

Hello. My name is Judy C., I am your Area 85 Delegate, Panel 73, Treatment and Accessibilities Committee and I am an alcoholic and my home group is the Northwood Group.

It was my honour and privilege to serve our Area at the General Service Conference in New York from April 22 through to April 29, 2023. To say it was an exhaustive week would be an understatement, but I managed to play my part and represented you to the best of my ability.

Prior to attending the conference, there were some issues that needed to be addressed. I will do my best to keep my bias out of it and provide you with the facts as they were presented to me.

In early February I got an email from the General Service Board regarding the sudden resignation of the Chair of the Board, Class A non-alcoholic Trustee Linda C. A week or so later, I got another email reporting that Josh E, Class B alcoholic Trustee resigned as a result of Linda's resignation. In this email, allegations of mishandling of the matter were made which caused me to wonder what was happening. More correspondence from the Board was received, and they set up a Question-and-Answer meeting for Delegates and Trustees via zoom. As it turned out, we had a total of three of these Question-and-Answer meetings prior to the conference and, in my naivety, I believed that would be the end of it.

Boy was I wrong! This issue was raised on several occasions during the conference, that resulted in the agenda being amended to allow for discussions and floor actions. The level of anger, hostility, mistrust, and accusations that were expressed towards the Board and Staff of GSO was truly disconcerting. We learned that staff members had been threatened, told to go drink and die, demands of others on the Board to resign, as well as posts on social media spewing hateful rhetoric. Although the discussions on the floor did not sink to this level, I must

admit that I became fearful that our precious fellowship was at risk of collapse. As the discussions proceeded, more level heads prevailed, and the hostile atmosphere changed while solutions were sought. Once again, the group conscience and magic of AA won the day and love, light, peace, and the joy of living returned.

The following floor actions on the matter ended as follows: It was recommended that:

1. “The 73rd General Service Conference censure the General Service Board due to poor communication to the Fellowship regarding the resignation of the former Chair of the General Service Board and for the process that was followed regarding the acceptance of her resignation”. The motion failed with a vote of 25/104; one person provided the minority opinion.
2. “To enhance trust among General Service Conference members, the following actions be taken: the board prepare a report delineating the history of their Confidentiality Policy and the reason(s) for enacting it ... the Board initiate a review regarding the need for a less restrictive Confidentiality Policy ... the existing Confidentiality Policy be made null and void”. A motion to decline to consider the recommendation and was passed with a vote of 110/19 – there is no minority opinion on the motion to decline.
3. “In an effort to improve communication, ensure Board policies are reflective of our principles, and reestablish a relationship of trust between the General Service Conference, the Board and the Fellowship, the Board is asked to undertake an inventory prior to the 74th General Service Conference. To assist the Board in this endeavor, the 73rd General Service Conference will establish a working group to aid the Board in formulating possible inventory questions”. The first vote on this motion was defeated. Following

the minority opinions there was a vote to reconsider that was passed. The second vote on the motion was passed 118/24. No minority opinion.

Now I will present the rest of my report for your information. I realize some of you may find this boring, but I will do my best to be brief and to the point. I am more than happy to discuss these issues privately or with individual groups. All you need to do is ask. I also draw your attention to my binder that I have left out for you to review if you are interested in specific topics. I have included pages with my scribbles and vote counts etc. I also added some information on Corrections, Accessibilities, On-Line meetings and the Turning on the Lights initiative. Please have a look at the new books I also received.

On April 22 I attended a Remote Communities meeting and stepped up to be co-chair of the committee. I am not exactly sure what that will entail so I await notification of my duties. Later in the day all the delegates got together for a fun activity to get to know one another and begin working together.

The Conference officially started on Sunday and went from 9 in the morning until 9:30 at night most days. A couple of days were longer than usual, beginning earlier and finishing after midnight. Imagine spending 6 long days at a business meeting!!

As I said above, I serve on the Treatment and Accessibilities Committee, and we met three times for a total of 8 hours, on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, to review our agenda and to make recommendations and considerations for the entire Conference body to vote on. Our committee forwarded two recommendations.

Recommendation One: that the revised pamphlet “AA for the Oder Alcoholic – Never too Late” be approved. The conference voted in favour.

Recommendation Two: that the 22 interviews recorded to date as part of the Military Audio project be approved. The conference voted in favour to this as well. We asked that the work proceed to find a Francophone speaker to be included to the audio recordings because one could not be found at the time.

Jon C (Delegate for Area 60, Western Pennsylvania) was elected chair of the Treatment and Accessibilities Committee and I was elected co-chair.

On Monday, April 24 I was given the opportunity to spend an hour reviewing the “plain language” Big Book. We were not allowed to bring our phones in and had to leave our bags at the side of the room. We were allowed to take notes on what we read, and I was able to give my feedback to the committee via email as well as at the mike. For those that are not aware, this book is a translation and not a replacement for our Big Book. During my brief hour I read parts of the “Doctor’s Opinion”, “Bill’s Story”, “There is a Solution”, “More About Alcoholism” and “How it Works”. I must say that one hour was not enough time and I really didn’t have a plan on what to look for. I simply went to those sections that meant the most to me when I was new and how it helped me to accept my alcoholism and understand the solution.

In the Doctor’s Opinion it read: “if they start drinking their craving will become strong” and “just one drink will trigger this strong and unstoppable reaction”. They removed the phrase “phenomenon of craving”.

In Bill’s Story where he talks about fearing a bout with Delirium Tremens, they replaced it with “the shaking that happened to me in the

morning before I started drinking". I felt that this was not an accurate depiction of DT's.

In the chapter There is a Solution it reads: "the alcoholics main problem lives within the mind" and that "one drink can undo years of sobriety". The original Big Book states "the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body". I was at a loss to understand the meaning of "one drink can undo years of sobriety".

Of course, I looked for the jaywalker story in More about Alcoholism and it remained pretty much the same except they made the jaywalker a woman! Some people didn't like that. Any one of my sponsees can attest to my reference to the jaywalker when working on Step Two. Further in this chapter it said, "we'll say it once more: at certain times, alcoholics have no mental defense against the first drink. They cannot stop themselves from drinking. No other human being can stop them from drinking. The only way to stop is to create a meaningful relationship with a higher power".

The chapter How it Works is where I had a few minutes to review the steps. They were left unchanged but put into a chart with the original step in one column and a descriptive meaning in the other. I had some problems with the descriptions of Steps One, Four and Five. They read: Step 1. "We understood and accepted in our heart that we could not control ourselves when we drank. We understood and accepted that our lives were falling apart, and we needed help putting them together". Step 4. We thought long and hard about our past and were very honest with ourselves. Then we wrote everything down, like a business owner taking inventory". Step 5. "We took responsibility for everything we did wrong with ourselves and also with a Higher Power. Then we met with someone we trusted and read them the list".

I sincerely wish we were given more time to read and or discuss the work but the committee working on the translation will continue. They have the first five chapters completed and lots more to go. It will be a long time before we see this translation in print.

Other committee reports were presented to the entire body of the conference, and we voted on their recommendations and had some discussions on additional considerations. I can't possibly list all the reports and recommendations. I originally tried in this report, but I found I was boring myself so I will spare you all the details.

An interesting option will soon be available for a Grapevine APP. There are currently 54,000 subscribers and it is hoped that subscriptions will increase to 100,000. The APP will be launched in September 2023 and Area Grapevine Chairs will be trained on the use of the APP.

Work is progressing on an outward facing pamphlet for mental health professionals. Reports on the development of the LinkedIn page were heard and will be reviewed again at next year's committee meeting.

CPC committee approved a pamphlet called "AA in Your Community".

The Finance Committee made three recommendations that were all approved. The first one being clarification that the General Service Board receives all voluntary money but that the General Service Office does the processing. Secondly, to increase the cost of the General Service Conference from \$1,800 to \$2,200 USD. And thirdly that the Trustees Finance and Budgetary Committee develop additional ways to report quarterly the fiscal performance of AAWS, GSB and GV Boards throughout the year to the Conference members.

It was recommended that the Membership Survey pamphlet be updated to reflect the findings from the 2022 membership survey.

It was recommended that two lines be added to the pamphlet AA in Correctional Facilities. The lines are “Like all AA members, persons in custody can benefit from sponsorship. For more information, please refer to the Corrections Kit and Workbook or contact your local Corrections committee”. For those interested in carrying the message in Corrections there is a memo on my little display that outlines activities and needs.

It was recommended that PI chairs be encouraged to utilize PSIs at local radio stations. YouTube and Podcasts are up and running. I had no knowledge of these options, nor do I really understand technology, but I am sure our younger members will embrace these options.

We are considering three potential cities for the 2035 International Conference – Phoenix, Arizona – Indianapolis, Indiana – or – New Orleans, Louisiana - talk about living one day at a time.

I was also given the opportunity to present Area 85s nominee for Canada at Large Trustee, Don A to the Eastern Canada Delegates and Trustee. He did not get the nod from our committee, but we presented two other options to the whole conference. As a result, the new Canada at Larger Trustee is Robert L from Quebec. I look forward to meeting him soon.

Since coming home, I have read and re-read my notes and the information that was provided to us. The experience of being there with so many others that love Alcoholics Anonymous as much as I do was a pleasure beyond words. My mind was opened to so many possibilities, and I must admit I envied some of the work being done to carry the message in other areas.

Of concern to me in our area is how many of our districts have gone dark. During one report I heard about an area that worked on a process

called "Turning the Lights On" and how they were able to get districts back to participating in the service structure once again. I have some ideas on how this could happen here, and I would love your assistance in this endeavor. Please see me after and we can talk.

My mind has been broadened to include thinking about accessibilities that goes beyond wheelchair access at our meetings, assemblies, roundups, and workshops. I have posted some information on accessibilities on the board for your review. I hope we can include accessibilities into the role of Treatment chair. I have asked Duncan to include accessibility information on our Area 85 website as well.

I have also placed a report on the Ad Hoc committee on the board. There was some interesting discussion about how to include these groups in our service structure so that we will have the opportunity to hear their voices as well.

To conclude, I would like you all to know that all the work that has been done throughout the fellowship is for one purpose and one purpose only: To carry the message to the next suffering alcoholic that comes to our door. We need to ensure that we are here and willing to share our experience, strength and hope with them so that they will join us as we trudge the road to happy destiny.

Yours in Love and Service