



REFLECTIONS

A monthly source of information for beneficiaries of the Adventist Retirement Plans.

GC Session

For several months I've been anticipating General Conference Session, the Seventh-day Adventist Church's quinquennial global meeting when leadership is selected and reports are brought to the world family. This is my first day back in the office after being in Atlanta for ten days. What was it like?

Hot! Temperatures and Humidity hovered around 90 most days. For those of us with a fairly lengthy walk, it meant going through more clothes than anticipated.

Crowded! Atlanta is a thriving city. Traffic is difficult even with no convention in town. Our busses and traffic made it even worse, particularly on the two weekends. It was estimated that close to 70,000 Adventists crowded the Georgia Dome on Sabbath, July 3.

Hospitable: The convention center employees were friendly and congenial, even as they did their job of controlling access and requiring proper credentials. They even wished us a pleasant "Happy Sabbath" as we flooded the Georgia Dome for Sabbath School.

Memorable: Session is an incredible time to reconnect with people you have known before. I don't know how many times somebody came up and I had to check their name badge before remembering who they were.

Confusing: The facility was massive. Events were happening simultaneously. One gentleman thanked me for the good job I did in front. I had directed some music, and assumed that to be his subject. But he went on to describe the changes to the church manual, and I concluded he thought I was Homer Trecartin, associate secretary of the GC. My wife leaned over and said "At least he didn't confuse you with Homer Simpson!"





I was pleased to see quite a few retirees. Many received special passes to be able to enter the main floor and participate. I'm including pictures of just a few individual retirees in some cases with Andee, my lovely wife.

Willy Nobuo is a retiree living in Guam where my wife and I began our missionary career. We saw Larry & Carole Colburn and Don & Irene Gilbert, as well as Carolyn & Bob Rawson. Don Roth told me that this was not his own cart, he was just waiting for Doris. Joan Shultz, wife of the late Wes Shultz surprised us.

Perhaps the most compelling of Atlanta 2010 was the diversity and unity. Andee and I sat at dinner one evening with a Filipino couple who live in Texas, and a Argentinean couple who live in Italy. Another evening we ate with a group from Slovakia. Efforts to communicate were somewhat fractured, but the smiles and genuine affection for colleagues in Christ were all we truly needed.

Not everything went according to the plan. There were some no-shows—musicians who had applied, auditioned, been approved, and then failed to meet their appointments. One preacher fainted halfway through his sermon. Another preacher went overtime. The hotel bus system was encumbered by the inherent

traffic gridlock of downtown Atlanta. But fellowship and spiritual food attended the business of God's church. We came home blessed.

The music is always an incredibly rich experience at the Session. Soloists, quartets, choruses and mass choirs, vocal, instrumental, multiple languages, styles and colors . . . One particular soloist was well supported by his sound track. Suddenly the sound track began to malfunction, skipping and dropping out. The singer gave a subtle gesture with his hand, and the audio director cut the sound track out entirely. "Disaster!" I thought. "How will this soloist complete his song in this massive Georgia Dome without accompaniment support?" But his voice, already rich and full, seemed to become even richer and fuller. With no accompaniment, he negotiated a key change, another stanza and a dramatic ending. I believe the angels helped him fill the dome with a song of praise!

There was sadness. Not all who sought re-election were selected to continue on. Some who were in St. Louis five years ago are no longer with us. Particularly poignant was the loss of GC Ministerial Secretary James Cress, who was responsible for planning the speaking schedule for the session. Jim's death on November 26, 2009 came from "complications arising from a rare pathogen believed to have been contracted in the course of his travels." But his planning for this session was so precise and well documented that those who stepped in were amazed. "He had done all the work."

The various Divisions of the General Conference presented their reports during the evening meetings. You can see the NAD report by going to the NAD Website, www.nadadventist.org.



Retirement Call-in Services

Occasionally Retirees express frustration at not being able to speak with a real person on a timely basis. We have eleven benefits processors, including some in training. Depending on the first letter of your last name or other factors, we assign you to one of these processors for questions and requests. They will be working on several applications as well as reports of death and death benefits, and responding to questions.

Contact Tips:

- Questions regarding status of medical claims and/or coverage/payment for tests, doctor's visits, etc., should be directed to the Adventist Risk Management line (1-800-447-5002). Retirement does not have direct access to your medical files.
- Questions regarding healthcare plan provisions, enrollment and eligibility should be directed to the SHARP line (301-680-5036).
- Requests for Medicare Part B reimbursement for eligible retirees must be done by mail, not phone.
- Notification of the death of the Retiree or spouse should be directed to the main Retirement phone number. (301-680-6249)
- Requests for replacement forms 1099-R, checks and verification of benefits for loans or housing should be made to Payroll. (301-680-6244 or 6250)
- Change of address; mail, fax or call our office. (301-680-6244 or 6250).
- Do NOT call for a change of direct deposit account; insert a voided check and a signed note requesting the change and mail or fax to 301-680-6190.
- Call the Payroll information bulletin line (888-838-8955) for information on release of payments or for instructions on how to set up or change direct deposit data. This is an announcement line and won't accept messages.

When you call:

- Consider when to call us. We are located in the east.
- Retirement operates on a flex-time schedule. Many of us work four day weeks. Fridays are not the best days to call.

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PAYROLL BULLETIN BOARD

Checks/EFT Released

This Month: **Aug. 27**

Next Month: **Sept. 27**

Adventist Retirement Plans

Del Johnson
Administrator

Lyn Wick
Associate Administrator

Judy Beers
Associate Administrator

Maurine Wahlen
Associate Administrator

Adventist Risk Management: 1-800-447-5002
Healthcare Claims Queries

SHARP: 301-680-5036
SHARP@nad.adventist.org
Healthcare Eligibility Queries

Submit all claims to:
Adventist Risk Management—SHARP
PO Box 1928
Grapevine, TX 76099-1928

Medco Health: 1-800-841-5396
Verify pharmacy participation with
Medco Health

Payroll: 1-888-838-8955
Bulletin Board of Payroll Information

NAD Retirement Department
Fax: 301-680-6190
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Barbara Yowell: 301-680-6244
Lost checks, direct deposits, 1099R,
tax withholding, change of address,
verification of benefits for loans,
housing, Medicaid

Retirement Reception: 301-680-6249
General Retirement Office Information

Chris Meier: 301-680-6192
Reporting a death, disability reviews



www.RenewedandReady.com

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Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

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- Have your Social Security number handy.
- When calling on behalf of somebody else, be sure you have provided us with a copy of your authority to discuss personal information with us.
- Leaving messages on multiple Retirement phones ends up causing confusion, and often delays a response. We return calls as soon as we can, but that may be 24 hours, and it may take longer to get the answer to your question if we need to do research or have a pressing deadline.
- Email is usually best. Always include your phone number and the last four digits of your Social Security number. Our standard email address at the office is NADRetirement@nad.adventist.org.
- If you are not sure who you should talk to, call our main number and let our receptionist direct you. This will save you from the delay caused by leaving messages for people who aren't able to help you.
- Check out our website: www.nadadventist.org/ret/. The site contains downloads of various forms and documents. You can get the most recent SHARP booklet, copies of previous newsletters, or many other documents.