

Iowa Delegate Report

June 2023 Spring Assembly

Greetings to you all!

I am Becky V., and I'm your Area Delegate. I want to say how great it is to see you all here, and if this is your 1st time to the Area Assembly, I am really glad you are here! May our service journey through this term be interesting, fun and full of growth.

As your Delegate, I'm here to represent all the groups in Iowa and am the primary communication link between you and the World Service Office (WSO). Today, I will be sharing with you the topics that occurred at the World Service Conference and hope you will become more aware of how WSO helps our groups here in Iowa and worldwide.

I want to start off by sharing with you the beginning of my trip. I had planned to have a travel day to Virginia Beach and then have an extra day before Conference just to acclimate myself to my surroundings, maybe eat at a nice restaurant or do some shopping. Well, like any perfectly planned out trip, there is a chance it won't be perfect! Yup, I woke up to an email on my phone that my 5AM flight was cancelled. WHAT? No way! My first thought was to react in panic and my next thought was, calm down. I had been taught in this program that there are steps I can take to make things better. I found the number to contact WSO about my flight cancellation and within the hour, I had my flight rescheduled for the next day. I had the rest of the day to relax, regroup and be thankful there was a power greater than me that knew I needed this extra day to stay in Iowa. The next day everything went much better, and I arrived in Virginia Beach on a warm sunny day, and it felt wonderful!

My luggage felt some of the struggle getting to the conference too, but at least we both arrived at the same time and at the same place!

WSO had arranged a bus shuttle for us to get to the motel. Have you ever looked at someone and think "I should know you," as we were waiting for the van to arrive at the airport, sure enough one of passengers that had been to the Regional Delegate Meeting in Minnesota back in March, was climbing into the bus too! My HP was reminding me that I was among friends, and I was going to be ok. Everyone was full of chatter all the way to the motel, and it was a delightful ride.

The World Service Structure

The ultimate authority is at the top of this chart. You...The Groups! If you follow the path, you will see how the structure works. As we elect our members to hold service positions, they become trusted servants. I need to be responsible when I accept a service position.

Now on to "the business days of your Delegate" at the World Service Conference, April 20-24th, 2023. This conference will be held for only 4 days, for a three-year trial basis. All the previous years had been 5ish days or more.

After having a wonderful breakfast, I joined all the other Delegates in our meeting room for the first time on April 20th to find my assigned seat. Yes, and just like at our Assembly today, the voting members are up front. There are 68 Areas in the World Service Conference Structure, 10 in Canada, 57

in the US (including Puerto Rico) and the newest Area, the Global Electronic Area (GEA). This was the



largest Conference to date.

This year was the 63rd World Service Conference and each year there is a theme. The theme for this year is: Love, Laugh and Grow Together.

One of the items asked of the Delegate before the conference was to send a report sharing our Area highlights, the pros and cons. After having a breakout session at the conference to share our reports, I have to say, Iowa, we are one fantastic Area! However, we are not unique in any way, shape, or form. We have accomplished many things and we have many items that we still need to work on. Examples of some of the pros and cons:

- Iowa has agreed to accept electronic meetings.
- Our Policy & Procedures are up to date.
- Our Alateen groups are struggling just like other Areas.
- Getting members to stand for service positions is difficult at all levels.
- Iowa is very blessed to have many past delegates in our Area that are willing to stay in service.

International Representative

We had the opportunity to hear from our International Representative, Britt Heidrun from Marquardt, Germany. It was interesting to hear her share how the pandemic affected AI-Anon in her country. Many of the groups are electronic and the Alateen groups are very limited. Literature is hard to get as it is often delayed so many use the online shop to get current material.

I was able to sit and visit with her for a bit and was so impressed how well she could speak English. She had come to the US for schooling where she learned English and now travels between the 2 countries when she can. Britt enjoys coming to the US and experiencing how groups work over here. Won't that be fun?



How many of you are excited about the 2023 Al-Anon International June 29-July 2 in Albuquerque, New Mexico?? How many are planning to attend physically? This is the first time this event has been offered virtually. How many will be attending virtually? The preparation for this event required “all hands-on deck” for the WSO staff and volunteers as you can imagine.

Cooperating with professionals is one of the ways we continue to build public awareness of the Al-Anon program. The Community Relations team, in collaboration with the Digital Communications team, has implemented a plan to include professionals in the International Convention. There will be a professional speaker at the Day of Connection luncheon this year. How cool is that?

The WSO staff have been working diligently to pull this event together. Think of the work it takes to bring our Assembly together, can you imagine the thought and teamwork it takes to get an international event into place?

Scot P., the Director of Communications and Community Awareness stated there can be approximately 112 different languages that can now be translated virtually for the convention by the company that is helping present this event. There will be many volunteers physically helping with the language barriers also. The committee has also arranged extra activities for visitors, and I have heard many say they are making this their vacation for this year!

WSO wants everyone to be able to enjoy the experience, strength, and hope of Al-Anon! I’m sure once it is over, WSO would love to hear how you felt about your experience attending the International in person or virtually. To me, this event is another reminder that we can accomplish many things when we work together!

WSO Outing

Speaking of working together, I would like to share about a very special outing that I had been looking forward to at Conference. It was a trip to the Al-Anon Headquarters! The place where staff go to work every day in order to help answer all our questions, to supply our groups/members with literature, and to help keep Al-Anon, Al-Anon.

A double decker bus arrived at our motel to take us to the World Service Office (WSO), the Al-Anon Headquarters. As we pulled up to the office and I saw all the staff lined up in front waving and smiling at us, I got tears in my eyes. The greeting of “Welcome home” from each one of them as we exited the bus just made me cry more! I have never been to Stepping Stones in New York where Al-Anon first

began, but for me going to the Al-Anon Headquarters just makes me feel warm and fuzzy inside. The tour of the office was awesome. We were divided into small groups so each group would have the attention of a staff member who could answer questions and point out interesting facts/items about the office. I enjoyed the whole tour however, the 3 things that impacted me the most were the room full of archives, the distribution/ mailing area and the skit put on by the Trustees.

Let me start first with sharing about the archives. Joe T., who has been the long time Archivist at WSO, has retired and will be dearly missed. Staff talked about how Joe knew what and where to find the archival materials that would work perfectly for their project, and he always delivered. However, there does come a time to allow others to learn and offer their talents to a job.

So, this room of archives is a sterile room because of all the items stored in here. Gloves are worn when touching any of the paper archives and many items are placed in glass casing to help preserve them. The beautiful artwork that different countries have donated to the WSO hung on the walls.

There were many shelves of paper literature and just notes on paper from Lois and Anne, that showed the struggles and successes of the beginnings of Al-Anon. All of it will become digital in time which will be quite the undertaking, however the new staff is excited about the work ahead and anxious to see for themselves how priceless these items are. I could have stayed in this room for hours, but they told me no, not possible this time!!! This brings me to a question for you. How are your group archives being stored? How about your district archives? How about our Area archives? I can be full of questions and most of the time, I can find the answer from some of our Al-Anon literature, Service Manual, or from just visiting with long time members. I want others to be able to read about the struggles and successes that Iowa Al-Anon has experienced in keeping this fellowship available for those that have been affected by alcoholism. Let's take care of our archives!

The next room that impressed me was the distribution area. The day of our visit, Mike, was there working and shared how the room looked so empty. I personally did not think the room looked empty, but I never saw it full either! He stated how the pandemic has/had hurt literature sales and because of a paper shortage, literature is just now starting to pick up. At one time, all literature was printed in this area. Because of items becoming more colorful and the cost effectiveness of running an old press, literature is now sent out for printing, but the shipping of material still happens in this area. I think it would be fun to put a label on a box showing it will be in the hands of some people in Germany, Switzerland, or even right here in Iowa! So, when you receive your items that you ordered from WSO, remember Mike is responsible for helping get this to you and he is saying "HI"! I would like to put in a reminder to support our Area local Literature Depots...one is in Sioux City and one in Des Moines. (But it won't be Mike saying "HI")

Another room we got to visit was the Board room. Yes, I was able to sit in one of the Board members chairs and yes, it looks just like a regular business board room. Ok, so why was this so special to me? Well, there were 3 Board members there to present a skit to us regarding Regional Trustees and Trustees at Large. Guess what, one of them was Jean L. who is from Iowa!! This skit was important as one of the items the Delegates vote on is the affirmation of new Trustees. In the skit they explained how a Regional Trustee and a Trustee at Large submit a resume differently, however once they are elected to be on the Board of Trustees, each of them has the same responsibilities. The Regional

Trustee resume is presented to their Area and the qualifying chosen resume is submitted, by the Area Delegate, to the WSO. The Trustee at Large resumes are submitted directly to the WSO. Both Regional Trustees and Trustee At Large resumes are presented to the Board for consideration. I will be bringing up the topic of Regional Trustees in the near future so, go to your service manual on pg. 173 and review the Regional Trustees and Trustees at Large process. Start thinking about how this could be your next service position!

Once back on the bus back to the motel, I looked at all the people all around me and it reminded me how we are all in this together and the world is out there waiting for us to make it a better place for all of us.

The 2022 Auditor's Report was rather interesting. If you are like me, ugh, finances are not my forte. I don't even enjoy doing my own finances but, it must happen!

Yes, Al-Anon Headquarters, Inc. must be audited. As this shows you, the audit was clean, and everything is in the positive. The contributions were the highest ever, while the literature sales were down, mostly due to the pandemic. In the past, the literature sales were usually always higher than the contributions.

- Audit conducted January 16, 2022 – January 20, 2023, and a clean opinion was issued with no findings.
- As of December 31, 2022, AFG had total assets of \$12,757,917 and total liabilities of \$1,850,252 = net assets of \$10,907,664 among the General, Reserve and Building funds.
- Operations General Fund expenses were \$5,729,985 and income were \$5,685,503 = \$44,482 decrease in net assets due to the decline in literature sales.
- Literature sales were \$2,099,846 and contributions were \$3,337,918 (the most contributed ever in AFG's history).
- The reserve fund net assets declined by \$1,333,861 due to a \$1,473,986 loss in investment earnings due to increases in inflation, costs, and interest rates.

I like this financial graph as it shows the different types of contributions. Many groups are becoming electronic, or they are groups on the mobile app. As you can see, the majority are following Tradition 7 just the physical face face meetings.

like to





How do you donate to WSO, via PayPal, credit card or by check? Do you respond to the WSO and our Area Appeal letters? It looks like most of do.

WSO supports ALL groups. Whether you are an electronic group, a mobile app group or a physical face to face group, your group receives support from WSO in some way. Is your group sitting with a healthy reserve in your bank account? Could your group/district financially afford to send a larger contribution to WSO? These are things to think about and share with your group and districts.

The highest year ever for contributions was in 2022, how about in 2023, we make another new record?

Revenue	2022	2021	\$ Change	% Change
Gross profit from literature sales	\$ 2,099,846	\$ 1,906,751	193,095	10%
Contributions	3,337,918	2,623,242	714,676	27%
Magazine sales	247,368	238,040	9,328	4%
Subscription income	48,174	33,328	14,846	45%
Noncash				

contributions 125,939 136,555 (10,616) -8% Investment income (1,647,728) 2,062,376
(3,710,104) -180% \$ 4,211,517 \$ 7,000,292 (2,788,775) -40%

Expenses

Program Services \$ 3,333,424 \$ 2,752,049 581,375 21% Literature distribution
services 904,405 922,257 (17,852) -2% General administrative services 1,352,031
1,540,509 (188,478) -12% \$ 5,589,860 \$ 5,214,815 375,045 7%

Change in net assets \$ (1,378,343) \$ 1,785,477 407,134 23%

Is your group buying literature? Do you have a personal or group subscription of the Forum? WSO supports our groups with their goals of refining the ebook strategy to reflect international needs, building public and professional awareness with Public Outreach Toolkit, improving the Online Store, translating our literature in 3 different languages (English, Spanish and French), by refreshing the Al Anon Family Groups Mobile App and so much more as the next graph will show.

- This graph shows the cost of services for each group. There are over 13,300 Al-Anon groups in 2022 and while 100% of them use WSO services, only 61% of groups contribute to the WSO.
- In Iowa, we have 160 registered groups and have an average of only 64% of the groups donating making the average of \$180.64 per group per year. I realize there are some physical groups that can barely pay their rent, at the same time, there are groups that contribute more and possibly make the yearly donation of \$321.25. Which one are you?

Literature

HAVE YOU HEARD..... A new daily reader is out! Those attending the International Convention in person will be the first to get the book called "A Little Time for Myself" a collection of Al-Anon personal experiences and it will be \$17.00. It is available in English, Spanish and French. It has been many years since a new daily reader was published. After the convention is over, our Literature depots will have it available for the rest of us to get it quickly!

Another update, the text of the "Just for Tonight" Alateen bookmark has been approved and is currently undergoing translation and design with hopes it will be ready later this year.

WSO Staff and members of the Literature Committee received many requests for the development of new pieces of literature or revisions to existing pieces. The Committee agreed to recommend to the 2023 WSC the development of an in-depth piece about sponsorship and service sponsorship. After discussion, the WSC voted to recommend that AFG develop an in-depth sponsorship document. Isn't this exciting news??? Yea!!

DEI Discussion

After much discussion before the conference, the Board decided to bring in an outside consultant to present the topic of diversity to the WSC body. The spiritual principles we utilized in this session were humility, open mindedness, curiosity, acceptance, willingness to talk about topics that are uncomfortable at first, and having conversations that are conducive to awareness, acceptance, and

action.

Seeds were planted to help us explore and consider how we are welcoming to all members. At the end of the session the entire WSC had the opportunity for discussion of feelings brought up by the presentation. Even though this topic has been discussed many times in the past we are now more of a global program than ever which now prompts this discussion to continue.

I was genuinely impressed how well the WSC body discussed this issue. I must admit, I really didn't know how this topic would be handled and I'm pretty sure my HP was in the room for this topic helping direct all of us to think before we decided to speak.

This is also something else to think about when you hear yourself saying the Al-Anon Declaration: **When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, let the hand of Al-Anon and Alateen always be there and LET IT BEGIN WITH ME!**

International Coordination Committee

Perhaps some of you remember Katy P. sharing in her delegate report during her term regarding the International Coordination Committee. Today, I will share an update regarding their trip.

- Two teams of three staff and volunteer trustees were formed to conduct visits to other countries with General Service Offices (GSOs) to share experience, strength, and hope.
- One team visited Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Netherlands.
- A second team visited Turkey, Bulgaria, Hungary, and German-speaking Switzerland.

Both teams then came together in Versailles, France for a meeting with France's GSO.

- Both teams then returned to London for the 2022 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) held between October 12-15, 2022.
- Beginning in February 2022, the International Team began holding virtual Regular Structure Meetings (RSMs) with evolving structures and General Services Offices (GSOs) to improve communications and exchange information between the WSO and the structures. As of November 2022, regular RSMs are held with 44 structures and growing.
 - Al-Anon meetings are held in over 133 countries. There are 17 countries with evolving structures and 36 countries with a national service structure or a General Service Office.

This presentation reminded me of how truly blessed I am to live where I do. I can get a book when I want one and I can attend a meeting any night or day that I want! Not everyone in the world can say that and to hear the members of the team share their experiences with the members from these countries was just so heartwarming.

Copyright & Trademark issues

The biggest challenge to Al-Anon's copyrighted material is technology. Retyping excerpts from Conference Approved Literature to share in person or online is one infringement. Posting any of our

material on a website is a serious violation. There are many reasons why this is a bad idea. Our CAL is **our** CAL. If we give it away improperly, we have no grounds for legal action if someone takes it without permission. Al-Anon needs to be vigilant about guarding all of our copyrighted literature.

Al-Anon's trademarks include different forms and colors of the triangle and circle design.

If this symbol is reproduced by someone outside of Al-Anon, it appears that we are endorsing an outside entity. If the triangle and circle, which we recognize as representing Al-Anon and Alateen, are printed on an event flyer, we would assume that this event is approved by Al-Anon and Alateen.

There are some instances where sharing is okay. If your group appreciates having the opening and closing readings printed in a larger font, and these pages are only used during the meeting, go ahead.

What should you do if you come across a questionable use of Al-Anon property? The WSO has hired a paralegal to help track down violators. If you see something that you feel should be reported, I can give you contact information at the WSO so they can take a look at it. Again, the biggest concern is social media. To safeguard our Al-Anon name and materials we need to be aware of our copyright and trademarks.

Transforming electronic groups:

This section is very complex.

I realize this slide is hard to see. Things change VERY quickly and VERY slowly at the same time.

The Global Electronic Area was admitted to the World Service Conference (WSC) in 2022. With that came the opportunity for all Areas to welcome electronic groups. On flowchart under, Geographic Areas Work, it required Areas to discuss and vote to have electronic join their Area. At the time of this report, there has been 31 Areas that welcome electronic groups, and Iowa is one of them.

This gets confusing because there are global electronic groups, geographical groups, and geographical electronic groups all within the WSC.

Now going over to the flowchart under WSO, they have launched the GEA search and creating group transfer forms. They are continuing to work closely with the GEA to make certain members can find global Al-Anon meetings. The next step they have planned is to make certain the geographical electronic groups are searchable.

WSO is working diligently to get geographic and electronic group locations on the search page, however, there are many steps to take to make this happen. Testing of the Geographic Search is happening and the rollout will be coming shortly. Until that whole process is completed, geographical electronic groups are kept on **Area** Websites only.

Our Area Group Records Coordinator will be busy in the future! If we all follow the proper links of registering our new groups or making group changes, I know Iowa will have no problem getting our group information out to everyone! Do you know the proper links to follow? Do you know who our Area Records Coordinator is???

Alateen Electronic Feasibility – This is in the CONCEPTUAL Stage

In 2020, the Board of Trustees of the World Service Conference (WSC) approved the Strategic Plan Strategy: Alateen Electronic Group Feasibility with the following scope and objective:

- Scope – Evaluate the implications of and gain agreement on a cohesive approach for expanding online Alateen meetings (not including Alateen events) availability through the Al-Anon Family Groups Mobile App and other electronic platforms.
- Objective – Make electronic groups available for all Alateen members who wish to participate, ensuring the safety of Alateen and AMIAS members.

Potential (Conceptual) Solution:

The conceptual solution that emerged represents a set of minimum safety requirements appropriate for the global nature of the electronic meetings involving minors which the Project Team came to refer to as the Electronic Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (Global EASBR).

The Project Team believed these could work for Areas within the WSC Structure (WSC Areas) as well as International Structures.

There would be a need to create and establish on-line minimum requirements and a process of certification so it could ensure the following:

- Alateen groups meeting electronically (Electronic Alateen Groups) could be recognized as Al Anon Family Groups.
- WSC Areas and International Structures would have the autonomy to decide if they wanted to host Electronic Alateen Groups.
- Electronic Alateen Groups could be connected to their service structure with vote and voice.

Prerequisite

Areas in the WSC Structure (WSC Areas) would need to be currently certified to use the Alateen name by having approved Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements (ASBR) in place and would need to have approved supporting Al-Anon groups meeting electronically before they could be certified to support Electronic Alateen Groups.

Process

If an Area decided to accept Electronic Alateen groups they would need to have their groups approval to implement the Global EASBR (Electronic Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements) **without modification**. These requirements may and possibly will include any legal issues involving minors online (remember, this is a global issue, not just a US issue), possible increased AMIAS requirements and many other global issues involving our teens. In other words, an Area would have to have both their current Alateen requirements and Electronic Area Alateen requirements as approved by the WSO.

So, as you can see, this is definitely a work in progress. And very much conceptual, especially when working with teens and global issues.

Currently there are no registered Alateen groups meeting online, except through the on Al-Anon app which is on a three year trial period.

Financial Feasibility of Continuing to hold the WSC Triennially in New York/Connecticut

As you might imagine, the cost to hold Conference in the New York/Connecticut area is much higher than holding the Conference in Virginia Beach area. The higher costs affect most of the Conference line items, such as air travel in general as well as adding Staff members' and interpreters' airfares to the budget; airport shuttles in New York; hotel rooms; meal costs; per diem rates; AV; bus rentals; and trucking supplies to New York/Connecticut.

The total expenses of Conference are partially paid through the Equalized Expense payments. The remaining Conference costs not covered by the Equalized Expense payments, or the net Conference costs, are paid from the WSO General Fund.

The pandemic afforded us a glimpse into the nature and cost effectiveness of a virtual Stepping Stones visit. The virtual visit also allowed for added value, as some Conference members noted that they "saw" more of Stepping Stones virtually than they had in person.

So, as with everything cost of things have gone up. You can see why this topic needed to be brought to the WSC body. There was discussion, emotions and ideas shared and were appreciated by the Board members. There will be continued discussion regarding the visit to Stepping Stones and I will keep you updated regarding the future on this topic.

Power outage

Just as we were to vote and discuss the motions of the conference, the motel lost all power. There happened to be a wedding going on that night at the motel, yet our room got to use the generator to turn on the lights on only in our room. We did not have microphones to use but yet, we were able to see each other again! We postponed the motions for the night and went on to the Chosen Agenda Item. We all discovered we all have an outside voice, and we were not afraid to use it with no microphones!

Chosen Agenda Items

There were 57 Chosen Agenda topics, and all the Delegates were invited to vote for 19 that we felt were important to them. What a great opportunity for all Delegates to have topics that their Areas had concerns or questions about. Two of the questions were chosen for the Delegates to discuss as a group, on two different days.

Question #1

Open discussion on attracting members into Service. What works? What doesn't work. What are the barriers to service participation? It has become increasingly difficult to attract newer members into Service positions. We know we are a fellowship of attraction rather and promotion. What are some

methods to use to attract others into service? It is important because as our Service positions go unfilled, those serving become overwhelmed with the amount of work required.

There were many things shared and yes, Iowa, we are doing many of the same things the other areas are doing to attract members to service.

- Remind all our members that they are important, and we need them. The newcomers need the seasoned members and vice versa.
- Sometimes our ideas are “in a box” and we need to look outside the box for attraction rather than promotion.
- Use a sponsor and get a service sponsor.
- Take someone with you to the Area Assembly, or a District meeting. A member doesn’t have to have a service position to attend.
- “There is not enough time for me to attend meetings and be of service too.” • “I don’t

think I can do that job.” Remind everyone, we don’t have to do anything alone! Question #2

How can we better tap into our wealth of experience with our Past Delegates at the Area and Conference level?

- Past Delegates are Al-Anon members, they need meetings and support just like everyone else.
- Instead of having an “Ask it basket” have an “Ask a Past Delegate basket” (I believe we have done this, and it went well)
 - Past Delegates have the experience of successes and failures, ask them about both.
- Record in the Area Archives a list of all the Delegates, check out where or what they are doing now. (Iowa once had a party for all the Past Delegates)
- Allow them to have a voice or ask questions. Their lives have or still are being affected by alcoholism.
- Encourage them to stay active in any position of service and thank them for staying active and sharing their experience, strength, and hope with us today!

I would like for us, here in Iowa, to think about these 2 questions and I would be happy to hear some of your answers. The best thing I can say for myself, is my recovery improved when I became active in service.

So, in closing, I want to thank all of you all for allowing me to share my Delegates’ report with you today. Each day we wake up, it is another opportunity for us to help Al-Anon grow as a whole and to help families and friends of alcoholics find hope and encouragement to live joyful, serene lives. By

participating at this Conference definitely allows me to say, I'm a proud member of Panel 63 and of this WORLDWIDE FELLOWSHIP of Al-Anon and Alateen.

Thank you for your time today and how grateful I am to be here to share this information with you. I hope you all enjoy your service journey these next 3 years on Panel 63, where Service is the Key.

And as we say in our closing, Let it Begin with me, when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, let Al-Anon and Alateen always be there and let it begin with me.

Becky V.

Panel 63