

Realizing Our Spiritual Potential

I arrived in Virginia Beach on April 10, 2016 and though conference did not start until the 11th with the opening dinner there is always plenty to do. I was able to spend the morning on the beach after meeting my men-tee and helping her to get her notebook together and start to get organized. Beautiful morning.

In the afternoon I met with the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) where we went over the process of nominating Trustees at Large. Then we moved to learn more about the other areas in this world wide fellowship. Instead of reading our Area highlights as done in the past we had questions that weren't part of the conference agenda items such as What specific strategies do you use in preparing your Delegate's report? What strategies do you use to encourage participation of inactive groups and districts in your area? What strategies do you employ to encourage members to fill service positions? How can Delegates influence what is or is not discussed at the WSC? Do we fulfill our role as Delegates at the World Service Conference? What effective strategies do you use to communicate between AWSC/Assembly meetings? How do we effectively encourage past delegates and other trusted servants to stay active? A lively discussion followed and after 45 minutes we switched to other questions and shared our experience strength and hope with each other. Much more productive sessions and got to hear what other areas are doing with similar problems.

The opening dinner was the start of conference and as a mentor I was given the task of pinning my men tee Angie R. from Mississippi with her World Service Pin. As a Panel 54 member we had the added phrase of Watch Us SOAR (Serving Our Area Responsibly). The camaraderie of Panel 54 was phenomenal and we all got to share our thoughts on Realizing Our Spiritual Potential. Watch the Forum for sharings from a number of delegates in Panel 54. Jan from Nebraska shared in May.

April 12, 2016

Beautiful sunrise and on to a busy day filled with lots of information and of course we had panel pictures taken.

We started our day with the results of the Alateen survey that was taken last year and there were certainly some eye opening findings. 170 members took the survey between the ages of 10 and 17. 19% had personal sponsors, 65% were in service, 61% like the literature, 43% thought public outreach was important and 20% want meetings in schools. The most surprising report was that 87% like face to face meetings and 80% don't attend chat rooms. The teens prefer being with other teens in a meeting room. The most shocking statistic given was that 18 million children under the age of 18 live with active alcoholism. There were also breakout sessions on Alateen of which I chaired one. The discussion of the group and reporting back our feelings were very important to the growth of the Alateen process. Below find our groups findings on the Alateen session I chaired.

What is the key to unlocking the success with Alateen throughout the area?

- Allot 15 minutes for Alateen speakers prior to Al-Anon speakers at assemblies, conferences, workshops, etc.
- Get Alateens involved in assembly and convention planning
- Have a one year long focus on parents and schools for more about Alateen program
- Newcomer meeting with teens and parents to help understand family recovery for disease involves all.
- AA members refer kids to Alateen. Keep letting them know about the meetings of Alateen
- Provide training for AMIAS in different formats such electronic manuals, weekend retreats, etc.
- Teens plan meetings.
- Alateen attention span short, so be flexible. Possibly include Game Night, craft night, Step/Tradition study in a fun way
- Alateen Tent Cards in Al-Anon meetings

Also Maryann M. has come back part time to assist with the Alateen unlocking process. WSO is still looking for a full time employee to take over the position.

Of course you can't have a conference without going over voting procedures. There were 92 voting members of conference including delegates, trustees and office staff. We were introduced to the new interim Executive Director Mary G. and she has been a Trustee in the past and is truly qualified for the position until a new Executive director is found. So now let's get our own voting procedure passed for the upcoming elections in November.

The Trustees of the World Service Office travel to many countries to help with their structuring of their country and to give experience, strength and hope. The trustees traveled to Belgium for the European Zonal meeting, Central America and Paraguay. We also had the Convention Chair from Mexico here with us again along with her interpreter. Here we are given chance to make history happen and support the other countries with their own struggles with the disease of alcoholism.

We did finish updating and revising Concept 11 in the service manual along with putting to bed the policy on Memorial Contributions. The conference approved that \$500 can be bequeathed as a one time gift of gratitude from a family member who is not a member of Al-Anon. These policies will be available on the website after they are edited.

Public Outreach is always a hot topic during conference. Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA) has already sent out 387,425 copies. Say thank you to all the people who bought and gave out these copies. The 2017 AFA will be out in September with hope, understanding and compassion being the theme. When giving them to professionals leave contact information so that when they run out they can order more. Also ask newcomers where they heard of us. Alcohol Awareness month was in April and in

September it's National Recovery month and there are many events scheduled to celebrate recovery. WSO is always looking for the professional perspective so talk to many and become part of Public Outreach.

Al-Anon received an award for being in the top 1% of non-profit organizations. Facebook is another way to increase public awareness. There are 1 million likes for Al-Anon on Facebook. Just because you like something on Facebook doesn't mean that you are a member. There are now many phone and online Al-Anon meetings that are recognized by WSO now and it's another form of public outreach. The new PSA (Public Service Announcement) with emphasis on parents of problem drinkers and how the children are affected will be out this fall but if you go to the website you can view the present ones that are being shown. Tennessee is showing the PSAs in movie theaters. Now let's hear from Maryann T about Public Outreach in Connecticut.

There were many task forces that were formed and presented at Conference. Most of them had to do with healthy groups. The task force on meeting types, task force on communicating links of service, the task force on acceptance of communities, cultures and beliefs all helped to provide delegates with information to help create healthy groups in their Area. There were also breakout sessions on dominance/balance and people not fulfilling their service positions and groups that don't follow the traditions. There were many great shares. So let me show you how that works.

April 13, 2016

I know by now most if not all of you have seen WSO's budget. The operating expenses still outweigh the revenue with employee salary and benefits being the bulk of the expenses. The revenue will again be literature sales and contributions. Contributions were up 8.4% over last year but it still wasn't enough. WSO needs \$268.12/group to cover the average cost of services per group. Connecticut last year only contributed \$131.25/group for a total of \$20,606 which is \$2,000 less than last year. 67% of the groups here in Connecticut contribute to WSO. Just because you put money in the basket at your group it doesn't always go to WSO. First take care of your group with rent, literature and other group expenses. Next is the district for district expenses. Then some money should be sent to the Area and finally the group decides if they are going to support WSO. So as individual members we can now hit the Contribute Now button on the WSO website and make a one time donation or have it taken from your checking account monthly. As a group we can take a group conscience to say if we want our money sent to WSO, as a district we can allocate some of the monies going to WSO and also as an Area we can do the same. Last year we took up a collection and sent \$750 to WSO. Iowa instead of sending love gifts with their delegate they collected \$3,600 as a gift to WSO. When the basket was passed at conference the conference members donated a total of \$11,100. Let's see if Connecticut can be truly self supporting and fill our basket with well meaning money to continue the services that are needed and wanted in the area.

WSO also had to take 4% from our reserve fund to offset losses totaling \$426,000 in the stock market due to investments in energy stocks. A prudent reserve would be a year of operating costs which would be \$5,002,000 while the reserve fund at present holds \$3,829,572. Interested members may go to WSO web site under Finances and see the pie chart of where our money goes. I also sent out to each DR ideas from the treasurer to pay it forward. So let's all see if we as members can help defray some of the costs and give a little more and continue the services we know and love.

David Zacks the WSO Chief Financial Officer has given his retirement notice but will stay on until the end of 2016 while the hiring process begins. The job is not posted as of yet but this position is for a non-member, so keep it in mind for friends and family. I will let it be known when the position has been posted.

Meet the Board Event was held in Canada last year with 60 attendees of which 22 were staff members. It really personalized WSO for the audience and of course there were some great shares. This year Meet the Board will be in Fayetteville Arkansas on 10/22/16. The trial will be up this year but it was extended for another three years. My question for Connecticut is would you like to put in a bid for the next Meet the Board event for 10/21/17?

Regional trustees were given traditional approval including Joan Sullivan from here in the Northeast along with three Trustees at Large and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). The Board of Trustees gave final approval on Saturday. World Service is also looking for other Trustees at Large. If anyone is interested they can see me and I can get you a resume. Now let's hear from our own Board of Directors.

The Literature Committee also was given that daunting task of revising the book mark of Just For Today. There was plenty of heated discussion on both sides of debate. I have the KBDM so that if interested groups would like to it and see what and how this all came about let me know. I did deliver petitions and let your voices be heard against having this prayer removed, We decided as a conference to continue with the discussion before a decision is made since some delegates hadn't even informed their members.

There are two new pamphlets entitled Links of Service S-28 and Joy of Service S-57. I would like to see these resources used instead of going straight to past trustees, delegates and WSO. If you as an individual have a question it works like this member to GR to DR to Delegate to WSO. Thanks again for your cooperation in this matter.

On a positive note though the Forum subscriptions are up 45% from last year due to the discontinuation of Forums being sent to groups. How many of you have a subscription to the Forum? In 1989 64,000 people subscribed while in 2015 only 18,000 subscribed. How can we change this? There is an e-subscription also available so please let's think about increasing subscriptions by looking at your raffle tickets and Aimee is going to pick 3 lucky winners for a Forum subscription. The Forum is always looking for legacy and Alateen sharings so let's start sharing.

WSO is also looking for a magazine coordinator to assist in putting together the Forum and Al-Anon faces Alcoholism please see the website under job opportunities.

The Policy Committee recommended revised text regarding "Convention and Other Events," formerly title "Conventions," pages 85 and 86, of the *2014 -2017 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). The proposed text included spiritual principles and criteria regarding conventions and other events. It was presented in a motion to the 2016 World Service Conference (WSC) as an effort to help prevent Al-Anon's name from being linked to outside enterprises, clarifying Tradition Six. Minimal feedback about the proposed text was received from Conference members prior to the WSC. However, numerous helpful suggestions were offered during the Conference discussion. A consensus affirmed that the language under consideration be revised and brought back to the 2017 WSC. A Policy Task Force comprised of Policy Committee members will review the proposed text and other ideas resulting from the discussion at the 2016 WSC.

April 14,2016.

Of course the 2018 International Convention in Baltimore Maryland is July 5-8th .
Lots of enthusiasm was had by all in letting people know to start putting your pennies away .WSO is also looking for a bid for the 2023 International Convention.

Another event that was promoted was TEAM. We played teams to see how well we knew the ins and outs of a TEAM presentation. Let's think about hosting another TEAM event real soon. We will now listen to Gail give our report for our past convention Miracles in Motion followed by the 2017 Convention.

The Annual Report emphasized the change that is happening at WSO and the world wide fellowship.

April 15, 2016.

Our week is almost over but we still had unfinished business to do. We had a task force present how technology and anonymity work hand in hand and pointers to protect our anonymity in using social media by checking your privacy settings frequently. Let's hear from Sue G2 how Connecticut's web site is doing.

We had one chosen agenda item that we spent in break out sessions and that Item was How do we get younger members into Al-Anon? Of course I shared how we get our younger members involved at the Convention level and also by having our Mooving On workshop at CAWW. There are still a few babysitting meetings here in Connecticut so that young mothers and fathers can be able to enjoy the benefits of the fellowship. I would like to take 10 minutes and hear some ideas from you so that maybe we could implement them here in Connecticut.

We closed the conference with the closing dinner where I as an outgoing delegate received my certificate of participating as a World Service Delegate for the past three years. The best part of the evening was our farewell skit where each of us from Panel 54 came in to say good bye to the Conference dressed as their state bird. The robin was well represented and we all did a ditty song to represent our state. It was a truly memorable time.

Of course our portion of Conference was over but there's always sitting in on an open Board of Trustees meeting to finish off Conference. I did get to go to the WSO office again with many members of the fellowship. Of course I got greeted with Welcome Home and got to see things that I hadn't seen before like a room full of the old posters that used to be in circulation for Public Outreach. Of course there were visits with people you talk to on the phone with or get e-mails from also. A great day.

That evening was the 65th Anniversary celebration and 2 speakers that were given that gift of spiritual potential by giving their histories of what Al-Anon was then and what Al-Anon is now. My biggest joy was the joy of being able to be in Virginia Beach for the office because when WSO was in New York there wasn't unanimity for the location of the new office so the places were placed in a hat and Virginia Beach was picked. Can you imagine going to Conference in Dayton, Ohio?

I want to thank all of you for electing me to this position and being able to serve as your representative to the state of Connecticut. I have gained many insights into myself and this wonderful program of Al-Anon.

Love and Peace
Ann B
Panel 54
Connecticut