

Delegate's Report
Spring Assembly 2009
Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future

Where to begin? That's my "Big Question". Several topics were discussed during the seven days I was in Virginia Beach, but other things were interesting as well. Ooooo!!!

I left Friday morning April 17th. Arrived in Norfolk, VA at noon where I met Delegates from eight other Areas in the airport. We stayed at the Wyndam Virginia Beach Oceanfront. After lunch, I met my conference Mentor, Rose Anna J. from Calgary, AB, Canada. Rose Anna suggested we take a walk, so out to the beach we went. Following our walk she showed me the hospitality room, where to put love gifts, and how to check the incoming mail. I registered for the Conference and received my conference notebook, badge, and carrying case. Rose Anna showed me how to put the notebook together and how to tab information so it would be in convenient spots for reference later in the week. She had a meeting with the other Canadian Delegates, so I was on my own for the evening. After dinner, I put my conference notebook together in the hospitality room where other first year Delegates were gathered and working on their notebooks. By this time the hospitality room was filling up with love gifts from all the Areas. It was exciting finding a spot to for the love gifts from Ohio. Then it was to bed early, since I knew long days were ahead of me.

Saturday morning was new Delegate orientation. We met the Trustees, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and the Conference Chairman and Co-Chairman. We learned the conference goals, rules, and generally how things work. I'll admit I felt like I had a leg up since Ohio had been using the Conference rules at our Assembly meetings for three years, thanks to our Immediate Past Delegate, Barbara W.

Saturday afternoon was our Conference orientation and small group meeting time. I am on a Thought Force called: ***Integrating Alateen into Al-Anon where no Alateen meetings exist.*** After exchanging contact information, our Chairman put us to work. We put together a time line and began answering Knowledge Based Decision Making questions. Our charge is to come up with ideas. Two hours flew by. Our Thought force will meet by conference calls and e-mail. I will give an up-date at our Fall Assembly.

Later Saturday afternoon Shared Area Highlights was conducted. This is when each Area shares a celebration and a concern in one minute or less. Our written sharing could be longer. I was so proud of myself. I was under the minute. The purpose of this sharing time is to generate conversations and get ideas. I talked with members during the week about things I had heard. Some of the topics gave me ideas and these will be referred to our Action Committees.

Saturday evening was the World Service Conference Opening Dinner. I sat with Rose Anna. (She is very energetic. I had trouble keeping up with her.) After dinner all the new Delegates received their Conference pin from their Conference Mentor. I was a little emotional as Rose Anna pinned the conference pin on me. I knew with that pin came a great deal of responsibility.

Our spiritual speaker for the evening was Tom C., part of our WSO staff. After the speaker had concluded, everyone went to bed. It had been a long day and there were six more to go. Would I make it???

Sunday morning came all too soon. I'm retired; I do not get up too early these days. BUT, up I got and headed out for the day. (Each morning I did a check list as I was ready to go out the door. Notebook, office supplies, conference bag, badge, room key, glasses, tissues, and purse.) I was ready. I met Rose Anna and we went to our work space for the week. (We had assigned seats which we sat in at each session. I got to know the people who sat around me the best. There was a little time for fun.)

The meeting Sunday morning consisted of several items I remember reading about in Conference Summaries from previous years, such as Opening Message, Serenity Prayer, Conference Leadership Team's Seating Motion, Welcome, the Traditions, and voting procedure. I was grateful. This gave me the time I needed, to get settled in, and get rid of the nerves. Orientation continued through most of the morning...

In the Opening Message this question was asked: "As we think spiritually, how can we use the Legacies as empowering tools rather than barriers to expand Al-Anon Family Groups into the future?" The Legacies have been used as barriers to progress, as history has shown us. Posted around the meeting room were barriers mailed prior to the Conference. In order to seek harmony, clarity, and understanding during the week, these were literally torn down. It made me think, what barriers might there be in Ohio?

Our Treasurer and Director of Business Services presented the Audit Report. They did an excellent job of presenting financial information to those of us who do not have financial backgrounds. The short version is: the finances are taken care of very well and the accounting principles are found to be general practices found in the United States. -- Remember the skit we did a couple years ago about the different funds. I thought of that skit to help me understand the different funds mentioned in this report. (If you would like to see the Audit Report, contact me for the information.)

A big change has come to Regional Service Seminars (aka: RSS) It is now call **T.E.A.M. Together Empowering Al-Anon Members** - It is an opportunity for Ohio and other Areas to team up with WSO to plan a service event which meets the interests of our members. T.E.A.M. can be added to an existing event and is for a smaller audience. However; it could be an event on its own. T.E.A.M. is designed for more input by the host committee and the host committee has shared responsibilities. T.E.A.M. can be hosted by one or more Areas.

Ohio can decide if this is something we what to try. If we decide to try a T.E.A.M. event, we choose what topics the WSO Staff member and volunteers handle and what the host committee will be responsible for. A T.E.A.M. event would be an opportunity for AFG of Ohio to meet a WSO staff member, a WSO volunteer, and either the Executive Director, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, or the Chairman of the Executive Committee.

My question is: when do we try T.E.A.M.?

T.E.A.M. information and packets will be available on the members' website.

Embrace the Legacies: Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future was the Conference theme. A presentation was given on the theme and our conference goals were given. We learned how each Conference member is a bridge to other Conference members, to groups, and to the members of the fellowship. The role of each conference

member was stated. Role of the Delegate: Share experiences, be a conduit of information, take the world wide view to the fellowship, and bring a Higher Power with me. Role of the Trustees: Serve and preserve the Groups, refer things to the conference, and are the visionary leaders. Role of the Executive Committee: Oversee the day to day operations of the World Service Office are the Administration of the World Service Office. Role of the Staff: Public Outreach world wide, support and develop literature, and write the Conference Summary.

Conference Goals:

- The spiritual tone of the WSC will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members.
- Conference members will understand the purpose of the conference, relationships within the structure, and be able to articulate conference decisions.

The Executive Director's 2008 Operational Report was given along with it an update on the Strategic Plan. I learned during this report members have trouble understanding the difference between the World Service Office and recovery. Also, The Executive Director writes some of the report, but other Staff members contribute to the contents and the Executive Director is the compiler of the information. A copy of the reports has been sent to Officers, Coordinators and District Representatives. If you would like to see the report, ask your DR or me to forward it to you via e-mail.

CALLING ALL HANDS!!! The fellowship needs our help. The Board of Trustees is asking all members to participate in a survey whose objective is to identify the abundant resources of the fellowship. Resources are not limited only to money. Abundant Resources also refers to the talents and gifts of the fellowship. We are asked to say to ourselves what can I do to help the fellowship? Do I have a specific talent I can share, knowledge in a particular area, technology skills, what abilities do I have to help carry the Al-Anon message to others? A variety of gifts and talents are needed.

To participate in the survey you log on to the member's website { www.al-anon.alateen.org/members -- pass word is the name of your home group followed by afg. Click on the Survey for Members' tab. That will take you to the Unlimited Abundant Resources Skills Inventory. Click on Submit to get to the survey. Fill it out and click on submit. A hard copy can be obtained from WSO if you are not internet connected. I have done this survey. It took about 6 minutes to complete and submit it. }

Next on the agenda was a short presentation by the E-CAL Committee. We had come to the end of our three year trial period and because of the lack of submissions and interest a motion was made to dissolve the E-Cal Committee and discontinue E-CAL. The motion carried. E-CAL has been dissolved.

Reports were given about the 2010 AA International Convention in San Antonio Texas and the Al-Anon International convention in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada in 2013. I will have more information about the AA convention in the fall.

Monday started with the Serenity Prayer in French. The Budget Proposal for 2009 was given. There was a lengthy discussion. Again our Treasurer, Frank R and our Director of Business Services David Z. explained financial items so members who did not have a financial background could understand it. The Budget passed. If you would like a copy of the Budget contact me, and I will send it to you.

Next there was a presentation by the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT). They talked about the Nominating Committee, Regional Trustees, Trustees at Large, and the Board of Trustee Officers. The Regions who elected Trustees in 2009 were listed. Then the Regions who will be electing a Trustee in 2010 were called together by Region in order to give a demonstration of the process. It was explained 2010 is the third year of a three year trial period for the Trustee election process.

Ohio is part of the US North Central Region. Our Region is one of the Regions who will have a Trustee elected in 2010. Forms and instructions were handed out.

Affirmations of the nominees were held for the 2009 candidates.

A presentation was given on the concerns about *The Forum*. Subscriptions are down. How can we change this fact? What implications do the facts have for the future of *The Forum*? This topic will be continued.

Our next topic was the discussion about the procedure for Excess Bequest Funds. A topic held over from the 2008 World Service Conference. The discussion was lengthy.

Following dinner there was a time to sum up the day and do unanswered question. Motions were then presented and discussion was held.

There was a recovery meeting for anyone who was interested in attending a meeting following our evening session.

Tuesday was an exciting day. We opened with the Serenity Prayer in German and got started. The discussion about protecting the Alateen traditions began. This is a topic which began in 2007 with the approval of the Alateen traditions. Then in 2008 discussion was held about giving the Alateen Traditions the same protection and status as the Al-Anon Traditions, but to do so would mean changing the Charter. The Conference determined more information was needed. A Task Force was formed and assigned this task and charged with gathering the further information. The Task Force came to the 2009 WSC with further information using the KBDM format. We would revisit this topic again during the week.

The meeting was adjourned and we loaded the buses. I was excited. Off we went to WSO. As we got off the bus, Staff members and WSO Volunteers greeted us with "Welcome Home." It gave me goose bumps. I had been on a tour of WSO once before, but it was still very exciting. Seeing the items our Co-founders used to get our fellowship started was an emotional experience for me.

The office looks very much like other corporate offices, except there are a lot of triangles and triangular objects around. If we were to fly over the building and looked down, the center is our logo. The gazebo just outside the reception area is shaped in a triangle, also.

On the tour we saw the archives room, conference rooms, offices, warehouse, and shipping department. It is a big operation. 200 orders are shipped daily. Printing of pamphlets is now done off site. I especially liked seeing all the art work hanging in the halls and meeting the Staff members.

The art work is illustrations of our slogans, framed, and hung in the halls. The other art work I thought was interesting was an AFG timeline hanging in the entry way.

I look forward to going there again. FYI: Tours are given M-F at 2:00 pm, should you happen to be anywhere near Virginia Beach, Virginia.

After lunch we went back the hotel and resumed the agenda for the day once again. We eased back into things with a discussion on attraction and promotion which was the first of the Chosen Agenda Items. After background information was presented, a discussion followed. {Chosen Agenda Items are selected by the Delegates for discussions that refer to items affecting Al-Anon as a whole. If you have suggestions for a topic, send it to me by October 12, 2009.}

The topic of expansion or consolidation of area carried over from the previous conference. The question asked was, "Is the current World Service Conference model providing the spiritual bridge we need to expand into the future in order to meet the needs of the fellowship?" Discussion was around the future design and how diverse needs of the Areas might be affected. This discussion will carry over to one or more Conferences.

Next was the Policy Committee Meeting. I learned the Policy Committee is the Board of Trustee's Group Conscience outside of the World Service Conference.

Following dinner there was a time for summing up the day and motions were presented and discussed. The outcome of these motions is: The Group Services Committee (This is not group records) and the Admissions Handbook Work Group have been disbanded on a three year trial basis. The meeting was adjourned and everyone went to the Open Board of Trustees meeting.

The Board of Trustees talked about modeling behaviors consistent with Al-Anon principles in meetings as well as outside the meetings. The Board modeled this throughout the week by showing respect for one another, being patience and understanding, doing non-judgmental listening, and following the **Knowledge Based Decision Making** process to have an informed group conscience.

Wednesday was a rainy, foggy, cold day. We did hear the thunder a couple times during the day. We opened with the Serenity Prayer in Spanish and got started. First on the agenda for the day was a presentation by the Member Contribution Thought Force. The Big Question asked was: *Embracing our Legacies, how can we help the general membership of Al-Anon understand that member and group contributions are spiritual bridges that help support the World Service Office work in order to fulfill our vision that all people affected by someone else's drinking will find help and recovery in every community?*

This was not a surprising, our Immediate Past Delegate reported similar information in 2008. What I heard was: the number of groups is down 28% from the 1990's and contributions are up from then, ***BUT***... contributions do not come close to the cost of services to the groups.

Contributions average about \$100 per group of those groups sending a contribution; however, the average cost to provide services to a group is about \$240 per year per group.

Here is an illustration: Meeting XXX has three members. There is only one pamphlet. Who gets the pamphlet? Do they cut in to three pieces? ???

Another illustration: Town Q has three groups meeting in the same location. There is a combined amount of \$1.00 in the treasury. Each group would like to have the DR visit, but it will cost \$2.40 for the DR to visit all three meetings. If there is only \$1 to pay for expenses, which meeting is visited? ???

There are 15,393 groups in our service structure with 55.85% of the groups contributing. Ohio has 44.7% of their groups contributing an average of \$76.64.

While it is true the total amount of contributions is up, there is still a big gap between what is contributed and the actual cost of services per group.

I believe contributions are an investment in our future. I have to ask myself am I a member of or a visitor to my group? If I am a member, could I increase the amount I put in the basket when it is passed? I know the dollar I may put in the basket today does not have the same value it had when I started in the fellowship. If we all increase our contributions, what services could we receive? Perhaps the possibilities are endless.

How can Ohio address this concern? What can Ohio do? I have referred this topic to the Group Services Action Committee for discussion. I do, however, suggest this is a conversation to have with your group.

The goal of this Task Force is to increase contributions by 30% by 2012. The discussion will continue on this topic.

After the morning break, we once again discussed the protection of the Alateen Traditions, following lunch we attended the Open Policy Committee meeting. Following the policy meeting I attended the **Knowledge Based Decision Making Workshop** and learned a little more about how the **KBDM** process works.

The afternoon wrapped up with the second of the Chosen Agenda Items being discussed. *How can Areas, Districts and Groups approach unhealthy meetings in a positive and productive way?* Discussion followed. While there are no quick answers, education has proved to be effective. When an explanation of the three legacies is given, groups learn The Tradition and The Concepts are as important as the Steps. This topic will continue.

After dinner we had a time to sum it up, motions and discussion. The wording of motions was an interesting process to me. The motion to adopt the Procedure for Managing Excess Bequest Funds carried after lengthy discussion. Following this the motion to protect the Alateen Traditions was read and discussed. This to had been a lengthy process. The motion carried.

While the votes were being counted we played games using words from recovery and words from service. These games were a lot of fun.

Thursday opened with the Serenity Prayer in Italian. We got started. It was a day for reflections on the week and unanswered questions. Thursday evening was the Closing Dinner. It was great to see Barbara and share my first conference with her. We had two speaker following dinner, Maragot M, Trustee and Jeff G. Panel 47, Georgia. After listening to them I knew Spiritual Bridges had been made during the week.

Friday morning was the Open Board of Trustees meeting where the conference proceedings were made legal.

Throughout the week we heard reports and sharings. Representatives from Germany, Italy, Mexico, and UK and Eire shared experience, strength, and hope and about AFG in their country. Staff members and WSO volunteers gave reports on International trips to India, South Africa, Turkey, and the International Al-Anon General Service Meeting (IAGSM) in Finland. We learned we have more similarities than differences. Each Delegate from Panel 47 had the opportunity to share on the Conference theme. I listened to these sharings with mixed feelings. While I enjoyed listening to them, I knew I would have very little time to get to know them. These Conference members were definitely “Reven”.

The first day of the Conference the very first Panel 47 member to share said “47’s Reven”. As more Panel 47 members said it, I began to wonder what 49’s saying would be? During the week I asked Panel 49 Delegates to come up with a saying for our Panel. We decided on “49 Shines”.

All week long I marveled at how accessible the Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, and WSO Staff were. There was open communication between and among members. Spiritual bridges were there.

The meals all week were outstanding. Each meal I sat with different members, in order to have the opportunity to meet and chat with as many as I could. When there were breaks, I went for a short walk, just to keep my back from getting too stiff. The days it did not rain, I even went outside and walked on the bike path. Usually someone else had the same idea, so I had walking buddies. A couple evenings a few of us relaxed in the hot tub following the meetings.

I made it!!! It was a busy week, lots of reports, meetings and papers. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be a part of the Forty-ninth World Service Conference. I am very proud to be your Delegate.

As Always, It is - One Day AT A Time.
Sandra F.
Panel 49, Ohio