

Delegate Spring Report March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Hello Area 86

First of all, I hope this report finds you and your families well during these trying times. I am sitting here in my home Office writing this report full of all sorts of emotions just as you all are too, I am sure.

I have put off writing this report as I just didn't know how or where to begin. The last two weeks have been so crazy with things changing daily as you all know. So here we go I will begin January 1<sup>st</sup>...

January 1<sup>st</sup> arrived and many of us stepped into our new positions with eagerness and excitement. We were heading for new experiences and challenges with lots of opportunities for learning and growth. We were continuing to serve our Fellowship and how blessed were we to have been given this privilege.

The emails began arriving from GSO and I was granted access to the Dashboard on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. So much information and dates to be aware of. As you may have heard by now, I was assigned to The Conference Literature Committee but things had to be changed so I was re-assigned to the Conference Trustees' Committee. Literature, I was told was busy but I knew and understood what that was all about. Trustees', well that was something that I wasn't so familiar with so I went to the Service Manual first and then I began reaching out and asking questions.

We had the Pre-Conference Agenda Items to read through but I was eagerly waiting for the final agenda items and the background information that would be posted to the dashboard in February.

Our January Area Committee Meeting took place. What a great day seeing everyone in their new positions. Thank you District 10 for hosting us all and to all the members of Area 86 that came out. The day was informative and the room was a buzz, full of positive energy. I felt so grateful to be a part of Area 86 and looked forward to serving you all.

One of the things that was a big concern was the new ERP system (Enterprise Resource Planning) as both DCM's and the GSR's were not receiving information and our Secretary Registrar was also not getting information. We gave GSO a bit more time but after more questions and concerns arose Pam reached out and asked for help. We got things sorted out and Pam was supposed to receive some training in the near future. I understand some kits did begin arriving but I am not sure if this has continued due to the virus.

January 27<sup>th</sup> we had our CERAASA Steering Committee call, this is with the Delegates and Alternate Delegates from the 10 Eastern Canadian Areas. Our Past Delegate Dale S. is the Chair as we, Area 86, are hosting the event. When you ask? February 26,27,28, 2021. Our Eastern Canada Regional Trustee Jan L. also takes part and this was our first call since the start of the new Panel.

I want to thank all the Districts, Groups and Intergroups that also contacted me. January was a busy month with emails and calls inviting the Area to participate in your Round Ups, Inventories, Service Days and Campouts. I quickly began passing some onto both Jeff, our Alternate Delegate and Janice our Area Chair.

February 2 the final Agenda Items were posted on the Dashboard and I did send this out to the Area. On February 14<sup>th</sup> the background information (all 1,072 pages) was posted and I sent the information that pertained to each Area Sub Committee Chair so they could use it in their Assembly workshops. This was

to be a Pre-Conference Assembly; this is to get the information out to the fellowship and gather feedback for the Delegate to take to the Conference in April.

With the background now posted we had a week to get our presentations done and sent in for the Ontario Delegates Committee (ODC). The ODC was held in Toronto, Area 83, February 28<sup>th</sup>-March 1<sup>st</sup>. I also had sent this information out along with the Agenda to the Area. Everyone was welcome and I want to thank the members that were able to attend. Your support meant the world to us. It is difficult to do presentations and get practice if no one is there to hear them so thank you.

The four Areas in Ontario come together in the even years with the Delegates, Alternate Delegates, the Eastern Canada Regional Trustee and Past Delegates participating. All members are encouraged to come and ask questions, learn a bit more about what the Conference is all about and to learn about the agenda items for that Conference.

The Delegates present on the Conference Committee they have been assigned to. The Alternate Delegates are assigned a Conference Workshop topic and asked to do a presentation. The Trustee gives a report and the Past Delegates share their experience at the Conference and give us tips and suggestions, like wear your tighter fitting clothes at the start of the week, take time to get outside, sit somewhere different during each session and meal and journal every night.

In my humble opinion everyone did a fabulous job including our own Alternate Delegate, Jeff. I found the weekend to be invaluable as it helps the Delegates and the Alternate Delegates get to know one another and prepare for the General Service Conference. All the presentations were very helpful and informative. There was also lots of time given for all members to ask questions and give feedback.

I felt a calmness come over me after the weekend as the preparation for the Conference is yes very exciting but also intimidating at the same time.

And then March arrived...things began to change quickly. I remember being at my home group on Friday March 6<sup>th</sup> and deciding to no longer hold hands or hug members. Some of the members thought I was overreacting but I needed to stay healthy. The following Thursday I was watching a show on TV with my husband and I checked my email. I received an email from Jan, our Trustee, to the Delegates notifying us that the 70<sup>th</sup> General Service Conference would no longer be an on-site Conference. GSO had to make the decision to change it to a Virtual Conference with what was happening in New York. The Conference was to be held in Rye Brook at the Westchester Hilton which was only 20 miles from where the majority of the first COVID-19 cases started in New York (Westchester County).

I think we all knew it was coming but it did not soften the blow and yes, I shed a few tears. It only took a couple of minutes and I returned to a place of Gratitude. This will be a whole new experience for us all and it is such an honour to be a part of it. Thank you to everyone that reached out to me with their thoughts and kind words but as we now know this was not the end...

Janice had to reach out to you Area 86 with the sad news that we had to cancel our Spring Assembly. To all the new GSR's, DCM's and Sub Committee Chairs I am so sorry. It is definitely not the way we thought we would begin Panel 70. This didn't put a damper on our Spirits though. We continued on then the meetings began to close.

GSO was sending notices every other day it seemed with updates. The emails and calls I received with your concerns. What was going to happen to the new comer? How can we do meetings? We are breaking this Tradition or that one? All these communications proved to me we are going to be OK. The members in our Area and around the world were banding together and figuring things out, and things were moving quickly, probably a lot faster than a lot of us would like but we were still going to be connecting.

On March 19<sup>th</sup> I participated in a Zoom call with the Conference Trustees' Committee as scheduled. Rick W., a GSO Staff member and our Secretary, was on the call and we spoke about how the Virtual Conference was going to look. The Panel 69 Delegates shared a bit of information on how they were preparing that I found very helpful.

March 20<sup>th</sup>, I received another email from Greg T. stating that due to everything happening in New York the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous had to close indefinitely. The Staff were working from home but through all this the planning for the Virtual Conference had to be put on hold.

The truth was they were now having to deal with the big question of the International Convention in Detroit and what should be done. Well as of today we know the answer. The Detroit Convention had to be cancelled.

March 23<sup>rd</sup>, we had our bimonthly Zoom call with the CERAASA Steering Committee. Tim M., Past Delegate from Area 82, Panel 67 was chairing the Eastern Canadian Hospitality Suite and he was asked to join us and give an update. I would like to thank Tim on behalf of us all in Area 86 for his hard work and service.

March 24<sup>th</sup> Janice, Area 86 Chair sent out an Agenda. The Area Committee Meeting to be held in District 19 on May 9<sup>th</sup> has been changed into a One Day Assembly. There is business that needs to be done and we can not wait until the Fall Assembly. The decision was made so to get an informed Group Conscience we would try to meet as an Area. The business of Alcoholics Anonymous must continue and Area 86 must do its part.

On March 26<sup>th</sup> Greg T. sent out an update to the Conference planning. The planning for a Virtual Conference will begin again on Monday. This is an exert from his letter.

**“The office, working closely with the trustees' Committee on the General Service Conference, will put forward for discussion a new proposed schedule for the 70th General Service Conference. Most of it will be pushed out a couple of months (into early June) from the current start date of Sunday, April 19, and we will incorporate in the proposed plan the “two session” approach and an abbreviated schedule to accomplish all the necessary business of our Conference.”**

Through all this I spoke with our Chair and expressed the need for an Area Zoom account. The Area purchased one this past week and the Officers have used it to meet. There is a scheduled zoom call with the Sub Committee Chairs this Sunday night, March 29<sup>th</sup> and then with the DCM's the following Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>.

It is my hope that we can arrange some sessions so we can share on the Agenda items, and you can give me your feedback. Both Jeff and myself sat in on Area 83's pre conference calls and were really

impressed. The more members that would like to get involved the better. If anyone is worried or not sure how Zoom works please contact me and we can set up a “play” session.

The account will also be made available to Dale to use for both the CERAASA Steering Committee and the CERAASA Host Committee. Thank you, Area 83, as up until now we have been using their account.

GSO is doing a great job posting the information on the aa.org website so please go there and look for updates before trying to contact them. They are doing everything humanly possible but they are just like us. Trying to do as the government has instructed them, taking care of themselves and their loved ones and getting to a meeting (virtually now or by phone) when possible.

So, we are now up to date with the exception of mentioning the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition. As you can see many services must continue. Rents, insurance, telephones, internet, storage fees, mailings, correspondence's, publications, payroll etc....We have obligations that have to be kept. Some of the meetings I see are doing virtual collections. I reached out to the other 92 Areas to see how they were handling it. The members are still contributing when they can. Through e transfers to Treasurers, a place on websites, mailing cheques, directly going to aa.org and contributing to GSO through the “make a contribution” link the funds are arriving. Please if you can send your 7<sup>th</sup> to your home group, keep doing your usual splits when possible, forwarding to Intergroups, Districts, Area and if you are able think about a Birthday Contribution to GSO. Is it before your AA birthday or is it a late contribution from your last AA birthday, but be aware if you do it on line it will be in US dollars. GSO can still accept cheques but with everything going on through the website is preferred.

Well I would like to finish just by saying thank you. I know this is challenging times for many of us. We can all be here for each other. Please let's be kind and gentle with one another. Before getting angry and disagreeing with what someone/group/District or Area is doing remember they too are doing the best they can and are trying. If we keep our Three Legacies in our Hearts then we will be OK and I believe come through this stronger.

Thank you to my fellow Officers who have all pulled together and shown each other support.

As always please continue to send your Districts minutes. They are a wonderful read and so appreciated. If I can be of any help please email or call me. [Area86delegatep70@gmail.com](mailto:Area86delegatep70@gmail.com), 905-466-8408.

Thank you, Area 86, for allowing me to serve you. Please keep calling and emailing with any questions or concerns and I will do my best to get you the answers or information.

Gratefully yours in love and service,

Sandi W.

Panel 70 Delegate

Area 86 Western Ontario

Conference Trustees' Committee