

"We can't control the direction of the wind, but we can adjust our sails."

While similar quotes have been attributed to various people, I credit this one to my first sponsor, Kathleen B., who gave me a coin with a sailboat and this bit of advice on it when I was a newcomer. She passed away many years ago, and the coin was lost in a wildfire. But I still carry this message in my heart, and it was the first thought that came to me when I woke up the morning after our December Area Committee Meeting.

Another thing that's been on my mind lately is something I heard from second-year delegates earlier this year when describing their delegate experience: "You're either in your first year or your last year." I shrugged it off as one of our General Service cliches at the time, but now here we are, halfway through Panel 71, and that sentiment has made the two-foot drop that same first sponsor taught me about. I feel the truth of it in my core.

We are in a new phase of our development in CNCA as we work toward solutions to allow more access to our area events, both in person and virtually, with the goal of something more unified. We will be adjusting our sails many times, but I believe we are headed in the right direction. I have faith in our Hybrid Ad Hoc committee and our other standing committees who will be letting us know what we need to make it happen.

Meanwhile, I do need to make plans. I need to be informed as your area delegate before I attend the General Service Conference at the end of April. I sent out a 2022 Agenda Topics Timeline to all the DCMCs, detailing the deadlines for various parts of the process. I suggest GSRs start talking to their groups now about scheduling sharing sessions in March, and plan to attend district agenda topic workshops held all over the Area in February and March. It's our busy season, and we are all here to help each other learn.

We have an in-person Pre-Conference Assembly planned for April 2-3 in Petaluma. It will be our first in-person assembly in two years! It's too early to know if we can add a virtual element to that successfully. So, for now, we are saving the date of April 9 as a possible "inform the delegate" Zoom event. When we get closer to April, if we determine it is needed, more information will become available as to what that will look like. If we have learned anything in the past two years, it's that we can adjust to changing conditions and get creative.

While I always suggest attending the assembly, there will also be the usual option to submit group consciences in writing, either by email or using the form that will be on our website. From my experience last year, I will tell you that all the methods were equal in their impact on my thinking. Whether I heard it or read it, the voices of your groups were carried with me to the Conference. With the help of the alternate delegate, the recording secretary, the web committee, interpreters and translators, and of course all who participated in gathering those group consciences, I felt fully informed.

Happy New Year!

Jennifer B., Panel 71 Delegate