

Virginia Area Assembly, May 4-5, 2024

Stacy Lewis, VA Area World Service Delegate, Panel 62

*WSC Theme - Our Path Toward Grace, Unity, and Understanding*

*Panel 62 Theme – It Started With A Shoe*

Delegates Report

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World Service Conference April 18-24, 2024

- ***Panel 62 Task Force (Prior to Opening Session)*** – Panel 62 met to create a 5 minute presentation to share ways to focus on worldwide Al-Anon, rather than just one’s Area, while attending Conference. A few of the shares were summarized: to speak up and ask questions, soak it all in, be fully present and keep a sense of humor and to convey the spiritual sentiment of the conference.
- ***Sharing Area Highlights by Panel 62 (Prior to Opening Session)*** – Our round table discussion discussed attracting service positions. 2 ideas I liked: Have Coordinators and Officers wear badges that say ‘Ask Me About Group Records’. After Assembly, send packets of information discussed to MIA GR’s that say ‘We Missed Your Face’.
- ***Conceptual Piece of Literature (Finances in Recovery)*** – **A very positive discussion was had about this topic and a motion was passed by the WSC to approve this piece of future literature.** However, there are several items ahead of this already in process. Work will probably not start on this for a year or 2. Note – this will be about personal finances and not group finances.
- ***How Does New Literature Materialize?*** – Member suggestions are tracked and recorded. When a topic reaches a certain number of requests, the idea goes to the Literature Committee (which is made up of staff members) for review. If the topic idea is approved, it is framed and the motion is taken to the WSC for a vote.
- ***Chosen Agenda Item #1 – Membership and Unity of Purpose, when is something diverting us from our purpose and spiritual aim? (this is the unedited question)*** – Here are some of the comments from Delegates:  
Sponsorship, we do not talk about this enough but don’t complain – be the example and Let it Begin With Me.  
Look to the past to predict the future.  
What a gift to be in Al-Anon during the pandemic and have so many tools and meetings available.  
Encourage group conscious meetings to check in with everyone – especially newcomers.

**My voice may be the majority or the minority but neither is louder than the other.**

- **What did the International Coordination Committee do last year?** – First, what does the ICC do? Page 211 of the SM  
The ICC held over 112 meetings with International Service Structures to discuss Public Outreach, Social Media and Alateen. They received first time permission requests to translate our literature from Bulgaria, Latvia, Mongolia, Thailand and Romania.  
Service Opportunity – If you are someone who speaks and writes another language fluently, the WSO can use your help for short term translation projects. You would review materials translated to make sure it reads correctly. Contact – [international@al-anon.org](mailto:international@al-anon.org)  
In the Dominican Republic, it only took 1 member to initiate an Al-Anon program and within 2 years it has grown to many meetings due to hard work and dedication to the program.

**If you want change you have to take the action.**

- **Conference Leadership Team (the team that plans the WSC each year)** – The big discussion was regarding having Delegates be represented on this committee. Until now, no Delegate was allowed direct input into the actual agenda. **On the final day of Conference, the WSC Delegates framed a motion to create a task force to discuss the process of adding 2 or 3 Delegates to the CLT for a 3 year trial.**

**This is my place, these are my people.**

- **Revitalizing Alateen Task Force Presentation** – This Task Force created a comprehensive action plan to be used for professionals to introduce them to Alateen. The packet contents have not been confirmed yet, but items might include a sample flyer template, Alateen literature, and a power point presentation. After Conference, the Executive Committee will prioritize this discussion and implementation but no timeline was set.  
The Task Force felt that teens are often referred by professionals – counselors, schools etc.
- **Auditors Report** – Literature sales are back to pre-pandemic levels thanks to the new daily reader. Overall, we got a great auditors report that says we are doing what we should. Interesting fact – our Director of Finance CANNOT be an Al-Anon member. AA is the same – and it was decided long ago that the person handling our money should be unaffected by the disease of alcoholism.

Virginia stats:

Only about 60% of our groups donate to the WSO

The average group donation is \$182.71

Nationally, the overall group donations average \$196.00

The average cost to support each group is \$330

What can you do to at least get Virginia above the average?

- **Stepping Stones/New York WSC Discussion** – There has been discussions about removing the Stepping Stones visit from the WSC Conference rotation (once every 3 years). This is not about Stepping Stones, but about the cost of having the whole conference take place away from the WSO. There is a larger cost for travel for the WSO employees as well as the expense of NY hotels. The discussion resulted in 99.9% of the Delegates expressing the spiritual rewards of visiting are worth the cost. Our equalized expense we pay for the annual WSC for our Delegate does not cover the Conference expenses in full. The price paid by the WSO in 2023 was less than half that of what was

paid to go to NY in 2022. However, I feel there were factors out of our control that influenced that – such as hotels trying to recoup costs lost during the pandemic. The conversation will continue but next year the Delegate will go to Stepping Stones as planned. The trip after that would not be until 2028.

- **Next Gen AFG Records Presentation** – Many improvements and updates have been made to group records and electronic meetings. However, there is one question that keeps coming up – Why can't groups in geographic Areas be listed on both the Geographic and Electronic Meeting Searches? Short, simple answer here. If a newcomer found a Geographic group to join and attended meetings, but later learned that this group participated in-person at local functions – workshops, District Meetings and Assemblies – they might not be able to participate due to geography/location limitations. This does not create unity and causes confusion.

I understand that we still have some groups that are labeled as 'Temporarily Meeting Online' but are still listed with a physical address. Once our Area approved adding global meetings into our structure, those meetings had approx. 7 mo to make permanent decisions to be in the GEA or in our Area. However, that process was not fully understood or relayed to Group Records. So if you are in a group that is 'Temporarily Meeting Online' that needs to change ASAP. It has become permanent now and we need to update records so newcomers do not show up to that physical address in error.

FEAR – lets put that to rest. If your meeting goes electronic and wants to meet in person at a later date, you can. You just have to work with Group Records.

Lastly, and this is a biggie. One of the projects in the pipeline was to add group records in other language. Turns out, our software is just not capable of doing this. Therefore, the process has begun to look into new software to meet our future needs. BIG PROJECT as anyone who has worked in business knows that software does not last forever and upgrading is a major project. Right now the research is beginning and more will be determined – but we looking at approximately 2 years down the road.

- **Gender Neutral Policy Discussion** – This is still confidential work at the WSC, but I want all the members to know that this is an ongoing discussion that is happening. For reference, read the WSC Charter section 3D to know what the current policy is.
- **International Convention** – The location will be announced at either the 2025 WSC or before.
- **Finance** – The new book is anticipated to be released in Fall of 2024, but is not expected to make the huge impact our latest book had. We are continuing to get back to pre-pandemic revenues and our 2024 Budgeted Contribution Goal is 2.6 million.  
Questions: 1) Did you look at the WSO Website? 2) Did you attend a meeting? 3) Did you read a piece of literature? All of the activities were made possible because members donated to their links of service and the WSO.
- **Personal & Service Sponsorship Task Force** – They were charged to create workshops about Sponsorship. The outcome was the creation of a 1 day workshop, a ½ day workshop and a 30 min

workshop. I have handouts to use as a guide for a workshop, but I am getting clarification on when and where we can post.

Speaking of Sponsorship, dual members are great sponsors! This is just 1 more service opportunity open to them.

- **2023 Annual Report** – There will be more focus on skill sets during the Trustee/Board application process. There will be some new employment positions coming up at the WSO. Information will be posted on AFG Connects when available. Global Ebooks – Our International Structures depend on hard copy books for income. The WSO is trying to determine how best to proceed here. The WSO Archive displays are being revitalized. The new booklet, *Healing Within our Alcoholic Relationships P95*, will be 48 pages and will sell for \$4.00. The GEA is working on creating District Boundaries. Our Al-Anon website has already had 1 MILLION hits (a hit is someone who stays on for 30 seconds or more) and is on track to reach 6 MILLION in 2024. And much more – watch for the release of the 2023 Annual Report on AFG Connects.
- **Road Trip 2024** – Will be held in October in Columbia, SC. Hybrid is under consideration for future Road Trips.
- **Chosen Agenda Item #2** – What spiritual principles help define good personal leadership? How do we balance service authority and service responsibility? Comments at the podium included these ideas: Bullying and dominating. Read and reread Bill's essay on leadership in the SM pg 200. Use the Conflict Resolution packet.

#### **PAUSE = Perhaps An Unexpected Solution Exists**

**Less said, best said. An empty wagon rattles the loudest.**

- **Does it work if you work it Task Force from the Board** – Benefits of working the Al-Anon program.

Longevity in Al-Anon is the key to better mental health. Meeting attendance, service work, spirituality, and sponsorship are key. Involvement in the membership survey is service work. By participating you are sharing your ESH with the community as this survey is used by Professionals who then share it with future members. Look for the next survey available on 6/20/24 through 7/31/24. Completely safe and anonymous.

How can we encourage increased participation and continued growth of members who are not newcomers? Inreach, be attractive, be a sponsor. Fun Fact – Lois was 61 when she started Al-Anon and proves you are NEVER too old to do service!!

- **Electronic Alateen Groups Feasibility Presentation** – Most of our members feel this is an opportunity to expand Alateen. But there are many legal hurdles to get through. The minimum requirements must be the maximum requirements of the toughest area – got it? What about International requirements – very tough – stricter than North America. Conceptually speaking, Areas would set their own processes and procedures. Work would need to be done to update training modules, create new training materials and plan communication processes. The Alateen Electronic meetings will be very regulated. If there was ever a lawsuit, AFG, Inc. is responsible and that puts every Al-Anon dollar (reserve fund, checking accounts) open to the lawsuit. Safety is the first priority and it is a worldwide concern. So much to do to make this happen, but we want it.

So much information this year!!! Keep your eye out for the WSC Summary when it is available to get even more information. The Summary takes time to create but I anticipate late summer or fall.