

## **Area 53 Inventory/Sharing Session, September 10, 2017**

### **How Well Does Area 53 Accomplish Its Primary Purpose” – Dan S. / Stephen S.**

Area 53 continues to embed Inventory Action into all gatherings.

- Taking inventory in the best sense of the word is a fundamental aspect of AA's program of recovery. As program co-founder, Bill W. reflected in AA Comes of Age on page 231. “Just as each A.A. must continue to take his moral inventory and act upon it, so must our whole society if we are to survive and if we are to serve usefully and well.” A.A. General Service Conference Inventory, 2015 (page 3).
- The 10<sup>th</sup> Step talks about a continuous inventory which means without cessation.
- It gives us the opportunity to find out where are the gaps and where we need to fill the gaps. All towards the end of serving the alcoholic usefully and well.

Reflecting on the Area 53 Guidelines (Article II), is the “Area 53 Assembly of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous” achieving its “primary purpose?” Is it necessary for it to improve?

From the Area 53 Guidelines, our purpose is:

1. To support the General Service Conference and its members in their roles as provider of A.A. World Services and as guardian of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.
2. To elect, and support, a Delegate to the General Service Conference.
3. To provide communication and encourage unity within Area 53.
4. To assist in the development and communication of an informed group conscience.

How well does the assembly facilitate the hearing and resolution of minority appeals/reports? How could it be improved?

How might the guidelines be revised in essence or wording to more effectively and relevantly guide our trusted servant?

- Stephen S. advises on the format for the Sharing Session which is now incorporated into the Inventory.
- Documents that may assist with the Inventory/Sharing Session
  - The Role and Purpose of the Assembly (8 page document)
  - Area Inventory Sharing Session
- For information on how the Sharing Session is to be formatted, refer to the Service Manual, S40 – “Let’s say that the topic is “How can we get more A.A.s interested in general service?” The leader, armed with a loud bell and a watch or stopwatch, reads the question and explains the rules. Each person present may talk for a specified time (the group agreed on 3 minutes.) Usually no one is permitted to speak twice on the same subject until all who wish to have spoken. The leader continues until the topic has been fully explored. “
- This is a sharing session and not a debate. If someone disagrees with a previous statement and wants to argue, then they would be ruled out of order.

- Area 53 Committee is interested in two things
  - What do you think that the issues are.
  - What suggestions do you have for how it might change.
- The following will be submitted electronically by email to all officers and DCMs, well in advance of the Area Planning Committee in October.
- The Area Committee will report back to the Assembly in December with any modifications or suggested actions based on the sharing results.

### Comments

Greg G, DCM, District 22

- Advises that he has written comments from the groups in his District.
  - Overall nothing wrong with it to provide resources and guidance for the groups and inter-groups in our Area.
  - Provide a brief description of goals and purpose of the General Service Conference.
  - We feel like we provide a good faith effort and try to encourage more attendance to the min-conference.
  - We felt that Area 53 is meeting it's primary purpose. However, it could benefit from more participation with more attendance and GSRs.
  - The suggested agenda on S39 (Service Manual) is similar to the Area 53 General Assembly. One difference is that there is not an agenda item for local problems, ideas and suggestions.

Bill F – Past Area 53 Delegate and past Regional Trustee

- I have been attending Area Assemblies for the past 25 years. In regards to the first question, I have never been to an Area Assembly where we handled a minority appeal. Our General Service Board has only held three since it's beginning and I was fortunate to be there for one. I don't see how there could be any improvement, because I have never heard a minority appeal or report. That is formally outlined in our Twelve Concepts.
- How might the Guidelines be revised in essence or wording? Some of the purposes in our Guidelines is in a hierarchy. For example, Number 2 says to "To elect, and support, a Delegate to the General Service Conference." Every two years we only do that once, so I don't see that as being a primary purpose. It's important, but not a primary purpose.
- The first thing about supporting the General Service Conference - I can't see it. The Area Assembly occupies a position in our Service Structure, so like it or not, we don't support it. We are part of that process. In regards to question two, I think that the Guidelines need to be revised to more accurately reflect what the Area Assembly does.

Heather R – GSR, Belpre GPS Group

- Advises that part of Area's responsibility is to support the General Service Conference and get more people involved. Makes a suggestion to have mini-conferences on a local bases in many Districts. She said that the mini-conference was informative, but involves cost and may people cannot afford it. District 15 has some funds and is considering doing a more downscaled version of the min-conference.

Frank G, Delegate, Area 53 –

- Under number 2, To elect, and support, a Delegate to the General Service Conference...As far as Delegate and Alternate Delegate, Area 53 done an excellent job. Has provided enough financial support for me to do my job. We learn these positions as we go and when we get good at them, then it is time to rotate out. Every time we had a question or I wasn't clear, I was able to call using the tri-fold and get information. We are doing a wonderful job of getting delegate

prepared for the General Service Conference. I encourage people to reach out and contact committee chairs. There are a lot of useful resources.

Dave C, Past Delegate –

- The answer to every question is to better inform our GSRs. We would be better off informing and training GSRs on their role based on service literature. Let GSRs know they ought be the majority of the Assembly and to have the ability change and improve our primary purpose. More should be done to focus on GSR. There are 700 AA meetings a week in central and southeast Ohio. GSR participation is less than 10% – more likely 2%. Participating is learning things. We as an assembly should put together learning activities at this Assembly, Area Committee and at our Districts. The focus should be on making the GSR best informed and best prepared.

Lara S – GSR, After Work Group

- The mini-conference is a lot of fun and there were a lot of topics voted on. My homegroup said that it is just a fraction on what you would vote on when you go to New York. I know that we received a booklet today in regards to the final report. It would be fun to hear how the topics from our mini-conference were voted on. I believe that I could try to understand the final report – read through it and find that information. It would be nice in having some help in interpreting the report and we could take that back to our Districts and groups.

Chris J – Correctional Facilities Chairperson

- Chris advises that he would like to address the question on the Sharing Session handout - “Do we have effective communications between groups, districts, the standing committees, the past delegates, the Area Committee and the Area Assembly?”
  - The Correctional Facilities Committee encourages groups to have Group Institutional Representatives that connect the group to the standing committee. Only a small fraction of groups have a GIRs. More groups have Group Service Representatives. As a means of communication on 12 step work in prisons and jails I rely on the opportunity created at the Assembly to provide information to the GSR, which effectively is the GIR to the group as well. The GSR is the connection to the Area service structure as a whole. I rely on those opportunities as a chance to give my report. It is a chance to inform the GSR of the need to have support for those incarcerated. One of the challenges that I face is as the committee chair is that the Assembly Agenda has changed. One of the changes were that the Standing Committee Reports moved to end of the Agenda. This presents a challenge to me to be able to effectively communicate when some people have left. It is an obstacle to effective communication. I believe there is justification to move the standing committee reports earlier in the agenda. This is a large area – 38 counties and there are a lot of prisons. We need to be that hand of AA for that desperate alcoholic that is reaching out for the hand of AA.

Sharon F – Past Delegate

- The question about communication is a big issue. We have a large area and anything we can do to encourage participation in all facets. We have a lot of people here from District 15 – not just Columbus. We have a lot of dark districts that need to be here. Until we can figure out a way to do that, I don’t think that we are going to have a lot of participation. I think that we are going to have a lot of people that are uninformed. It’s a common problem. I think it’s a common problem for a lot of Areas. I am not sure what the answer is, but when we try to come up with an answer for people that live in Woodfield or wherever... how we can help them.

Joel K – Alternate DCM, District 15

- Bruce, DCM and I talked about this and as a DCM and alternate we need to go and visit the groups. Especially the ones that don't have a GSR. Because I was lucky on my side, I just kept hearing about people talking about DCMs and GMCs, GGGs and all the Gs the Ds, the Es and the Fs. I had no idea what you were talking about. I figured out what a GSR was because there is a pamphlet out there to read. I didn't read pamphlets in the beginning but after reading some of the pamphlets I began understanding it. This whole thing has challenged me even as the alternate DCM. If the DCM and the alternate DCM go out and visit the groups, especially the ones without the GSRs, you might get some knucklehead like me who wants to know more about the GSR, DCM and all the other stuff. The triangle is inverted. The groups are the king. I challenge every DCM and alternate DCM in this room today to go out and do that today.

Bill F – Past Area 53 Delegate and past Regional Trustee

- As far as the second section in the Area Guidelines, I think our Area Guidelines need to be revised to reflect more accurately what the Area 53 Assembly purpose is. As an example in our Guidelines we still talk about Special Needs Committee. At the Conference, there is no Special Needs Committee. There is no longer a Trustee's Committee on Special Needs. That has been renamed the Accessibilities Committee. It has a much broader scope than our committee. What I suggest is that we look at the assembly section of our Guidelines and have it more accurately compare to the service manual.
- If a group doesn't have GSR or sent anyone to the Area Assembly, they are out of the information loop. That puts the work on the DCM.
- Does our Assembly reflect the makeup of Area 53? No. This brings new importance to what the word trusted servant means.

Heather R – GSR, Belpre GPS Group

- Explains that it is a good idea to go to groups and offer information sessions on why it is important to have individuals become GSRs and have representation in other service positions. More people will become involved if you go local.
- Also advised that the Assembly location should rotate in all districts.
- She brings up a question regarding young people AA. Do we have a committee for youth?

Kalen C – Alternate Secretary

- Advises that we don't have many people represented that are under age 35.

Scott R – District 26 Secretary – Part of the job of the DCM is to carry the message. Doesn't seem realistic for DCM to visit every group. A lot of Groups don't consider work outside the group.

Dan S – Thanks everyone. I will go over my notes at the Area Planning Committee.