

Delegate's Report

February 2019 ACM

"Board Weekend" goes down in the books as a true learning experience. The Delegate Chair involvement was empowering and humbling in equal parts. The Orientation began with introductions that included our favorite "service" memory. I was charmed by all the illustrious stories of how service in AA has affected each of us. We spent a great deal of time on Concept 9 for it covers the attributes needed for carrying out our work: Tolerance, Resourcefulness, Flexibility and Vision. Though these attributes are in evidence, we often miscalculate the future. The General Service Conference is our 12 step call on the future. During the meeting, held at the Riverside Church, we were seated at tables in a large room with a wooden panel across the back that had doors leading to another room. Carole B, Chair of the Trustees Literature Committee and Vice Chair of the Trustees Conference Committee chaired the orientation. She was hilarious. When the Non-Alcoholic Trustee and Chair of the General Service Board, Michelle Grinberg, was delivering her address, the old furnace in the ancient room gave up a loud, repetitive puff, and Carole said to the group, "That was her, not me," and the room exploded into laughter.

Some important takeaways from the orientation are to budget time, plan the agenda you will be chairing and don't get bogged down with heavy items. If you want to skip over and come back, to an item, that is normal. Review, discuss, consider. We were told that additional committee considerations carry no obligation to bring them to the GSC.

What I learned right away was that NO ACTIONS ARE TAKEN AT JOINT MEETINGS AND SESSIONS of the Trustees and Conference Committees. The purpose of the meetings or sessions is to report their activities and actions over the past year directly to their corresponding conference committee. The trustees are available for questions from the delegate regarding their reports but agenda items are not debated at these meetings.

Delegate chairs have been invited to attend Board Weekend for over 25 years with the goal of building unity and conveying good will. We were allowed to raise our hand to share especially when the committee is reviewing proposed Conference Agenda Items, but the trustee chair can and will decide if they will permit this sharing.

I first sat on Agenda and remarkably went through 15 items in record time. Most notable was a proposed agenda item that would have put back the two paragraphs we removed from Concept 11 in the Service Manual during Panel 66. Naturally the committee took no action. Delegates do not have a vote on this board, by the way. The reason some of these requests are not forwarded is that we have a guideline about not changing changes that have not been in place an adequate amount of time. I wondered how long was adequate. This came up several times. One proposal asked that the GSC cease the development of all new literature and make all current literature accessible in all formats. There have been past actions on a moratorium on

new literature since the 1990's so this item was moved to Trustees Committee on Literature to discuss at the July Board meeting.

Next I went to Archives where there was much discussion on the GSO Policy on "loans." Apparently we neither loan out or accept loans and we don't appraise items. Monetary value has no relevance in Archives. I believe this may have been due to residual attitudes about the Manuscript that was purchased by a member who then wanted to "loan" it to GSO. There was a lengthy presentation of new acquisitions and how each piece must be photographed, digitized and catalogued. It was so interesting talking about symposiums on Dr. Bob's correspondence to Bill and having a collection of newsletters from all over the world. Digitizing is ongoing and this is helping to alleviate the "paper towers."

It was on to the Trustees International Committee where I heard a riveting presentation on what is happening in Cuba since AA showed up 25 years ago. It is now being recognized as a legal organization so it officially exists. Now we can finally ship literature without fear of retribution. Cuba has a higher percentage of women in AA than men. Cuba is quite progressive when it comes to gender equality. Cuba is proud of their medical system and there are more doctors per capita than here. To suggest AA is needed must be done with care. A woman named Dr. Enselma, a non-alcoholic, has become legendary in her work to get AA recognized as a true and legitimate entity. Besides Cuba, the meeting covered the AA Data Map which does not yet have a "live" link. The Chair, Scott, commented that Class A trustees (non alcoholic) are gems of General Service and we need to make them more visible to AA at large. Belize has a new GSO and the Faroe Islands are currently back "on" as a GSO. The Two Irelands are officially two Irelands now.

The Trustees Literature Committee had 25 agenda items and they managed to get through all of them. Much of the discussion was about updates and progress reports on pamphlets which you read about in the Trustee's Report. Item 12 was the request for translating the Big Book into a fifth grade reading level that came out of our Area, District 2. The Literature Committee asked the GSB to create a committee to evaluate the request. The discussion went from contemporizing the Big Book to taking no action. In the end it was tabled until the July Board Meeting. Everyone seemed to recognize the need for a tool for people with limited literacy and the sponsors that work with them but there was a pervasive feeling that this request would undermine an competing request for a 5th Edition Big Book. So much so that there were proponents of the 5th Edition who suggested contemporization of a new edition. The discussion moved to modernization of the Big Book. This was followed by a proposal to publish a workbook to accompany the Big Book. I raised my hand to participate in the discussion so frequently the chair closed participation from the attendees, as she is allowed, for the remainder of the discussion. The chair actually said, "I am reluctant NOT to send this to the Conference." The rest of the agenda items were forwarded to the committee or tabled until July. We are likely to see a "service sponsorship" pamphlet in the near future.

The International Convention and Regional Forums Committee was a great opportunity to hear some new ideas that have been formulated around a process for informing members about service. The feedback on “brain dates,” where you can be matched up with a staff member, trustee or director for a lunch or dinner during a Regional Forum or Service Assembly, has been positive. Another idea was to offer a free Grapevine Subscription to the first 50 First Time Registrants to a Regional Forum. These are great ideas that will hopefully be implemented the next time we go to a Regional Forum.

Sitting in on the Trustee’s Finance and Budgetary Committee was by far the most interesting part of the weekend. We had to sign for the copies and return them at the end of the meeting. Very top secret. The early business was cut and dried, review balance sheet, reserve fund, quarterly summary. But the continuous discussions about where to have the GS Conference and how Server Outsourcing and Network Connecting as well as the Communications Audit were costly. There figures were eye opening. When you look at projected revenues of almost 20 million you get to wondering about self-support and what the business of carrying the message is costing. Then I got to sit in on the report from the upcoming 2020 Convention in Detroit. The cost for registration is currently set at \$115 if you pre-register. They are expecting to have 47,500 in attendance in Detroit.

And the final report simply recapped the weekend. I can tell you that I found the process very enlightening and worthwhile. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the Trustees and other Delegate Chairs better. Most of the Delegate Chairs ate together, sat together and went on brisk walks together. What an honor it is to be counted among them.

I apologize for such a long report. I have been busy in my local AA as well, Most of the Conference background Information has been separated and distributed to all our committees. If you are interested in receiving anything else, or having a discussion, please don’t hesitate to call or email me. It has been my extreme pleasure to serve you as your Delegate.

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