

## **DELEGATE'S REPORT**

### **Fall Assembly 2017**

**Opening Comments:** We are concluding our second year of Panel 56. I encourage our move forward into next year, to be strategic, productive and meaningful. As International Convention will be upon us soon and Elections will end or three year term, what will we do locally, at the District and around our State? We already have a lot to be proud of; Assemblies with continued Workshops and GR/DR Sessions, wonderful Convention, 501.3 Status, Outreach throughout the Districts, Speaker Meetings, Breakfast, Healthy Meetings, adding meetings and successful Alateen Workshops to mention a few. I ask for all members to reach down inside their Program and ask, "What can I do to keep our Program Healthy, to make the newcomer welcome and supported, can I make myself available for Service even by being a Sponsor and working the Steps with someone?"

**2018 Al-Anon International Convention:** Al-Anon International Conventions are a great way to celebrate recovery, meet old friends, and make new ones. An International Convention is where members from Canada, the U.S., and many other countries gather together to speak the same language—the language of the heart.

1. Save the place and date; Baltimore, Maryland (Inner Harbor) on July 5-8th: Celebrating One Day at a Time.
2. Registration started in September 2017. Save a little money and vacation as registration fees are as follows: \$130.00 U.S. if received by December 31, 2017; \$165.00 U.S. if received between January 1 and May 31, 2018; and \$195.00 U.S. June 1 through the event. You can register Online, via surface mail, or fax. If you have registration questions, call 757-563-1600.
3. Special Events:
  - a) Day of Connecting: It is an opportunity to connect with staff members and volunteers from the World Service Office in a variety of Al-Anon workshops and meetings. The "Day of Connecting" is a separate event taking place during the day on Thursday, July 5th, before the Convention starts. Everyone is welcomed and the registration fee is as follows: US \$ 40.00 if received before May 31, 2018 and US \$ 45.00 if received between June 1 and the day of the event.  
Presentations with topics such as:  
Our Worldwide Fellowship: Al-Anon's International Reach  
Telephone Book or the Internet—What's Your Digital Age? Al-Anon on Social Media Know Your WSO—Service IS Its Middle Name! What Happens at the Office  
Al-Anon's Financial Stewardship: Gratitude in Action  
Discussion Meetings:  
Dusty Bookshelves: Falling in Love with All Our CAL: Going Beyond the Daily Readers  
Tag—You're It! NOW WHAT? Becoming the Leaders Others Know You Can Be  
Attitudes – Are Mine Worth Catching? Searching for the Answer in Our Twelve Traditions  
The 3 T's of Public Outreach – Tips, Tools, and Techniques – Successful Public Outreach  
Panels: Are the Twelve Concepts Still Al-Anon's Best Kept Secret? Hear the Secret of Our Service Structure  
Young Members Wanted! Alateen Opportunities: Online meetings, Resources, Sponsorship, Outreach  
Big "P" or little "p" - Big "T" or little "t": What's the difference when making decisions in Al-Anon?  
"Face Time," not what it used to be! The Changing "Face" of Meetings: Online and Phone Groups

There will also be opportunities to listen and learn more about how Al-Anon works through participation in Leadership Talks and Roundtable Discussions. The Day of Connecting will end with a "Meet and Greet" with presenters and participants.

- b) Language of Love Parade: The parade is a celebration of joy and gratitude reflecting our worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups. The parade will take place on Friday evening at the beginning of the Big Meeting. Information regarding the Language of Love Parade will be available in the spring of 2018. Please note that in order to march in the parade, you must sign up to march. Participation is limited and will be based on a first-come, first-served basis.
  - c) Pioneer Luncheon: The Pioneer Luncheon is a special, ticketed-event luncheon to celebrate our history. Everyone who registers for the Convention—whether they have been in the program for one day or for 60 years—is invited to purchase a ticket for the Pioneer Luncheon. When you register for the International Convention, there will be an opportunity to purchase a ticket. Please note that seating is limited. The deadline for purchasing a Pioneer Luncheon ticket is May 31, 2018. No tickets will be sold at the door.
  - d) Al-Anon workshops & Big Meetings: Will be held at the Baltimore Convention Center. Al-Anon workshops, Alateen workshops, and A.A. meetings will be held during the day on Friday and Saturday. The Big Meetings—all International Convention attendees are welcome—will be held on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning.
  - e) Alateens: Alateen will have a variety of daytime workshops on Friday and Saturday that Alateens 12 through 19 wearing Convention badges may attend. Children ages 9 through 11 may also attend Alateen workshops. Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) who are currently certified by their Area will serve as Sponsors for the Alateen workshops. A special identification for the Convention Badge will be given out at the workshops indicating this service position.
4. You can stay connected to "breaking news" related to the 2018 International on the International Convention Web site: [www.alanoninternationalconvention.org](http://www.alanoninternationalconvention.org).

**International:** Al-Anon meetings are held in over 133 countries. There are 17 countries with evolving structures and 34 countries with a national service structure or a General Service Office. Al-Anon General Service Offices and evolving structures are the World Service Office partners in the international community. Each operates as a service entity within their respective country.

Translations of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature are initiated by Al-Anon members living in the country where the language is spoken. 2018 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) will meet October 2018 in Virginia Beach. The purpose of the IAGSM is to share the experience of Al-Anon national services around the world through their Delegates.

Delegates to the IAGSM encourage the growth of a sound service structure while maintaining worldwide unity through the application of our Traditions. Ultimately, this leads to the primary purpose of Al-Anon as a whole — to seek the best way to carry the AlAnon message of recovery to families and friends of alcoholics amidst cultural and language differences.

The International Coordination Committee (ICC) holds the responsibility of planning the IAGSM agenda and bringing forward to the Board the suggested theme. During our July meeting, the Board enthusiastically approved the theme for the 2018 IAGSM:

"Leading by Example: Structures Supporting Structures"

## **History: Trustees**

Before 1960, Lois and the Directors wanted to link the groups to world services through a Conference. The first trial Conference was held in 1961.

With the finalization of the Conference, the Board of Directors was converted to a Board of Trustees and a plan to add regional participation on the Board was developed. The first Regional Trustee selection process began. As the Concepts of Service were developing, the process for the Conference to affirm nominees to fill vacancies on the Board was established.

Although the Board of Trustees is a self-electing Board according to the By-Laws of the Corporation, traditional approval by the entire Conference gives the Board the direction and voice of the fellowship. Today, (15) Elected Members make of the Board of Trustees of the Al-Anon Family Groups Corporation. (7) are Trustees at Large and (8) are Regional Trustees. The Regional areas include; US Southeast, US Northeast, Canada West, US Northeast, US Southwest, US South Central, US North Central and Canada East.

**World Service Office, WSO:** It is with great pleasure that the Board of Trustees, Al-Anon Family Groups, Inc. announces that on September 5th, 2017, Vali F. will begin her tenure as our next Executive Director.

Vali brings with her over 15 years as an active Al-Anon member. She served as a Panel 53 Delegate from Arizona, Area Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. Additional Al-Anon service roles include AIS Chair and Alateen Coordinator.

Vali also brings over 20 years of business experience including management of teams of staff throughout the world. Vali has a keen understanding of the world's ever-changing landscape and how those changes have and will continue to impact the growth and diversity of our fellowship.

Vali fully embraces the continued need to find new ways to reach those whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking. Our current Executive Director, Mary G., has committed to working side-by-side with Vali beginning September 5th through the October Board meeting.

This transition period will ensure that our new Executive Director, our World Service Office (WSO) staff and our fellowship as a whole experience a smooth transition.

As shared in the April 2017 Chairperson of the Board Letter, the Board believes this transition period is supported by the spiritual principles of our program by offering the sharing of our experience, strength and hope. We then let go and allow the new Executive Director the freedom to oversee the World Service Office in her own way as outlined in Concept Eleven.

Al-Anon Family Groups launched a new website recently and we hope you have taken an opportunity to visit this newly-designed website. The entire WSO staff, led by the Digital Strategy Team, has been involved in the redesign of this website. We believe you will find the site fresh and exciting and reflective of our world today, the needs of our fellowship, and those who have yet to find our help and hope. If you have not visited the new site, please take the time to visit and share your enthusiasm with our membership by encouraging a visit.

Please continue to remember the Links of Service before calling WSO directly. Our Groups, Districts and/or State may benefit from the information that our members are asking. All inquiries are sent back to the Delegate (with identifying information removed) for the purposes of learning from the question and answer. Sometimes those answers involve one of our Links to vote in order to move forward with resolution.

**WSO Finance Committee Update:** This is an update from the finance committee to delegates July 24, 2017.

As you will read in the Chairman of the Board July Letter Finance update, Literature Sales are a little over budget at the six-month mark but Contributions are falling a little short of target. The request for help after the Conference in 2016 resulted in a significant increase in Contributions but we did not see that bump this year, which caused the Finance Committee some concern. We were wondering if we, as presenters at the Conference, did not adequately convey to you the ongoing financial needs of AFG Inc.

As you know, we built our 2017 budget based on a projected \$2,100,000 in Contributions. As you remember, the abundance realized in 2016 allowed us to make significant investments in technology. We have brought much of the work in-house, resulting in the near completion of our completely re-worked website, a Conference app, improved Communication applications and hints and promises of great things to be unveiled in the very near future. All these improvements and more are dependent on the message being carried that there is still a great need for support of the operations of the World Service Office. Last year's abundant and unexpected response was a direct result of your effectiveness in carrying that message to the fellowship.

Please also express our gratitude to your Areas. In addition, please also continue to keep them aware of the need that is as great, or perhaps even greater than last year.

The following update is based on the unaudited financial statements for the period ended June 30, 2017: The General Fund recorded a loss of \$10,349 for this period, compared to a gain of \$341,931 this period last year. That represents a net negative of \$352,280 over this period last year.

This is mainly due to full staffing in the office this year, which was not the case last year. It is also reflective of the amazing bump in Contributions this time last year after the World Service Conference.

Revenue from literature sales was slightly above that of 2016, and is tracking ahead of budgeted expectations. The General Fund investment income totaled about \$27,000. We are hopeful that Contributions and Sales increases will allow us to grow the Reserve Fund by not transferring funds from the Reserve Fund to the General Fund.

Income: Literature sales were \$1,899,251 for this period, compared to \$1,845,798 at this time last year, Gross profit on literature sales was \$1,506,554 (81% of sales), compared to \$1,495,171 for 2016.

Contributions are at \$1,015,231 for 2017, compared to \$918,718 last year—an increase of 10.5% but falling a little short of budgeted projections.

Forum subscription income was \$134,767 for 2017, an increase of 13%.

Expenses: Actual operating expenses were \$2,709,426 for the first six months of 2017, compared to \$2,321,645 last year and slightly over budget.

Full staffing, notably in the Digital Strategy Department, is reflected in the increased expenditure over last year.

Reserve Fund: The fair value of investments in the Reserve Fund totaled \$5,585,360 at June 30, 2017, an increase in value of over \$400,000.

Outlook: While Contributions dipped a bit in the month of June, we are hopeful that the abundance demonstrated in 2016 will carry on in 2017. That level of participation, along with some encouraging Literature Sales numbers will allow the World Service Office to continue to support all the members carrying the message of help and hope.

Tradition 7: Every group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

**World Service Conference, WSC:** The 2018 World Service Conference theme; "Al-Anon - There is no standing still!", "Al-Anon - Il n'y a pas de place pour l'immobilisme!" (French) and "Al-Anon - ¡No hay razón para detenerse!" (Spanish). This theme, an excerpt from a statement made by our co-founder Lois W., is both a reminder and a call to action for every member. Al-Anon must continue to grow if it is going to fulfill its primary purpose of reaching millions who need Al-Anon's help but are not yet aware of the existence of our fellowship.

The 2018 World Service Conference will be held in West Harrison, New York, Monday April 16 through Friday April 20th, 2018. The site will allow the opportunity for the full Conference to visit Stepping Stones. The 2017 World Service Conference Summary hard copy can be ordered for \$5.

**Board of Trustees' Big Question:** World Service Conference Summary page 26 & 27.

**2018 Planning:** Soon it will be time to start planning for next year, please consider working with your District to come up with a plan, goals or a strategy for next year. Consider Finances and a Budget to match that plan. Consider a campaign for the International, fun events as well as Speaker Events. Think about the Election next year and ways to encourage Service by allowing everyone to have fun while doing some very important healthy things. Please talk about outreach and encourage everyone to use our Website and give good constructive feedback on how to make it better but more importantly ideas to reach those who come onto it looking for help.

**Reflections:**

**Yours in Service,  
Duane Faircloth  
Virginia Delegate, Panel 56**

**New York Times Article:** Codependent No More ... Yet Wanting Back In  
CHRISTOPH NIEMANN, JULY 20, 2017, Social Q's, By PHILIP GALANES

*I was very close with a couple for 12 years. I considered them family. Sadly, the husband drank to excess daily. He then became verbally abusive to his wife and dismissed his family's concerns. So the wife asked me to intervene. I wrote him a letter about how his drinking was affecting his relationships. He acknowledged it but continued to drink. I withdrew; I couldn't tolerate the abuse of his wife. This was a few years ago. I still send them emails. The wife replies; the husband doesn't. But I miss their friendship greatly. Is there a way to resurrect it? MARC*

*Not a pretty picture, but a pretty common one: Family and close friends catering to an alcoholic every way but productively. Here, the wife casts around for heroes to save her. And though I'm sure you meant well, Marc, you were just grandiose enough to take the bait, as if Superman could add a superpower: able to crack addictions with a single first-class stamp. This is how codependence thrives, not recovery.*

*Check out Al-Anon, a worldwide group for the family and friends of alcoholics. I once heard a member boil it down like so: "I didn't cause my mother's drinking problem; I can't control it; and I can't cure it." But by focusing on our own behavior and feelings — instead of the alcoholic's, for a change — we may find a healthy path forward.*

*Just walking into an Al-Anon meeting helps break down the secrecy and shame that so often surround addiction. You are not alone. Invite the wife to go with you. Rewriting your tired-out roles in this family drama is the only way I know to resurrect the friendship. You may not change the alcoholic, but you can certainly improve the way you deal with him.*

**New York Times Article:** Lois Burnham Wilson, a Founder Of Al-Anon Groups, Is Dead at 97

By ERIC PACE Published: October 6, 1988

*Lois Burnham Wilson, a founder of the Al-Anon Family Groups, whose members are relatives and friends of alcoholics, died yesterday at Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, N.Y. Mrs. Wilson, widely known as Lois W., was 97 years old and was a longtime resident of Bedford Hills, N.Y.*

*As Lois W., she was revered as "the first lady of Al-Anon," and as a living reminder of the beginnings five decades ago of the Alcoholics Anonymous self-help movement.*

*Al-Anon members help one another and themselves to deal with personal problems by speaking about them - "sharing their experience, strength and hope," as they like to say - at group meetings. They also help each other on a one-to-one basis, and they read the movement's many inspirational pamphlets and books. Thousands of Groups Formed An executive on the staff of the Al-Anon Family Group headquarters in Manhattan, where Mrs. Wilson's death was announced yesterday, said 30,000 groups - including several thousand Alateen groups for the teen-age children of alcoholics - are in operation.*

*The executive, who in accordance with Al-Anon policy declined to give her name, said more than 20,000 of the groups were in the United States and Canada, with groups in about 100 other nations. She estimated worldwide membership of Al-Anon at about 500,000.*

*In the 1930's, Mrs. Wilson - a spirited, small woman with lively brown eyes - stuck by her alcoholic husband, William G. Wilson, who had become a self-described "hanger-on in Wall Street." She hoped he would manage to stop drinking for good.*

*Mr. Wilson did, and in 1935 he became a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous. One of its groups flourished in the Wilsons' home, then an apartment at 182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn. Since those early days, Alcoholics Anonymous has grown to an international membership of more than 1.5 million. Known within that organization as Bill W., Mr. Wilson died in 1971. A Time of Discontent*

*After Alcoholics Anonymous was founded, Mrs. Wilson became discontented. "It seemed I saw nothing of the man I had tried to help," she later recalled.*

*"He was always with his A.A. cronies" who helped him to resist alcohol, she said, adding that "I guess I was jealous and resentful that these strangers had done for him what I could not do."*

*A turning point for her came one day when, as she said, "I threw my shoe at him as hard as I could."*

*"I was so ashamed of myself," she said, "that I went out and walked around the block several times. I soon had to admit that I needed some therapy myself."*

*Mrs. Wilson, who was not an alcoholic, began applying to herself the same self-help principles that her husband and his Alcoholics Anonymous friends were using.*

*"I shared my experience with other relatives of alcoholics, and we began to hold informal meetings," she said. "We did not discuss our alcoholic relatives, but tried to straighten out our own lives. This attitude became basic to Al-Anon."*

*Two Separate Organizations*

*Though Al-Anon is in many ways patterned on Alcoholics Anonymous, the two organizations are organizationally separate. Both groups are self-supporting; they do not accept funds from nonmembers. Members of both groups are supposed to maintain anonymity in the news media - which is why Mrs. Wilson and her husband were widely known only by their first names.*

*Mrs. Wilson was said never to have voiced blanket condemnation of the drinking of alcoholic beverages, affirming that she opposed "only the disease of alcoholism and the damage it does to a family."*

*She was born in Brooklyn, the daughter of a physician. She graduated from the Packer Collegiate Institute in Brooklyn, worked in a Y.W.C.A. and taught school in Short Hills, N.J., before her marriage to Mr. Wilson in 1918. After her marriage she worked for a time as an occupational therapist, wrote magazine articles and worked as a Macy's sales clerk.*

*After Mrs. Wilson and other alcoholics' relatives began their meetings, similar self-help discussion groups for members of alcoholics' families were founded elsewhere in the United States during the 1940's. In 1951, Mrs. Wilson, along with a friend and Westchester County neighbor, Anne B., set up a central information center for these groups. The center was initially in her Westchester home. First Alateen Group*

*Not long afterward, the center moved into offices in Manhattan, and the movement took the name Al-Anon Family Groups. In 1957, the first Alateen self-help group was set up, in California, for young people with alcoholism in their families.*

*Mrs. Wilson remained active and prominent in Al-Anon into the 1980's, traveling on its behalf and appearing at and addressing Al-Anon gatherings. At the first international convention of Al-Anon, in 1985 in Montreal, an audience of 45,000 -members of Alcoholics Anonymous as well as Al-Anon - gave her a standing ovation.*

*Mrs. Wilson wrote an autobiography, "Lois Remembers," first published in 1979.*