

Delegate's Report – 2016 Spring Assembly

The World Service Conference was held in Virginia Beach April 11-15, 2016. This was not a beach vacation but I looked at the sunrise and beach on a daily basis but the cold temperatures and busy schedule kept me from enjoying the ocean further. I got my very cold toes in the sand.

The theme of the 2016 World Service Conference was Realizing Our Spiritual Potential. To set the tone I will read you some of the quotes that introduced the theme.... The World Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon...and the guarantee that our world services shall continue to carry on under all conditions. *2014-2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual (P-24/27)*, p. 139

65th Anniversary: In the beginning, there was a typewriter and two women who were determined to reach out to others affected by the family disease of alcoholism: Lois W. and Anne B. In May of 1951, the largest group conscience began when they wrote to all the groups and asked their opinion on certain questions. In 2016 we are celebrating the 65th anniversary of the founding of Al-Anon. Here I am outside the beautiful offices of the World Service Office in Virginia Beach which serve Al-Anon members around the world.

As part of the Open House for the 65th anniversary, I was able to once again tour the WSO offices and spoke with some of the staff whom I have met by attending the World Service Conference. Some of our best resources are the WSO staff who work hard every day to answer phones, emails and provide a variety of services.

A somewhat surprising change for many of us is that Ric B. is no longer working as the Executive Director. Mary G. will be serving as the Interim Executive Director while a search is under way for a new Executive Director. An announcement was made on AFGCONNECTS explaining some of the reorganization that the World Service Office (AFG, Inc.) that is going under way. To quote it: "The WSO under Ric Buchanan's leadership was an era of moving from New York, blending New York and local talent, creating a strong, skilled and diverse workforce. If members in your Area would like to send expressions of gratitude for his service, they may do so through the WSO. These will be forwarded to him."

Finances. Numbers have never been my thing but thanks to being Delegate I can now read an audit report and a budget. Finances were a big part of this conference. Your \$15 donation is used in this way: World Service Conference \$1.25, Public Service Announcement \$1.60, Volunteer Oversight \$2.02, Member Services \$4.91, Toll Free Numbers \$.10, Communication Services \$5.12. In 2015, WSO expenses per group was \$268.

A multi-year decrease in literature sales, our major source of income, is causing deficits which must be made up by increased literature sales, increased contributions or, as a last resort, a cut in expenses (services). Literature sales were down. Donations were up by 8.41%. Forum Subscriptions were down -4.71% and Interest on investments (Reserve Fund) down by 1654.86% Expenses were about the same as the previous year.

There is less than a year's expenses currently in the Reserve Fund. Projected Budget deficit is that the expenses will exceed the revenue by \$184,000. If you want more details on the WSO finances, see the Member's Website under WSO/Financial Information. Ohio Donations did increase last year: 55.8% of groups donated to AFG, Inc. Groups donated \$596 more last year. Individuals donated \$915 more last year. Total increase of \$1511. Yeah Ohio!

What can we do? Think Abundantly. Buy a book and give it away to a newcomer, Al-Anon friend or library. Groups could buy multiple copies of Al-Anon and Alateen Groups at Work (P-24) and use it for their meeting format for only a \$1.00 each. Have your group buy a book for its library. Buy more pamphlets and use them for meeting topics. Buy multiple subscriptions of the Forum for your group and sell each monthly copy on an individual basis for a \$1.00. The subscriptions pay for themselves. Buy Forum subscriptions as gifts to Sponsees. Make sure your group orders a group subscription.

Individuals. As an individual member place \$15 in the appeal envelope this year. Donate as little as a \$1 to Al-Anon directly through the Contribute Now button on the member's site. The possibilities are almost incredible.

\$200,000? (that might be only \$1-\$2 per member) \$1,000,000? (that might be \$5-\$10 per member)
\$3,000,000? (that might represent \$15-\$20 per member) Think of the possibilities!

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

Districts/Areas. What if even half our districts contribute to WSO? Any amount would be an expression of gratitude, abundance and responsibility. One Area donated over a \$1000 to WSO by each group making “dream jars” and throughout the year they collected loose change in their jars.

We are blessed with so many grateful members. That is our abundance. If each of us does a little, we can accomplish a lot. We each have multiple opportunities to express our gratitude for what Al-Anon has given us. **WE CAN DO IT.** Please don't be discouraged. We each can and do make a difference. We can not only close the deficit but fund the Reserve as well. Ensure Al-Anon's presence far into the future.

Thank you everyone for sending such lovely handmade love gifts and tasty Buckeyes for me to share!

Here I am in the skit from my task force on Communication and Strengthening the Links of Service. I was Polly Ease i.e. “Police”. More will be revealed next fall at the Two Day Fall Assembly. The charge of the Task Force was Develop a presentation that assists trusted servants in better communicating information using spiritual principles as guideposts while empowering members to use the links of service and make their needs known. We developed a Skit, a Handout and a Workshop. Copies of each are available.

Some suggestions for communicating using Spiritual Principles & encouraging use of the Links of Service: Abundance-Highlight the many resources available through the Links of Service. Knowing our Roles-Practice Concept Ten by pausing before responding to questions, in order to allow the person currently serving in the most direct Link of Service to act as the resource to the member with the question. Open mindedness-Ask and invite members to share their thoughts, ideas, and concerns about their personal experience with the Al-Anon program and respond with humility, patience, and sincerity. Unity-Frequently revisit the “WE” in our program—we do not ever have to do it alone in any level of Service!

Concept Eleven Descriptive Text: The World Service Conference finally finished the changes to the Concept Eleven Descriptive Text. Final changes will be posted to the member website.

Memorial Contributions Changes: The World Service Office accepts contributions in memory of deceased Al-Anon members from “family” who are not Al-Anon members. The Fellowship recognizes that accepting such contributions can give comfort to families as described in Tradition Five. The World Service Conference defines family as anyone who has a close relationship of loving care and concern for another. The individual donor defines his or her relationship to the deceased Al-Anon member. This one-time gift of gratitude is limited to an amount no greater than \$500. Memorial contributions by non-members are not solicited.

Just for Today Prayer. The Literature Committee presented their KBDM on Should the WSC give conceptual approval to remove the “Prayer for Today” from Conference Approved Literature? After much discussion of the pros and cons, the WSC decided to drop the issue. After a presentation on welcoming various communities, cultures, and beliefs in Al-Anon, we changed our minds and decided to talk more next year. This was the most spiritual moment of the entire conference for me. I had voted against the conceptual approval because there had been negative feedback from our Area and other Areas but I felt convicted, like many others, that we were not being open minded and we may have been guilty of being biased. At the Two Day Fall Assembly, I hope to show you that very powerful PowerPoint. In addition to a mind blowing PowerPoint on Bias, the Task Force on Acceptance of Communities, Cultures and Beliefs presented a funny yet to the point skit.

This is the second year Mexico sent a representative, Lourdes Maria C. She is very friendly but speaks through an interpreter and I don't speak any Spanish. Or I should say I have to speak through an interpreter. The Central Zonal Meeting was held in Paraguay. The countries that were represented are Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Panama.

Alateen Survey. Earlier this year WSO did a survey of regarding Alateen members. More of these results will be published later. The Average Alateen age is 14 years old. Face to face meetings is the most important part of the program. 70% were brought by parents. What is your favorite thing about Alateen? “Be able to talk to someone I trust, Group of teen friends that get it, share stories, Caring, Love daily, Support and friendship and Not Al-Anon.”

Meet the Board. This year the Meet the Board Event is in Fayetteville, Arkansas at the Chancellor Hotel on Saturday, October 22, 2016. Meet the Board in 2017 will be October 21, 2017. The Board decided to extend the trial through 2019, build upon lessons learned and adapt and modify as necessary

Where will you be in 2 years, 1 month, and 13 days?

Our next Al-Anon/Alateen International Convention will be July 5-8, 2018 in Baltimore, Maryland!

Now is the best time to start planning your budget to attend. A few important things to consider: Estimate your travel expense; Think about how many others you may want to room with; Plan on registering early for the lowest registration price; Total these items for a preliminary budget; Divide this number by weeks remaining to determine how much to save each week.

Al-Anon International Conventions are a great way to celebrate recovery, meet old friends, and make new ones. An International Convention is where members from Canada, the U.S., and many other countries gather together to speak the same language—the language of the heart. This fall we can submit for a bid on the 2023 International Convention. **Does Ohio want to submit a bid? Cleveland? Columbus?**

TEAM. Together Empowering Al-Anon Members. 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. This is a sample TEAM event agenda.

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Any questions?

Yours in Service,

Ginny C., Panel 55