

Delegate's Report to the Spring Assembly 5-21-11

I arrived in Norfolk, Virginia on Sunday, April 10 about 5 pm ready to attend my third World Service Conference. After collecting my bag I headed to the appointed area to catch the shuttle to the hotel in Virginia Beach. To my delight I would be able to be on an earlier shuttle and hopefully, would be able to get my Conference notebook before they closed for the evening. To my future delight, I also meet Shirley R. from Arkansas, who was my mentee. I believe this was an H.P. thing. You see as a panel #49 delegate, I had made a hard decision but one I believed was right for me thru the help of this program. Most of the other panel 49 delegates had met earlier in the weekend in Connecticut so they could journey to Stepping Stones for the visit there and then proceed on to Virginia Beach for Conference. Due to circumstance beyond their control, this group of delegates did not arrive in Virginia Beach until well after midnight. After a peaceful meal, I spent some time with my mentee, Shirley; I helped her get her notebook in order and shared a few thoughts with her about the work ahead. Returning to my room, I tried to organize myself for the next day and get some much needed rest. Monday morning would soon be here and our work would begin. The 2010 Thought and Task Forces who were presenting at Conference were scheduled to meet and do any last minute work on their presentations. Following lunch all Conference members would meet for a short orientation and then we were off to our new 2011 assignments; mine being the Thought Force: Members Involved in Service Work who are Unable to Effectively Fulfill the Responsibility of the Position. This committee had already begun work before heading to Conference. Using the KBDM questions we each responded to the questions as they applied to the subject matter and had received back a summary of our responses. After a review of the charge and our responses to the KBDM questions; we needed to identify the issues and develop a variety of strategies that would assist areas in dealing with the issue in a positive and productive manner. We determined that we needed to research the literature including conference summaries, service manual, How AI-Anon Works and the Guidelines and members accepted these assignments in preparation for a conference call that was held last weekend. We have a target date of August 5 for a preliminary report to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

Next would be the Sharing of Area Highlights, an opportunity for each delegate to share in a three minute period some of the things happening in their areas. The helpful part of this is that we do submit our sharing's ahead of time and a copy of this is made available to each of us. This is followed the Opening Dinner where the panel 51 delegates will be acknowledged and they will receive their Conference pin from their mentor. I had the privilege of giving Shirley R. her Conference pin. We would close out the evening with our first speaker of the week, Judy P. chairperson of the Executive committee for the last three years and a former trustee-at-large for two terms.

Tuesday morning was soon upon us and the opening of the Conference at 8am. This year's Conference theme was: "Expanding our community of hope by embracing: Yesterday's foundations, Today's successes, Tomorrow's possibilities. This theme would be heard throughout the course of the next four days as we discussed the topics before us and shared our experience, strength and hope. There were 97 conference members in attendance; 67 delegates representing the areas of the U.S. and Canada, two-thirds and the other third were the members of the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee and members of the WSO staff; more specifically the Executive Director, two Directors and the six Associate Directors. The first order of business would be the vote to seat six additional persons who would have voice but no vote, voice limited ECRPM , voice and no vote, and one with no voice or vote.

We reviewed the Goals of Conference: We would have mutual respect and acceptable conduct; We would understand the purpose of the Conference and its relationship within our structure; Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience members will be able to support Conference decisions. Using the KBDM process there would be Open communication, Dialogue before deliberation; Common access to full information; and an understanding that we exist in a culture of trust.

The first order of business would be to take a look at our financial health. Two pieces are essential to our financial health these include the Audit of the previous year's financial income and expenses and the budget for the current year. David Zach is Director of Business Services and is a non-AI-Anon member; he oversees the handling of all of our money matters. David presented the audit which was done by Goodman & Company of Norfolk, Virginia and dated February 28, 2011. The financial statements are the responsibility of the management AI-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The auditor's responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on the audit. Using auditing standards general accepted in the U.S. the firm believes that their audit provides a reasonable basis for their opinion. We express an unqualified opinion on those financial statements. Please note that an "unqualified" opinion is a good report.

As of December 31, 2010, our WSO had total assets of \$9,413,281 and liabilities of \$1,465,897 leaving a net asset \$7,947,384 among three funds – General, Reserve and Building. Anyone wishing to see more of the details of the audit can contact me for this thirteen page document. Finances are looked at on a monthly basis and are reported on a quarterly basis to the Board of Trustees and the Delegates following each quarterly meeting of the Board of Trustees. This information can be accessed on the WSO member web site – Board of Trustees.

Each of you has been given a copy of the 2011 AI-Anon Family Headquarters, Inc. Budget. The 2011 Budget shows that we expect expenses to be \$2,000 less than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,088,000 and revenues to be \$5,090,000. We made two adjustments from the Preliminary Budget. After receiving and reviewing all our insurance bills

we reduced Office Services expense by \$3,000. Due to some unexpected expenses, we increased Repairs \$1,000.

Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$307,000 from last year's actual. Labor costs are expected to increase \$212,000 due to more staff becoming eligible for the retirement plan and cost of living and merit increases effective June 1, 2011. On the Outreach Activities line, we have included funds to be available for projects that may be proposed during the year.

We are estimating income from literature sales to be about \$164,000 more than last year and Forum subscription income to be less. We are budgeting contributions to be \$1,500,000 which is about \$294,000 more than last year's actual. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer up to 4% of the fair value of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund. Since the average value dropped for the 36 months ended December 31, 2010, we are budgeting investment income about \$40,000 less than last year.

As regards the Budget and the Audit, these are two documents which the delegates receive well in advance of the Conference and we are given ample time to study them over and raise any questions which we might have regarding either document. At Conference we receive a copy of all the questions and their answers as well as having time on the Conference floor for additional questions. Both of these documents received the full approval of the Conference members.

Finally, a look at how New York North did in supporting Al-Anon Family Headquarters, Inc. In 2010 we were down almost 3% from 2009 with participation of 55.0% of our groups giving an average of \$66.47 (\$69.26-'09) which was below the per group average of \$104.04. I have provided all DRs with a copy of this information; in addition I have also furnished them with a printout of the groups in their respective districts to be share with the Group Representatives of these groups.

The Annual Report was given by the Executive Director, Ric B. Since this is a lengthy report and it is included in the Conference Summary in its entirety; I will only highlight some of the happenings in each of the sections of the World Service Office structure. The Executive director is responsible for the overall supervision of the WSO staff and for the administration of the organization's policies. The Administrative Team oversees office-wide projects, review resource allocation, and serve as a resource to the Executive Director. The Director of Business Services is directly responsible for business operations and controlling finances.

The Board of Trustees, along with the members of the Executive Committee, direct business operations of the WSO, observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board acts as the chief service arm of the WSC. It guards the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship and controls the finances. The Board serves as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Conference Charter. The Board has a Strategic Plan which it is continually going back to and evaluating and updating in order to do an effective job in moving the organization forward and to remain relevant in an ever-changing social environment.

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is the administrator of the WSO, with legal authority granted by the Board of Trustees to conduct its daily affairs. It approves actions of the Finance Committee and special projects of the board and staff that involve day-to-day operations, and receive monthly service updates from the Directors and the Executive Director. Its actions are submitted quarterly to the board of Trustees for final approval.

The Policy Committee is the second largest representative group conscience in Al-Anon. It did not bring any policy motions to the 2011 WSC. There are three items under consideration by the policy committee; they include a possible reorganization of the "Public Relations" section of the 2011-2013 Service Manual. There has been a discussion of Special Focus Groups; no action has been taken and they are looking at assisting areas regarding "do not refer". During Conference we are given an opportunity to attend an Open Policy Meeting; the topic of their discussion was tied into the Thought Force presentation on Dual Members. As the result of this group's work there was a strong recommendation for a look at specific pieces of our literature. When changes appear necessary; it is referred to the Policy Committee for their input. According to the recent letter from the Chairperson of the Board a Task Force will be appointed to review the spiritual principles underlying the dual membership policy. The Task Force will present the Committee with a proposed language that maintains the current policy while more effectively communicating the spiritual rationale for the policy to the fellowship.

Communication Services: "Sketches III" has been our most successful public service announcement campaign with a 6% increase over "Sketches II".

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism – we distributed 350,000 copies; a 29% increase over 2009
a new bookmark "When you don't know where to turn" was introduced
seven podcasts "First Steps to Recovery" have been viewed by increasing numbers
the outreach web site has been updated
the new book "Many Voices, One Journey" made its debut at Conference
the Forum has a new tagline: "Sharing Recovery, Unity, and Service" April 2011
three literature motions were presented at Conference only the one on intimacy was approved

Member Services: the 2011-2013 Service Manual was completed and is now also available in Spanish and French

Alateen has chat rooms in six area and continues to add new rooms

Podcasts were developed to help support and strengthen our structure on the member site

Group Records are now able to edit & update records on the web site

Registered Groups: 25,452; U.S. Al-Anon – 13,286; Alateen – 1,031

Alateen Advisory Committee is being evaluated for effectiveness

2013 Al-Anon International Convention Vancouver, B.C. July 5-7, 2013

Conference Leadership Team trial period ended; adopted as a planning body long term

TEAM EVENTS 8 held so far, 6 planned for 2011 and 1 for 2012; info member site

International Al-Anon General Service Meeting held Oct. 6-10 in Virginia Beach – 15 structures represented; held every two years; next one in South Africa 2012

Discussion Forums have been added to e-communities for Delegates, Alateen & AAPP coordinators, Group Records, Literature coordinators and past delegates; Area Chairpersons and District Representatives to be added.

Area Highlights – Summer edition – no more hard copy

Chosen Agenda Items – these topics are generated by the areas thru the delegates and are sent in by the delegates to the Conference Leadership Team to be grouped by categories and then returned to the delegates to select the top two topics for discussion at Conference. The two selected topics are then assigned to two delegates to prepare a presentation on each of the topics and allow time for open discussion of the topic from the Conference floor. About an hour of time is allowed for each topic. Depending on the discussion and the interest in the topic a Thought Force or a Task Force may result from these presentations.

The first Chosen Agenda Item was on Technology: Minimal (or unsuccessful) Public Outreach conducted by Al-Anon members because many do not know the latest media terminology, lack familiarity or comfort with current technological methods of communication, and have no training about evolving media unless received outside of AFG. Kay R. delegate from Hawaii raised the question: Where's the balance? It challenges the membership and it challenges Public Outreach. Communication within the fellowship: What does Al-Anon need to do to make the best use of technology while maintaining all aspects which make Al-Anon effective? Keeping spiritual principles in mind. These were some of the questions raised. Some thoughts on the topic: How to get an e-buddy; Try some electronic meetings; Create a thought Force to determine levels of capabilities; Have a plan of how it's going to be used; Look at safe ways to conduct meetings; Create tech support; Do hands on workshops, these are just some of the ideas put forth and we will probably continue to hear more on this topic. Following this discussion a motion was brought to the floor requesting the use of computers at Conference. This motion will be looked into.

The second Chosen Agenda Item was on Diversity: Our Survey indicates that our members are primarily well educated, 56-year-old, white women. Have we become a polite society that behaves correctly, but lacks a spiritual connection with those we see as different from our personal "normal"? Cindy K. delegate from Texas W. challenged us to look at these questions: What adaptations do we need to make if we are going to become more diverse? How can we expand our Public Outreach efforts to reach the diverse of NYN? We need to make a plan. We need to work thru our prejudices; Can we divide our Area in to sections around our AISs and begin work on this issue? Groups we need to consider: Black, Hispanic, & American Indian. Are there other segments we have missed? We need to get out of our comfort zone and also look at economic and educational components of this issue. Be pro-active; Order Al-anon Faces Alcoholism in Spanish; reach out to AA to help find our diverse population. Our outreach can be to professionals who care for these minorities such as doctors, dentists, etc.

The Chosen Agenda discussion was the second of two presentations on diversity. On Thursday afternoon Dr. Vivian Jackson Research Instructor, National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development was our guest speaker for this year's Conference. Dr. Jackson began her presentation by first taking us thru an exercise to assess our Vision and Values: Who Am I in the Work? This was followed by a power point presentation "Cultural and Linguistic Competence: A Strategy Towards Diversity and Inclusion". The first thing she had us look at were our top values and their relationship to culture and action or behavior. Culture is a total way of life – tells group members how to behave, and provides their identity. Cultural factors that influence diversity are both internal and external. As a culturally competent person I am capable of interacting positively with people who do NOT look, talk, move, think, believe, act, or live like ME! Cultural competence requires that organizations have a clearly defined, congruent set of values and principles, and demonstrate behaviors, attitudes, policies, structures, and practices that enable them to work effectively cross-culturally.

Linguistic competence is the capacity of an organization and its personnel to communicate effectively, and convey information in a manner that is easily understood by diverse audiences including persons of limited English proficiency, those who are not literate or have low literacy skills, and individuals with disabilities. It requires organizational and provider capacity to respond effectively to the health literacy needs of the population served. It insures policy, structure, practices, procedures and dedicated resources to support this capacity.

A culturally and competent Al-Anon and Alateen will show in its values, policies, structure, practices, behaviors, and attitudes. It will acknowledge its mistakes, take risks and be willing to change.

Show the power point: Thought Force – How to include Dual Members in Al-Anon Service While Maintaining Our Policies.

Each year at Conference two International Representatives are invited to attend the Conference; these are two of the people who we vote on the first day to seat with voice but no vote. It is an opportunity for us to hear both their own personal story and about the service structure in their respective countries as well as an opportunity for them to hear and participate in our Conference. This year we had Rose Adam from New Zealand and Maria Evangelina de Leon Gomez from Mexico as the two international representatives. It is always good to hear that Al-Anon struggles with the same issues in these countries. Al-Anon is the same the world around.

WSO staff members and Trustees frequently make international trips to visit general service structures in other countries. This past year, Trustee Carol V. and Marsha Ware, Associate Director of Member Services-International traveled to Northern Europe where they met with representatives from Sweden, Lithuania, and Poland. In Sweden they are struggling with money problems and getting literature. Due to language problems Lithuania is struggling with

understanding structure. They have a strong foundation but not much literature. In Poland they were celebrating their 30th Anniversary. In 1980 their first group met. They have 400 groups and are currently having a growth period. It is always good to see how alike we are even though we don't speak the language.

The Fifth International Convention for Al-anon Family Groups will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada on July 5-7, 2013; the theme is: "Celebrating Worldwide Unity". There will be a Day of Service on July 4th. Information regarding this international will be available in the Fall of 2012.

Even though the fifth international has not yet taken place the World Service Office is already in the process of soliciting bids for the Sixth International Convention planned for July 6-8, 2018. I have received the background information and bid forms if we are interested. Bids are due this December 31, 2011.

Each year delegates are offered a choice of workshops for building skills. This year the workshops were all centered on Communication and we had a choice of two out of three. The three choices were: (1) Understanding Different Learning Styles, (2) Active Listening and (3) Presentation and Reporting Skills. I will share more on the two workshops that I attended in the fall.

Property Ownership, as you may recall from last year's report this was a topic which we did address but in the end determined that we were not yet ready for all Areas to make a decision and so we were able to refer the matter to the Board of Trustees and we would continue our discussion of the matter and return this year prepared to vote. Time was given for any additional questions both before and during Conference. We received a copy of the proposed motion from the Board of Trustees which was little more than two pages in length and I have included a copy in the handouts. On Thursday morning, April 14 we heard a reading of the motion, had discussion and proceeded to vote; the results were 95-for; 1-against; carried with unanimity. "Now, therefore be it resolved that the 2011 World Service Conference does agree to end the 15-year trial and further empowers the Board of Trustees to continue to own the current or a subsequent property in the name of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. for its use under the following conditions:" This is a very small excerpt from the motion; I suggest you take time to read the complete motion and take in the completeness of this motion how it guard the Traditions, Concepts and Charter.

With this motion now passed and the mortgage paid off in March of 2010, we would mark the 60th Anniversary of Al-Anon Family Groups on Saturday, April 16, 2011 with a special ceremony on Saturday afternoon as we watched the burning of the mortgage and then later that evening attended a celebration of 60 years of the Al-Anon Family Groups. What a beautiful way to end three special years with friends from near and far. I was especially happy to have several NYN friends with me for this very special weekend.

Each year part of what conference members do at Conference is to affirm the selection of the willing members who will serve as Trustees. Volunteers for these positions come to the Board thru two methods 1. as a Trustee-at-large or 2. as a Regional Trustee. The process varies for how each reaches the Board. More information on the process is in the Handbook section of the service manual. In 2010 a revision of the Regional Trustee plan was approved following a three year trial period and now we also have new resume forms. The following people were affirmed by the Conference as Trustee: Penny Ridderbusch, US Northwest, Karen Rimmell, US Southwest; Bev Anderson and Vicki Hoppin both Trustees-at-large; all four were for a second three year term. The following were selected as Board officers: Karen Rimmell, chair; Carol Vandenberg, vice chair; & Penny Ridderbusch, treasurer. Joan Vergean was affirmed as a member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management for three years. For information only Mary Ann Reid, chair; Liz Walstrom Sery; and Mary Gregory are members of the Executive Committee and Debbie Grace, chair of the ECRPM.

Power Point Presentation: How Service Contributes to Recovery

As a third year delegate this was a very special year, each of the panel #49 delegates would have an opportunity to share in a three minute time frame their recovery thru service. On Friday evening at the closing banquet we would have the opportunity to hear one of our panel #49 delegate's share her story of recovery thru this program. We would also hear the sharing of Mary Ann Reid the outgoing chair of the Board of Trustees and soon to be chair of the Executive Committee. Each of the Panel #49 delegates would receive a certificate of appreciation from the Executive Director, Ric B. and Chair of the Board, Mary Ann R. The evening would conclude with entertainment from the panel #49 delegates who SHINE.

On Saturday morning at the Open Board of Trustee meeting legal approval will be given to these selections along with the motions approved at the Conference. From here we would later journey to the Open House at the WSO and then onto the Banquet on Saturday evening at the beautiful Virginia Beach Convention Center where Dee M. of Virginia and Myrna H., past staff member would share their experience, strength, and hope with us. What a beautiful celebration of Al-Anon fellowship.

I would rise early Sunday morning and begin my journey homeward grateful for the opportunity to have been able to serve my area.

A copy of my report will be posted to our NYN web site; if you have questions regarding any of it please contact me via e-mail or phone and I will be happy to respond to your questions. Let me hear about your successes and concerns. Remember you don't have to have all the answers, if you're not sure take time to check it out and get back with the answer. Watch the coming issues of the Forum for information on the Conference and consider getting a copy of the Conference Summary when it becomes available. There is also information available on the WSO member site.

