

## **Delegate's Report Spring Assembly 2011**

The 2011 World Service Conference was a week filled with meetings, tours, and fellowship. My experience was more intense this year than in previous years.

It all started on April 9<sup>th</sup> with my flights to New York City where I caught a shuttle to Stamford, Conn. That night, I had the opportunity to meet friends from Ohio, who now live in Connecticut, for dinner and some catching up.

April 10<sup>th</sup> was one of the most exciting days I have had as your Delegate to the World Service Conference. I, along with other members of Panel 49, toured the home of one of our co-founders, Lois W., called Stepping Stones. The Stepping Stones Foundation provided tour guides who answered many questions. It was very touching for me to go into the kitchen and see the famous kitchen table, then, to go up-stairs and see the desk where Lois and Anne wrote the first 87 groups, followed by venturing outside and walking up the hill to "Whit's End", the office of Bill W. Back at the Welcome Center, we tasted Lois' coffee flavored gelatin. I will say the flavor was interesting. My time at Stepping Stones was not only spiritual but also inspiring.

Ever too soon our tour ended and we headed to LaGuardia International Airport. We rushed there, so some would not miss their flights to Norfolk. However, 23 of us were booked on a later flight, so we had some time to spare. Did we ever have time to spare! Our flight was delayed a few time and we ended up being at the airport from 1pm till 10:30pm when we finally departed. I will admit I was grateful for this extra time with my friends. We were able to catch up and get to know each other better. We practiced our skit and had a meeting right there in the middle of the food court in Terminal C. Patience was the topic. About that time I needed to be reminded about patience.

We finally got to the hotel at 1am April 11<sup>th</sup>. Morning came all too soon. I met my Conference mentee before her orientation just to chat and give her a hug. The afternoon was filled with meetings.

My Conference Assignment for this year is the Literature Committee. The committee discussed possible motions to be presented to the 2011 Conference.

Following the afternoon meetings, Shared Area Highlights was held. Shared Area Highlights is when all 67 Areas in our Conference Structure give a one minute summary of celebrations and concerns they have. I heard some ideas that are possible for Ohio; but, also learned we are very similar to other Areas.

Monday Evening was the 2011 World Service Conference's Opening Banquet where I had the pleasure of giving the Conference pin to my Conference Mentee, Linda B. who is from Saskatchewan.

The 2011 World Service Conference was held April 12<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>. Each day began with breakfast at 7am, lunch about 12:30pm, and dinner about 6:30pm. The Official pictures for each Panel were taken the first morning during breakfast. The remainder of the days we usually sat with different conference members so we could chat with as many members as possible. Lunch and dinner likewise, the exception was if we had a meeting scheduled during the meal. I did have meetings during meal time. Following dinner, Business resumed. Being a third year Delegate my Panel (group of delegates) practiced our skit each night when we adjourned for the evening. {As you can tell there was not very much free time.}

Wednesday afternoon we toured our World Service Office. During the tour I met the staff members I talk with when I call the office and send e-mails to. I like walking around the building and grounds. I get emotional when I visit the office. If you would like to visit the World Service Office tours are held weekdays at 2:00pm.

On Thursday, I gave my three minute talk. Each year, third year Delegates give what is called Sharing Ourselves, it is a talk relating your recovery or service journey to the conference theme. This year's conference theme was Expanding our community of hope by embracing: Yesterday's Foundation, Today's Successes, Tomorrow's Possibilities. I chose to relate mine to my service journey. Surprisingly, I found it to an emotional time.

Friday evenings was the closing dinner. My honey was able to join me for this dinner and was there when I received my scroll. How neat it was to have him there. Following dinner and the spiritual speakers, my Panel did a skit featuring all the Panel 49 Delegates with a little singing and lots of drama. I had fun doing it, but it was a lot of work.

Saturday was a big day. The Annual meeting of the Board of Trustees was held which current conference members can attend. In the afternoon the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration's open house was held at AFG Headquarters, Inc. A special ceremony was held to burn the mortgage which was paid off in March, 2010. In the evening the banquet was held at the Virginia Beach Convention Center. Over 525 attended this event. We heard a brief history from a past WSO Executive Director and then a long time member shared her story. For me, a highlight of the evening was being able to share this evening with members from Ohio who came to the celebration.

Sunday came and we had to say our goodbyes. It is always difficult to depart and go our separate ways. Always keeping in mind we are Al-Anon members who are connected through the links of service to the worldwide fellowship and to each other.

There are few agenda items from the 2011 World Service Conference I would like to tell you about...

Goals were set at the beginning of the meeting. These goals were:

- The Spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct as its members presume goodwill.
- Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference and the relationships within the structure.
- Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will be able to support and communicate Conference decisions.

The goals were often referred to and reviewed as a check to see how we were doing.

Reports given were: 2010 Annual Report, the Audit Report, and the Finance Committee Report. Following discussion on each of these topics approval was given.

Throughout the week the Finance Committee did a skit called the Generosity of Spirit. The skit reminded me how our contributions are used. Each scene of the skit depicted a way our contributions are used both financial and giving of myself. Some of these were: helping someone find recovery, Alateen chat rooms, helping developing structures in other countries, sending sharings for *The Forum*, help someone find a meeting, and write a sharing for Al-anon Faces Alcoholism (the booklet that touches those who suffer), giving AFA to professional to give to clients, or through doing service. I learned my gifts help in many ways and when I give, I receive more than I give. (Sing chorus here) A question for you, what spiritual gifts do you receive when you give of your resources?

Going along with finances is the contribution list for groups in Ohio. Check my list to see if your group's monetary contributions to WSO for 2010 are correct.

I learned it costs about \$240 a year per group to provide the groups with services from WSO. WSO provides services to groups whether they send contributions during the year or not. Our contributions are needed. Contributions received are used for Public Outreach.

There is a new blog called Thinking Abundantly In ... The blog is available on the members website. Just click on Blogs. The podcast that accompanies the blog encourages us to share about what we have and how what we have changes our way of thinking.

There are two new books. Our newest CAL titled *Many Voice, One Journey (B-31)* was introduced. It tells how previous generations pursued their spiritual growth as our service structure developed through the years as the fellowship grew. This book costs \$16.00 plus shipping and handling. The other book is a soft cover version of *How Al-anon Works (B-32)*. This version of the book is intended for groups to give new comers as well as professionals who talk to people about their lives.

Property ownership was discussed. There was a time for any unanswered questions to be asked and answers given. Background information was reviewed; the discussion of property ownership began 30 years ago. The Trial ownership period began 15 years ago. Charts with costs of leasing vs. ownership were explained. As well as costs of varying locations were shown. The time line of events was reviewed. Last year a motion to end the trial was tabled. Tabling the motion gave members enough time to ask question and thoroughly review all information. The role of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management was stated and reports reviewed stating there was no evidence owning property affected the fellowship in any way were reviewed. Following the discussion, a motion was presented to end the trial period and authorize the ownership of the property. The motion passed by an overwhelming majority. As the Chairman of the Board of Trustees said, "Al-Anon now has a home." I refer you to the 2011 World

Service Conference Summary for the exact motion and the discussion held. The Conference Summary will be available in the fall.

The Thought Force to Identify Information for a Guideline on Memorial Contributions gave a presentation. Their charge was to identify ways non Al-Anon members could honor their deceased family or friends who were Al-Anon members. Different situations were dramatized. While no guidelines were proposed or adopted, suggestions I heard include: non-members could honor the member by having a moment of silence or moment of gratitude at the local level, send Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism to the member's Area for Public Outreach, purchase conference Approved Literature for a local library, and write letters to "Dear Abby" for example to confirm Al-Anon's benefits to family relationships. A question for you to think about, in what ways can Al-Anon Family Groups support a non-member's request to honor a deceased member of Al-Anon?

Another Thought Force was on How to Include Dual members in Al-Anon Service while maintaining our policies. Definitions were given for both Al-Anon and AA members. In 1967, the guidelines for group separation between AA and Al-Anon were approved by the Al-Anon World Service Conference. We are separate entities with separate purposes. Dual members do not serve in Al-Anon policy-making positions otherwise this would give the appearance of not being separate. Suggestions I heard on what service dual members could do, depending on Area and local policies, include serving on event committees, assisting with public outreach, support fellowship communication with help on websites or newsletters, assist with technology needs, be an e-mail buddy, become AMIAS (Al-Anon Members Involved In Alateen Service), contribute to WSO publishing (i.e. the Forum, blogs, sharing written for new literature), serve on Thought or Tasks Forces, or be the liaison for AA conventions or Intergroup Service. Several possibilities were given as to how dual members could be involved with Al-Anon Service and yet stays within the policy. A discussion followed the presentation. This topic was also discussed during the open Policy Committee meeting and will continue. A question for you, how can dual members be of service in your local group and follow Al-Anon Policies? I encourage your group to discuss possibilities.

A topic brought to the Conference by the Policy Committee was titled "Policy Discussion – Do Not Refer". This is what I understand from that session. Several Districts, AISs, or Areas have made a decision to discontinue listing a group that has been determined as not reflecting Al-Anon principles, policies, and procedures. A group fitting this description as determined by their district, AIS (aka Intergroup), or Area are not being included on printed or electronic schedules, but still participated in the links of service with voice and vote. The criteria for a group not being included on printed or electronic schedules were determined by the District, AIS, or Area. This topic was referred to the Policy Committee for discussion. Following their discussions, the Policy Committee decided to bring the topic to the Conference for Delegates to share about what their Area has done and what philosophy behind such decisions might be.

Three questions were asked.

“Question 1. If your area has a delisting criteria and procedure, please share that with us. Specifically what principles were discussed when making the decision to delist? Who makes the decision not to list or refer members to a group? How does your area feel about this decision/process? For everyone present, please share your feelings about deciding not to refer to a group?”

Delegates shared about situations in their area and how groups either changed and began using the principles or broke away completely. A few stated delisting criteria was currently being worked on.

“Question 2. If your area has a criteria and procedure for relisting a group that has been delisted, please share that. How are the principles applied? Who makes the decision? Have you worked through this process? What was the result? What are your Area's thoughts about this decision/process? Then everyone please share your thoughts about a process to relist a group that has been delisted?”

Delegates again shared thoughts and described situations in their areas.

“Question 3. What if anything, might the World Service Office do to support Area in reference to referring members, newcomers, and professionals to groups that an Area has determined do not follow Al-Anon's principles?”

Again sharings from Delegates were given. I heard two things: there is a need for all to study Warrantee Four; and, Areas would like support, but no suggestions as to what was desired in the way of support were given.

To me this topic was a "Hot Topic". What I gleaned from the discussion was it is up to Districts, AIS's, and Areas to come up with guidelines for their location which have clearly defined criteria for both not beings included and also how to be added back to the schedules.

So, what is next? I highly recommend Districts, AIS Counsels around Ohio, and the Area develop guidelines for which groups would receive Do Not Refer status while maintaining the links of service with voice and vote. That these guidelines would include the criteria for how groups would be returned to local printed and electronic meeting schedules.

Can you picture yourself in Vancouver? We are two year away from the next International Convention. It will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, July 5-7, 2013. Theme for the event is *Celebrating Worldwide Unity*. There is the possibility a day of service will be held before the convention on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Registration and housing information will be available in the fall of 2012. Have you started your plans for attending the convention yet? I have. Hope you can attend. I think it will be an exciting time.

Speaking of international conventions, bids for the Sixth International Convention in 2018 are now being accepted. If you are interested in perusing this idea, contact me for a bid form application.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent Ohio at the 2011 World Service Conference. It most certainly was an informative and amazing week of *Expanding our community of hope by embracing: Yesterday's Foundations, Today's Successes, and Tomorrow's Possibilities*.

As always, it is One Day at a Time  
Love in Service, Sandra F.