

**2007 World Service Conference
New Thinking – New Energy – Abundant Outlook**

Barbara W. Panel 46 Ohio

Our opening dinner was held Saturday, April 21 and Sharing Area Highlights for the delegates followed. “Big Ideas” that I took from this session included the success of full page motion forms, with the author presenting the motion. One Action committee printed Acronym bookmarks. Another committee composed and distributed an assembly evaluation form. Let's invite Alateen (and their abundant knowledge of technology) to eCAL. Mike B., Michigan, Panel 46 was elected the chairperson and I was elected to serve as the recorder for WSC 2008 Sharing Area Highlights.

The 2007 WSC began with presentation of the Conference Goals, Conference Procedures, Rules and Orientation. A reminder might help us to continue to adhere to these at our Ohio Area level: (see hand-out)

Follow the Agenda

No Clapping on Opinions

Start and Stop on Time

Two minutes at the Mike

Cell Phone off

Courteous to each other

Stay on Topic

No Side Conversations

No repeating at the Mike

The conference is using “Hot Topic Sheets” again this year and I have copies of these for your use. (see hand-out) You may wish to use them at assembly and in your districts. These sheets provide a note taking format to name the topic, review the background (what we know), list several Main Points, and then summarize in an Outcome/Conclusion. You may adapt and copy these for your local use.

**Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) to reach an Informed Group
Conscience**

Having successfully implemented this process after introduction at the 2006 WSC, this conference continued to utilize this method. It provides participants involved in making the decisions with all the pertinent information that can be gathered from all relevant resources. All information is assembled, digested by the body and the topic is discussed for as long as it takes for everyone to understand the information. It is then that an informed decision can be made, which can include a decision that no action is necessary.

KBDM has four essential elements:

- * Open communication between the leadership and the membership**

- *Dialogue before Deliberation**
- *All decision makers have common access to full information**
- *Exist in a Culture of Trust**

This process occurs before a motion is made. Our founders used this process as evident in the closing of our Al-Anon meetings: “talk to each other, and reason things out”. This process keeps communication alive.

Discussion is held with background information being introduced to frame the topic. All points of view are considered at each stage of the decision. It requires research and information gathering before the discussion. During such a discussion, members may ask questions, with no limits set on “times at the mike”. Of course, questions begin with words such as “who, what, when, where, why, how”. Opinions, either advocating for or speaking against, are reserved for after a motion has been made when standard procedure is followed. The time this discussion takes allows for the reality of what a group conscience is supposed to produce – a decision that most, if not all, can support. KBDM can be used without changing the standard motion procedure.

Members of the group assigned to make a decision (trusted servants) will have access to the necessary information required to make an informed decision.

We have learned that if we “presume goodwill” on the part of our trusted servants, trust in their competence and learn to act within our roles, work is accomplished without the distraction of rumors, fears, or hidden agendas.

Once a motion is made and presented to the body, standard procedure is followed.

Big Thinking

There was a three-part “Big Thinking” discussion around the Conference Theme, “New Thinking—New Energy—Abundant Outlook.” Each session utilized a different form of brainstorming that challenged us to do “Big Thinking”. The introduction, “What do we know—What do we wish we knew?” began the three-part series. The first session looked to the past 50 and 25 years and “Al-Anon Family Groups in the World Today”. The Big Question was: How do we create a future that’s more responsive to the diverse needs of Al Anon Family Groups? We discussed how technology will impact our future, and how to maximize the use of technology today. How do we go from a “cannot do” attitude to a “can do” attitude? Find a need and fill it. Take the “Basics” into the future. Think outside of the triangle!!

The second topic, “Al-Anon Family Groups: From Traditionalists to Millennials” focused on how to ensure that future members will experience a feeling of welcome. The Big Question was: How can Al-Anon, formed by Traditionalists and re-energized by Baby Boomers, apply new thinking, new energy, and abundant outlook so that Gen X’ers (16% of our current membership) and Millennials (age 6-26) will feel welcomed by us, and will want to join Al-Anon in greater numbers engaging as

full partners with the current generations in all aspects of the program? Six younger delegates came to the front of the room and responded (unrehearsed) to the following questions:

How do we make them feel welcome? - look past the physical appearance (tattoos, piercings) and suspend judgment; ask for email address, not just phone numbers, be inclusive in other activities they are interested in. How do we get them to join? - living an attractive life. Make simple requests that are inclusive, such as reading, chairing meeting, setting out literature. How do we get them to stay? - learn more about them, let them lead and be autonomous, obtain consistency through sponsorship. How do we get them to serve? - again, through sponsorship, invite them and let them lead, set them up to succeed. Ask them to help with the website.

The third, “Tapping the Abundant Resources of Al-Anon Family Groups” opened my eyes to the different types of meetings and different locations where meetings could be held. (ex: think of an Alateen who is trying to attend meetings without parents knowing. What if the meeting was at the mall instead of St. Andrews' Church?!) The Big question was: “How can we maximize our abundant resources throughout the Al-Anon Family Groups structure allowing for flexibility in meeting the needs of our fellowship at every level?”

Finance Presentation

The financial report gives us information about AFG, Inc.'s financial progress. This progress is reported in three funds: General, Reserve and Building Funds. The General Funds are our contributions. The Reserve Fund is Warranty One in action – our savings bonds, stocks, cash and one year operating expense. The Building Fund is like a mortgage.

The Audit was given an unqualified rating which is the highest rating for an audit. (Adverse is the worst, Qualified means “except”). The net assets at the end of 2006 was 7.9 million, which included increased net assets of \$418,000. The General Fund had a loss of \$73,000. Our Group Contributions make up the General Fund. In the U.S. and Canada, 8, 612 of the 15,123 registered (56.95%) groups contributed. The average cost of services was \$227.00 per group. The average group donation was \$97.00. From May to December, \$60,000 was spent, from the Reserve Fund, to send monthly Forums to all registered groups within our service structure.

AFG, Inc. is currently not self-supporting by our own voluntary contributions, we rely on our literature sales and the interest from our reserve fund.

Ohio's Donations – I was delighted to see that the percentage of Ohio groups contributing to WSO were up from 46% to 51%. The average group donation was up from \$76. to \$84. for Ohio. This is still far lower than the \$227.00 cost of services per group, it is progress on our Ohio part. Overall, our Ohio contributions to WSO went from \$18,000 \$20,000. Keep showing your gratitude and doing all that you can to ensure that Al-Anon Family Groups will be here for the newcomer.

PSA – The Sketches will be available in June. When you hear or view the PSA, please write a thank you note to the station airing the PSA.

We have a wonderful NEW book that is available to the fellowship *Opening our Hearts, Transforming our Losses (B-29)*. “This book helps us to acknowledge the painful reality of loss and grief. It encourages us to acknowledge sometimes hidden thoughts and fears, to recognize the truth of our feelings, and to seek solutions that ease our pain and lead us to inner peace.” (To quote from the Preface)

The three-year trial of the Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) Election Plan began with distribution of the training packet and a demonstration on how the plan would work. Every member of the Conference received a RCT packet with a copy of the trial RT PLAN, general information, copies of blank résumés, Time line for Regional Trustee nomination/selection, Roles and Responsibilities of the RCT Chairperson/Alternate Chairperson, Sample Score sheets, Scoring Tip sheet, and a copy of the RCT Training power point. Four Regions will be using the RT plan this year: US Northwest, US Southwest, US South Central, and US Southeast (no candidate was nominated this year). A Regional Committee on Trustees Caucus was held for each of the four Regions to elect the Regional Committee on Trustee Chairperson and Alternate Chairperson.

RT, TAL and Board Officer Affirmations

Regional Trustees affirmed: Frank R., Northeast Region

Carol V., North Central Region

Trustees at Large affirmed: Doreen D., Mary G., Roger C., Margot M.

Board Officers affirmed: Zelda R., Chairman of the Board

Doreen D., Conference Co-Chair

Mary Ann R., Treasurer

Richard S., ECRPM Chairperson

International Coordination Committee Report

WSO is a trilingual structure. We were given a Passport requesting information, should we travel abroad. Ohio has 213,147 Spanish speaking population. Ohio has 44,594 French speaking population. Where do they live and do they need Al-Anon? Outreach to Asia trip has been chronicled on blogs that are available on the members' website: www.al-anon.org/members, use your home group followed by .afg as your password. Iran has 50+ registered meetings and they are getting ready to have their first convention!

Selected Committee Meetings

These committees met for over 4 hours. I am the chair-elect for the CCT (Conference Committee on Trustees. Detailed instruction was given to new members on scoring resumes. We explored methods of leadership training.

Regional Service Seminar Discussion

RSS is not a convention. Currently, the RSS is reaching a small percentage of the fellowship. Suggestions were to make the month/climate of the locale more

appropriate, have 2 a year vs. 3 a year, price by the hotel room divided by the participants to reduce cost, discourage expenses for hospitality rooms and encourage the use of the RSS as a fund raiser.

A motion was carried to approve a major change to the book, *How Al-Anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22). The Concepts of Service will be moved to a prominent position, placed following the Traditions, adding a brief text similar to the current text for the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as well as brief descriptions of the personal applications of each Tradition and Concept.

Changes to the descriptive text of Concepts Eight, Nine, Ten, Twelve, and the Warranties are finalized. The changes to the English, Spanish, and French *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* will be done on-line as soon as the French and Spanish translations are complete. There are a number of changes to the Policy Digest that will be in the new Service Manual, as well. As in the past, changes will be noted with the black line in the margin of the text. This manual may be available in the Fall, 2007.

The last motion of the Conference was the approval of the Alateen Traditions. We affirmed what has been used for the past 50 years. The Conference approved Alateen Traditions are found on pages 43 and 44 of the 2004-2006 *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27) with the following exception: change the text in Tradition Eleven from “TV and Films” to “Films and TV.” This will then make it consistent with the Al-Anon Traditions. Happy 50th Birthday to Alateen!

Registration material will be available in the Fall of 2007 for the: 2008 Al-Anon International Convention, July 4 – 6, 2008; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. CONNECTING PEOPLE -AROUND THE WORLD - AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

The 2008 World Service Conference will be April 12-17 in Stamford, CT. Cynthia H., Associate Director, Conference, is retiring in June. She will be replaced by Suzanne, who is currently the editor of The Forum.

A site committee for the 2013 International heard 14 bid presentations for 2 days after the conference. I was honored to sit on this initial committee. The sites selected for further review are: Denver, CO., Anaheim, CA., and Vancouver, BC.

Throughout the conference, discussion time was reserved for the Chosen Agenda Items:

***Al-Anon's Future: Where do we see Al-Anon in 5 years? What changes could Al-Anon make in the way that it is structured which might attract younger members who are our future? Are the places where we meet attractive to a diverse audience? What language barriers do we create with terms like “fellowship”, “sponsor”. How are new members being greeted –**

are we getting to the meeting and setting up early so we are ready and the meeting looks welcoming?

***What does “abundant outlook” as expressed in the WSC Theme mean in terms of our individual programs, our groups, districts, Areas and for the fellowship as a whole? How could thinking abundantly influence the way we approach our service responsibilities?**

***Group Problems: How can we encourage “seasoned” members to change with the times, grow with the opportunities; rotate long-held service positions; omit statements that begin with “because this is how we've always done it....” How do we deal with members who are overwhelmingly controlling, dominating, and threatening to members of the group to do things their way? How do we address non-Al-Anon terms used during meetings (i.e. My qualifier or co-dependent)? Would it benefit the groups if something addressing the issue of crosstalk were included in the Service Manual? How does the fellowship help members understand that Al-Anon membership is not for: hyper-focusing on socializing and popularity, losing sight of Al-Anon's primary spiritual aim; gossiping and criticizing; joining another in their catastrophe vs. tossing a life preserver; exhibiting an adrenaline rush over another person's turmoil, encouraging drama in another person's life; energizing a relationship with a significant other by discussing another member's hardships and problems. How do we keep the focus on Al-Anon in meetings where dual members are participating in large numbers?**

These questions could be discussed in your districts or groups! Think of the energy such a discussion might generate!

A session on Conflict Resolution was held. “How to Listen in Skillful Dialogue....” was detailed with 1) stop talking, 2) imagine the other person's viewpoint, 3) look, act and be interested, 4) observe non-verbal behavior, 5) don't interrupt, 6) listen between the lines, 7) rephrase to ensure understanding, 8) stop talking (yep, again!). Participants have to give full attention. If unable to give full attention at that time, set up a time to re-visit the topic. Conflict is a signal that someone's needs are not being met – something needs to happen, something needs to come out. If we try to save time by moving something along, we HAVE to take the time later! Don't plan the response, listen. Suspend the thoughts while listening. Suspend judgment. Separate the facts from the feelings. Seek to understand, not to be understood. Don't go into problem solving mode – no “life stories” - “oh, that happened to me”, that makes it about me! Acknowledge the presence of a Higher Power. Silence is not agreement.

At a workshop, delegates were encouraged to fore go the written report and present the WSC information in more creative ways, energizing the membership. Areas could use the WSC Summary, generally published and available for purchase by August, as the full conference report.

Darcy A., N. Dakota, Panel 47 was my conference sponsee. After we put our notebooks together, we took a few minutes to step out on the beach. This was Darcy's first time to see the Atlantic Ocean! The breathtaking view, the sounds of the surf and the cleansing breeze reminds us all of the worldwide fellowship we are serving.

I am looking for a member who has access to projection equipment to assist me in showing power point presentations at assembly.

Would you, or a group member like this report sent to you in an email? Email such a request at barbaraw92@yahoo.com.

Please share this report with your groups!

From the depths of my heart, I thank you for the privilege of serving Al-Anon Family Groups. This isn't service work – it's service LOVE !! I appreciate the cards, letters and love gifts you sent for me to share with other conference members. Your loving and supportive prayers were uplifting and energizing. I have seen a glimpse of heaven in serving as your Delegate to the World Service Conference! Stay in service and we'll meet again!

With love and gratitude,

Barbara W.

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