

Delegates Report

Lori C Panel 69, Area 32

April 16, 2020

Hello members of Area 32. I just wanted to touch base with all of you again as we continue to “Stay Safe, Stay Home”. I know I am missing attending my meetings “face to face” but have found Zoom meetings in my home town to be very beneficial at this time. It is my hope that you are as well. I have been attending many more meetings on a daily basis and keeping in contact with members I do not get to see very often. Home group boundaries have been torn down as we are simply carrying the message of hope and recovery through our Zoom meeting links and for this, I am very grateful. It has helped me feel even more connected to AA as a result. With that said, I hope you are finding the gratitude for Zoom meetings just as I have.

I was supposed to leave on a plane bound for Rye Brook, NY Friday April 17, 2020 to attend the 70th General Service Conference but this was not in the plans this year due to the virus. At one point it looked as if the 70th General Service Conference may just have to be cancelled but the Trustees and General Service Board of AA decided that was “not in the best interest of Alcoholics Anonymous”. I am grateful they felt the same way as I did. We are still holding the 70th General Service Conference but it will look way different than it has at any time in AA’s history.

The 70th General Service Conference will be held via a virtual platform. This means we will stay in our respective homes (no going to Rye Brook at all) and get on our computer devices. All attendees will still meet and hold discussions in committees and then on the General Service “Floor” to decide recommendations and advisory actions for the benefits of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Conference will be held in two separate sessions. The first session is to be held Wednesday April 29-May 13, 2020. Among other business, we will have training sessions and then meet with our respective General Service Committees to discuss our agenda items and decide what items can be removed from the agenda and put off until the next year and which items need to be decided in 2020. For myself, I serve on two committees. While I am unsure of what the Policy and Admissions Committee will decide, I am aware that due to the cancellation of the International Convention the committee of International Conventions and Regional Forums Committee we will not have many (if any) items to discuss this year. The reduction of agenda items is due to the fact that we are meeting in the full General Service Conference remotely and the entire selection of agenda items are simply too much to discuss fully for an informed group conscious. No matter what either committee I serve on decides, I am still fully prepared to discuss these items and vote on what we feel is best for AA as a whole.

The second session is to be held Saturday May 16-Tuesday May 19, 2020. Again, we will be holding this session remotely from our respective homes and computer devices so it will be very different for all of us. There are approximately 129 voting members at the General Service Conference so there has been much discussion and planning on how we can all participate with questions, comments and then voting. I am unsure of exactly how this is going to work but that is the reason behind the reduction of agenda items for this conference and also for our training sessions prior to the actual conference.

The General Service Conference will be held no longer than six hours each day with breaks for a total of four days only. Of course, if there is particularly passionate debate on any one agenda item, the full amount of time required to fully discuss these will be allowed no matter how long it takes.

We have some “essential business” that we will definitely vote on. These are the completed slates of the members of the General Service Board and the directors of the two corporate boards, AA World Services Inc. and the AA Grapevine, Inc. In addition to this, we will hold trustee elections, review board and finance reports and receive the reports of the Conference Committees. The schedule will also include a general sharing session, an area delegates only meeting and member connection activities.

What all of this will look like still remains to be seen but wow, what an opportunity to be a part of unprecedented AA history.

I am prepared to serve our Area in the best way possible even with these changes in venue for the Conference. Obviously, if I am invited to share my conference experience with Districts during 2020, I will not have any pictures of New York to share with you all nor any pictures of my fellow delegates. Pictures of the conference “floor” will be my desk and computer and no, I will not be dressing very often in business attire for the purpose of serving so I will spare all of you pictures of myself in jeans and t-shirts. However, I am glad not having to travel during this time, not trying to pack everything I need into just a couple of suitcases and not gaining 8lbs from all the good food they feed you at the General Service Conference.

What I really want to share with you all is how grateful I am to be a part of group of people who would not allow this pandemic to slow our program of action down. When we found out we could no longer attend face to face meetings we did not sit around and do nothing. No, we figured out a way to continue to hold meetings at all levels of service. We refused to allow isolation to keep us away from each other. We united and continue to carry the message of recovery and hope to all who need it. We could not sit back and bemoan the trials of our nation because instead, we got busy. We found a way just as we always have to get into action. I am so grateful that today, we live in the solution and not the problem. We can and will continue to learn and grow through all of this. We continue to “trudge” despite the odds and I know, I will be forever grateful and humbled to be a part of such a wonderful group of drunks.

May God bless you and keep you safe.

In Love and Service,

Lori C

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