

When I pulled up to the Petaluma Veterans Hall on the first day of the assembly and saw the parking volunteers in the brightly-colored CNCA vests, waving good morning, I was hit with a flood of happy tears. The first person I saw in the parking lot was my sponsor and past delegate, Joann. We walked in together, and it all felt so different and yet so much the same. So many familiar faces, so many new faces, so many faces I'd only ever seen on screen. The beautiful, buzzing activity of a society of alcoholics in action, making sure we could do our part to participate in greater A.A.

The first year I was a GSR, it was the experience of gathering a group conscience on a controversial topic very close to my own heart, and then hearing our Delegate report back on what happened at the Conference that finally rocketed me into the fourth dimension. I'd been sober for six years, doing the deal but growing complacent, and now I felt part of something bigger. I've been hooked ever since.

I learned to be truly accountable. I found my voice. I learned we can disagree and still have that joyful camaraderie. I learned to trust the group conscience by participating in it. I got more comfortable in my own skin, trying new things, and sometimes making mistakes. I let you get to know me. And somehow you decided to put your trust in me again and again. I like to remember that I'm just the drunk whose turn it is this time, but I also don't forget that a very small number of people get to have the experience of serving as a delegate to the General Service Conference. It's humbling, to say the least. But I know I can't break A.A. because I don't do this alone. I have the other delegates, and I have all of you.

I love the information and seeing how all the pieces fit. I love the principles, the process and the procedures. I'm definitely a service geek! But what has been the most wonderful discovery for this alcoholic is how much I love the people. Learning from you, watching you grow, seeing your creativity, hearing your passion and vision, and knowing that together, we can carry out our three legacies and keep the doors open for the next alcoholic looking for a way out.

The participation at the assembly was inspiring. We knew it was over when the past delegates sang. As Dolly Parton said in Steel Magnolias, "laughter through tears is my favorite emotion." By the time you read this, I will have received all the notes from our wonderful recording secretary and alternate delegate, reviewed all your emails and web form responses, held a virtual sharing day, and been fully informed by my beloved CNCA. I am especially grateful for your input on my Trustees committee items—you gave me some specific ideas I plan to bring to the table.

Thank you for your amazing service to your groups and to A.A. as a whole. Thank you for your trust. Thank you for making all of this so much fun.

No sleep 'til Brooklyn!

Jennifer B., Panel 71 Delegate