 Notice of Members' Meeting

Notice of the time and place of a meeting of members shall be given to each member entitled to vote at the meeting by the following means:

- a. by mail, courier or personal delivery to each member entitled to vote at the meeting, during a period of 21 to 60 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held; or
- b. by telephonic, electronic or other communication facility to each member entitled to vote at the meeting, during a period of 21 to 35 days before the day on which the meeting is to be held.

Pursuant to subsection 197(1) (Fundamental Changes) of the Act, a special resolution of the members is required to make any amendment to the by-laws of the Corporation to change the manner of giving notice to members entitled to vote at a meeting of members.

SECTION 3 – MEMBERSHIP DUES AND TERMINATION

3.01 Membership Dues

There shall be no fees or dues payable by members for membership in the Corporation.

3.02 Termination of Membership

A membership in the Corporation is terminated when:

- a. the member dies;

- b. the member resigns;

- c. the member is removed from membership in accordance with section 3.03 below;

- d. the member's term of membership, if any, expires;

- e. the Corporation is liquidated and dissolved under the Act; or

- f. the member's membership is otherwise terminated in accordance with the articles or by-laws.

Subject to the articles, upon any termination of membership, the rights of the member automatically cease to exist.

3.03 Removal from Membership

A member may be removed for just cause by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the board. Just cause may be found to exist by the board based on: i) the member's absence from two or more meetings of the board during any 12 month period without the board's prior approval; ii) a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment violation involving the member; or iii) the member's failure to adhere to any written policies and procedures of the board.

Upon a finding of just cause by the board, the secretary of the Corporation shall send written notice of the proposed removal to such member at his or her last recorded address on file with the Corporation at least fifteen (15) days before final action is taken on such removal. At any time after such finding by the board, the chair or secretary, or both, may meet with the member to discuss the board's finding concerning such member.

The member may submit a written statement to the board regarding the proposed removal not less than five (5) days before any final action on the proposed removal. Prior to any final action, the board shall review any such statement submitted and determine the mitigating factors, if any, contained therein on the proposed removal before the final vote by the board to remove such member. Upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the board to take final action on such removal at a regular or special meeting of the board, the removal will become effective as of the date of the meeting, or at such later date as may be determined by the board at such meeting, and the member shall be notified in writing by the board of its decision.

SECTION 4 – MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

4.01 Annual and Special Meetings

The members shall have an annual meeting and such special meetings as may be called by the board.

4.02 Place of Members' Meeting

Subject to compliance with section 159 (Place of Members' Meetings) of the Act, meetings of the members may be held at any place within Canada or elsewhere as the board may determine.

4.03 Persons Entitled to be Present

The only persons entitled to be present at a meeting of members shall be those entitled to vote at the meeting, the directors and the public accountant of the Corporation and such other persons who are entitled or required under any provision of the Act, articles or by-laws of the Corporation to be present at the meeting. Any other person may be admitted only on the invitation of the chair of the meeting or by resolution of the members.

4.04 Chair of the Meeting

In the event that the chair of the board and the vice-chair of the board are absent, the members who are present and entitled to vote at the meeting shall choose one of their number to chair the meeting.

4.05 Quorum

A quorum at any meeting of the members (unless a greater number of members is required to be present by the Act) shall be a majority of the members entitled to vote at the meeting. Each member shall have one vote. In the absence of a quorum, a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting from time to time until a quorum is obtained. If a quorum is present at the opening of a meeting of members, the members present may proceed with the business of the meeting even if a quorum is not present throughout the meeting.

4.06 Votes to Govern

At any meeting of members every question shall, unless otherwise provided by the articles or by-laws or by the Act, be determined by a majority of the votes cast on the question.

SECTION 5 – DIRECTORS

5.01 Directors' Powers

The directors may exercise all such powers and do all such acts or things as may be exercised or done by the Corporation that are not by the Act, articles or by-laws expressly directed or required to be done in some other manner. Subject to the Act, articles and by-laws the board shall manage or supervise the management of the activities and affairs of the Corporation.

5.02 Number of Directors

The board shall consist of the number of directors specified in the articles. If the articles provide for a minimum and maximum number of directors, the board shall be comprised of the fixed number of directors as determined from time to time by the members by ordinary resolution or, if the ordinary resolution empowers the directors to determine the number, by resolution of the board. In the case of a soliciting corporation the minimum number of directors may not be fewer than three (3), at least two of whom are not officers or employees of the Corporation or its affiliates.

5.03 Election and Term

Subject to the articles, the members will elect the directors at each annual meeting at which an election of directors is required. If an election of directors is not held at the proper time, the incumbent directors shall continue in office until their successors are elected.

The directors of the Corporation shall be elected and shall retire in rotation. Except where an election is held to fill the unexpired portion of a term, a newly elected director shall be elected for a three (3)-year term. Directors of the Corporation shall be eligible for election to the board for a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms. However, a director who has served two terms but has not served a full six years may be eligible for election by the board to fill such vacancy until the next annual meeting.

5.04 Vacancy in Office of Director

The office of a director shall be automatically vacated if:

- a. the director dies;
- b. the director delivers a written notice of resignation to the Corporation;
- c. the director ceases to be qualified for election as a director; or
- d. the director is removed as a member in accordance with section 3.03.

5.05 Filling Vacancy in Office of Director

Subject to the Act, a quorum of the board may fill a vacancy in the board, except for a vacancy resulting from:

- a. an increase in the number or minimum number of directors; or
- b. a failure of the members to elect the number or minimum number of directors provided for in the articles.

SECTION 6 – MEETINGS OF DIRECTORS

6.01 Calling of Meetings

Meetings of the board may be called by the chair of the board or any three (3) directors at any time.

6.02 Notice of Meeting

Notice of the time and place for the holding of a meeting of the board shall be given in the manner provided in Section 9.01 (Method of Giving Notices) of this by-law to every director of the Corporation not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time when the meeting is to be held, if delivered or sent other than by mail. Notice by mail shall be sent at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. Notice of a meeting shall not be necessary if all of the directors are present, and none objects to the holding of the meeting, or if those absent have waived notice of or have otherwise signified their consent to the holding of such meeting. Notice of an adjourned meeting is not required if the time and place of the adjourned meeting is announced at the original meeting. Unless the by-law otherwise provides, no notice of meeting need specify the purpose or the business to be transacted at the meeting except that a notice of meeting of directors shall specify any matter referred to in subsection 138(2) (Limits on Authority) of the Act that is to be dealt with at the meeting.

6.03 Regular Meetings

The board may appoint a day or days in any month or months for regular meetings of the board at a place and hour to be named. A copy of any resolution of the board fixing the place and time of such regular meetings of the board shall be sent to each director forthwith after being passed, but no other notice shall be required for any such regular meeting except if subsection 136(3) (Notice of Meeting) of the Act requires the purpose thereof or the business to be transacted to be specified in the notice.

6.04 Quorum

A majority of directors in office, from time to time, but no less than two (2) directors, shall constitute a quorum for meetings of the board.

6.05 Votes to Govern

At all meetings of the board, every question shall be decided by a majority of the votes cast on the question.

SECTION 7 – OFFICERS

7.01 Appointment

The board may designate the offices of the Corporation, appoint officers on an annual or more frequent basis, specify their duties and, subject to the Act, delegate to such officers the power to manage the affairs of the Corporation. A director may be appointed to any office of the Corporation. Two or more offices may be held by the same person. Every officer appointed shall also be a director of the Corporation, unless these by-laws provide otherwise.

7.02 Term of Office

Each officer of the Corporation shall be appointed to hold office for a term of one (1) year. If an election of officers is not held at the proper time, the incumbent officers shall continue in office until their successors are elected.

7.03 Description of Offices

Unless otherwise specified by the board (which may, subject to the Act modify, restrict or supplement such duties and powers), the offices of the Corporation, if designated and if officers are appointed, shall have the following duties and powers associated with their positions:

- a. **Chair of the Board** – The chair of the board shall be a director. The chair of the board, if any, shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the board and of the members. The chair shall have such other duties and powers as the board may specify.
- b. **Vice-Chair of the Board** – The vice-chair of the board shall be a director. If the chair of the board is absent or is unable or refuses to act, the vice-chair of the board, if any, shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the board and of the members. The vice-chair shall have such other duties and powers as the board may specify.
- c. **Secretary** – The secretary shall attend and be the secretary of all meetings of the board, members and committees of the board. The secretary shall enter or cause to be entered in the Corporation's minute book, minutes of all proceedings at such meetings; the secretary shall give, or cause to be given, as and when instructed, notices to members, directors, the public accountant and members of committees; the secretary, or such other officer or employee as designated by the secretary, shall be the custodian of all books, papers, records, documents and other instruments belonging to the Corporation. The Executive Director shall serve as the secretary of the Corporation.

The powers and duties of all other officers of the Corporation shall be such as the terms of their engagement call for or the board or Executive Director requires of them. The board may from time to time and subject to the Act, vary, add to or limit the powers and duties of any officer. In the event that any of the officers above are not appointed, to the extent that such officers have any responsibilities pursuant to any other provisions of this by-law, the board

may assign those responsibilities to another officer or employee of the Corporation.

7.04 Vacancy in Office

In the absence of a written agreement to the contrary, the board may remove, whether for cause or without cause, any officer of the Corporation. Unless so removed, an officer shall hold office until the earlier of:

- a. the officer's successor being appointed;
- b. the officer's resignation;
- c. such officer ceasing to be a director (if a necessary qualification of appointment); or
- d. such officer's death.

If the office of any officer of the Corporation shall be or become vacant, the directors may, by resolution, appoint a person to fill such vacancy.

SECTION 8 – COMMITTEES

8.01 Committees

The board may from time to time establish any committee or other advisory body, as it deems necessary or appropriate for such purposes and, subject to the Act, with such powers as the board shall see fit, or terminate any committee or other advisory body, as it deems necessary or appropriate. The size, composition, structure and election process for members of any such committee shall be established by the board. Any such committee shall operate within the rules and directions as the board may from time to time make. Any committee member may be removed by resolution of the board.

SECTION 9 – NOTICES

9.01 Method of Giving Notices

Any notice (which term includes any communication or document), other than notice of a meeting of members, to be given (which term includes sent, delivered or served) pursuant to the Act, the articles, the by-laws or otherwise to a member, director, officer or member of a committee of the board or to the public accountant shall be sufficiently given:

- a. if delivered personally to the person to whom it is to be given or if delivered to such person's address as shown in the records of the Corporation or, in the case of notice to a director, if delivered to the director's latest address as shown in the records of the Corporation or in the last notice that was sent by the Corporation in accordance with section 128 (Notice of directors) or 134 (Notice of change of directors) and received by the Director appointed by the federal Minister of Industry under the Act to administer the Act;
- b. if mailed by prepaid ordinary or air mail to such person at such person's recorded address, or in the case of notice to a director to the latest address as shown in the records of the Corporation or in the last notice that was sent by the Corporation in accordance with section 128 (Notice of directors) or 134 (Notice of change of directors) and received by the Director appointed by the

federal Minister of Industry under the Act to administer the Act;

- c. if sent to such person by telephonic, electronic or other communication facility at such person's recorded address for that purpose; or
- d. if provided in the form of an electronic document in accordance with Part 17 of the Act.

A notice so delivered shall be deemed to have been given when it is delivered personally or to the recorded address as aforesaid; a notice so mailed shall be deemed to have been given when deposited in a post office or public letter box; and a notice so sent by any means of transmitted or recorded communication shall be deemed to have been given when dispatched or delivered to the appropriate communication company or agency or its representative for dispatch. The secretary may change or cause to be changed the recorded address of any member, director, officer, public accountant or member of a committee of the board in accordance with any information believed by the secretary to be reliable. The declaration by the secretary that notice has been given pursuant to this by-law shall be sufficient and conclusive evidence of the giving of such notice. The signature of any director or officer of the Corporation to any notice or other document to be given by the Corporation may be written, stamped, type-written or printed or partly written, stamped, type-written or printed.

9.02 Omissions and Errors

The accidental omission to give any notice to any member, director, officer, member of a committee of the board or public accountant, or the non-receipt of any notice by any such person where the Corporation has provided notice in accordance with the by-law or any error in any notice not affecting its substance shall not invalidate any action taken at any meeting to which the notice pertained or otherwise founded on such notice.

SECTION 10 – ELECTRONIC MEETINGS

10.01 Participation by Electronic Means

If the Corporation chooses to make available a telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during a member or director meeting, any person entitled to attend such meeting may participate in the meeting by means of such telephonic, electronic or other communication facility in the manner provided by the Act.

A person participating in a meeting by such means is deemed to be present at the meeting. Notwithstanding any other provision of this by-law, any person participating in a meeting pursuant to this section who is entitled to vote at that meeting may vote, in accordance with the Act, by means of any telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that the Corporation has made available for that purpose.

10.02 Meeting Held Entirely by Electronic Means

If the directors or members of the Corporation call a meeting pursuant to the Act, those directors or members, as the case may be, may determine that the meeting shall be held, in accordance with the Act and the Regulations, entirely by means of a telephonic, electronic or other communication facility that permits all participants to communicate adequately with each other during the meeting.

SECTION 11 – INDEMNITIES TO DIRECTORS AND OTHERS

11.01 Indemnification

Subject to the Act, the Corporation shall indemnify a director or officer, a former director or officer, or a person who acts or acted at the Corporation's request as a director or an officer or in a similar capacity of another entity, against all costs, charges and expenses, including an amount paid to settle an action or satisfy a judgment, reasonably incurred by the individual in respect of any civil, criminal, administrative, investigative or other proceeding in which the individual is involved because of that association with the Corporation or other entity, if such individual (a) acted honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the Corporation or, as the case may be, to the best interests of the other entity for which the individual acted as director or officer or in a similar capacity at the Corporation's request; and (b) in the case of a criminal or administrative action or proceeding that is enforced by a monetary penalty, had reasonable grounds for believing that such conduct was lawful. The Corporation shall also indemnify such person in such other circumstances as the Act or law permits or requires. Nothing in this by-law shall limit the right of any person entitled to indemnity to claim indemnity apart from the provisions of this by-law.

Section 12 – DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ONLY IF ONTARIO, IF NOT REMOVE)

12.01 Dispute Resolution Mechanism

If a dispute or controversy among members, directors, officers or committee members of the Corporation arising out of or related to the articles or by-laws, or out of any aspect of the activities or affairs of the Corporation is not resolved in private meetings between the parties, then such dispute or controversy shall be settled by a process of dispute resolution as follows to the exclusion of such persons instituting a lawsuit or legal action:

- a. the dispute shall be settled by arbitration before a single arbitrator, in accordance with the *Arbitration Act, 1991* (Ontario) or as otherwise agreed upon by the parties to the dispute. All proceedings relating to arbitration shall be kept confidential, and there shall be no disclosure of any kind. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding and shall not be subject to appeal on a question of fact, law or mixed fact and law; and
- b. all costs of the arbitrator shall be borne by such parties as may be determined by the arbitrator.

SECTION 13 – BY-LAWS AND AMENDMENTS

13.01 By-laws and Amendments

Subject to the articles, the board of directors may, by resolution, make, amend or repeal any by-laws that regulate the activities or affairs of the Corporation. Any such by-law, amendment or repeal shall be effective from the date of the resolution of directors until the next meeting of members where it may be confirmed, rejected or amended by the members by ordinary resolution. If the by-law, amendment or repeal is confirmed or confirmed as amended by the

members it remains effective in the form in which it was confirmed, subject to any rebuttals by the World Service Conference or any successor. The by-law, amendment or repeal ceases to have effect if it is not submitted to the members at the next meeting of members or if it is rejected by the members at the meeting.

This section does not apply to a by-law that requires a special resolution of the members according to subsection 197(1) (fundamental change) of the Act because such by-law amendments or repeals are only effective when confirmed by members.

13.02 Invalidity of any provisions of this by-law

The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this by-law shall not affect the validity or enforceability of the remaining provisions of this by-law.

ENACTED AND CONFIRMED the 30th day of January 2019.

Gail G., Director

Vali F., Director

Presented to the 2019 WSC

SECTION 14 – EFFECTIVE DATE

14.01 Effective Date

CERTIFIED to be By-Law No. 2 of the Corporation, passed by the Board of the Corporation by resolution on the 30th day of January 2019, and confirmed by the members of the Corporation by special resolution on the 30th day of January 2019, and to be effective on the date of such special resolution of the members.

DATED as of the 30th day of January 2019.

MOTION #3

To amend the text on pages 93 – 97 in the “Alateen” section in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the 20018 – 2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27) as follows:

(Strikethrough indicates deletion; double strikethrough indicates text was moved; underlined indicates new text; double underlined indicates new location of moved text.)

Alateen Policy

Safety and the Alateen Motion

Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements

Note: World Service Conference Alateen policies that are approved for the World Service Conference Structure must adhere to the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. The 2003 Alateen Motion is a legal resolution of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and cannot be changed by a World Service Conference mMotion. Just as our Al-Anon/Alateen policies and procedures must be in keeping with our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, and the “Al-Anon World Service Conference Charter,” Alateen policies and procedures for the World Service Conference Structure must also comply with the 2003 Alateen Motion. Only the Board of Trustees can amend or alter the 2003 Alateen Motion. (See the 2003 Alateen Motion at www.al-anon.org or in the appendix of the current printed or online version of the Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual.)

Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements

In order to use the Alateen name, ~~Each Al-Anon Area~~ in the World Service Conference Structure must have has Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements in place which that meet or exceed the minimum requirements set by the 2003 Alateen Motion, ~~from the Board of Trustees (available from the WSO).~~ The Each Area’s established Safety and Behavioral Requirements, as well as any revisions to those same include minimum requirements, must be current, compliant, and on file with the World Service Office (WSO). These requirements, developed by individual Areas, protect the teens and the adult Al-Anon members who serve them and assure parents and guardians that Al-Anon and Alateen function within the law.

Each Area must identify the required steps that need to be taken by members in order to comply with their Area’s requirements. Maintaining and implementing these Area requirements demonstrates to the fellowship and to the public that Alateen is a program characterized by careful oversight of young people seeking recovery from the effects of someone else’s drinking.

The Area’s Requirements apply to the registration of all Alateen groups, certification of ~~for~~ Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), Alateen members’ participation in Alateen meetings, and all other events with Alateen participation such as in conferences, and conventions and other events. In order to use the Alateen name, the Area, all ~~Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service~~ AMIAS, all Alateen members, and all meetings and events with Alateen participation must ~~be in compliance~~ comply with the Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. ~~Each Area’s Alateen process details the steps that must be taken to meet its requirements.~~

An Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) is an Al-Anon member who is currently certified through their Area’s Alateen process and is therefore eligible to be directly responsible for Alateens while being of service to Alateen. AMIAS may be certified by more than one Area; however, they must first be certified by the Area in which they reside. AMIAS may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors, chaperones, drivers or other roles as outlined in their Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Area Alateen Coordinators are required to be certified AMIAS; the Area determines which other service roles require certification.

Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. may be certified as AMIAS and serve as Alateen Group Sponsors by virtue of their Al-Anon membership, in accordance with their Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program at all times.

Area Alateen Process and the Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP)

In keeping with Area autonomy, ~~Each Area has~~ must create its own process and documentation that identifies the trusted servants responsible for the ongoing implementation of that Area’s ~~to implement and maintain its Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements~~ in order to use and continue to use the Alateen name. This Area process includes the steps to follow ~~for, including the paperwork required for certification of AMIAS, registration of Alateen groups, initial certification, and annual re-certification of AMIAS, guidelines for any and events with Alateen participation, and procedures for parental permission and medical care when applicable.~~ An -

~~Details on an Area's Alateen process is are available from the Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP), Area Delegate, Area Chair, another Area trusted servant or your District Representative (DR), or . To connect with Area trusted servants, contact your Group Representative (GR), DR or the World Service Office.~~

To ensure unity, consistency in communications with the WSO, and compliance with Area requirements, each Area has an individual who serves as the Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP). The AAPP maintains the current list of certified AMIAS and communicates with the WSO and Area trusted servants as described in the Area Requirements. This list includes certified AMIAS who are eligible to serve the Area at any time. It is within the Area's autonomy to determine how the AAPP service responsibility is fulfilled.

Certification as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS)

Anyone serving Alateen in any capacity must be a currently certified AMIAS in accordance with his or her Area's Safety and Behavioral Requirements. To maintain AMIAS status, all Al-Anon Members in Alateen Service must be re-certified annually according to the timeline established by the WSO. All AMIAS must adhere to specific requirements set by the Area in which the AMIAS serves. AMIAS may be certified by more than one Area; however, they must first be certified by the Area in which they reside. A currently certified AMIAS is an active Al-Anon member directly responsible for Alateen members as a Group Sponsor, chaperone, driver, or any other role as outlined in the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements.

To ensure adherence to the Alateen policies and safety of all Alateen members, each Area must have an Alateen Coordinator who is currently certified as an AMIAS. In keeping with Area autonomy, the Area determines which other service roles associated with Alateen and its members require AMIAS certification.

Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. may be certified as AMIAS and serve as Alateen Group Sponsors by virtue of their Al-Anon membership, in accordance with their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program at all times.

Starting an Alateen Group and Using the Alateen Name

In order to use the Alateen name, groups must first register with the World Service Office through their Area's Alateen process. Each meeting must have an Alateen Group Sponsor (two are recommended) in order to keep the focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program. Every Alateen Group Sponsor is a minimum of 21 years old, currently attending Al-Anon meetings and an active Al-Anon member for at least two years in addition to any time spent in Alateen. (Additional requirements may be set by the Al-Anon Area.) Registration provides a connection to worldwide Alateen and ensures unity of purpose for both groups and members. To register as an Alateen group, each Alateen group must have currently certified Al-Anon Member(s) Involved in Alateen Service to serve in the following capacities: the Group Sponsor; the Current Mailing Address (CMA); and the Phone Contact. Two Sponsors are recommended, but not required. Once registered, every Alateen group abides by the Alateen Traditions and is open to all Alateen members. To continue use of the Alateen name, each Alateen group must participate in the Area's annual recertification process. (See "Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work" and the *Alateen Service e-Manual* for more information on "Starting an Alateen Group," "Organization of an Alateen Group," and the "Alateen Registration/Group Records Change Form" [GR-3]).

Alateen Group Sponsors

An Alateen Group Sponsor is an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service who is certified through the Area's Alateen process and gives his or her time on a regular basis to ensure that the spiritual principles of the Al-Anon program are shared within the Alateen group. As defined in the 2003 Alateen Motion for Minimum Safety and Behavioral Requirements from the Board of Trustees, ~~an Every Alateen Group Sponsor is an adult member of Al-Anon who is a minimum of 21 years old, currently attendings Al-Anon meetings, and has been an active Al-Anon member for at least two years. These requirements are in addition to any previous time spent in Alateen. Any additional Alateen Group Sponsor requirements may be set by the Al-Anon~~ are a matter of Area autonomy. attends Al-Anon meetings regularly, is currently certified as an Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service through their Area's Alateen process and has made a commitment to be of service to an Alateen meeting on a regular basis. Alateen Group Sponsors encourage the Alateen to take responsibility for their own meetings and to share their experience, strength and hope with each other.

An Alateen Group Sponsor(s) or Area-certified AMIAS must be present to hold an Alateen meeting, as outlined in the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. When a regular Sponsor is not no certified AMIAS are available, another Al-Anon member who is certified through the Area's Alateen process can serve as an Alateen Group Sponsor. no Alateen meeting is held. When there are no certified Al-Anon members available to be of service to the Alateen group, the Alateens are welcome to attend an Al-Anon meeting. Whenever young people (minors) attend an Al-Anon meeting, the Al-Anon group would be responsible for prudent safety measures for them just as it is for the safety of Al-Anon members attending (e.g. making sure no one is left alone at the facility, etc.).

Alateen Personal Sponsors

Alateen members are encouraged to sponsor each other in a peer-to-peer relationship. Alateen Group Sponsors and other Al-Anon members do not serve as Personal Sponsors to individual Alateens. ~~Alateen members are encouraged to sponsor each other in a peer-to-peer relationship.~~

Who Attends Alateen Meetings and Participation

Alateen meetings are closed meetings; intended only for young people affected by someone else's drinking. ~~ordinarily only current Alateen members, prospective Alateen members, and the Area-certified Alateen Group Sponsors affiliated with the group can attend. However, designated Area trusted servants may occasionally attend the meeting as a resource to the group per the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Any potential Alateen Group Sponsor must go through the Area's certification process prior to visiting an Alateen group. No other adults may participate in or observe an Alateen meeting. In accordance with Tradition Three, any person affected by the family disease of alcoholism may attend an Al-Anon meeting, regardless of age.~~

An Alateen group may hold an occasional ~~(annual, biannual or quarterly)~~ public outreach open meeting for the purpose of public outreach to introducing the Alateen program to members of Al-Anon members, and A.A. as well as members of the community, professionals counselors, teachers, and therapist other members of the community. Participating in public outreach is a Twelfth-Step opportunity for Alateen members to carry the message of hope and to build self-esteem and self-confidence.

Alateen Membership and /Age Range

As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. It is within the autonomy of each Alateen group to lower the age limit or divide into groups according to age. The Alateen program does require the ability of members to participate and share experience, strength, and hope. Alateen is not a teaching program. Family members below teen years might not be ready for the Alateen program. Such children may have to depend on others to choose what they learn. This could lead to the development of a teaching program. "Teaching" is not compatible with the Al-Anon principle of sharing. There are, however, younger children who can benefit from the Alateen program, which requires the ability to participate in a shared learning experience.

It is within the autonomy of each Alateen group to lower the age limit or divide into groups according to age. Whatever the decision, all such groups will be registered as "Alateen" at the World Service Office. For group unity and safety, Members in their teen years who are legally adults agree to abide by the same requirements as minor Alateens when they attend Alateen meetings and events. Alateen members in the upper teen years are encouraged to begin attending Al-Anon as well as in addition to Alateen meetings; young people beyond the teen years attend Al-Anon meetings.

Whenever minors attend Al-Anon meetings, the Al-Anon group is responsible for prudent safety measures for them just as it is for the safety and common welfare of all members.

Funding/Alateen Self-Support and the Seventh Tradition

An Alateen group ~~It may be find it difficult for a new Alateen group to meet all its expenses and needs. The local Al-Anon group(s) or District can support their Alateen groups may provide literature or funds to help the group get started, with the goal of the Alateen group becoming fully self-supporting as soon as possible. Alateen members are responsible for filling their group service positions and for passing the basket to cover group expenses.~~

Alateen Meetings in Schools and Other Limited Access Facilities

Alateen meetings held in limited access facilities such as schools, hospitals, juvenile centers, and other professional settings can give children and teens access to Alateen who might not otherwise be able to attend. Such meetings are often only open available to the young people affected by the family disease of alcoholism in those schools or facilities. ~~Generally, members will meet with the facility staff to explain Al-Anon/Alateen principles of anonymity and confidentiality and learn about the facility's requirements. The goal is to reach a mutually beneficial arrangement in keeping with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements and the Traditions. However, some facilities may require that a counselor or other staff member sit in on the meeting; in such cases, the meeting can be is considered open only to the required personnel in a limited access setting of that facility. (See the guideline Alateen Meeting in Schools [G-5].)~~

Prior to having an Alateen meeting in a limited access facility, ~~Generally, Al-Anon members will meet with the facility staff to explain the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, the Al-Anon/Alateen Traditions, and the principles of anonymity and confidentiality and learn about the facility's requirements. Alateen members carry the message to other teens within the parameters of the Area Requirements and the Twelve Traditions. (See the guideline Starting an Alateen Group [G-19] and the guideline Al-Anon/Alateen Public Outreach Service—Outreach to Institutions [G-9].)~~

Events with Alateen Participation

In order to use the Alateen name, any event or gathering with Alateen participation ~~(including Alateen conferences, Al-Anon/Alateen conventions, Area Assemblies, multi Area events and A.A. events with Al-Anon and Alateen participation) must be in compliance with the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Area in which it is held. (See "Area Alateen~~

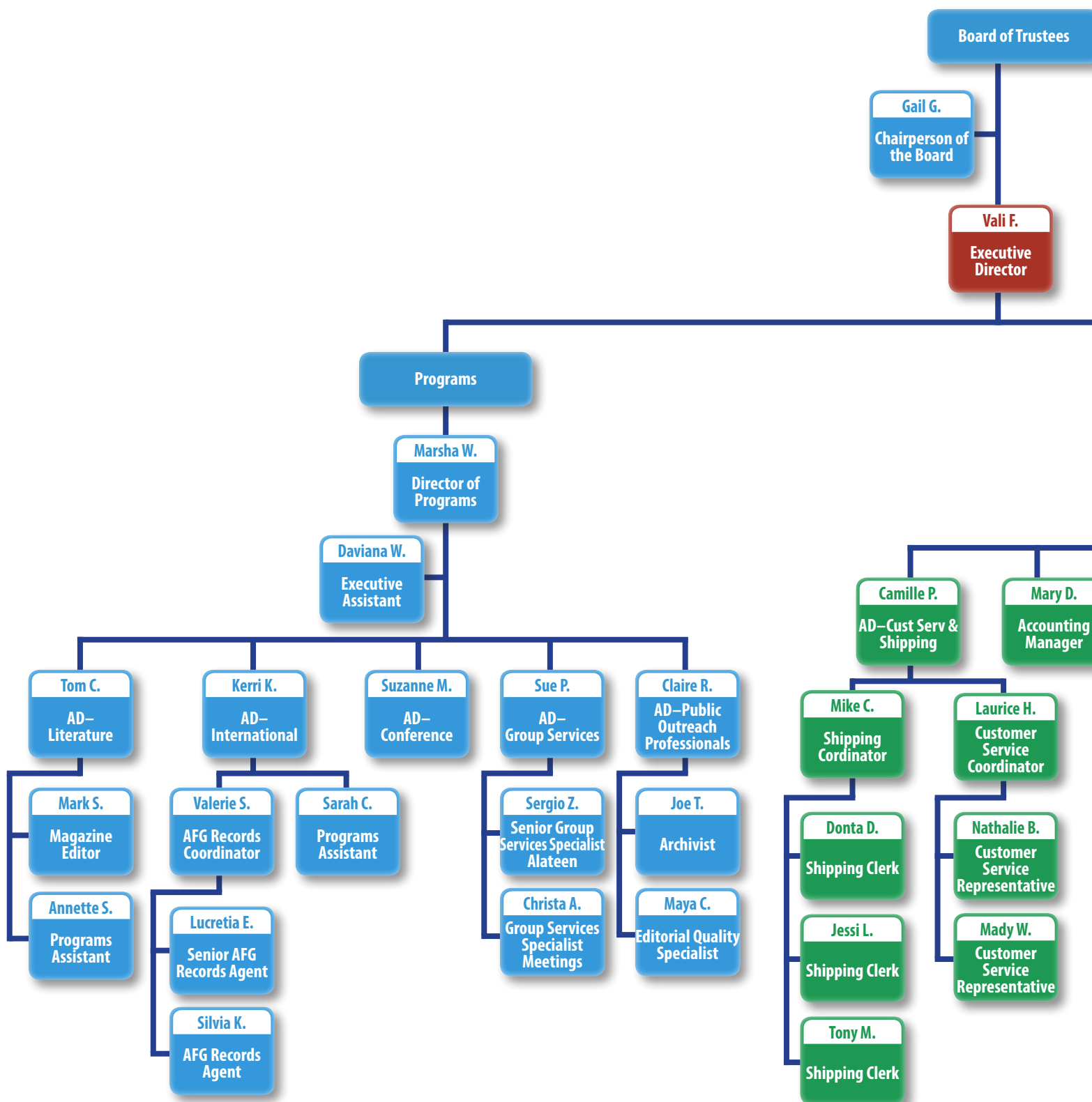
Process.”) These gatherings include, but are not limited to, Alateen conferences, Al-Anon/Alateen conventions, Area Assemblies, multi-Area events, and A.A. events with Al-Anon and Alateen participation. Maintaining the identity and integrity of the Alateen program as a resource for young people affected by someone else’s alcoholism is essential.

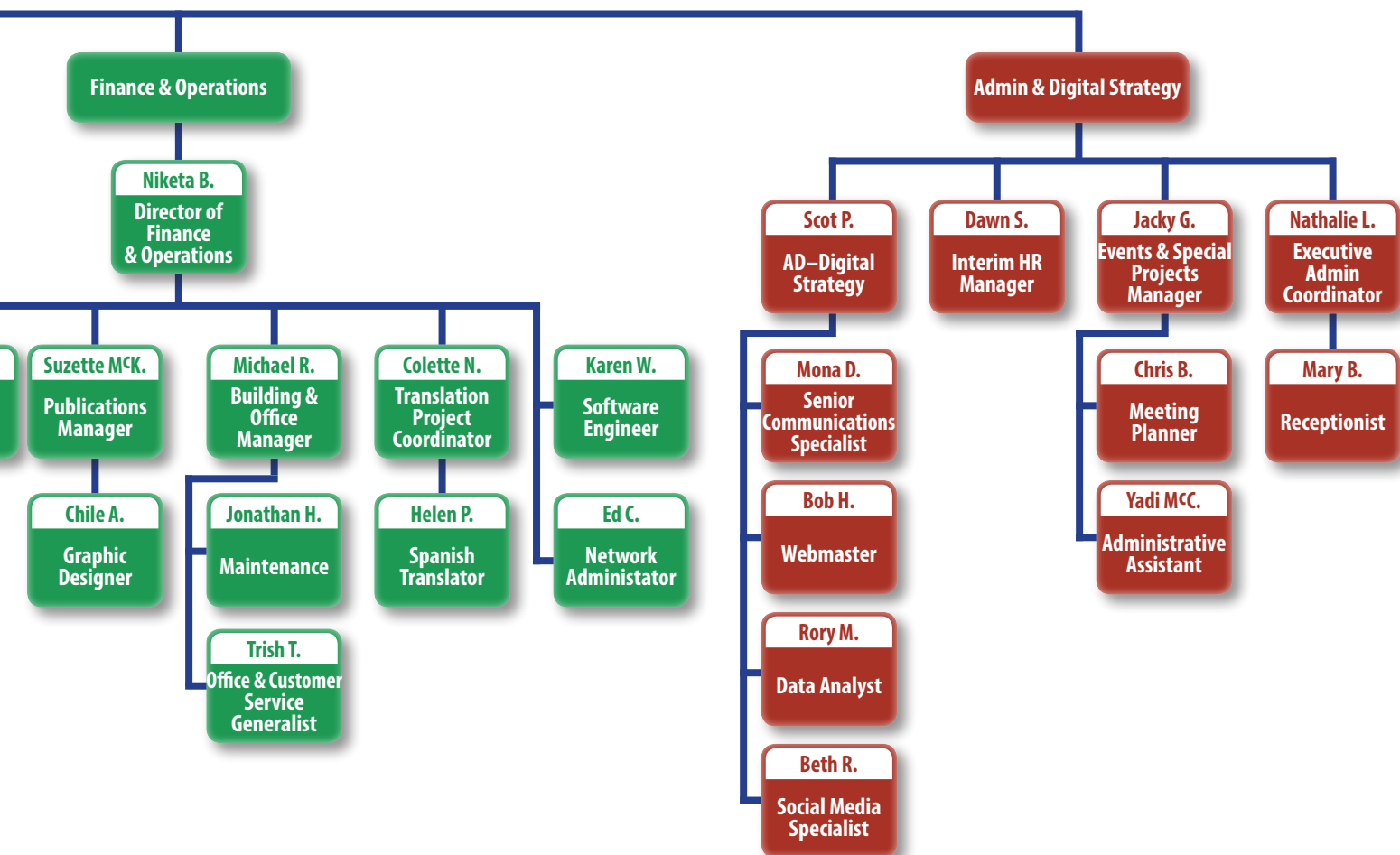
Al-Anon service arms or conferences/conventions Areas, Districts, groups or conferences may have fundraising events to provide full or partial scholarships for Alateens or Alateen Group Sponsors who may not otherwise be able to attend these events. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, any contributions of financial support are solicited only from within Al-Anon/Alateen. (See “Financial Matters/Fundraising” and the following guidelines: *Alateen Conferences* [G-16], *Al-Anon/Alateen Area Conventions* [G-20], and *Al-Anon/Alateen Participation in an A.A. Convention* [G-7].)

In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, any contributions of financial support are for attending the conference should be solicited only from within Al-Anon/Alateen. (See “Financial Matters/Fundraising.” (See guidelines *Alateen Conferences* [G-16], *Area Conventions* [G-20] and *Participation in Area A.A. Conventions* [G-7].)

World Service Office Organization Chart

As of: May 31 2019





2019 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Terry F.	Teri M.	Rosie M.
Lynette K.	Jennie McC.	Cathy T.
Judy K.	John McL.	Norm W.

Regional Trustees

Thérèse S., Canada East	Joyce B., US Southwest
Joan S., US Northeast	Debbie G., US North Central
Gail G., Canada West	Cindy K., US South Central
Arlene M., Canada Central	

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Paula B., Chairperson
Vali F., Executive Director
Debbie G., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)
Joan S., Treasurer
Norm W., Policy Chairperson
Connie H., At-Large member
J.P. M., At-Large member
Marsha W., Staff member

Non-Trustee Committee Chairpersons

Thomas B., Executive Committee for Real Property Management Chairperson**

WORLD SERVICE OFFICE STAFF

Vali F., Executive Director
Niketa Bailey, Director of Finance*
Marsha W., Director of Programs
Claire R., Associate Director—Public Outreach Professionals
Kerri K., Associate Director—International
Scot P., Associate Director—Digital Strategy
Sue P., Associate Director—Group Services
Suzanne M., Associate Director—Conference
Tom C., Associate Director—Literature

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

María J., Mexico**

*Non-member, non-voting

**Non-voting

AREA DELEGATES

Mary Jo Y., Alabama/ Northwest Florida	John I., Nebraska
Terry T., Alaska	Janet P., Nevada
Sharon F., Alberta/ Northwest Territories	Nancy D'A., New Hampshire
Claudia M., Arizona	Donna S., New Jersey
Gail F., Arkansas	Stephanie S., New Mexico/ El Paso
Lynn B., British Columbia/ Yukon	Molly C., New York North
Rosanna H., California North	Taaj J., New York South
Marcia M., California South	Angela D., Newfoundland/ Labrador
Rick G., Colorado	Anu B., North Carolina/ Bermuda
Gail L., Connecticut	Sheri S., North Dakota
Kim C., Delaware	Theresa M., Ohio
Cindy J., Florida North	Samantha M., Oklahoma
Cheryl A., Florida South	Debbie C., Ontario North
Barbara T., Georgia	Sue G., Ontario South
Patti P., Hawaii	Katie W., Oregon
Kathy B., Idaho	Jeffrey F., Pennsylvania
Christine W., Illinois North	Mabel M., Puerto Rico
Tim E., Illinois South	Céline G., Quebec East
Miriam B., Indiana	Claudette D., Quebec West
Beth K., Iowa	Barbara H., Rhode Island
Phil G., Kansas	Jean H., Saskatchewan
Sherry H., Kentucky	Dave B., South Carolina
Carmen O'M., Louisiana	Sue C., South Dakota
Sonya M., Maine	Leah L., Tennessee
Mintie G., Manitoba/ Northwest Ontario	Kay C., Texas East
Wally C., Maritime Provinces	Kay M., Texas West
Idalia R., Maryland/ District of Columbia	Nancy W., Utah
Lois H., Massachusetts	Joanne P., Vermont
Ann M., Michigan	Terry W., Virginia
Fred H., Minnesota North	Kathy D., Washington
Betty A., Minnesota South	Melissa H., West Virginia
Jennifer M., Mississippi	Susan B., Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Sarah S., Missouri	Madeline S., Wyoming
Carol S., Montana	

Reflections heard at the 2019 World Service Conference:

“It was very exciting to be part of the first Conference in three languages. ... What we cherish will always be remembered in our hearts.”

“I was fully prepared for the business meeting, but I was not prepared for the love and laughter.”

“On Saturday, April 13, we had our 100,000th social media follower!”

“If we don’t ride the wave of technology, we will be left behind. I am so grateful to be on this boat.”

“Last year, I had an expectation that Conference would be all old people who were no fun. The seed was planted, though. Today feels like amazing labor pains—we are relevant and are sticking to principles. I am embracing the old and accepting the new. I am so grateful to be on the ground floor with this.”

“I am excited because I feel the program is in good hands.”

“Thanks to all of you for your enthusiastic participation and for riding out those uncomfortable moments and coming out the other side.”