

## Delegates Report - Spring Assembly 2014

First I want to thank the Assembly for funding most of my way to the Regional Delegates Meetings the past three years. Thanks to the training I received there, going to the World Service Convention was not as intimidating as it could have been. That being said, I still had to pinch myself to believe it was really happening. One of the things I have learned in my years of service is that if I am an Alternate for someone, I must be prepared to step in.

The theme of the conference was Our Spiritual Principles in Action. While the conference deals with the business of AI-Anon, I had a number of spiritual experiences during the meeting. For example, I all of a sudden looked at the back of my service manual and realized that I was living through the concepts in action as they were written with the World Service Conference in mind. We practice our principles when we use mutual trust and respect, when we listen and participate and talk to each other and reason things out. The WSC demonstrates the path to group conscience is through delegated authority and how each of us votes on matters affecting AI-Anon.

These are the underlying spiritual principles we operate under: equality, patience, honesty and generosity, understanding and compassion and acceptance and trust.

We learned the difference between a procedure and a principle during a workshop. This was very meaningful to me because it made me realize these “guidelines” or “rules” were all based in the principles of the program. For example, the sending of the Quarterly Letter of Appeal is based in Concept Seven and Warranty One.

One of the many things our executive director said that was inspiring was “If you don’t share what is in your head, it’s not a true group conscience.” His words encouraged me to find my own voice and to vow that I would make it to the mike once a day at a minimum. He also stated “Vote what we think is good for AI-Anon regardless of what others are doing.” These words encouraged me to vote based on my own convictions and conscience.

One of the first presentations was on the importance of a home group. The Thought Force generated several strategies that could be used by groups: make home group a meeting topic, beginners’ meetings, workshops for Group Representatives, encourage participation in District Area, and TEAM/WSO events, submit articles for *The Forum*, develop language in group opening and inviting members to adopt meeting as their home group. Districts could use several strategies such as: Create a presentation/workshop on home groups, sponsor an event on service, communicate and disseminate tools and messages on this topic, and encourage member submission of written material. I would like to add to discuss this in our Membership Outreach Action Committee. The World Service Office or the World Service Conference could create a definition of “home group”, integrate the “home group” definition into WSO events and material or Initiate a campaign that conveys the benefits of a home group.

A trustee committee defined a universal understanding of recovery and was tested and retested with professionals in order to better communicate with professionals in the community. “Family recovery is a process of healing and growth from the effects of living in a family affected by someone’s problem drinking. This process helps individuals to make healthier life choices, and to develop relationships that are more positive and supportive.”

The Literature Committee presented the idea of having a new daily reader which reflects the diversity of the AI-Anon fellowship. The Courage to Change reader had edited out differences. We discussed format and how to get a diverse perspective from writers. The WSC carried the vote to give conceptual approval to develop a new daily reader. A Literature Committee Task Force was formed.

A new project has been launched to facilitate outreach to professionals in the community, in particular, treatment facilities. The resources can be found on the member’s website under Service Structure, then under District Resources. Check these out! The *Resources Guide* is a tool that helps members plan and host a Treatment Facilities Outreach Project workshop. It includes suggestions for enhancing a presentation with audience participation. It also includes background information about the types of treatment facilities staff and services that members may encounter when developing outreach projects and communicating with professionals. The *Presenter’s Guide* supplements the presenter’s script to the PowerPoint presentation modules. It cites the duties of the presenter, and helps the presenter to prepare for a workshop presentation.

This presentation launches a new beginning for Public Outreach and Institutions activities within an Area. Your support and follow through in making announcements about the project and the Treatment Facilities Outreach Project workshop materials is critical. This brief presentation can be used to make the project come alive and to motivate members by hosting a workshop using the presentation materials and *Guides*. It is posted in the Public Outreach Community to access it.

One of our chosen agenda items involved discussing ways to inspire service in Al-Anon. Some ideas that were discussed included asking someone directly to take a position, talk about what you get back and Pairing New GR's with old GR's. Another idea was the 3 E's: enthusiasm, energy and encouragement. TEAM events and getting others involved through skits.

The second chosen agenda item involved discussion of dominance issues inside the program. One suggestion was to state how you feel: "I feel really uncomfortable when you..." Other ideas included doing an inventory of your Area, District, or Intergroup, having a Workshop on Healthy Meetings and to use the Conflict Resolution Kit. Resolving these conflicts involve presuming goodwill, finding your voice, and being willing to have tough conversations.

First, the magazine delivers information that Al-Anon members' value. Every month, 33,000 copies are distributed to individual subscribers and Al-Anon groups throughout the U.S. and Canada. And third, based on recent surveys, it appears that *Forum* readers participate in service more strongly than the Al-Anon fellowship as a whole.

The bad news is that—even though *The Forum* is Al-Anon's largest monthly publication—it reaches only about 10 to 20 percent of the fellowship. The number of personal subscriptions is *shrinking* every month. The magazine has lost about 100 subscriptions per month, every month, since July of 2010. The sale of Forum subscriptions only pay for the printing, it is NOT enough to pay for shipping.

*Forum* subscriptions rallied when in 2009 this decline was pointed out. As soon as the crisis was perceived to be over, *Forum* subscriptions began to decline again, and they have been declining ever since. Based on survey results reading *The Forum* goes hand-in-hand with a strong Al-Anon program that includes participation in service.

The new Alateen Service e-Manual is on the members' website under the Alateen tab.

Resumes for Regional Trustee Candidate must be submitted to WSO by August 15.

The WSC approved after considerable discussion the new policy update regarding members of Al-Anon who are also members of AA (previously referred to as dual members). There is no actual change in the policy but rather the wording clarifies the policy using the principles of the program.

In both the Conference as a whole and in small groups we discussed various questions regarding thinking forward into the future of Al-Anon. Some of the questions included: What questions will face us as service leaders, as we anticipate and ensure Al-Anon's place in the future? How do we open our thinking in preparation for Al-Anon's 100<sup>th</sup> year? What spiritual principles and core values will guide us? What opportunities will the future present us?

A Task Force on Area Guidelines for Trusted Servants Not Fulfilling Responsibilities discussed some preventative measures and some active measures that can be taken. Some of the preventative procedures include job descriptions (which may include reasonable expectations, and an impact statement if the job is not done), use of résumés, AWSC training at the beginning of each term, Service Sponsors and clear communication paths for raising concerns. Some active measures include presuming goodwill, identifying what constitutes non-fulfillment for removal, and to have an investigative process to verify complaints. Areas could identify the responsible officers to work together, and find positive ways to approach the individual. Removal processes would include the Area officer's guidelines for how to take action, the appointment of a replacement, what is included in the communication with the removed trusted servant, and the record-keeping documentation.

Several games are now available that use the Service Manual. We tried out AI-Anopoly which was both exciting and frustrating. A simpler game is As the Group Turns. SMINGO is modeled after BINGO.

During the WSC, several skits were performed. Their scripts will be posted to the e-communities. A skit on the Importance of a Home Group was very humorous as was the skit performed to introduce the Conflict Resolution Kit.

A Thought Force presented several good ideas regarding making Technology as more Inclusive rather than Exclusive. These ideas include creating a technology coordinator, using "Go To" meetings in between Assemblies or AWSC meetings (such as for Task and Thought forces) and demonstrating on-line/webinar meetings at Assemblies and Area meetings. Furthermore, use of technology is encouraged when we share technology success stories. Other ideas include creating workshops or games to introduce members to technological problems and solutions, Utilizing telephone conference calls, conducting Delegate "live" reports via webinar, using a webinar to train AMIAS or putting QR codes on flyers.

My trip to the World Service Office was very eye opening and a moving experience. I was struck by how beautiful the building is but also by how the WSO is a relatively small operation that does a lot considering its size. They only have approximately 45 employees. The warehouse operates with just four employees! This is not Amazon, it's no wonder there are delays sometimes. I developed a great appreciation for how much they do with what they have.

One of the things I learned in the program is to make the best of things when things don't happen as you plan. The night before returning home my flights were cancelled and I was rescheduled on other flights a whole day later. When we toured the WSO before, the woman who stuffs the newcomer's packets asked us to come volunteer when we can. After the conference was over I bummed a ride to and from WSO and put in a few hours putting packets together.

Your Trusted Servant,

Ginny C., Alternate Delegate, Panel 52