

2021 WSBC: April 17 –24, 2021

Lee Ann S.

In 2021 the Trustees of OA decided to hold the annual WSBC (World Service Business Conference) via Zoom. Instead of the usual 5 days of conference (Tues-Saturday), we had 5 days of business meetings preceded by a full weekend of conference business. As I had been assigned to the Bylaws committee, and know our R7 Trustee, Karen B, from service at Region 7, I was selected to be one of about 20 WSBC reps to do additional service on the Reference Sub-Committee. There were Reference meetings every day so initially I was stressing about the time commitment. However, as evidence that things are not in my control, I was able to take 12-4pm off for daily Business meetings and from 4:30-6:30 able to attend Reference, all with my boss' support. Following Reference, we had an optional R7 "check in" for half an hour to give everyone a place to talk about the day. It sounds like a lot but it was just a week plus a Saturday and we did get a lot done, after the cancellation of the 2020 WSBC.

A word about Reference Subcommittee. It is a committee within Bylaws and is primarily concerned with emergency motions and changes in approach that come up at Conference. This allows resolution to happen at Conference and not a year later. There is often heated discussion on Reference and a lot of kinks can get worked out in a smaller group. This subcommittee is more easily managed than the 240+ reps and allows Ref team members to hash out resolutions. It was a huge learning experience for me and the Zoom voting feature was extremely helpful; we used the Green/Red checkmark/x-mark to take a read on the sentiment of the group and that worked well.

Aside from the intensity of WSBC week, it was manageable to do Bylaws Committee work in advance of and since the conference; I've been doing service looking for broken website links on oa.org and now working on developing website content about Bylaws as part of a sub-committee. The conference experience and spending such focused time on OA service enhances my Program. The very concentrated discussion about things like the definition of "recovery" and coming up with language on the statement on abstinence, gave me a new appreciation of views held by others, giving me opportunities to be patient and tolerant.

Topics were passionately discussed by people with differing views from all around the world. Our international WSBC delegates for whom English was not their native language attended business meetings at inconvenient times and beautifully articulated their positions which was completely inspirational and moving. One of the most interesting topics to me was the need to provide simultaneous translation at WSBC to support non-English-speaker reps. This became an Emergency Motion at the very last business meeting. Up to 3 emergency motion statements are able to be submitted for review - and I was very happy to have my statement chosen to go to first discussion then vote. In the end the motion was defeated since there was not enough discussion time to explore concerns about costs; but an ad-hoc committee was agreed to research the topic and

look for assistive technologies (“apps”) which would run on a delegate’s smartphone and provide translation during conference meetings including business and OA meetings, wherever the delegate goes. Some felt that the technology already exists to provide enhanced language support for our international representatives and I look forward to hearing what is discovered by the ad-hoc committee as possible solutions.

Other Emergency New Business Motions that came to Reference Subcommittee were:

- better definition of how to define and record Special Focus Groups on the OA.org website is needed and it should be developed and posted [agreed];
- request to rescind approval of Voices of Recovery due to changes made by application of the “Style Guide” - which removed capitalization of reverential pronouns [defeated; but agreed the Literature Committee would re-check VoR manuscript prior to publication; the deep concern of many members was noted];
- OA.org should refund the Paycheck Protection loan received as a non-profit from the US Government as pandemic assistance [defeated as there is no way to give the money back, apparently]
- translation at Conference, already discussed.

As Ross has already reviewed some key motions, for a full recap, please read the WSBC Wrap-Up Report (at <https://oa.org/app/uploads/2021/05/wrap-up-report-21.pdf>) if you want details of how each of the motions we voted on, did at Conference.

I echo Ross’ comments on the professionalism, calm serenity, and focus of our Trustees and Chair for such a well-run Conference. Thank you for allowing me to be your CJI delegate for the 2021 Virtual WSBC. Please consider stepping up for this service as it is completely worth doing and even better in person!

Respectfully submitted, Lee Ann S.