Minutes NCWSA Assembly May 17, 2014
Approved by motion 1410.02
Concord, CA

Note: The meeting minutes for this meeting are not necessarily chronologically ordered. In an attempt to make the minutes more easily used as a reference, the minutes will be ordered in a topical fashion.

Table of Contents
Routine Business
Motions and Consensus
Notices
Delegate’s Report
TEAM Event
Area Structure Trial
Roving Workshops on Area Service
Thought Force Report on Gender-Neutral Language
Electronic Voting

Routine Business:
Meeting opened at 10:00 am with the Serenity Prayer. Traditions Concepts and Warranties were read. Strong district hollers were given.

Meeting closed at 4:53 pm with the Al-Anon declaration, “Let it Begin with Me.”

If you are a dual member please do not include yourself in the GR headcount, as you cannot vote at Assemblies. GRs countdown: 151, towards end of day, before motions.

Committee Roll Call and District Holler: Patti R., Secretary, took roll call. We heard district hollers. Patti submitted minutes and they were approved. See Motions section below for minutes approval.

Chairperson’s Welcome: Yvonne De G. Welcomed Everyone and thanked the hosting district. We will have a prize at 1 pm for those returning from lunch on time. Are any GRs here for first time? About 20-30 people raised their hands. This is an Election year, so at the end of this year we have elections. You can get WSC Conference summary on WSO website.

Motions and Consensus:

1405.01
Motion: To Approve Minutes of May 4 2013 Assembly
Moved-Diane C., second-Eliza Y., D26
Approved as submitted. 0 opposed, 13 Abstentions. Substantial Unanimity

1405.02
Motion: To use electronic voting at the next Assembly.
Moved-Lydia S., D14; second-Dean C., D8
11 Opposed, 3 Abstentions. Approved by Consensus.
 Notices

TEAM event is September 6, 2014, 10 am to 6 pm.

The audio version of One Day at A Time (ODAT) is now available, $19.95, 7 hr. 48 min. and read by volunteer members is available at audible.com, sample chapters are also available on iTunes and amazon.com

Delegate’s Report Introduction

Patrick spoke about the links of service – he goes to the WSC conference, then brings back the information to the Area. Today we won’t be getting into discussion about the information he is sharing but he can come out to districts to help any discussions move along. Please ask questions if something isn’t clear or an acronym isn’t understood, etc.

Patrick was determined he would touch the beach this time in Virginia Beach (didn’t last time). So did get outside once, early on with another delegate, but it was kind of cold, so they turned around. “Progress, not perfection.”

In the report below, the Conference goals are:

Goal 1: Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships with the structure, and be able to articulate Conference discussions and decisions.

Goal 2: The spiritual tone of the Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members.

Goal 3: Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will presume goodwill.

Report from the 2014 World Service Conference (WSC)

To the members of the Northern California World Service Area (NCWSA),

The 54th World Service Conference was held April 25th through 29th, 2014 in Virginia Beach, VA. It was my privilege to represent this Area for the third and final time in my term as Delegate. The Conference theme was “World Service Conference: Our Spiritual Principles in Action.”

We started the WSC by reviewing the Conference goals and then had some time to think about our personal goals for the week. We then talked about the roles of everyone who participates in the Conference, which includes Delegates (67), Trustees (18), WSO Staff and the Executive Committee. You can find descriptions of each in your Service Manual. We talked about the perspectives that each role brings to the Conference. There were 99 voting members in attendance this year.

Next, we talked about the elements of Knowledge Based Decision Making (KBDM) and how they are linked to spiritual principles. The five elements of KBDM are:
Open communication between leadership and membership
- Dialogue before deliberation
- All decision-makers have common access to full information
- Existence in a culture of trust
- Confidence in the competence of our partners

We did an exercise where we put the above into our own words. I thought I would share some of what people came up with, along with some of the spiritual principles that were mentioned (in parentheses):
- Talk to each other (Equality)
- Share ideas before focusing on a solution (Patience)
- Information in writing and made available to everyone (Honesty, Generosity)
- No secrets (Understanding, Compassion)
- We are all equal in the fellowship (Acceptance, Trust)

All of the above set the stage for us to have meaningful, loving and productive conversations as we conducted business on behalf of the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

The first presentation that we saw was a skit on the relationship between Al-Anon Family Groups (the fellowship) and Al-Anon Family Groups, Incorporated (the corporation). Al-Anon is both a fellowship and an organization, with Traditions and legal responsibilities. Al-Anon Family Groups (the fellowship) is the Traditional arm, while AFG, Inc. (the organization) is the legal arm. The decisions we make at the World Service Conference are Traditional. The Board of Trustees votes on any of our decisions that need to be made legal, such as election of Board members and officers, to make them legal.

The Conference gave Traditional approval to the new panel of Regional and At-Large Trustees, Board Officers and a new member of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM). After the WSC, the Board appointed new members of the Executive Committee, the Chairperson of the ECRPM and two Trustees at Large to fill vacancies for a one-year term. The names of all of the above can be found on the www.al-anon.org members website under WSO > Board of Trustees > Chairperson of the Board Letter. I would like to congratulate Sandi C., who was one of the Trustees at Large appointed to a one-year term. I would also like to thank Vicki H., whose term on the Board of Trustees came to an end.

One of the Thought Forces reported on their work to “Create Strategies on the Importance of a Home Group.” Some of the suggestions for groups include use “home group” as a meeting topic and include discussion of the importance of a home group in beginners’ meeting. Strategies that the WSC and WSO will move forward with are to create a definition of a home group and to integrate this definition into WSO events and materials.

We had a discussion on the Universal Understanding of Recovery (UUR) project. The goal of this work is to have a definition that will help professionals understand what family recovery is. The focus does not have to be solely on treating the alcoholic, but also that family members can recover, even if the alcoholic does not. With this understanding, professionals can more readily see the benefit of Al-Anon and recommend it to family members. The definition that was presented to the conference was formed through several surveys to members and then presented to professionals for their feedback. Minor tweaks were made based on comments from professionals, but the substance of the definition came from Al-Anon members. There was a lot of discussion on this as a 15-minute agenda item was extended to 45 minutes. It seems as though the definition that was presented is not quite ready and there is more work to be done. This topic is likely to come up again at next year’s WSC.
New policy language on service for Al-Anon members, who are also members of AA, was presented. I distributed a draft of the new language prior to Conference and received many comments and suggestions, so thank you very much! The language presented is not a change in policy, but an effort to clarify and include the spiritual principles that underlie the policy. During the discussion we were asked to consider three questions: 1) is the language accurate? 2) is it clear? and 3) can you live with it? After the discussion a motion was brought to the floor and the proposed language was approved by substantial unanimity. In the new language, you will see an intention to move away from “Dual Member” and “Double-Winner” as these seem like labels and detract from the fact that we are all members of Al-Anon. The new language clarifies that Districts and Areas have autonomy in terms of determining what service positions are policy-making or affect other groups, or Al-Anon as a whole. Al-Anon members, who are also members of AA, can serve in any position that does not vote on policies that affect other groups, or Al-Anon as a whole. The electronic version of the Service Manual will be updated with the new language, as soon as it has been translated into French and Spanish. The policy language will also be distributed in format that can be printed and affixed to the notes pages in your copy of the Service Manual.

At every World Service Conference, two Chosen Agenda Items (CAI) are discussed. Delegates submit topics that they would like to be a CAI and then the conference members vote on their top two. The first CAI we discussed this year was how to inspire Al-Anon members to get involved in service. Some ideas that were shared:
- Read “When I Got Busy, I Got Better”
- Make service fun
- Ask someone to help you do your service
- Pay attention to the shy, quiet person
- “Screw up” in front of people (let them know it is okay to make mistakes)
- Fellowship after the meeting
- Ask people to be of service
- Talk about the benefits of service

The Conference gave conceptual approval to a new daily reader…Note that daily readers take about five years to produce. During the discussion, we talked about different formats (for example shorter shares, or electronic) and acknowledged that the Literature Committee has room to do things differently. Be on the lookout for requests to submit written shares.

We listened to a report on The Forum and learned the following: This magazine is the most effective means of communication to members of groups. Readers value it greatly, as 54% report reading it cover-to-cover on the day it arrives. 33,600 copies are distributed each month. However, only 10 to 20% of members see it…Is your group’s copy sitting at the bottom of a box, collecting dust? Personal subscriptions have been declining. There is confusion about whether or not The Forum can be used in meetings because it doesn’t go through the full Conference Approve Literature (CAL) process. However, the magazine is approved in concept as CAL and can indeed be used in meetings. In fact, each issue contains an “instant” meeting. Each group receives a free copy of The Forum, so if you aren’t receiving your copy, make sure that your Current Mailing Address (CMA) is up to date. Don’t forget that part of the role of a Group Representative is to be the group’s Forum liaison, letting members know about the magazine and how they can subscribe. Also, you can now receive The Forum as an electronic subscription.
We heard and read the Annual Report, the Budget Report and the Audit Report. You will be able to read these for yourself when the Conference Summary is published on the [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org) members’ site. You can also find the audited financial statement and tax return there. Just a couple of notes about group contributions and the WSO budget. If each group contributes $6.18 more in 2014 than they did in 2013, the WSO will meet its budget for group contributions. If each group contributes $8.00 more in 2014 than they did in 2013, contributions will cover the budgeted deficit of $27,000. In order for the above to come to fruition, groups that did not make any contributions to WSO in 2013, would need to contribute $6.18/$8.00 in 2014.

We had a very powerful and practical Financial Breakout Session. In this session, we walked through how a group can go about creating a budget. In the end, we saw how much each member would need to contribute each week, in order for the group to meet its budget. In this session, we also talked about how to create a reserve fund at the group, district, AIS and area (see Guideline G-41).

We got a tour of the new Alateen Service e-Manual. This contains a lot of great information for Alateens and Al-Anon Members Involved in Al-Anon Service (AMIAS), including how to start a new group. You can find the e-Manual on the [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org) members website.

A Task Force presented their work to “Develop a Script of Workshop to Encourage Discussion About the Difference Between Principles and Procedures in Al-Anon.” We participated in the workshop that the Task Force developed. Each breakout group looked at a set of Al-Anon procedures, such as how to name your group, and then discussed the principles associated with those procedures. It was interesting to think about why we do what we do and it was helpful to see how our principles keep us connected together.

Does your group receive its copy of Group e-News? If not, you may want to check if your group has a Current Mailing Address (CMA) email. Currently, the WSO has valid email addresses for about 50% of the registered groups. There are three ways to submit a CMA email: 1) send it to the Area Group Records Coordinator 2) Send form G-1 to the WSO via fax, email or regular mail 3) Add the correct email address to your group’s Annual Update Form. The purpose of Group e-News is to provide timely information from the WSO to the groups. If you receive this for your group, be sure to bring a printed copy to the group, or pass along the information. A suggestion is for the group to get a generic email address that more than one member can login to check it. This would make it easier when it comes time for rotation of service. Note that beginning on June 1st, Group e-News issues will come out at the beginning of the month, instead of the end.

The Board of Trustees Big Question is when the Board brings a question forward for the members of the WSC to consider. The Board Big Question has not been part of the agenda over the past few years, but it was back in 2014. We were asked to think about the future of Al-Anon and to try to anticipate how Al-Anon, and the world around it, will look in 2051 (when Al-Anon has been around for 100 years). We had a discussion with the full conference and here are some of the ideas that were shared:
- Spiritual Principles as safeguards, rather than barriers
- Electing good leaders, not just our friends
- The Twelve Steps are our program
- Love and support, the opposite of love is fear
- Concept Four - Participation is the key to harmony
- Openness and gentleness
- We have our story, even if everything shuts down
- Humility - practice our program one day at a time
- Stay connected
- Our common purpose
- Share what works
- Focus on our similarities
- Spirituality of members
- Embrace technology
- Be the best example of working a good program
- Making a commitment to service
- Telling our stories, that is what is attractive

We then had breakout discussions where small groups looked at several questions related to this topic. We did not have time to debrief the small group sessions, so there will likely be more information shared during the year, or at next year’s World Service Conference.

We heard a report from the Task Force that was charged with “Compiling our Guidelines for Trusted Servants not Fulfilling their Responsibilities.” As part of the report, the Task Force talked about Proactive Processes that some areas use. These include:
- Job descriptions
- Resumes
- Training
- Service sponsors
- Communication

They also talked about Action Processes, which include:
- Presume goodwill
- Identify non-fulfillment
- Investigate complaints
- Decide the approach to use
- Avoid gossip
- Offer help
- Hear all sides

The Associate Director of Communications - Professionals reported on the Treatment Facilities Outreach Project. Al-Anon’s communication with treatment facilities builds relationships with staff, increases staff referrals to Al-Anon and provides support for family services and programs. This project included the development of PowerPoint presentation modules, presenter guides and resources to help members do outreach to these facilities. These materials will be available in The Best of Public Outreach, which can be found on the www.al-anon.org members website in the Public Outreach section. If your group or District is interested in this type of outreach, consider holding a workshop, so that members can get familiar with the materials. After that, you can plan an outreach project. You can reach out to the Area Public Outreach/Cooperating with the Professional Community Coordinator for support. You can also contact me at delegate@ncwsa.org.

We got to see the new public service announcements (PSA) in English, French and Spanish. Two simple things that you can do to encourage the playing of Al-Anon PSA’s on local TV or radio:
- If you see or hear a PSA, call the station that played it and thank them
- Take Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism to stations near you and let them know that 25% of their audience is affected by someone else’s drinking

These two things can go a long way to getting more air-play for the PSA’s. For more information on how to do this and other types of outreach, see The Best of Public Outreach on the www.al-anon.org website, in the Public Outreach section. Do something small, as every little bit helps. Do something with your group. Tell your story. Help prepare for Al-Anon’s future by letting people who might need us know that we are here.

The second Chosen Agenda Item that we discussed was dealing with dominance of members in service. This started out with a lot of conversation about conflict resolution and typical steps that one might take to address these issues. As the conversation progressed, people started sharing about tougher situations, ones in which there is more unreasonableness, bullying and situations that might require outside intervention. Unfortunately, these situations can arise from time to time and they can be tough to talk about. In terms of solutions, here are some suggestions that were shared:

- Be proactive
- Role playing
- Tradition studies
- Get all the facts
- Get help/support from a service friend
- Escalate within the service structure
- Talk to those affected
- Encourage people to have a voice

The AA International Convention, with Al-Anon participation, will take place July 2 - 5, 2015 in Atlanta, GA. Registration begins Wednesday, September 3, 2014. Information will be available in August and will be available: 1) in Group e-News 2) on the Al-Anon International Convention website 3) in the June issue of The Forum.

WSO staff and Trustees participated in a number of International trips in 2013. These include:
- Australia and New Zealand in August, 2013
- The European Zonal Meeting in Germany in August, 2013
- Finland in October 2013
- The Central America Zonal Meeting in Honduras in November, 2013

During these trips, the WSO is not there as an authority, but rather to offer experience, strength and hope to other service structures. During the visit to Finland, Al-Anon members there held a reading marathon to celebrate 60 years of meetings in Finland. They read Courage to Change and contributed $4.00 for every page they read. They managed to read 350 pages during the marathon, so the contribution came to $1,400.00. The Al-Anon members in Finland have extended a friendly challenge to other areas to hold a similar reading marathon.

There is a new Conflict Resolution Kit (K-70), which consists of the following:
- The Loving Interchange Wallet Card (S-71) that was introduced two years ago
- The Conflict Resolution using the Traditions card set (S-72) that was introduced last year
- The Talk to Each Other booklet (S-73) that was introduced this year
The Task Force to Create Games Using Information in the Service Manual presented four new games designed to help members familiarize themselves with the information in *The Service Manual*. To answer the questions in each of these games correctly, you actually need to open the book. The four games are:
- Al-Anopoly
- SMINGO
- As the Group Turns
- The Service Manual Quiz

If you are interested in playing any of these games email me at delegate@ncwsa.org or contact your District Representative.

There are ongoing Thought Forces and Task Forces that will report at the next World Service Conference. The Thought Forces are:
- Create Strategies to Help the Membership Welcome New Trends into the Fellowship
- Create Strategies to Show Spiritual Connection of Being a Regional Group
- Create Strategies to Show the Importance of Abundance and Spirituality in Money Discussions

The Task Forces are:
- Create Ways to Raise Awareness of the Tools Available for Alateen
- Identify, Gather and Present Practices that Demonstrate a Healthy, Thriving Group

Other Highlights:
- We heard report on the results of the “Readiness for Step Twelve” survey
- An audio version of One Day at a Time in Al-Anon is now available from your audio book retailers for $19.99
- The [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org) members website is now compatible with mobile devices
- We continued the conversation about memorial contributions from family members of deceased Al-Anon members, but nothing was decided, so this will continue to be discussed at next year’s WSC.
- The Conference voted to allow the use of electronic devices for note taking, on a three-year trial basis, beginning at the 2015 WSC.
  - The first Meet the Board event will be held in July 2014 in Newfoundland/Labrador.
  - NCWSA will submit a form to be considered for the 2015 Meet the Board event and the location for the event will be chosen out of a hat from among all areas that submit a form.
  - The next World Service Conference will be held April 19 - 23, 2015 in Virginia Beach, VA
- If you would like to learn more about the 2014 World Service Conference, you can read the Conference Summary, which will be published on the [www.al-anon.org](http://www.al-anon.org) members website in PDF format and can be ordered in hardcopy. At the last meeting each delegate is given 3 minutes to share. My share began “When I was three years old, I “lost” my spirit.” You can read the rest online if you are interested in the Conference Summary.

Thank you so much for letting me be of service!
Patrick B., NCWSA Delegate. Panel 52

**TEAM event (Together Empowering Al-Anon Members) – Johanna MM**
WSO and Northern California Area create the program together. Our focus is “Beyond the group, reaching for personal freedom”
This event is not just for people in service. We encourage sponsors to bring their sponsees; any member is welcome.
We need an Alateen Chairperson, as we would like to have Alateen participation.
Hours will be 10 am to 6 pm, Sept 6, 2014 with the hope that people who live 3-4 hours away can still do a daytrip.
Johanna has a list of hotels but we don’t want to commit area to a block.
If you are interested in childcare, let Johanna know. The location has childcare but we need to request it.
We have a signup sheet in front for anyone who wants to help.

**Area Structure Trial** – Patrick B.

Let’s keep in mind: Communication, Representation and Participation (among all the groups in our area)

The Trial was introduced at 2012 WSC and we opened discussion at the Oct 2012 Assembly. We established a Thought Force. We presented a *History of Area Structure Changes* at the May 2013 Assembly, and entertained the discussion “What does a well-served group look like?”

We had Breakout discussions at October 2013 Assembly on Group challenges and District challenges and distributed those lists to the group representatives. (also in Oct 2013 Assembly minutes on ncwsa.org>service>minutes and agendas).

Southern California isn’t sure they want to split.

**What we are going to do next**: We are going on a “Road Show” around Northern California – to reach out to groups that aren’t participating at the Area level. We have an Online survey to get input from members.

**Discussion**: (per WSO policies, we ask for no applause, and for people to come to microphone:
One Challenge is that we don’t get people from far north or far south.

We could have at least one of our meetings a year electronically with groups gathering in District areas (not individually).
Division does not have to be geographic. For example, the Spanish groups as overlays-form a district of the Spanish Groups that aren’t necessarily next to one another, or even an Area overlaid on our Area.

This an old idea-we can learn from our history. There can be an All-State Conference, which would increase communication with CA-South. Fresno, Bakersfield could be connected.

Charli D & Bonnie have had a lot of fun going to groups of districts to present workshops (for Alateen). We could do that in general: officers/coordinators could go to farther places.
We could have scholarships for people who have to drive a far way, stay in hotels—help them financially to get to events/Assemblies.

Al-Anon is not advertised enough, especially in low-income area. Would love to see ads on BART, buses.

How do you reach the people who want to be a part of Al-Anon, but aren’t? We don’t have a lot of young people here: we need to use social media.

Please email Delegate@ncwsa.org to send other ideas.

**Roving Workshops on Area Service**

15 min Workshops were presented by members currently in Officer or Coordinator positions, where the presenters roved. This was a chance for GRs to become familiar with the duties of the positions and the skills required to perform those duties.

**Thought Force on Gender Neutral Language**- John from District 26

What would the process look like to change the steps?
What do we know about our members’ wants/needs for gender-neutral steps?
You can go to Ncwsa.org on mobile device: on the survey tab – follow instructions, there are a few short questions, you can go there now. Concept 4 is paramount: your participation is key to the harmony of northern California. The survey is concluding on August 31.

Errol, Website Coordinator: There’s a technical error on submitting the surveys right now – please re-submit. Not right now but tomorrow or Monday.

**Electronic Voting**

Last Election Assembly at Squaw Valley in 2011, we used little pieces of paper to vote. We now are considering using electronic or text messaging system to vote. It can be expensive like an extravagant wedding or can be less expensive. Text message or app is cheapest, audience-response equipment.

How many people would be comfortable using their cell phone to text? A vast majority raised their hands. About 20 people did not want to use cell phone. Would you be willing if you got help?

We can do clicker versions. It is hard doing everything we do within a $4-5K expense. - but also $$ for cell phones

Voting cards and clickers - we would be first Area to do this. We would use voting cards and clickers.

Questions/comments – please come to microphone – line up, keep it to 2 minutes.

This will save us time and pain.
• Would we save enough money paying for room for extra Assembly to pay for clickers? In the past, a separate voting assembly was very poorly attended.
• The cost would be approximately $4K-5K each Assembly. We can use rentals for a trial. Once we purchase clickers, then we will have them to use in the future.
• 300 people voting last assembly, so need at least that many.
• One member asked if we use cell phones how do we know that it is still one group one vote? DeDe’s response – all systems would have a registration system – there is a way of registering no matter which you use.
• Another member commented that there are two ways we save money – The Area wouldn’t need to attend an extra assembly and each group would save. Do we want to increase registration to offset voting cost? This would take money from the voting Assembly and put it into electronic voting.
• Another member totally supports electronic voting, but doesn’t support the hardware investment– he did some research, there are e-voting kind of platforms - $50 to $1,000, Could the Area spend money on tablets?
• Someone mentioned that Arizona is trying this out with 80 people
• Someone asked if there is a margin of error with the clickers. DeDe’s understanding is that you take a vote count first and then vote - 260 vote count, need 260 voting. Instant feedback. We don’t want to take 4-7 hours to vote.
• One member said that her experience at election assemblies she has attended really support the idea of using electronic voting. In 2013 – we came in $5k under budget. We are pretty solid financially.
• Another member commented - Let’s stay away from “not enough” thinking and make space for grace – she’s all for trying out clickers.
• If we can save one day for 400 people, let’s go with the clickers, let’s do it for this next meeting.
• Many members thought this a great idea; one mentioned not so much wanting less time as to use the time more efficiently. Some thought that renting equipment is a better choice for us.
• Tax wise does this affect us? Claude stated that NCWSA is not affected since we are a non-profit.

Let’s take a vote. So we need to take a count. 151
**Electronic voting approved.** See motions section for details.

Someone brought up that we might need to list Committee members or Group Reps attending Assemblies in the minutes. The Bylaws Coordinators will look into this and we will amend minutes if needed.
**Minutes were approved.**

Meeting closed at 4:53 with Al-Anon declaration.

Respectfully submitted,
Patti R., Secretary, Panel 52