

Delegate June 20, 2020 Report

When I look back on my previous reports, I am reminded that change is always occurring. Reality changes from moment to moment. Time and life do not stand still. We are in a “New Normal” that may continue for longer than most of us would like. However, surrendering to the situation - accepting this even when it is certainly not my first choice- is deepening my understanding of our spiritual principles, and how I can practice those in my daily life. Crises can and do offer opportunities for change. (p139, CTC). In *Opening our Hearts/Transforming our Losses* (B-29, p51), “... we find that we have loosened our grip on the dreams we once held so tightly. Before long we are building new dreams.”

The World Service Conference (WSC) theme this year was “*Dreaming Big with 2020/Vision.*” “... this can’t be the vision of one person, one meeting, one Area, the WSC or the WSO. It takes all of us to face the challenges ahead with 20/20 vision.” Karen W-P (At-Large Executive Committee member), p.20, June 2020 *Forum*

I trust that by now - thanks to the pandemic - you have found access to the WORLD SERVICE OFFICE (WSO) site (www.al-anon.org) that has a wealth of information including the Members link that contains the latest information from the Board of Trustees, as well as all the World Service Conference (WSC) Summaries from the first in 1961. To help all understand the various positions at the WSO, there will once again be a WSO Organization Chart in the 2020 WSC Summary. The 2020 WSC summary will be posted after it has been translated into French and Spanish later this year.

It sometimes takes me a while to realize that not all of us are familiar with or attach significance to what our service structure is, what the various acronyms stand for, or even what the World Service Conference (WSC) is. I refer you to the pages 68 and 160-164 in P24/27 the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2018-2021 version 2* - which is always available with the latest updates online at the WSO website - www.al-anon.org/members

In short, the WSC is the largest gathering of Al-Anon members to discuss how well we are carrying out our **Mission:** *Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. is a spiritually based organization that helps the families and friends of alcoholics connect and support each other through meetings, information, and shared experiences.* Our **Core Purpose** is *Helping families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives.* <https://al-anon.org/for-members/board-of-trustees/core-purpose-mission-strategic-goals/>

This year our 2020 World Service Conference (WSC) had 92 voting members: 67 Delegates, 7 Trustees-At-Large (TAL), 7 Regional Trustees, 1 Sustaining Trustee (our Executive Director), 7 other WSO Staff, and 3 Members-At-Large for the Executive Board. The 2020 WSC Theme “*Dreaming Big with 2020/Vision*” was derived from a combination of suggestions made by 2019 Conference members. Little did we suspect that our 2019 Mega-Issue of what a Hybrid WSC could look like would be realized without a trial period! *Dreaming Big* meant that the Conference Leadership Team’s 11 months of preparation could be condensed into one month! The 2020 annual business meeting of Al-Anon Family Groups was held in virtual and hybrid formats for the very first time in 60 years. While most of us greatly missed the fellowship of a face-to-face meeting, and while there was postponement until the 2021 WSC of some Agenda items, overall, it was a success. It was putting “presuming good will” into action each day as the glitches that occurred were quickly addressed.

The two components of the 2020 WSC were:

- A virtual segment was held over two half-days on Tuesday, April 21 and Wednesday, April 22. Conference members participated via web conferencing in the Conference proceedings. This was when we voted on the necessary business motions and gave traditional approval of candidates for Trustee and the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM).
- A Hybrid WSC (HWSC) was held Monday, April 20 through Friday, April 24. This segment consisted of usually two topics at a time posted and opened for discussion on a new AFGConnects. The hybrid platform offered all Conference members the opportunity to collaborate through responses posted to each topic during selected 24-hour time periods. We did “2 minutes at the mike with no repeats” as one-time responses limited to 300 words or less in this new 2020 WSC AFGConnects Community.

Delegates are still having discussions, asking and getting answers to questions. You will be able to find and read the complete work of the Conference in the 2020 WSC Summary that will be posted on www.al-anon.org and available for purchase in all three languages this summer.

The overall impression for me of the 2020 WSC and what to present to you comes from a deeper understanding of how Step 12 (gratitude in action), Tradition 7 (self-supporting in all aspects of life) and Concept 1 (responsibility and accountability) relate to each other as each of us do our best to carry the message of Help and Hope to those who have been affected by another's alcoholism.

I am going to limit my report to a brief summary of finances along with sharing thoughts from presentations by the Thought & Task Forces and the Chosen Agenda Items.

First will be my summary of my 2020 WSC experience of "the latest" financial information. While we may all have concerns and questions related to the financial state of Al-Anon both in our home groups, districts, Ohio AFG, Inc. and at the AFG Headquarters, Inc., transparency will be maintained with reports from our various treasurers and through Announcements on the AFGConnects and *In the Loop*.

Budget/Financials 2019

- We once again received the highest possible review by the Auditors for WSO finances
- Literatures sales were greater than budgeted amounts. Top selling literature was once again HAW, CTC, ODAT and HFT.
- Though slightly down from 2018, contributions were still high and greater than the amount budgeted. Note: This was because of several large bequests which cannot be budgeted for.
- In 2019, the average cost of services per groups was \$304.39
- 65% of US/Canada groups contributed average of \$153
- Ohio's contributions were greater than last year with almost 63% of the groups contributing an average of \$110.91

Budget/Financials 2020

- The preliminary budget for 2020 was presented and approved by the WSC. This was once again a deficit budget that had been prepared taking into account historical sales and contributions and at the time.
- Though we were all aware that COVID 19 would and had affected our revenues, the proposed 2020 budget had been prepared and approved by the Finance Committee and Board of Trustees. By the time of the 2020 WSC, steps had already been taken to decrease costs with some retirements, furloughs, canceled travel etc. The Finance Committee will be presenting a revised budget to the board at the quarterly meeting in July 2020.
- Al-Anon's operating funds come from three main funding sources: revenues from literature sales, contributions, and other revenue. More than 67% of total expenses go directly towards achieving the Mission of Al-Anon Family Groups. The supporting services included in general and administrative expenses provide customer service support, shipping, and financial support to maintain operations.
- On the 2nd page of every quarterly appeal letter, there is a listing of all the services that the World Service OFFICE (WSO) – our clearing house – provides to our Fellowship.

Any member/group or district that wishes to see more detail, I will be happy to email more details and answer questions to the best of my ability. Email is always delegate@ohioal-anon.org.

I observed that an overarching theme and topic in our discussions was ***how to include ALL members in our service structure***. This came up in all the reports and presentations whether it was in the Electronic Meeting Work Group (EMWG) Report; the 2 Thought Forces: Fear of Change and Identifying New Ways to Look at

Service; the Task Force on Reaching & Unifying Rural & Large Geographic Populations; the International Coordination Committee Report; and the two Chosen Agenda Items: How is Al-Anon going to reach new members in the 21st century and the millennial generation?, and How do you see Al-Anon becoming a global organization with barrier-free access?

The introductory comments on page 9 in *P24/27 (2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual, version two)* states, "Al-Anon is a unique fellowship that unites members of different backgrounds, races, and walks of life in an inspiring endeavor: helping themselves and others to lead purposeful, useful lives by overcoming the frustration and helplessness caused by close association with an alcoholic."

WSO is continuing to increase its ability to get all material translated into our three languages. We refer to Al-Anon Family Groups as a worldwide fellowship. However, 40% of Al-Anon members do not reside in our WSC structure (the US, Canada, Bermuda, and Puerto Rico). This is even before considering the Electronic Meetings (EM), which also do not have a direct vote at the WSC. The Trustees are hard at work looking at these issues, have asked, and will continue to seek input from EM members and other General Service Offices (see International Al-Anon pages in *P24/27*). You can read more about this in the International Coordination Committee (ICC) and EMWG (Electronic Meeting Work Group) reports that are in the WSC summaries and updates in the quarterly reports from the Board of Trustees (BOT) on the website.

The number of registered electronic meetings as of December 31, 2019 was 236. As of February 25, 2020, worldwide there were 296 meetings of which 180 are phone meetings and 116 are online meetings - 215 English; 42 Spanish; 20 Russian; 5 French; 3 German and Polish; 2 Italian and Greek; and 1 Danish, Farsi, Icelandic, and Portuguese speaking meetings. The numbers continue to increase. There are seven continents worldwide - Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America and South America - and electronic meetings are occurring in them all.

In this time of covid-19, some questions for all of us to consider.

- Do you see Al-Anon becoming a global organization with barrier-free access?
- Are members and potential members from regions outside the WSC coming to electronic meetings you attend?
- Are your face-to-face meetings recommending electronic meetings?
- Are your groups recommending these meetings to the people they sponsor?
- Do your members know where to find electronic meeting information?
- Are your AIS's giving out information about electronic meetings on the WSO or local meetings only?
- Do you think your home meeting will become a hybrid meeting – including an electronic component (Zoom, Skype, FaceTime or other)?

I believe we have a talented and committed fellowship that will find answers using the principles in our 36 Legacies and that are in keeping with our Core Purpose, Our Mission and our Core Values. <https://al-anon.org/for-members/board-of-trustees/core-purpose-mission-strategic-goals/>

One final note, each Delegate gets the choice of serving on a task force, thought force or committee. I have continued to be on the Literature Committee all three of my years. This year we are working on the New Daily Reader and hope to have it well on its way to be ready in all three languages by the 2023 International Al-Anon Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve as your Delegate.

Theresa M, Panel 58, Ohio

June 20, 2020

World Service Conference, April 2020: Delegate's Summary Report

1. Basic facts about the World Service Conference (WSC):

- a. **Who attended?** 92 voting members: 64 Delegates (including Canada & Puerto Rico), Executive Director of the World Service Office (WSO), Board of Trustees, WSO Executive Committee, WSO Staff. 103 total in attendance, including non-voting WSO Staff, Interpreter, Recorders.
- b. **Schedule?** Virtual Conference: two, 4-hour days using “Webex” platform; Hybrid Conference: 6+ days (prior to Conference, during & after) of reviewing documents online with emailing comments/questions regarding several of the documents. Total of 45 documents sent to WSC members, and over 400 emails on topics and overall WSC communication.
- c. **Voting?** “Voxvote” website used for confidential voting. Multiple trainings with Webex and Voxvote were provided for WSC members.
- d. Policy discussions and Conference Approved Literature (CAL) discussions were postponed due to time constraints.

2. WSO Financials:

- a. Highlights of 2019 World Service Office (WSO) Independent Audit:
 - Four Auditors; high-level review with “unmodified opinion”
 - Total assets increased: contributions (especially bequests) & investment income exceeded budget; WSO didn't need to transfer money from reserve fund in 2019.
 - Strong year for Literature sales; top selling is still *How Al-Anon Works* ((B- 32) and *Courage to Change* (B-17). E-books are a very small portion of literature sales (1%), and doesn't negatively impact our literature sales.
 - General Administrative Services: expenses decreased (down 17%)
 - Program Services: expenses increased by 11% for activities to fulfill purpose, such as Public Outreach, AFG Records, International Services, Group Services, Literature, Conference, Digital Strategy-Technology, innovation.
 - Literature sales & Contributions alone won't support WSO's work. Sources of revenue: Contributions= 40%; Literature= 54%. They usually need to tap into Reserve Fund-- which can provide annual transfer to General Fund up to 4%.
 - Reserve Fund: 8 months operating expenses, aiming for 12 months.
 - There are over 14,000 Al-Anon groups; **WSO expenses per group: \$304.**
- b. Budget for 2020:
 - Finance Committee began creating 2020 budget in Fall of 2019.
 - Budget projection to “actual” is reviewed every month, and analyzed to explain variances. Frequent conversations between Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees (BOT) regarding how to reduce expenses.
 - Budget is revised/updated in July, which is reflected in the July WSO Chairperson of the Board Letter.
 - The 2020 Budget given at WSC predicted a deficit budget of over \$129k.
 - The WSO Finance Committee reevaluated the significant decrease in literature sales and contributions due to the impact of COVID-19. They are now projecting a \$1,600,000 operating deficit at the end of 2020.
 - Because of the significant changes between the Budget and actual, the WSO has eliminated Staff travel and implemented Staff furloughs and layoffs.

3. WSO 2019 Annual Report.

- 2019, first-time release of 2018 WSO Annual Report in English, Spanish and French.
- Processed 92 requests to translate or reprint CAL, and 52 were requests for Italian, Turkish, Slovenian, Finnish and Icelandic.
- Added Members' Blog on al-anon.org.
- Growth in electronic meeting registrations, 60 new since Dec.2019 -116 online & 180 phone; held in a variety of languages and displayed on al-anon.org.
- Electronic meetings now have Current Mailing Address (CMA) members incorporated into AFG Connects Electronic Meetings community. They also had 8 web conferences with online/phone CMAs and WSO Group Services Staff.
- Multiple Areas challenged with Alateen Recertification. Difficulties: not having certified Al-Anon Members Involved with Alateen Service (AMIAS) attached to Alateen groups; lack of updating to reflect changes. Nine Areas do not have an Area Alateen Coordinator. **Note: Our SCWS Alateen Coordinators are on top of our Recertification processes!**
- *Alateen Service e-Manual* posted on al-anon.org: reviewed/revised; *Alateen Newcomer Packet* (K-18) available in new format/3 languages.
- New Daily Reader (working title): Literature Committee is reviewing 50 sharings pre month, starting May, 2020. Plan is to have book written, approved, translated, designed and printed by **July 2023** for the **Al-Anon International Convention in Albuquerque, New Mexico**.
- Developed automated email "Electronic Newcomer Kit", which contains short narratives from CAL and al-anon.org links helpful to new members.
- Al-Anon in Other Countries: organized under a General Service Office (GSO). The WSO International Team provides guidance to 37 GSOs, 12 Service Boards and has meeting contacts in 70 other countries. New in 2019: first meetings registered in Mongolia and Mozambique.
- *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism (AFA)* is now offered for sale year-round.

4. Other business conducted at the WSC:

- a. WSC voting members approved the 2019 Audit, 2020 Budget, and 2019 Annual Report.
- b. The WSC affirmed the new Trustees, both "Regional" and "At Large". The new Trustee for the Southwest Region is Cindy M. from Arizona, who serves a 3-year term.
- c. Thought Force: Identify Ways to Look at Service in Relation to Roles, Terms and Possible Roadblocks.
- d. Thought Force: Fear of Change
- e. Task Force: Reaching and Unifying Rural and Large Geographic Populations
- f. Chosen Agenda Item (CAI): Our Envisioned Future sees Al-Anon being a global organization with barrier-free access to the program. How do you see this manifesting?

5. What's up-and-coming at WSO?

- a. Mobile Al-Anon App in 3 languages will be launched soon.
- b. Hiring free-lance translators to supplement the translators on staff (1 French & 1 Spanish) to catch up with literature translation.
- c. Will be adding capabilities of directly ordering Spanish & French literature on the WSO website late summer.