

What an exciting and productive 61<sup>st</sup> General Service Conference I was honored to attend this year. As a 2<sup>nd</sup> year delegate, I was elated to see staff, Trustees and Panel 60 friends from last year, as well as meet new Panel 61 friends. Checking in, knowing what was expected and feeling more confident at the mic helped me focus on the tasks before me.

My theme from last year's conference was humility. I was struck with the importance of autonomy: at individual, group, district, area and conference levels while maintaining our 2<sup>nd</sup> Tradition of relying on our Higher Power for Ultimate Authority. I was overwhelmed with the task Bill W. and Dr. Bob laid at our feet – that our service structure demands alcoholic members take the predominate role for our Fellowship through the election of representatives. As the representative from Southwest Ohio, Area 56, I was humbled to realize I was elected to walk in 1/93<sup>rd</sup> of Bill and Bob's shoes during my term as delegate. In the tapestry of our 3<sup>rd</sup> Legacy of Service, my piece of the string was small, connected to past and future Area 56 Delegates, and intertwined with Area Delegates and Trustees from across Canada and the United States, in a beautiful blanket created to protect our beloved Fellowship.

It may be difficult to sum up a weeklong A.A. business meeting and group conscience in a paragraph, but I am an optimist. Roll call started our proceedings. After all the voting members were accounted for, my thought was 'wow – all of us brought our Higher Power to the conference with us – this is going to be something!' We heard from our Canadian Trustee-at-Large about her travels carrying our message to other countries. During the Sharing Sessions, we had the opportunities to speak our mind or ask any questions. We heard board reports from the Grapevine, A.A.W.S and the General Service Board. A financial presentation was also given. There were nine, wonderful presentations about topics in A.A. as well as five short 'leads'. In small workshops we discussed *How to Increase Participation in A.A. – Striving for Self-Support in All Our Affairs*. My conference committee met with the Grapevine Board to clarify any questions before our committee convened. We met twice for about 7 hours total to discuss the agenda items. The agenda items we recommended went to the whole Conference in our report. After all the delegates' conference committees finished their work, we heard the individual reports, discussed the items and voted whether the recommendations would benefit A.A. as a whole. The conference ended with goodbyes from the delegates and trustees rotating on to their next service adventures.

The theme for me from this year's conference was willingness. My how I have changed by being willing to fill the role H.P. assigns. Leadership does not come easy for me. I am an introvert. I do not have a gregarious personality and usually flee from conflict. Before the conference officially started, a past Trustee from Baltimore told me that I was enough. How did he know of my struggles that I wasn't even consciously aware of? I brought to the conference concerns about challenges facing my committee, fears of asking intelligent questions about financial statements I barely understood and felt adamant that we do a better job of following our spiritual principles contained in our Steps, Traditions and Concepts. A truth prevailed – God provides. I prayed for serenity to accept the things I couldn't change. I prayed for courage to change the things I could. I was granted wisdom in knowing that I did all I could for Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you for allowing me to represent you, your home group and our area. With gratitude for my opportunity to be your trusted servant, I would be happy to give a report or summary to your group.

Yours in Service,

Alicia R., [undergracein56@yahoo.com](mailto:undergracein56@yahoo.com), (513)872-0846