**Friday afternoon: Business**

The conference voted to raise the limit on how much a person can donate per year to the general fund, from $5000 to $7500. This was strictly to account for inflation. The reason for the limit is to prevent some swank benefactor from expecting influence for all the cash they give. IMO, how much someone gives to an organization is up to the individual. It is up to the organization to decide what influence will be allowed as a result of a donation. But here’s the import of this matter: Hardly anyone has run up against the old limit, and it seems unlikely that will occur now. So, like, whatevs.

A proposal asked to increase the number of years available on recovery chips from World Service. Someone who wanted to celebrate a fellow’s 46 years found our recovery chips didn’t go that high. The proposer pointed out that OA is 63 years old, meaning we could have some pretty long-term abstinence, and we should have the tools to recognize those milestones.  … The conference is having trouble understanding what the proposal and its amendment means. It’s not all glamour, here in Albuquerque, but this is how the sausages are made. … The original motion wanted us to print medallions for every number between 1 and 50. A successful amendment changed that to making two new chips, for 45 and 50 years.

They took a 7th Tradition collection. It raised $2477.75. You’ll see a line item for that amount on my expense report! (Yes, just kidding.)

We’re just back from the 3 o’clock break, and the bylaws committee has withdrawn four proposed changes, because we’re running out of time. It is, I think, the practical result of profuse amending. Also, IMO, the changes that we now won’t address are all are valid, but not vital. Perhaps that’s why they were chosen for removal, under these circumstances.

We’re now dealing with a substitute motion that seeks to address, among other goals, the term “closed meeting,” which is intended to mean “no visitors, just those who have or think they have food issues.” Also in this motion, a hot question from last year is also addressed, indirectly: It creates the term “specific focus meeting,” which is intended to avoid the term “special-focus meetings,” which some feel has a negative sense, in that someone “special” is not only different, but also, perhaps, less than. This is akin, IMO, to the term “special needs,” which I believe has moved out of favor. Many, including me, consider “special focus” to be less inclusive. To my surprise, two people who attend special-focus meetings spoke against this change, saying they found the term to be affirming.

Generally, once thrice-amended motions are sent to reference subcommittee, they are no longer amendable. So we were told. A delegate asked if we could split this question, to divide the open/closed meeting question and the special focus/specific focus question. The parliamentarian, surprisingly to me, said it could, and the body voted to split them. Regarding the first question, the conference voted to approve what I would call broader, clearer definitions for open and closed meetings.

On the second question, it is the same argument, to me, as the binary/non-binary question of earlier today. As then, I’ve not been persuaded at all by those opposed to this change. One of the pro speakers said that both terms are effective descriptors, and one doesn’t have the negative baggage; can’t we compromise? I sure don’t see why we can’t.

With diversity so fully in awareness here, someone suggested it would be good to have a demographic baseline for the conference’s diversity. A survey with perhaps 20 questions asking about skin tone, flavors of spirituality, age, etc., was prepared by Beth B., the Region 6 trustee liaison and 2d vice chair of the board. It’s gonna be a big job to collate overnight!

For the last act of the session, we returned again to Proposal F, the Unity With Diversity question that began with whether we would change “his or her” to “their.” In the end, it passed, but by sidestepping the issue of whether we are going to use terms that reflect the experiences of all our members. A delegate from Brazil, for whom English is a second language, suggested this change: from “by allowing any member to share his or her experience…” to “by allowing members to share their experience…” I spoke in favor, because clearly this solved this problem, but I also pointed out the avoidance, and that, IMO, we will have to face it again soon enough. It passed.