

Delegates Report 2016 Fall Assembly

The finance report for WSO going into the final quarter of the year is being prepared. You have all done such a great job of spreading the message of hope to families and friends of alcoholics. In addition, you have spread the message about the need for financial support for the services provided to the fellowship by our World Service Office. If this response continues, we are poised to meet or exceed our projected contribution budget of \$1,800,000! This is very exciting news and the credit goes to you. Thank you for hearing and passing on the message from the Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee. Thank you for believing in and supporting the Mission and Vision of the Board of Trustees and the work of the World Service Office. Thank you! Please continue to support the work of the World Service Office.

Two Policy Committee topics will be discussed at the WSC in 2017: Open and Closed Meetings designation and the policy on Conventions and other events. The purpose of this conversation was to determine whether newcomers or potential newcomers might read a meeting schedule and not understand that they are welcome to attend closed meetings. In fact, newcomers and professionals frequently call the World Service Office seeking clarification.

It would be easy to assume that a closed meeting does not welcome newcomers, is closed to anyone who doesn't have a personal invitation to attend, or that the meeting is "full" and cannot accept any more new members. Generally, a "closed" meeting does not sound welcoming. This appears contrary to Step Twelve and Tradition Five. Within the WSO structure, there are 8031 open groups and 8276 closed groups.

The Policy Committee invited all Delegates to share your experience and thoughts on the following questions: 1) How well do members in your Area understand the difference between an open and a closed meeting? Do group members know if their meeting is listed as *open* vs. *closed*? 2) How do students and professionals find out about Al-Anon in your Area? Are the closed meetings in your Area providing a monthly open meeting? 3) Is the original purpose of open meetings obsolete? (See attached background information). Has the Internet, numerous self-help books, active public outreach, etc. eliminated the need to designate Al-Anon meetings as "open" or "closed"?

At the 2016 WSC, we discussed some changes to the wording in the Service Manual regarding Conventions and other events. The Conference agreed that the wording needs to be clarified. Suggestions were made to the Policy Committee regarding possible wording changes. The Policy Committee was asked to address these and bring them back to the WSC in 2017 for further discussion.

At the 2016 WSC, the Literature Committee presented their KBDM regarding the Just for Today Prayer. Should the WSC give conceptual approval to remove the "Prayer for Today" from Conference Approved Literature? This will be discussed further at the 2017 World Service Conference. Nothing has been changed.

The following are excerpts from the KBDM which indicate a variety of issues to consider:

"The use of specific religious prayers such as the prayer of St. Francis is often divisive as it is part of a specific religious cannon that is not shared by all Al-Anon members. Al-Anon members of other religious faiths or none are consequently excluded by use of this prayer in our Conference Approved Literature."

"One of the "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon" is discussions concerning specific religious beliefs."

"I don't believe that we become non-spiritual or religious because of a prayer."

"Our fellowship is seeing more people who are of different ethnic backgrounds and religious experiences."

"For many, this prayer encompasses the principles of the program and serves as a guide for changed attitudes to help develop and define the God of our understanding for spiritual growth."

The average Al-Anon member is a white female in her late 50's. How can Al-Anon attract younger, more diverse members to maintain and increase Al-Anon's current membership? One way to attract younger members is to use technology but balancing that with maintaining anonymity. The following is the presentation by the WSC Task Force on Technology and Anonymity. These are some guidelines to help you navigate these issues.

Avoid using an e-mail address that can identify you. Work e-mails are owned by the company and may be subject to review by employers. When sending an e-mail to more than one person, send the e-mail to yourself and use the blind carbon copy (Bcc) field to enter all other e-mail addresses. Do model the principle of anonymity to the individuals who receive your e-mails. Alateen Chat Rooms are moderated by two certified Alateen Group Sponsors to provide guidance and ensure a safe environment. No personal information is exchanged. E-mail addresses are used for registration purposes only.

The fact is, Web searches on our name, address, e-mail address, or phone number may reveal additional personal information about us and our family. Password-protected Web pages on an Area site keeps the page from being found in an Internet search.

Don't use your full name on flyers, newsletters, and other documents posted on Web sites. If you have an uncommon first name, don't use it on any documents posted to the Web site. Do create position specific e-mails for all AWSC members, create a personal e-mail account that does not disclose identifying information, or create and use a group e-mail account. Don't use an e-mail address that includes last name or employer/business information on Area Web sites, flyers, newsletters, and other documents posted on Web sites. Do use your first name, first name and initial, or position title. (e.g., Jane, Jane X., Area Chair, or Jane Area Chair). Do use a pseudonym or position title.

Don't use your personal phone number or address on flyers, newsletters, and other documents posted on Web sites. Do use Area office, AIS, or LDC phone number when a phone number is necessary. Indicate callers should leave a message and call will be returned. Do use the Area office, AIS, or LDC address and arrange to pick up mail or have it forwarded to you. Do review flyers, newsletters, and other documents for information that may compromise someone's identity before posting on an Area Web site. Don't post flyers, newsletters, and other documents on the Web site without considering anonymity issues. Don't assume you are safe on a password-protected Web site. Do use these precautions when posting on a password-protected Web site. Do review flyers, newsletters, and other documents for information that may compromise someone's identity before posting on an Area Web site. Don't post flyers, newsletters, and other documents on the Web site without considering anonymity issues.

Some issues arise when posting photos online. Don't reveal photographs of full-face images of anyone identified as a member of Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. in any publication form, including Internet social media sites. Don't identify a person as an Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. member in photographs. Do look at the backgrounds in photographs and confirm that other members or the location are not identifiable.

Social media could present challenges with anonymity. Simply "Liking" or "Following" any of Al-Anon's or Alateen's social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter doesn't imply affiliation. It simply means you support the message. Don't identify yourself as an Al-Anon member, or the identity of other Al-Anon or A.A. members when posting on any social media site. Remember Tradition Eleven: Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all A.A. members. "Liking" or "Following" Al-Anon's social media can have a ripple effect. When you "Like" or "Follow" a page or post without identifying yourself as a member, you share that information with your social media friends. This helps broaden Al-Anon's message of hope to others.

How can Al-Anon attract more diverse members to maintain and increase Al-Anon's current membership? The following is a presentation by the WSC Task Force on Acceptance of Communities, Cultures and Beliefs. **What is bias?** And what does it have to do with welcoming various communities, cultures, and beliefs in Al-Anon? **Bias is:** Partiality, Prejudice, and Unfair preference for or dislike of something.

"I see myself as welcoming and open-minded, but... I only ask someone I know to lead the meeting. I only talk to my friends before and after the meeting. I wouldn't want to meet in a jail or a mental facility. I wouldn't meet in a mosque or synagogue. I insist that we close with the Lord's Prayer. I insist that we do not close with a prayer. I don't like poor grammar when someone shares. I insist on saying how long I have been in Al-Anon. I don't want to sit by a homeless

person. I don't like sitting by someone who has not cleaned up. I don't like the passive/aggressive sharings of some members. I cross my arms to keep people at a distance."

"Everyone is welcome, but... We meet in a church. We have steep stairs to navigate. This is a men's only, or women's only, or an LGBT only meeting. We don't allow small children; they are too disruptive. Teenagers are difficult to deal with. Members of other Twelve Step programs are not welcome. We ask, "Are you looking for an A.A. meeting?" We are a Step meeting; we do not talk about the Traditions or Concepts!"

To reach those in need, there are times when meetings need to be "non-traditional" to meet the needs of individual members or the group. The WSC TASK FORCE on Meeting Types produced a list of a variety of such meetings. The following is a list of more flexible meetings: Technology-assisted meetings (phone or video connection); Brown bag meetings; Bring a group meeting to a home, nursing home or hospital; Roving meetings (location posted online); Transient meetings on college campuses; Special language needs meetings; Family-friendly meetings; Summer meetings in parks/RV parks, evening campfires or beaches.

What is **TEAM**? Together Empowering Al-Anon Members. We are planning an Ohio TEAM even the summer of 2017 in conjunction with Ohio Area Convention in Akron. What is a TEAM EVENT? A partnership with the AREA and World Service Office (WSO). An opportunity to learn more about service and the Al-Anon program. The Area and the WSO TASK FORCE work together. The WSO Task Force and Host Committee plan the agenda of workshops and presentations. TEAM events are sponsored by the AREA and WSO.

The WSO TEAM members make three presentations: Their personal stories, a Financial Presentation (Giving—Our Spiritual Link to Gratitude: Al-Anon world services in action, or Abundance and our Twelfth Step in action), and Trustee Search. The OHIO TEAM EVENT Workshops are Service as a Part of Recovery; Attracting Members to Service; Principles vs. Procedures; Concepts; and Conflict Resolution.

Where will you be in 1 year 8 months and 5 days? **Al-Anon's 6th International Convention is July 6-8, 2018 in Baltimore, MD.** Start saving your money now!

This month we can submit a bid for the Al-Anon's 7th International Convention in 2023. Will it be Cleveland or Columbus, Ohio?

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The 2017 World Service Conference is April 24-28, 2017 in Virginia Beach, VA. The theme is Our Members: Our Hope for the Future. Please help yourself to love gifts from the 2016 WSC and think about making some for next year. Your gifts were very much appreciated.

Any questions?

Yours in Service,

Ginny C., Delegate, Panel 55