

FLORIDA NORTH  
DELEGATES REPORT  
MAY 20, 2016

WSC CONFERENCE APRIL  
11-15<sup>TH</sup> "REALIZING OUR  
SPIRITUAL POTENTIAL"

PANEL 55



Dear Members,

I have many things to report back to you so this will be a long report. Feel free to read it at your own pace 😊

Conference is an amazing experience, 67 Delegates from the US and Canada coming together with the Trustees, our new Executive Director Mary Gregory and members of WSO staff plus guests.

It is AI-Anons largest group conscience. We all come together for the good of AI-Anon. So while as Delegates we bring the perspective of our Area's and our own opinion we are also tasked to keep an open mind and look beyond our own opinions and feelings about matters concerning AI-Anon to be sure we are voting for what is best for AI-Anon as a whole.

There are emotional subjects, tears, passion and opinions (all stated within our 2 minutes of course!)

What there is *not* is arguing, criticism, displays of anger, punitive comments. There is above all mutual respect and trust and the presumption of good will. I hope every AI-Anon business meeting can emulate this atmosphere.

### **WSO Transition**

Information was shared with the 2016 World Service Conference members that Ric Buchanan is no longer associated with the World Service Office (WSO). 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.

The Board in its legal authority considered several names of past Trustees with backgrounds suitable for the position of an interim Executive Director. These names were then provided to the Transition Team for

consideration and recommendation. The Board of Trustees selected Mary Gregory as an interim Executive Director during this transition period to spearhead the dynamic changes that are in progress.

Mary has been an Al-Anon member for nearly 40 years, 39 of them in service. She has served the fellowship as a Delegate, a Trustee, and as a member of the Executive Committee. She chaired the Literature Committee, the International Coordination Committee, the Policy Committee, and the Conference Leadership Team. She was on the Finance Committee for 5 years. In her professional life she was an educator and administrator where she developed skills in communication and strategic planning. Mary is an active member of the Monday Morning Miracles Group in Venice, Florida.

Mary will serve as the interim Executive Director for a period of time to ensure the new office structure is functioning well. The Board will post the Executive Director position description and qualifications to all members in the fellowship when appropriate. The full letter can be read on the Area website;

[http://www.afgarea9.org/uploads/4/3/4/9/43490087/wso\\_transition.pdf](http://www.afgarea9.org/uploads/4/3/4/9/43490087/wso_transition.pdf)

## **WSO Finances**

The budget approved for 2016 is at a deficit of \$184,000. This is due for the most part to declining literature sales and loss of investment revenues for 2015. The deficit will be taken from the reserve fund as needed.

From page 209 in the Service Manual “Finance Committee: The primary function of this Committee is to see that our WSO operation remains financially sound, always aligning the use of our money with the spiritual principals of our program. **This committee may be compelled to risk temporary deficits.** “

It is hoped that investment revenue and contributions will increase to help close the gap. Whether or not literature sales will continue to decline is not known at this point but will most likely not be the source of revenue it once was. Literature sales in past years were robust enough to cover the expenses of the WSO leaving contributions to be spent on Public Outreach etc. This is not the case today.

I urge you all to “let it begin with me”. It is *our* WSO. As an Al-Anon member I do not have absolute control over what portion of what I put in the basket at my meetings goes to WSO. The quarterly appeal and individual contributions go directly to the WSO. I urge you to consider a monthly or quarterly donation to the WSO. You can have it automatically deducted from your checking account. The form is available here <http://www.afgarea9.org/uploads/4/3/4/9/43490087/authorizus.pdf> and on the Area website under Delegates corner. Or you can go to the WSO website and click the “contribute now” button.

The following update is based on the unaudited financial statements for the period ended March 31, 2016. The General Fund recorded a loss of \$104,839 for this quarter, compared to a gain of \$38,865 this quarter last year in large part to a continued decline in literature sales.

Revenue from literature sales was below 2015 revenue from sales by \$97,368. In an effort to balance the budget, the investment income and transfer from the Reserve Fund totaled \$33,571 compared to \$22,360 in 2015. While 2016 Contributions exceeded 2015 Contributions by \$4,794, they are not meeting budget projections. Total income fell below budgeted income by about 1% while total expenses were just slightly above budget. Income: Literature sales were \$874,756 this quarter, compared to \$947,192 this quarter last year, a decrease of 7.65%. Gross profit on literature sales was \$706,913 (80% of sales), compared to \$804,281 at March 31, 2015. Contributions were \$367,371 this quarter, compared to \$362,577 this quarter last year—an increase of 1.32%, Forum subscription income was \$57,193 this quarter, compared to \$65,525 last year—a decrease of 12.72%. This reflects activity before the suspension of the complimentary copy of the Forum took effect.

Expenses: Operating expenses were \$1,269,887 this quarter, compared to \$1,215,878 this quarter last year-- an increase of 4.44% which was very close to the budget. There were no significant changes in

expenses from one year to the next. As part of our duty to keep a watchful eye on expenditures, the Finance Committee must find places to cut expenditures while not affecting core services to the members. The suspension of the complimentary copy of the Forum to the groups is one such action we have taken in 2016. If revenues do not increase significantly, the Finance Committee will be looking for additional ways to cut expenses, which may affect services.

Reserve Fund: The fair value of investments in the Reserve Fund totaled \$4,818,093 at March 31, 2016. This amount includes an unrealized gain of \$523,379. In compliance with a Board of Trustees' motion, 4% of the average balance of the Reserve Fund over the prior 36 months could be transferred to the General Fund, if needed. The 2016 budget includes such a transfer

On a positive note "The Forum" subscriptions have increased by 48%! The Finance Committee is looking very hard at all aspects of the budget, income and expenses. We are in good hands. I have added the WSO 2016 approved budget to the end of my report along with some suggestions from the Finance Committee. Because we have our Trustee Karen here to do a fabulous workshop for us we won't discuss at Spring Assembly but if you have questions please reach out to me. The Conference Summary will be out in August with detailed information.

### **Memorial Contributions**

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 of alcoholics 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. This motion reflects the spiritual principles of Tradition Five and reinstates a similar policy that had been in place from Al-Anon's early days until 1986. The amended text will be updated in the electronic version of the Service Manual located on the Members' Web site. Members can download that text and insert it into their current Service Manual.

### **Concept 11 Changes**

You will note at the end of the 2015 discussion, there was consensual approval of the text changes through the section, "Conference Committee on Trustees."

The following points provide the framework for this discussion:

- The Concepts belong to the world.
- The World Service Conference is the senior group conscience providing an example to General Service Offices and emerging structures around the world. It is important that we maintain a brief description of those Board Committees that, while no longer in effect in the U.S., Canada, Bermuda, or Puerto Rico, may continue to be utilized in international structures.

- “Al-Anon’s Twelve Concepts of Service” is not a procedural manual. It is not the place to outline roles, duties, or provide an organizational chart. Committees have guidelines for direction.
- As with all changes to the descriptive text, any deleted information is maintained in the “Amendments” section following the Twelve Concepts of Service in the Service Manual.
- The double asterisks mean the Committee is no longer used in the WSC Structure. However, the Committee may be functioning in worldwide General Service Offices or emerging structures that look to us for guidance.

We hope that the update to the text will provide an improved measure of clarity and guidance to all members and the worldwide service structures in their service to Al-Anon Family Groups.

### **Literature Committee Recommendation**

#### **KBDM—Should the WSC give conceptual approval to remove the “Prayer for Today” from Conference Approved Literature?**

##### **Framing/Background:**

During its June 2015 meeting, the Literature Committee began discussing requests from two different members in different Areas for changes to the “Prayer for Today.” This prayer is included in the *Just for Today* Wallet Card (M-10) and Bookmark (M-12), as well as on page 101 of *How Al-Anon Works for Families & Friends of Alcoholics* (B-22, B-32). (It is on page 103 in editions printed prior to 2008.) The first member felt that although it is beautiful, it is clearly a religious prayer, and should be revised or discontinued. The second member requested that the words “O, Divine Master” in the second paragraph of the prayer be changed to “God.” Because the prayer is included in the Newcomer Packet (K-10), she felt it could give many newcomers the idea that Al-Anon is a religious program.

The current wording of the “Prayer for Today” is as follows:

“Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy.

“O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.”

Using the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Process for an Informed Group Conscience (KBDM), discussion on this topic continued in October 2015. Prior to this meeting, Committee members answered the five KBDM questions via the discussion board on e-Communities. At the meeting, the Committee had a thorough discussion of all aspects of the information from the KBDM document. It reached a unanimous consensus to recommend removal of the “Prayer for Today” from the *Just for Today* Bookmark and Wallet Card, as well as from *How Al-Anon Works*. The Committee also decided to have a discussion thread in its Community on AFG Connects to brainstorm ideas on what, if anything, it would recommend to replace the prayer where it is featured.

At the Literature Committee's December meeting, it recommended that, if the Conference agreed to remove the "Prayer for Today," the text on the Bookmark and Wallet Card could be enlarged without adding any other material, and that page 101 in *How Al-Anon Works* could end with a quotation from the last paragraph in *When I Got Busy I Got Better* (P-78), so that it would read as follows:

*When I Got Busy, I Got Better* offers invaluable information about this crucial area of recovery. Perhaps nowhere is the spirit of Al-Anon service more clearly articulated than in the last paragraph of this booklet:

"We have the opportunity to contribute not only what we can *do* but, more important, who we can *be*. By sharing our recovery, we strengthen its workings in our own lives. By seeking to allow a Higher Power to work in and through us, we come to feel, more fully, the presence of that Power.

"In giving, we receive."

I will be presenting a workshop from conference relative to this topic at Fall Assembly and we will have conversation so that I can share your views with the 2017 Conference as the Conference consensus was to keep the conversation going.

### **Alateen Survey Feedback**

The data from the survey is being analyzed as we speak and the results will be available soon.

Thank you to all our Alateens that contributed, there were about 150 Alateen members that took the survey.

### **Chosen Agenda Item**

Chosen Agenda Item discussions have been taking place at World Service Conferences for 40 years. The original intent and vision was for the Conference as a body to have open discussions on topics of interest that effect Al-Anon as a whole. The process for submitting questions or topics and the format have changed over the years.

The title of the session has also changed over the years—Red Light, Green Light; Green Light; Green Light Open Discussion; Timely Topics; and currently Chosen Agenda Items.

For the 2016 Conference, members submitted 22 topics, one of which was referred to a WSO department for response since it was a question related to the work of the WSO. The remaining 21 topics were combined into 12 topics by a Task Force made up of Wendy R, Panel 55, Florida North; Tina B, Trustee, Conference Chairperson; and Tarcila F, Panel 55, Tennessee.

Ninety-one Conference members were eligible to vote; 68 Conference members voted. Twenty were Panel 54 Delegates; 18 were Panel 55; 15 were Panel 56; 11 were Trustees; two were members of the Executive Committee; and two were WSO Conference staff.

This year, in addition to discussing Chosen Agenda Item #5 today, Conference members met in WSC Agenda Item small group breakout sessions earlier this week to discuss: Alateen—what is the key to

unlocking the success with Alateen through all the Areas, Balance between dominance and trusted servants not fulfilling their jobs; and Groups that are not following the Traditions.

**CAI: (Chosen Agenda Item) How do we adapt and evolve to attract and retain younger members (under 40) while staying true to our purpose, traditions and concepts?**

Explain the importance of this CAI and how it could shape AI-Anon as a whole:

The importance of attracting and retaining the younger members is we are an aging group, and we need the younger focus. It is also very important to stay true to our traditions and concepts as they have worked for 65 years.

**CAI: We need to save the big roof that covers our house, emotional, mental and spiritual. We have to unify the name of AI-Anon Family Groups for good.**

How can we attract and retain more members under the age of 50? According to the latest AI-Anon Annual Survey results, 80% of our membership is over the age of 50. The percentage of AI-Anon members rapidly declines according to their age group to less than 1% as it gets closer to the age of 24 or younger. The average age of our AI-Anon members has risen from 56 in 2009 to 60 in 2015. As the average age continues to increase, we may jeopardize our long term sustainability or solidify a perception as a fellowship for older individuals.

**CAI: Are we as inclusive as we could be whether potential newcomer or member has religious belief or not (the agnostic)?**

We have specific literature for several diverse groups within our fellowship. Does our literature stress the difference between spiritual ideas and religious beliefs for the newcomer? Should we have literature about how the agnostic works a spiritual program?

**CAI: Are the number of AI-Anon groups worldwide growing or shrinking? and once we determine the answer, how can we best respond to address the trend?**

The data available on numbers of AFG meetings around the world has not been collected and analyzed to provide insight into trends — to answer questions such as, are AFG and Alateen meeting numbers growing or shrinking, or what are the trends in particular regions, states, provinces, countries, etc. In Massachusetts, our meeting numbers are half of what they were in the 1990s. What are other Area experiences? If we had this data, how could it help us make better decisions about public outreach, communication with the membership, financial support, etc.?

**CAI: How can AI-Anon attract younger, more diverse members beyond the current AI-Anon member being a 62-year-old-hetrosexual white woman; to maintain and increase AI-Anon's current membership?**

AI-Anon/Alateen may be growing internationally but here in the U.S. our membership is diminishing. Without 20 to 40-year-old diverse membership will AI-Anon/Alateen still be here for the next 65 years? We need to be aggressively visible in the youthful eye - college campuses, young adult associations, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Cable/internet TV, Theaters, Subscription Radio, Arena venues, electronic billboards, App adds, etc. We need to assist these medias, that they may recoup their revenues by

helping Al-Anon, without breaking Our Traditions. Literature focused on younger more diverse groups - (electronic and audio that can be used as intended)

### **Facebook Update**

In 2015, we have seen substantial growth in the WSO Facebook pages. The number of Facebook “likes” went from 15,094 in November 2014 to 28,968 at the 18 2015 Annual Report close of November 2015, a **92 percent increase**. The growth of the WSO pages has allowed us to reach over 2.5 million people in more than 90 countries. Facebook statistics have shown that video posts are more popular and more engaging than regular posts. As a result, we have begun featuring a new video each month. This allows the video to display prominently above our “About” information and in our video library. In addition, we have added a “call-to-action” button to new videos. When the video ends, viewers can click on a “learn more” or “watch more” button and will be directed to either the WSO Public Outreach Web site or YouTube channel. We have also added a “Send Message” call-to-action button at the top of the page. This makes it easier for visitors to send private messages to the page and lets them know that we are available to answer questions. Another milestone for the WSO Facebook pages was to have them “verified” by Facebook. This designation means that Facebook has verified the authenticity of the English, Spanish, and French pages, and confirms them as the official pages for Al-Anon Family Groups. This designation also improves the chance that our pages will be first in a search, as all verified pages are listed before any of the other search results.

### **Zonal Meetings**

A Zonal Meeting is an informational meeting held every two years for countries with General Service Offices or evolving service structures.

European Zonal Meeting (EZM) Brugge, Belgium was the site for the EZM. The dates were August 21-23 and the General Service Offices (GSOs) for Belgium (French) and Belgium (Flemish) cohosted the event. The theme was “Participation is the Key to Harmony.” Those sending representation included Belgium (French), Belgium (Flemish), Finland, France, Germany, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland (French), UK & Eire, and the US and Canada. Topics discussed included communication, service, literature, Alateen, and finance.

Central American Zonal Meeting (RECACSA) The 2015 RECACSA was hosted by the Al-Anon Information Service (AIS) for Nicaragua on November 13-15, in the city of Managua. The theme for this meeting was “Un sol Pais”—one single country. The countries represented at this meeting were Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, and the US and Canada. Each structure presented a report sharing 40 2015 Annual Report public outreach activities, and service work. Many shared about the growth of Al-Anon/Alateen in their respective structures.

Ibero-American Zonal Meeting (RIASA) Paraguay was the host country for the 2015 RIASA. The city was Asuncion, and the GSO in Paraguay hosted this two-day event. Nine structures were represented and included Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Paraguay, Uruguay, and the United States and

Canada. After a welcoming dinner on the evening of November 13th, the meeting took place on the 14th and 15th. The agenda included various presentations and discussions on topics such as “How to cooperate with A.A.” and “Where to find volunteers.”

### **New Career Opportunity at the WSO!**

The Al-Anon World Service Office is seeking to fill a new Director of Programs position. This is a senior position, reporting to the Executive Director with oversight over five Associate Directors. The Director of Programs is responsible for participating in the development, implementation and evaluation of all World Service Office activities that serve members, and those activities that seek to attract new members who can benefit from affiliation with Al-Anon.

Position requirements: Bachelor's degree or higher in communications, business administration, or related field; and ten years' management experience. Ten years active Al-Anon membership and Al-Anon Area leadership experience required. Non-profit management experience preferred.

If you wish to find out more about this position and how an application can be submitted, you can find that at this link: <http://www.al-anon.org/members/pdf/DirectorofPrograms.pdf>

If you would like any more information or have any questions about this position, please contact Bill P, Employee Resources Manager who can be reached via e-mail at [bill@al-anon.org](mailto:bill@al-anon.org) or telephone at 757-563-1600.

**Sharing Area Highlights (SAH)** Although not considered “officially” part of Conference SAH is a time for Delegates to share their experience, strength and hope about topics of concern to their Area.

- Past- Go to mic & tell a success and challenge for your Area-2 minutes max!
- Present- Round Table Discussion-
  - ✓ Role as Delegates at WSC
  - ✓ Participation in setting the agenda
  - ✓ Doing a WSC Inventory
  - ✓ Strategies we use to encourage participation of inactive groups and Districts in our Area
  - ✓ How do we connect and communicate with members in rural areas?
  - ✓ How does your area communicate with members not at AWSC?
  - ✓ What technology facilitates communication
  - ✓ How does our Area encourage financial contributions?

It was wonderful to have the time to network together!





### **Birthday Party! Al-Anon is 65!**

The Birthday party was fabulous! It was attended by more than 400 Al-Anon members from many countries. The speakers were Mary R. and Sandra F. Mary has been an Al-Anon member for 57 years, she met Lois and Bill W in the very beginning. Mary R's husband was the first African-American Delegate in AA. What a wonderful speaker, the spiritual principles spoke eloquently through Mary!

Sandra F was also a fantastic speaker, she is an Al-Anon member and past WSO employee. I enjoyed her story of how the WSO came to Virginia Beach. She told a story of how the relocation committee was split between Ohio and Virginia Beach as new location for the WSO. In the end they pulled the name of the selected location out of a paper bag!

That is all for today, I hope my report has been informative. Please feel free to reach out with questions.

With Love & Gratitude,

Wendy R

Delegate P55

Florida North

