Delegate's Report from May 2018 Assembly

First, I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to represent you as your Southern California Area Delegate to the World Service Conference held in West Harrison, New York, April 16-20, 2018. This was an incredible experience for me and I'm extremely grateful that I could attend. Your love and support before, during, and after this intense week meant everything to me. Thank you! I'm going to take the PowerPoint information that I presented at the Assembly, as well as additional material I received at the Conference, and attempt to condense it into this report.

Before I gave my primary World Service Conference (WSC) report at the Assembly, I created a condensed PowerPoint presentation that highlighted my experiences while visiting Stepping Stones, the Historic home of Bill and Lois Wilson. The A.A. tour guides were extremely well-informed and entertaining. You could hear the love they had for Bill and Lois and the A.A./Al-Anon program! The privilege of visiting Stepping Stones with my fellow WSC members will be one that I fondly remember and cherish forever! If you are interested in learning more about Stepping Stones, there are great descriptions in Chapter 13 of *Lois Remembers* (B-7). There are also more details and pictures, as well as the ability to hear recordings of Lois and Bill speaking found at the Stepping Stones website (steppingstones.org). (My Assembly PDF presentation is on our SCWS website, scws-al-anon.org.)

The first World Service Conference (WSC) was held in April, 1961 in New York City to coincide with the A.A. Conference. It is Al-Anon's largest group conscience, providing guidance to Al-Anon's Board of Trustees and the World Service Office (WSO). The WSC includes Delegates, Board of Trustees, Executive Committee members and some WSO staff members. This year International Representatives from Denmark and Mexico attended as observers. There were 92 voting members at this year's Conference.

The World Service Delegates are the primary communication link between the Al-Anon/Alateen groups in their Area and the WSO. They bring the perspectives of the Al-Anon/Alateen members in their Area to the WSC, and return with current information about WSO financial and policy reports, new/proposed Conference Approved Literature (CAL), implementation of new technology, Committee/Work Group/Thought or Task Force updates/recommendations and much more.

The new Panel 58 Delegates were given special orientation time together the first morning. Some of the feelings expressed by us were: "What am I doing here? I'm not good enough to be here!," "I might embarrass myself by saying something stupid!," "I'm worried I'll forget everything I know about Al-Anon," "I'm not ready for this position." During the Orientation we had a great discussion about the differences between *Al-Anon Family Groups- The Fellowship, and Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.-The Organization*. (The PDF copy given out at the May Assembly is on our SCWS website.) We discussed the different perspective each of the members bring while attending the WSC. It was fun to share information regarding our own Areas and how Areas conduct their Assemblies. One example: some Areas have 2-3 days for their Assembly, 2-3 times/year, and use this extra time for speakers, workshops, sharing a meal and more thorough new GR /DR orientations.

During the Conference the WSO Board of Trustees shared with us the *"De Bono's Six Thinking Hats"* approach while we discussed issues relating to translation of Conference Approved Literature. This strategy was introduced as another method to facilitate discussion, to work with KBDM, but not meant to replace KBDM. (The *De Bono's Six Thinking Hats* PDF and the script for the fun skit are on our SCWS website.)

This was the first year that first-time Delegates could submit a **Chosen Agenda Item (CAI)** topic. The purpose of the CAIs is to give Conference members an opportunity to select ideas and issues of concern that affect Al-Anon groups and members worldwide. We were asked to consider: Does the topic merit an in-depth discussion that could benefit Al-Anon groups and members worldwide? Is the topic somehow related to the 2018 Conference theme? "Al-Anon—There Is No Standing Still". Topics were submitted, compiled, fact-checked and combined with similar topics. There were 16 CAIs and the Conference members voted for their top five. Some of the CAIs were discussed in small breakout groups, and warranted full Conference discussion. The topics were right on target for our Area and our members. Below are a few of the comments/ideas generated by Conference members for each topic.

CAI #1: Service Beyond the Group Level: Help younger Al-Anon members step into more Service; Connect DRS thru web meetings to provide more training, share information, brain-storming sessions; Service is attraction, we can demonstrate enthusiasm, be Service Sponsors, share service positions.; Have more discussions of the *Links of Service* (S-18) because

members may not be aware of what's happening beyond their group.; Do an individual inventory on service for a group activity (such as the *Service Journey Worksheet* we did in our area).

CAI #2: Public Awareness: Our membership is aging. We need to attract younger members.; Connect with health fairs and health-related professionals.; Connect with emergency personnel. Provide Al-Anon "referral forms," easy to grab District/Area Al-Anon business cards, outreach bookmarks.

CAI #3: Our Primary Purpose & Group Autonomy: A healthy Group centers on education. Open discussion, "reason things out" at District meetings. GRs bring Group's successes and concerns to District meetings; Autonomy can be misused, it shouldn't compromise our Principles; Let's not act out of fear, but act from our Principles; Encourage Group Inventories and empower Group members to speak up.

CAI #9: Reaching out to Groups in Rural America: Establish a "link" with the CMA & /or GR of rural meetings, especially if there is District Representative; Area members personally connect to these meetings and make sure the Group Records are accurate; Use technology, conference calls, "GoToMeeting" to provide info and have "Virtual meetings"; Develop pamphlet that addresses Rural Meeting issues and add a feature sharing in the Forum about Rural meetings and Virtual meetings.

CAI #11: A.A. Members and Their Role in Al-Anon Service: Education is the key. We have literatures that speaks to this issue. *The Al-Anon Focus (P-45), Al-Anon Spoken Here (P-53), Cooperation Between Al-Anon and A.A. (G-3)* and our *2018-2021 Service Manual (pg. 86);* We are all guardians of the legacies. We don't need to search for problems, but deal with them as they arise. Avoid controversy by approaching on a one-to-one basis; At the Group level, make sure it's clear what positions Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. can hold in the Group, and outside of the Group as an AMIAS; Bill Wilson spoke of problems that can arise by having A.A. members involved in Al-Anon service beyond the Group level. (*Many Voices, pg. 184-185*).

Being a Trustee
There were several short presentations throughout the World Service Conference that provided enlightening information about *Being a Trustee*, such as, "The Resume Form/Interview Process," "Trustee Travel," "Mentorship/Roommates," "Time Management" and "Having Different Roles—Including Legal Authority and Accountability." (For more details, please see the *2018 World Service Conference Summary* that will be posted on the WSO website.) *(NOTE:* This information was not presented during the May Assembly due to time constraints. Our Area hosted the *Together Empowering Al-Anon/Alateen Members* (TEAM) event in Sept. 2016 at which information about what Trustees do and how Trustees are elected and appointed was presented.)

WSO Thought Force/Task Force/Work Group/Committee/Workshop Presentations:
One of my favorite presentations was *Celebrating our Differences and Our Common Purposes*.
This was first presented at the 2016 World Service Conference and was titled "*Acceptance of Communities, Cultures and Beliefs".* As a result of these presentations, Conference members requested additional ways to identify the spiritual principles that can be applied when looking at how our own biases limit our ability to accept and welcome all potential and current members, families and friends of alcoholics. This year the presentation included a fun skit, a PowerPoint presentation, and an Inventory exercise called "Facing our Biases." (PDF Copy is on SCWS website). The "Inventory" was especially eye-opening to many of us!

Reserve Fund Workshop: The World Service Office (WSO) has received questions from members related to the establishment, use, balance and investing of Area reserve funds. Even with existing resources *(Reserve Fund Guideline, G-41, 2018-2021 Service Manual, P-24/27, the Legacies*) questions remain about an appropriate amount, use and management of finances. There are also concerns about whether an Area's reserve fund is keeping with the spiritual principles found in the legacies. "Reserve Fund" was defined as any funds equal to six-months-to-a-year's operating expenses, such as maintaining a significant minimum checking balance, "seed money", line item allocations in the budget, etc. During the workshop we discussed the purpose of a Reserve Fund (Current *Service Manual*, p. 214), then followed up with questions: 1. In what ways is our money essentially held in reserve? 2. When does a Reserve Fund become excessive? 3. Why is having an ample Reserve Fund considered a prudent financial principle? 4. Why was our Area Reserve Fund established? 5. What is/are the Area's current goals for the Reserve Fund? 6. How have Area Reserve Funds been utilized in the past? 7. How can we approach our Area's financial needs from a spiritual basis, stepping away from fear, practicing prudence, gratitude, generosity, etc.? Although the *Reserve Fund Workshop* was designed for Areas, we can easily substitute the words "District" or "Group" to make the discussion more relevant for ourselves.

Virtual Meetings Thought Force: This was an extremely informative presentation covering many types of "Virtual Meetings." Electronic meetings are not in competition with face-to-face meetings, they can supplement them. Al-Anon electronic meetings use different online platforms: discussion boards, email, chat, phone and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), such

as Skype. Each meeting is autonomous in its style, format, and "entry procedures" (methods for accessing and joining the meeting). Like all Al-Anon meetings, participants agree to abide by the spirit of the Twelve Traditions. Meetings focus on Al-Anon-related topics, and participants are required to maintain their personal anonymity. Pictures of Al-Anon members and other personally identifying information are not posted in the meetings. Some participants may have email addresses specifically for the online Al-Anon meeting whereas some members use pseudonyms. Each meeting may have its own entry procedures. Some online meetings have an email contact where a "greeter" will provide the newcomer with specific directions to access the meeting. Meetings that don't list a specific meeting time are held 24/7. In 2001, the WSO started registering online meetings, and in 2007, added phone and other electronic meetings. Electronic meetings offered Al-Anon members a means of connecting and sharing the Al-Anon program regardless of location. By 2018 there were over 25,000 groups in 133 countries and 107 electronic (digital, social media and phone) meetings.

To find electronic/virtual (EVM) meetings—go to the Al-Anon website, under the "Find a Meeting" tab/Virtual Meetings. The internet and other electronic telecommunications media are tools for carrying and sharing our Al-Anon program of hope and recovery around the world. These electronic meetings occur globally as well as locally without geographic restrictions. Consequently, electronic meetings don't have a Group Representative and are not a part of any structure. They do, however, have a meeting contact. When electronic meetings form, they register with the World Service Office (WSO) in order to use the Al-Anon name. Upon registration, they receive support from and have their voices heard and represented through the WSO. Registered meetings may request a license from the WSO to use in text format the Steps, Traditions, Concepts of Service, Suggested Welcome, Suggested Closing and excerpts from Conference Approved Literature (CAL). The Virtual Meetings Thought Force presented other information comparing Virtual meetings to face-to-face meetings, noting how they are the same and different, their advantages and disadvantages, and more questions to investigate in the future. This was just a beginning to the discussion. *(NOTE:* This information was not presented during the May Assembly due to time constraints.

Literature Committee Discussion—*"Just for Tonight" Bookmark*: During August and September of 2016, the World Service Office (WSO) received three written requests (as well as several phone calls) suggesting the WSO produce a new bookmark using the "Just for Tonight " article from the August 2016 issue of The *Forum.* Each member making the request described the article as very powerful, and that it could be a wonderful companion piece to the *Just For Today* bookmark (M-12). The WSO Literature Committee agreed that further discussion was needed and completed the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions on this topic. They presented their findings to the WSC. We all had a chance to participate in the WSC discussion to share our opinions, pro and con. The biggest hurdle was in understanding that we were approving the "concept" whereas the exact type of CAL (bookmark, wallet card…) and the specific wording would be up to the Literature Committee. A Motion followed, "That the 2018 World Service Conference give conceptual approval to develop a bookmark based on an August 2016 *Forum* article titled "Just for Tonight" using inclusive language. (The motion carried!)

New Conference Approved Literature (CAL):
Conference Approved Literature (CAL) are books, pamphlets and service tools conceptually approved by the World Service Conference (WSC) and written by and for Al-Anon and Alateen members. Once developed, this material undergoes a rigorous process of review established by the WSC to assure it is identifiably Al-Anon in content and feeling, and consistently reflects Al-Anon's principles. CAL is identifiable by the CAL seal. (*2018-2021 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, pg. 76) There were three new pieces of CAL shared with the World Service Conference. *Hope & Understanding for Parents & Grandparents* (P-94) is available in English, Spanish and French. *Intimacy in Alcoholic Relationships: A Collection of Al-Anon Personal Stories* (B-33) will be introduced in English at the Al-Anon International Convention in July for $11.00 each. French and Spanish translations are expected to be ready for shipping by February 2019. *Fiftieth Anniversary Edition of One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6-50) will be available at the International Convention in July in English, French and Spanish for $15.00 each. This limited edition is in celebration of this classic book's 50 years. The text of the book remains the same in this special souvenir edition that has a special anniversary cover, ribbon and commemorative bookplate. Any books remaining after the Convention will be sold while supplies last.

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRMP):
In 1994, the World Service Conference passed Motion #12, which allowed the Board of Trustees to purchase property for Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. This purchase of real property was for a trial period of fifteen years and contingent on several conditions. In 2011 the World Service Conference passed Motion #6, which ended the fifteen-year trial period and authorized the Board of Trustees to continue to own the current or subsequent property in the name of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The ownership of property is contingent on conditions enumerated in Motion #6. One condition set

forth in the 1994 Motion #12 and the 2011 Motion #6 was that the Board of Trustees "establish a separate Executive Committee for Real Property Management in order to ensure that the management of the real property be done in a prudent manner and not interfere with the day-to-day operations of the spiritual parts of the program, i.e., service to the groups, individuals, or Al-Anon as a whole." To fulfill that condition, a motion to create the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) was approved by the WSC in 1995. The Bylaws were amended in January 2012 to include the Executive Committee for Real Property Management and the Amendment was presented to the 2012 Conference. The separate Executive Committee was preferred for its simplicity and the fact that it would eliminate the need to file additional forms annually with the Internal Revenue Service. This Committee was established to oversee the management of real property in order to separate property maintenance and management from the day-to-day operation of the Al-Anon fellowship. The Committee consists of three at-large Al-Anon members, the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, and the Director of Business Services. The Committee first met June 15, 1996 and has met twice a year since then. The 2018 ECRPM Chairperson reported "that ownership of property has been a very good step financially. A savings of approximately $446,000 this year has been realized by owning property vs. leasing it in Virginia." "After reviewing the last 18 years of real property ownership, the Board of Trustees has no negative impact to report." "The ECRPM is a Committee separate from all other committees. It operates separately from the work and business of the World Service Office, allowing the WSO to focus on the primary spiritual aim of the fellowship." *(NOTE:* This information was not presented during the May Assembly due to time constraints.)

World Service Office 2017 Annual Audit:
The Audit was conducted by Dixon Huges Goodman, LLP Audit Firm from January 22-26, 2018. When I looked at the Audit report, I was reminded that Al-Anon Family Groups Headquarters Inc. is a very large Non-Profit Corporation. This is what I call the "business end" of our Fellowship. In my mind I thought of a large organization such as the Boy Scouts of America. (I took a glance on line at their audit reports, etc. and there are many similarities.) The complete 2017 WSO Audit report is very long and complicated. Following is some of the information from the Audit report that I shared at our Assembly.
 Revenue: The 2017 contributions reflected our second highest year of contributions. Literature sales reflected an increase of $186,192 from 2016. *Expenses:* Actual operating expenses were $5,276,835 for the year compared to $5,143,217 in 2016 and slightly over budget. There were no surprises in any of the expense categories. Intense scrutiny of the expenditures throughout the year ensured that we would end the year close to budget. *Outlook:* Although we fell short of our budgeted amount for contributions, literature sales were unexpectedly strong and allowed us to end with a relatively small deficit. *Contributions from California South to WSO*: The total contribution from Groups was $114,612 ($13,000 less than 2016). "Other Contributions" refer to individuals, AISs, and Area meetings. Total for "other" was $102,831 ($5,300 more than 2016) **By the way, the average amount that WSO spends on each Al-Anon group is $283 per group per year.**

Some Al-Anon/Alateen members are very interested in reading Al-Anon's WSO finances in detail. AFG Financial information can be found on the website at al-anon.org. by navigating to Members/WSO/Financial Information. In the U.S. our WSO is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit corporation. In Canada it is a 149 (1) registered charity. The 990 tax form is a long form for U.S. non-profits. If you like reading pages of detailed tax returns, this is the place to look! It includes the salary and benefit information for some of the Directors at AFG, Inc. Typically the last two years' Audits are posted on the website. Currently the Audit Reports from 2014 and 2015 and 2016 are posted. 2017 will be posted soon.

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, INC. 2018 Operating Budget:
 The 2018 Budget is the financial plan for AFG Inc. which has been approved by the Board of Trustees. One of the Conference presenters said, "Budgets are a good guess". They take a look at their Revenue and Expenses from the previous year and try to predict what might be happening this year. The 2018 Expenses are predicted to increase by approximately 5%. This is partly due to WSO being fully staffed, holding the World Service Conference in New York this year, moving forward with technology, adding an additional Public Service Announcement (PSA), and additional visits/outreach to Areas.
NOTE: Some of the financial charts shared with the Conference members were contained in the Delegate's Power Point. For more information please look at the Delegate's Report PDF on our SCWS website.

Every quarter, the Treasurer includes a 'Finance Update' along the Chairman of the Board Letter. As of April, contributions are $53,000 above budgeted projections. The Board is projecting that our literature sales will be strong this year, due to the introduction of new literature in April and July. Forum subscriptions are being monitored to determine the effects of publishing in full color, which began in January of this year.

Regarding contributions, our WSO Treasurer stated that "We trust that members understand the need and will continue to support the efforts of the World Service Office."

There was much more information presented at the World Service Conference than I was able to cover in this report. I encourage you to read the 2018 World Service Conference Summary that will be posted on the WSO website, or order it for yourself ($5), for your group, your District, or your "Al-Abuddies."

Thank you again for your support before, during and after the World Service Conference. It truly is an honor to be your Delegate!

Sincerely (and with Hugs), Marcia Meyer