

# AREA 53 INVENTORY      MAY 16, 2009

## QUESTIONS:

- 1) What is the basic purpose of Area 53? Do we stay alert for any decisions that might affect AA as a whole?
- 2) What is meant by the "collective conscience" of AA? Is it at work in Area 53?
- 3) Who is the Area delegate? Do we support our delegate? Who are the Area officers? Do we support our officers? Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility, not to be viewed at a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?
- 4) What is the Area assembly and what is its relationship to the General Service Conference? Does my group contribute to the area in money, time, and activities?
- 5) Is the Area attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community? Do new members stick with us, or is turnover excessive? If so, why is it excessive, and what can we as an Area do about it?
- 6) Does our delegate know the Area's conscience on matters of importance to us? Do we contact our Area delegate and Area officers with our concerns and questions?
- 7) Should the minority opinion always be heard at area assemblies? Are all members given the opportunity to speak at assemblies and to participate in activities?
- 8) Are treatment centers standing in the way of our 12th step work? Does talk of AA politics effect new people becoming involved in AA service?
- 9) What does "leading by example" mean? how important is good leadership? What are some qualities of good leaders?
- 10) Does our Area do its fair share in participating in the purpose of AA as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service?
- 11) Do we have enough committees or too many committees to do the needed work of the Area? Do our committees fulfill their responsibilities? Regardless of the number, do we support our committees?
- 12) Do I expect that because I am an AA member, I should be allowed to vote in elections at any group, even if I am not an active member of that group? Do i understand the importance of my participation in the growth of AA.
- 13) Is the Area 53 Mini-Conference serving the Area? Can you describe how? If not, why not? Do we support the Mini-Conference? If not, why not? Is there a need for an Area 53 Convention?

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- 14) Do you have enough information about the Area to make informed decisions? Do you receive whatever information you need in a timely manner?
- 15) Does your group have a General Service Representative (GSR)? If not, why not? If so, is your GSR active? Does your group get reports? Does your group support Your GSR?
- 16) Have we missed any items of concern or importance to you? Are you being heard? Are the Area officers listening?

## ANSWERS (Questions 1-5):

- 1) What is the basic purpose of Area 53? Do we stay alert for any decisions that might affect AA as a whole?

-part 1: The purpose is to conduct the business of AA within our geographical area. This is where the groups' consciences are transmitted through GSR reports and voting on agenda items. Our input influences the Delegate's conscience for the General Service Conference [GSC]. Our collective conscience informs the Delegate.

We vote on the Delegate to the GSC and the panel to which he/she serves for two year terms. The panel and the GSRs are the guardian of the traditions.

-part 2: This is achieved through an informed Delegate and panel members. We trust our trusted servants.

- 2) What is meant by the "collective conscience" of AA? Is it at work in Area 53?

-part 1: The collective conscience comes from the GSRs and the area officers. Our voice is heard at District meetings, assemblies and the mini-conference. The collective conscience is spiritual in nature, guided by our Higher Power. The more voices and minority opinions expressed can lead to a more informed conscience.

-part 2: This works to a degree. More participation, more GSRs, at assemblies and the mini-conference would be beneficial. The trusted servants are representing us so we need to include as many voices as we can.

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3) Who is the Area delegate? Do we support our delegate? Who are the Area officers? Do we support our officers? Mindful that holding office is a great responsibility, not to be viewed at a popularity contest, are we choosing our officers with care?

-part 1 and part 2: We support the Delegate financially. We try to support spiritually through the conscience of the assemblies and mini-conference. We have faith in our Delegates.

-part 3 and part 4: We don't know all the panel members and their positions. The officers don't get as much support.

-part 5: [popularity vs. care]: A little of both takes place. We don't always know who is standing because we also take nominations from the floor per 3rd legacy procedure. We ask for a service history of each nominee so that the voter can be informed when casting their ballot. At the June assembly previous to the voting assembly we ask the outgoing officer to describe their service duties.

4) What is the Area assembly and what is its relationship to the General Service Conference? Does my group contribute to the area in money, time, and activities?

-The group felt this was covered in Question 1. Contributions of money, time, and action are spotty. A lot of groups are uninformed about contributions.

5) Is the Area attracting alcoholics from different backgrounds? Are we seeing a good cross-section of our community? Do new members stick with us, or is turnover excessive? If so, why is it excessive, and what can we as an Area do about it?

-part 1 and part 2: A lot of mixed responses to this question. They range from no, not enough minorities, to we can only vote for those that are willing to attend. we have a responsibility to get more groups involved to get a better cross-section of the AA population. Most felt there is no conscience exclusion of anyone. If you want to run show up and be active.

-part 3 and part 4:We need to track turnover and visit as many meetings as possible.

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## FLOOR DISCUSSION Questions 1-5:

The assembly dates and voting date has never changed. It's our own responsibility to stand for office if we don't like the status quo. We need to do a better job with nominating and getting the word out. Notice of elections run in the area page of the newsletter for several months before the election, we send out post cards and we follow 3rd legacy procedure. We need to steer our sponsees into service.

## RECOMMENDATIONS Questions 1-5:

1. Encourage people of all backgrounds to stand for office
2. Track diversity and newcomers.
3. Make sure your groups voice is being heard at assemblies.
4. Publish contribution addresses in the newsletter and Conscience Contact.

## ANSWERS (Questions 6-10):

6. Does our delegate know the Area's conscience on matters of importance to us? Do we contact our Area delegate and Area officers with our concerns and questions?

-part 1: The Delegate gets the conscience of those that attend the assemblies and the mini-conference. You can only get the conscience of those that participate. Usually 50-75 at an assembly, there could be several hundred.

-part 2: Many didn't know they could or should contact the Delegate. Many contact the area chair first. Many don't know the difference between central office and the area or which one they should contact.

7. Should the minority opinion always be heard at area assemblies? Are all members given the opportunity to speak at assemblies and to participate in activities?

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-part 1: Minority opinion should always be heard. We do a good of encouraging it.

-part 2: Sometimes new GSRs are afraid to go to the mic. Our GSRs need to have the courage of their convictions. We always ask for all opinions at assemblies, committee meetings and the mini-conference. We feel we do a good job with this.

8. Are treatment centers standing in the way of our 12th step work? Does talk of AA politics effect new people becoming involved in AA service?

-part 1: No, we've turned our 12th step work over to the treatment centers. We allow them to do the dirty work most of the time. Few of us detox a shaky drunk anymore. We should not dismiss the work they do, but we need to direct newcomers to the right fellowship. They are often taught that a meeting is a meeting. We have pamphlets that explain our singleness of purpose and what AA does and does not do.

-part 2: Politics: There is a lot of contempt prior to investigation by old timers and the uninformed. Many like the status quo of being the grizzled vet that everyone comes to and like being the voce of their area. We felt there is a lot to overcome here. The talk of politics is used as a cop-out. By putting down general service you never have to step up and serve on a committee or become a GSR. It's easier to sit on the sideline and be critical than it is to step and take the responsibility. Many newcomers remain uninformed because no one is stepping up to inform them.

9. What does "leading by example" mean? how important is good leadership? What are some qualities of good leaders?

- We feel that action speaks louder than words, do what you say you'll do, rather than talk about what you've done or are about to do. Leaders should take their own inventory and not that of others. They should approachable, willing to listen and willing to learn. No one knows it all. They should do what is best for the area and AA as a whole, not have a personal agenda. They should read and know the Service Manual, the Orders Of Procedure and the Guidelines. They should present themselves well at area and state functions (language, dress and demeanor). They are representing Area 53 after all.

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10. Does our Area do its fair share in participating in the purpose of AA as it relates to our Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service?

- Great discussion on this. It's a loaded question because more can always be done. The mini-conference is exposing more people to the three legacies. Our standing committees are becoming more active, our corrections committee is doing a great job with the spare change jugs and correspondence. The area sets up at Spring Round-Up so more people are learning who we are. We felt that we need to take a look at special needs and that many groups still don't have even a nodding acquaintance with the Traditions. So there is plenty of work to be done.

## **FLOOR DISCUSSION (Questions 6-10)**

There is still too much politics in the area and from old timers trying to control their groups. Without leadership the next generation could wither and die. We don't send a newcomer out with the Big Book and tell them to get well. We need to work with those new to service.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS (Questions 6-10)**

1. More workshops to involve the GSRs and spur interest in general service.
2. Get the Districts involved with the Standing Committees once again.
3. Get out fliers and information on the State Convention, the Mini-Conference, and workshops to neighboring groups. Help build excitement, share your good experience with these activities.
4. Consider a Special Needs Committee.
5. Get a service sponsor if your sponsor isn't active in general service.

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## ANSWERS (Questions 11-16)

11. Do we have enough committees or too many committees to do the needed work of the Area? Do our committees fulfill their responsibilities? Regardless of the number, do we support our committees?

- Many felt we have enough committees, that we have trouble supporting the ones we do have. Some expressed concern about committees becoming cliquish or that politics played a role and that a new person might feel left out. If you're not part of the gang why bother. We need to put more emphasis on principles over personalities.

12. Do I expect that because I am an AA member, I should be allowed to vote in elections at any group, even if I am not an active member of that group? Do i understand the importance of my participation in the growth of AA.

-It was pointed out that groups have the autonomy to call this the way they want. We need to make a personal decision. It's easy to not be the "The only Big Book someone ever sees". We need to be responsible for our actions and set a good example.

13. Is the Area 53 Mini-Conference serving the Area? Can you describe how? If not, why not? Do we support the Mini-Conference? If not, why not? Is there a need for an Area 53 Convention?

- Positive feedback on the mini-conference serving the area well. Some felt it was time to revive the Area 53 convention.

14. Do you have enough information about the Area to make informed decisions? Do you receive whatever information you need in a timely manner?

- Yes to all.

## **AREA 53 INVENTORY      MAY 16, 2009**

15. Does your group have a General Service Representative (GSR)? If not, why not? If so, is your GSR active? Does your group get reports? Does your group support Your GSR?

-Yes to all.

### **FLOOR DISCUSSION   Questions 11-15**

The concerns are the same in most Areas. Special Needs, the return of the Area 53 convention and an on-line newsletter were brought up.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS   Questions 11-15**

1. Look at the feasibility of a convention at the DCM/ Area Committee meeting
2. Look at online newsletter vs. just minutes,
3. Include mailing addresses for contributions was brought up again.

### **FLOOR DISCUSSION   Question 16**

16. Have we missed any items of concern or importance to you? Are you being heard? Are the Area officers listening?

-Poor attendance at the inventory again. Are we doing a poor job of spreading the word or doesn't anyone care? We had more discussion on diversity and if we're exclusionary. We need to to liven up Unity Day so that it's not the same topics with the same people. Do Area officers address your concerns? We need to be pro-active with GSRs, DCMs, and officers getting to groups to push service activities. We need to reach the uninformed and disconnected. Talk to your group about the use of the Lord's Prayer.

**Thanks goes out to Districts 26/27 for hosting and feeding us**

Respectfully submitted, Carl D.  
Panel 59 Area 53 Alternate Delegate

CD/sjr