General Service Conference! It has been so much fun getting to share with you what I saw, felt, and heard. I will be attending the Pacific Northwest Conference this next weekend and look forward to Hello, Area 72! Well, I have been traveling around visiting you all with my report back from the 73rd listening to the panelists and fellowshipping! I was assigned to present on the Fifth Edition Big Book. I had a lot of fun researching the history of our first four editions and will be sharing some fun facts! As for the topic on our 7th Tradition, I thought I would share a section from Concept XI. In discussing the composition of standing committees, it highlights the importance of the General Service Board finance and budgetary committee stating, “The main responsibility of this body is to see that we do not become money-crippled or go broke. This is the place where money and spirituality do have to mix, and in just the right proportion. Here we need hard-headed members with much financial experience. All should be realists, and a pessimist or two can be useful. The whole temper of today’s world is to spend more than it has or may ever have. Many of us consequently are infected with this rosy philosophy. When a new and promising A.A. service project moves into sight, we are apt to cry, ‘Never mind the money, let’s get at it.’ This is when our budgeteers are expected to say ‘Stop, look, and listen.’ This is the exact point where the “savers” come into a constructive and healthy collision with the “spenders.” The primary function of this committee, therefore, is to see that our Headquarters operation is always solvent and that it stays that way, in good times and bad.” Having done a lot of research before the conference and after attending the conference, I am not so sure as a fellowship we are giving good clear direction to the General Service Board. We are constantly putting forth new ideas each conference year, but do not take the time to evaluate the effectiveness of each service. We also have a lot of content that most members are not aware exists, yet we ask for more to be developed. I am not saying when there is a clear need for to help the still-suffering alcoholic that we should not approve and fully support that service. But what I do see as a potential issue is the reporting of financials to the fellowship through the delegates is not always easily understandable. I think if the fellowship were to have a better idea of what a project costs from development, implementation, and then maintenance, we would be able to make a more informed decision about which services to produce. There was some progress made at this year’s conference, and I look forward to seeing if this helps facilitate more transparency in our financial health as a fellowship. Until then, I hope we all take the approach of “Stop, look, and listen.”

Crystal S., Area 72 Delegate