Thursday morning: First of five business sessions. Announcements, introductions, approval of standing rules, chair and treasurer reports, region reports,

Trustees, WSO staff, and volunteers were introduced. Then, delegates were introduced, though only by Region/state or Region/country. I didn’t ‘t get the entire list, but we have delegates from Canada (part of which is part of our Region 6), Russia, Greece, Colombia, Brazil, Australia, Italy, Israel, Iran, Sweden, and Ukraine. According to the Region 9 report, OA members speak in more than 40 languages from Afrikaans to Zulu. More than 40 countries have active service bodies. But according to the Region 10 report, all meetings in China have ceased since the pandemic, even virtual meetings.

One hundred seventy-six delegates are eligible to vote. When we vote, they close the doors to the room; they’re very serious about it all.

Last year, “no gum chewing” was added to the standing rules, to the frustration of more than one delegate, not for the specific point, but in the vein of “are you kidding?” It passed. This year, someone wanted to remove it, and it led to a discussion, including the words “debilitating,” and “diagnosed medical condition.” Ultimately, it was decided to keep it, but to add the proviso “except for medical requirements.” That was followed by a request from someone from the virtual region that if someone needs to chew something for medical reasons, that she/he not do it near the virtual region (seats are assigned by region, and where we sit in the hall will change for each session. This was because there were complaints in prior years that some regions never got to sit in the front.) When we came back from break, it was reported that the someone had started chewing gum, after the break had been called but still in the room, and the person in the Virtual Region with the debilitating medical condition had had a reaction and had had to leave the session.

Tidbits from the managing director’s report (not discussed during the business session specifically, but interesting, IMO):

* In 2022, OA had an average of 6,467 groups, including virtual groups of course. That was lower than the number for 2021 (6,566), but higher than in each of three years before that. In its separate report, Region 7, which went from 436 meetings to 404, said they were alive and well. The math represented not the loss of actually meetings, but from the delisting of f2f meetings that had been listed twice (f2f and virtual) during the brunt of the pandemic, but now had decided to be only one or only the other.
* OA ended 2022 with a loss of about a quarter million dollars. About $100,000 was lost on the decision to cancel the f2f WSBC, and about $185,000 was lost on our investments, which was a condition of the market, not our investment decisions. Or rather, I should say we weren’t the only investors to lose money last year.

The question of interpreting English OA docs into other languages comes up often!