

Area 59, Panel 71 Inventory, October 18, 2021

During the 1st year of each Panel, it is customary for Area 59 to take its inventory. This report provides a summary of sharing, suggestions, and opinions by attendees at the Panel 71 inventory, hosted by District 30 in Thorndale, PA. This report is not a verbatim transcript but is being presented to provide a synopsis of the meeting. Individual members are not fully identified, in keeping with our Traditions of Anonymity. Subcommittee inventories were also held, and the reports that were shared with the secretary are also included herein.

At 10:00 a.m., Delegate Caroline N. welcomed those who were present and noted that today's event is open to all AA members. She then instructed subcommittees to begin their inventory work and noted the Area Inventory would begin at 11:15 a.m.

Current Chairperson Curt C. called the meeting to order and after a moment of reflection asked those present to join him in reciting "Serenity Prayer." This was followed by Treasurer Dan B. reading from *AA Comes of Age* pp. 231.

The Delegate made some opening remarks, thanking those present for their attendance and participation and noting that this is an opportunity for reflection for our Area. She welcomed the moderator, Michelle G, Past Delegate for Area 13, Panel 69 and Area Officers, Special Servants, and all DCMs, GSRs and Members who were present. A special thanks was extended to members of District 30 who hosted the event. She noted that the OAL is filling in for the Secretary and is recording this meeting for the sole purpose of creating a written report of the inventory. She further explained that there is a 2-minute time limit at the microphone and encouraged Officers to listen and not comment unless the Guest Facilitator asks one or more officers to provide clarity or answer a question from a member directly. She then turned the meeting over to the moderator.

Michelle G. served with Area 59 Delegate Ken D. during Panel 69 and is grateful to be here today from DC to serve as our facilitator. Michelle spoke about Ken, noting that their last conversation was held the day before he passed away. A moment of silence in his memory was held.

About Michelle – from Area 13 DC and state of Maryland and handles all Spanish speaking groups. Her sobriety date is 7-4-1991, Home Group is Happy Joyous Free Young People's Group in Silver Spring MD which currently meets on Zoom – all are welcome. She has served Area 13 as chairperson, secretary, and alternate delegate. She was impressed with today's greeters getting people from the street to the door; what a nice welcome! She wanted to get to know Area – she asked for raised hands to indicate all who had been to one, two or as many as five previous inventories. All were encouraged to share today. Michelle has reviewed the last 3 inventories and is d with where today's questions are – it shows the evolution of our Area. Her role today is to facilitate - we will get as much out of this as we put in. Don't leave and feel like "I should have said that." Ask questions; you have the right to interject. If it's your first time, make sure you are clear about what is being asked. If secretary has questions or does not understand something, she will ask for clarification. Please silence cell phones. Line up at mics after question is read. She will provide some suggested reading – conference approved – that may be helpful to take back to your home groups. She will share this with Caroline, and it will most likely be found on the Area Google drive for future reference. Michelle then did a short reading from the AA Group pamphlet, ending with a quote from Bill W: "*Realization dawns on each member that he is but a small part of a great whole. He learns that the clamor of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group. It becomes plain that the group must survive, or the individual will not.*"

Question 1. What is the basic purpose of the Area? Area Committee? Area Convention/Assembly? What more can we do to fulfill these purposes?

Jack C. - show up – to committee meetings, quarterly meetings – the service manual describes the responsibilities of someone who is in service.

Chris R. - An outline was provided, but ultimately, Area acts as a go-between between the district and the General Service Conference. Understanding the right of decision, etc. I believe our Area has failed at representing the group conscience at the GSC. I believe some of the topics discussed at the Pre-conference Sharing Session have been ignored.

Steve N. - I wish we had been sent these questions ahead of time. If we had been sent them prior to my last district meeting, I would have gotten feedback from GSRs in order to speak about how they felt about these questions. I am just looking at these now, didn't get feedback from groups. Secondly – what was addressed about communicating the group conscience to the GSC – we did have a Pre-conference sharing session and had GSRs who were not able to express their feelings because that was not on the list of what was going to be discussed. So, there were unhappy people. And, after that, it did not appear that the group conscience of the area was presented at GSC because of Right of Decision. I had a question at the report back about one agenda item and my question was dismissed. I have been unable to get an answer, so I am very discouraged and unsatisfied.

Candy S. - basic purpose is to carry the message of AA and PA – the area committee helps facilitate that. The DCMS being the voice of the GSRs and the groups. The Area Assembly is another method in helping to share and circulate the message. What more can we do? Continue to get the word out to increase participation. What we have works, it's just a matter of continuing to do what we do. Let people know this is not just for GSRs not just for DCMs but for all AA's.

Tara L - we need to work more with subcommittees, with area, and work with a more diverse population of the area to carry the message within our area.

Deb S. - frustration with area website – feels like a lot of GSRs are new and trying to figure out how to understand. I know changes are in place; improving that is such a great educational tool you could improve the use-ability.

Donald H - it seems we are torn between the purpose of the area. It's not to do 12 step work, it's to make 12 step work possible. "Shoemaker stick to thy last!" - Focus on the one thing we do – make 12 step work possible, than try to do too many other things.

Question 2: What can Area 59 do to increase the number of GSRs involved in General Service and deepen their engagement with the Area? Do new GSRs stick with us or does the turnover seem excessive? How do we retain GSRs and sustain their involvement and engagement over time in order to cultivate more service leaders and create a stronger service culture in Eastern Pennsylvania?

Tony - sees a lot of GSRs come and go and doesn't see interest from members at home group level. People want to chair meetings, committees, but don't want to get involved in levels above that. Why not allow GSRs to participate, they need to "get some skin in the game."

Katie D. - not a lot of turnover in our district. Comes from a district with strong service ties. Our GSRs, in the beginning of the pandemic, there was way less involvement, went to half of what we normally had.

In the beginning of this panel, we have had 6 or 7 groups that didn't come that have started to come. When people see big changes happen such as the Preamble, they asked "how come your meeting knows this and mine does not?" Then they got a GSR. When I share my story, I make a point to say that I am involved in general service and why.

Jill E. - response dependent on whether districts have strong intergroup or not. As the result of strong intergroup there are a lot more opportunities. People don't understand what position entails. People think this falls on the district or the home group so if people don't understand what they are doing – I think having an orientation for GSRs will provide understanding. Maybe use Zoom to engage more people.

Melissa A. - one of the approaches my district has taken is we have enough subcommittees but not enough GSRs to staff them. I made a motion to ask GSRs to have home groups identify which committees are most important so they can all be staffed. Appointed a special servant to staff archives since that wasn't listed as being important but there was a person who was enthusiastic about archives. I try to impress the gravity of general service and why it is so important. Incumbent on DCMs to do that.

Melissa M. - ditto to prior speaker. We try to mirror what Area does with the district. When workshops come up, collaborate with other districts to make more involvement possible. This allows people to see that service is fun.

Vicki L. - address part about how to retain GSRs and sustain their involvement. Blessed to have big involvement with home groups and have at least 27 members in attendance at all times (district meeting). We let AGSRs participate with no voting rights, but they can participate in discussion and ask questions. AGSRs need to get involved if they are expected to stand for GSR.

Steve N. - agrees with Jill that orientations for GSRs is good. His district has 5 GSRs and no AGSRs attend. He was only ADCM for 3 months before becoming DCM. He learned more from attending other district meetings that he learned from Area.

Pete B. -what I have heard so far is from a district perspective but how about ideas about what we as an Area can do? We have 2 silent districts at present, what can we do to address this – there is another one who has struggled to have a DCM for a while. What can we do as an Area? Do we visit? Do we hold GSR Orientations? How do we get people to attend these orientations?

Mike A. - this is a WE program and we at our district close each meeting with the Responsibility Pledge. WE are responsible, when anyone, anywhere reaches out for help... part of that is to get people active.

How can we foster or facilitate better participation? That comes at the districts and inviting GSRs to these events, and ADCMs out to these events to give them a general sense of what goes on here.

MICHELLE - I want to share with you something about my area that is a little bit unique – something about how we get people involved. Because we have the same problems. Area 13 has 3 Spanish-speaking meetings, they have a high level of involvement. When it comes to contributions from those districts 93% of those groups contribute. 93%. The English-speaking districts - that are six times larger than the Spanish-speaking districts - 30% of groups contribute. We found out that if you are a Spanish speaker and part of these districts, the DCM makes it their responsibility to make sure every group has a GSR. They give them 2 months to figure it out.

After 2 months, they attend meetings and say they're not leaving until there is a GSR. The DCMs are serious about representation and the contribution level. They are also serious about spending contributions appropriately and not keeping too much in the treasury. When she was secretary for her area, 30K was stolen from them by the treasurer. They announced it at their January meeting, by March they had completely recovered.

It wasn't because a lot of groups came out of the woodwork, it was because Spanish-speaking groups dug deep, – they were the ones who were involved in the process and saw what happened. There were no questions about where the money went; where did it go? They knew because they attended our meetings. So, by being engaged with proper knowledge and financially connected, they are more involved.

Question 3: How are our Area Committee communications practices? What can we do to be more effective in communicating with each other? With GSRs? Intergroups? All A.A. members? Consider communications channels such as the “We...” Newsletter, the website, the DCM Orientation microsite and videos, e-blasts, emails, texts, phone calls, in-person communications, etc. as well as print vs. digital methods of disseminating information, and the availability of English and Spanish communications.

Steve N. - I like that we had this Covid thing with Zoom stuff because it forced everything into emails. I forward all the emails and that is welcomed. It has increased communication.

Ray McB. - I totally forgot about this event. I know it's my responsibility, but A: a reminder to attend THIS meeting would be helpful, and B: tell us that this is important, tell us to come, there's going to be a delegate from Washington DC there. I might have invited my ADCM. I am communicating with GSRs by personal emails and they respond. A personal email from Area officer, a reminder, or a shove is welcomed.

Katie D. - I think from my district it helped people be more involved and ask more questions at the district meeting when we were fully on Zoom. Multiple GSRs want to have hybrid, not necessarily because they want to ask questions, but to be able to observe. Because of traveling and Covid concerns. Home groups that never had a GSR go to anything throughout area but through the pandemic they did. They were able to have more active conversations, even about area, at our district meetings.

Vicki L. - Area communication practice is poor. Could use improvement we should not be afraid to speak with each other and voice what we feel. If people feel that they can speak freely, then the communication gap breaks down and people can feel free to say “Hey I agree with that” and you don't learn stuff unless you attend area things and realize that your voice does matter, so if we communicate on the area level amongst ourselves personally, then we can show people that your voice does matter regardless of what your position may be.

Tara L. - Finance gets a lot of questions about information that is already available. Previous panels have made presentations about processes but it's not readily available. Our subcommittee is thinking about using QR codes to get information out.

Roland - does Area 13 do Unity pitch to newcomers? Michelle stated that when she was chairperson they had 13 districts and only 3 DCMs so they did orientations at the area level. At present, 11 districts are represented, so orientations are now done at the district level.

Candy S. - Website. The three little slants on the side of the website, who would think those slashes are anything. I tell people to go to website but then I must click on 3 slashes on side for menu. It's confusing.

Tim S. - should have utilization of Google Drive or Dropbox so each subcommittee has a folder. Would appreciate more organization of the back side so things don't get lost in the emails that everyone has. I always go to Area event thinking, do I have all the files or not? Utilizing the microsites more would be helpful.

Claire B. - what you see on the website is being completely overhauled. The difference will be unbelievable. Sneak peek at EPGSA and feedback will be appreciated. Bear with us – if effort is put into maintaining the current site we cannot focus on the new one – by mid-January, it will be really good. Change is coming!

Jack C. - the illumination of what each entity does sounds really complicated to someone who is new in AA. We make it complicated for people to be in service. Goes back to “what are your responsibilities?” “What are you supposed to do?” We keep kicking the can down the road instead of selling our unsalable goods. Let's do one thing right – gets too many texts and emails – gets so many from subcommittees.

Question 4: Are our Area 59 Quarterly Meetings inclusive and accessible for Area Committee members? For GSRs? A.A. members? Please consider the pros and cons of in-person, virtual, and hybrid Area Quarterly Meetings. What about other Area activities, such as workshops, share-a-days, sharing sessions, mini-assemblies, the annual Assembly/Convention, etc.? Are these inclusive and accessible?

Vicki L. - lumping all these things together - believes the area in general could do better to make things more accessible. There are people who may be homebound, cannot travel – I think the area should really look into making all these things hybrid, I know it's a big thing, we could reach more people, get more people involved. Especially at the quarterly meeting. I think hybrid is a better way to go so everyone is included.

Katie D. -her intergroup and district are having hybrid meetings to be sure they are accessible to all. Meetings cannot afford to send their GSR to EPGSA – when it was proposed to have more GSRs come to more events they asked “how can we do that?” I have visual impairments and I purchased my own technology to help me with my reading disability. We have a plethora of money can we get a group account for multiple people to use if they have disabilities – if you're blind can you get the same message? I don't believe that is the case. If I didn't have the knowledge I did on how to make things accessible, I wouldn't be a DCM.

Jill E. - participation is how people feel engaged and included in the process. Giving people the opportunity to be a part of is important. It's expensive for people to travel across the area. No one was traveling 5 hours in the past. All meetings were at one time more centrally located. It would give everyone a better opportunity to go. I was able to stay in Williamsport the night before the quarterly meeting but GSRs can't afford that. In terms of EPGSA the one-day registration was reduced, single day registration gives people a better opportunity to attend.

Tara L. - without being hybrid we are not being inclusive. Since the GSC has voted that online meetings are a part of AA's service structure all meetings need to be hybrid to offer any GSR that is representing an online group that option. Hybrid needs to be available so online groups can be a part of.

Bernadette - an an AGSR coming in, she had no understanding of what Share A Day, NERAASA, EPGSA was – we need to simplify these different things – its almost intimidating to a new person coming in because they don't understand what it is. There is a huge confusion between what is a GSR and intergroup. People feel that these events are not attractive because they have no understanding of what they really mean.

Tony - this is my 1st inventory. For me it seems we are talking about GSRs. My home group is sending me and my GSR to EPGSA. Thanks to my home group, but I don't own a car and it's hard to get involved if I hadn't had a ride here today. I heard Area is flush with cash – maybe we can give scholarships to districts or GSRs who can't get here.

Elizabeth – new to GSR position, comes from West Chester Morning Miracles. Would like to see a video created to explain what GSR responsibilities are. I've been in AA a long time but from NY and they do things differently there. It would be nice to know what I am expected to attend and the acronyms distance me from getting involved.

Fred S. – explained the acronym EPGSA – looked through his notes about AA Technology Workshop this year and a presentation from Mike W and Laura S talked about things to consider with hybrids: Is livestream enough or not? If interactive need back and forth discussion and setup to support. In-person vs. virtual attendance. Buying equipment vs. hiring vendors, cost, (tech rehearsal could be problematic) cable management and safety issues, internet access. Wi-Fi is slower than hard cable connection, most places only have Wi-Fi___33. Something that scares him a bit: at a place like this, we cannot get on it here but if we are at a location where everyone gets on the Wi-Fi___33 on their phones, the hybrid can potentially fail. It is doable but will take a lot of hardware, practice, that type of thing.

Tom - keep open mind when discussing inclusion of GSRs – pros and cons of hybrid – in my district one large meeting meets every day and hybrid fractured the group and caused problems. In terms of inclusivity and hybrid – what level? What size? What issues come up in terms of it being pro or con? Re: obstacles and inclusivity – when removing obstacles, you are changing the growth process – even the idea of getting to an in person meeting and asking someone else for a ride might have an effect, a 2-hour drive in car, could change things.

Elena B. - when I became DCM, I was well prepared because before pandemic I attended everything in person, but the most important thing was my DCM took me by the hand and introduced me around, took her by the hand and introduced her to many people.

Question 5: Do you sense any apathy and disengagement in General Service as a result of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic? At the group, district, and Area 59 level? How can we address this effectively?

Matt M. - I noticed the GSRs in my district, when they don't get the minutes posted to the website or handed to them, they call me and ask for meeting minutes. They think minutes are their GSR report and so they read them verbatim. Boring. I encourage them to go to events and take notes of the important things they hear. It's difficult to communicate on online format, beneficial for people who don't want to open up and for those who don't want to travel. I definitely notice a sense of apathy in the note-taking thing, in that respect.

Ted C. - past panels have more energy level in service – the last quarterly meeting I stepped in for DCM but I did not feel the energy I once did. I got the impression that some people felt they were at the quarterly meeting out of obligation - people feel “have to do this or do that.” Feels that structure has changed, and the DCMs are being stretched too far so maybe open up subcommittees for AGSRs to participate.

Vicki L. - in my home group personally, Covid threw us for a loop. Big issue with members wanting to stay in person and those who wanted to go virtual. Did 5 days a week live and virtual at same time, was confusing. Home group feels more inclusive now that we are all back together. The energy from meeting in person can't be beat. Ditto to Matt – GSRs do the same thing – they don't come to the meeting but want meeting minutes to report back to group. This whole Covid thing has turned AA upside down on its head.

Steve N. - when in person, you get to ask "what did they say?" and he writes down everything for further questions. At lunchtime you get to fellowship with other attendees. With Zoom it got really restrictive and it was one-way communication and not very satisfying. I knew DCM D62 and ADCM should have been voting and he could not get message to people – it was not satisfying.

Tara L. - I am new to Area service so I am not sure about apathy and disengagement but at my district it's the same – apathy is there whether in person or on Zoom. If there are opportunities to be of service there will be more engagement, you get out of it what you put in.

Donald H. - I've been involved in this area for 16+ years and have noticed a steady decline. Covid has provided an easy out for people who don't want to do much. *A good example has twice the value of good advice – Albert Schweitzer.* We don't have service models at this area – we need to show them don't tell people what to do – show them!

Melissa M. - how can we address this effectively? We are doing that today! Few are present and we can talk about this to our districts, to committee members who are not here, and we show them that this is still here. My home group, when we went to zoom platform, there were only 3 members, but we revamped and now we have a revitalized home group – we don't meet online, we didn't have attendance – I am hearing this to take back to my district and maybe we will do an inventory at the district level.

Jim L. - spirit of rotation is a big thing, but I think we sometimes overdo it and get rid of those with experience. We had past GSRs who rotated out – I made them heads of committees so they could teach new GSRs how to do things. Maybe at area level we should look at having delegate select past DCMs as subcommittee chairs to explain things to current DCMs how to perform the jobs.

Roland – when I came in no one turned their back on me. As an active AA I won't turn my back on you. I will show you my experience so you can carry that on.

Question 6: How well have the Area Officers been available to answer questions pertaining to (a.) the subcommittees as Subcommittee Advisors, (b.) advisors to assigned districts, and (c.) the Area Committee and General Service during Panel 71?

Vicki L. - my experience past and present but this panel has definitely been there for me. Everyone I have reached out to always answers my emails. They tell me what I need to do or direct me to people I can go to when I need to know what happened before. I like to break ceilings. If you have an idea, run it by any of the officers and majority of the time they tell you to run with it.

Elena B. - Thank you everyone super helpful - I have had issues with language barrier and everyone is helpful. Alicia helped me a lot with the GSR packets. I am grateful for this and previous panel for help with the Russian project.

Steve N. – Mixed bag on this. Best assistance I've gotten is when after an email someone spoke with me via phone. Unsatisfactory ones were when I got an email directing me to someone else. There was an email sent about what to do with 75k surplus and I suggested helping districts who could not afford to send their DCMs but I heard nothing back (i.e.: thank you for your suggestion) Sending emails is fine but getting an email back is not as helpful as an actual call back.

Elizabeth - DCM and ADCM have been great getting back to me via email and phone.

Matt M. – my adviser is extremely helpful. She always calls me back.

Melissa A. - it was explained to me that I am not the boss. My sponsor explained that my job is to be a servant, my job is to be the bumper rails. I get a lot of reinforcement from our officers. I appreciate service leadership and what it's all about.

Question 7: What more can we do to efficiently utilize our financial resources to carry the message and educate the membership of Area 59 on General Service? What are your ideas for the use of funds above and beyond our prudent reserve?

Dan B. - soliciting ideas from fellowship on how to spend money - of course we can also give it to GSO but are thinking about giving money to PI for PSAs and help with literature where it is needed. Also, the Finance subcommittee will come up with a policy that if our funds are over a certain amount we have a way to get rid of it.

Deb S. - our district was flush with funds, we live in an affluent area. We found that digital billboards were not cheap, but we put a digital billboard up for a month. Strong feeling is that when groups distribute their \$ to district, area, GSO they made a decision to have that \$ spent in those places. We shouldn't just send all the excess to GSO. So, we as an area have the obligation. Spend the money here. All for hybrid meetings and so buy more equipment.

Jack C. - frankly, as a member of Area 59 I don't care what other areas are doing I care about what we are willing to do. I think we should look at centralized location in the area and you could still have an hour and a half drive to a meeting but we could deal with Wi-Fi at a central location and have a place to have subcommittees meet. How about spending that 75K on something that will really help the area – give us a place to meet, give us a place to educate our membership which is supposed to be our primary purpose.

Tara L. – I think communication is a problem with Finance too. We need to have conversations about money – more than well we did the splits and now the money is gone so you guys have to spend the money we sent to you.

Colleen - we should preserve our Archives better than we are doing now in some kind of better storage unit.

Claire B. - we as DCMs have to come with motions or subcommittees have to come with motions, I can make all the suggestions I want but have to come to meetings with clearly worded motions to actually get something done.

Question 8: Has enough effort been made to properly inform and educate DCMs and Subcommittee Chairs on the proper procedures for presenting motions from districts or recommendations from subcommittees to be brought to the full Area Committee for consideration?

Ted C. - whenever we review motions, we go through with fine tooth combs, but motions at Area are not well thought out, are not actionable. They should be well thought out and ready to be addressed.

Steve N. - I would say no, I didn't spend 2 years as ADCM going to meetings. It would be helpful to have a resource to help you formulate a motion that is actionable. Ideas come up that aren't phrased right so assistance would be good.

Troy S. - You have to ask. We had some issues at our district and our DCM reached out to Caroline who came to the district meeting to answer questions about motions and described steps to send things to general service. She provided all the info we needed – all you have to do is ask.

Vicki – shout out to Pete for the video on the website but maybe the structure manual should have a layout of the procedure for a motion. You can ask, but it would be great to have an outline somewhere.

Ray McB. - last week I went to SW Regional forum. Very informative. I thought Area was going to do forums before the pandemic.

Question 9: How do you utilize Past Delegates and Special Servants? Special Servants include our Archivist, Assistant Archivist, Web Servant, Assistant Web Servant, Technology Servant, Bridging the Gap Coordinator, and Spanish Interpreters? Do you see a need for other trusted servant positions in Area 59?

Elena B. - I often use past delegates because while I've never been ignored by Area people, I will always turn to them but sometimes I turn to past delegates because they have more time, they have nothing to do and they are retired.

Tara L. - I don't use the trusted servants as I should. I haven't yet. But I reach out to past delegates when I have questions, I talk with my adviser but I get good feedback and hear what worked in the past, what didn't etc.

Jim L. - anytime I'm thinking of doing something I run it past someone else. If 2, 3 4, 5 people think it's a good idea, I use the experience of past servants for opinions.

Rich M. - props to people giving good service. Our trusted servants should be recognized as we should recognize good service and they all do a great job.

Roland – we are all trusted servants.

Caroline N. - it is at the delegate's discretion to appoint special servants. If something happens during the panel, it has worked this way. Also, at delegates discretion to form subcommittees (ad hoc literature, technology, digital comm. for example).

Question 10: Is adequate opportunity given to all members to speak and participate in General Service activities and arrive at an effective group conscience for our entire Area? Do you feel like your voice is heard? Do you feel like your voice matters? Why or why not?

Candy S. - I think the opportunity is there through these type of events as well as different events that the Area has, however, it can be intimidating. If I had not been coming around for a while I would not be at this mic. There are a whole slew of people who would not do this – they would not feel comfortable if they came to this meeting and would not come back.

Now we have masks on so you can't really see people's faces – it's not warm and fuzzy – it's kind of clique-ish. It's almost like, if I walk into certain meetings, I see people look me in the eye and turn away.

But I address it with them – I went into a whole group of only men - they acted like they didn't see me. All I could think was thank God I've been coming around a few 24 hours.

Steve N. - at the quarterly meeting and here I have people come up and say hello and I have no idea who they are. The masks are difficult, and we have been meeting on Zoom. I have no idea who people are. In my district someone shared that half the GSRs are ready to get out. We have officers leave at half term. After the panel is over, officers are gone. I agree with Candy about greeters. I cannot find people at tables in order to meet with my subcommittee. I don't know where they are sitting.

Elena B. - I want to highlight the importance of what DCMs should do – I was a GSR when I started going to these events. The DCM introduced me to people, they explained things to me, and I have no fear to ask questions. My district is not active, I wish I had someone willing to step up. I want to introduce people to others in Area and I would love to do that now. I also went to different district meetings.

Vicki L. - I think the area does provide ample opportunity for members to speak at the mic. I feel that from my personal experience they feel that their voice does not matter. There is a fear of sounding like an idiot. If I don't know something I need to ask. I think there should be more opportunity for District 68 to participate in events. Maybe they need a personal invite, because they are influenced by personal invites. I think on an Area level they don't reach out to them as much and most people don't feel like their voice matters,

Roland – If I'm one of you, then you are one of me. My name is Mr. Coffee.

Question 11: How can the democratic selection of our Area service leadership be enhanced so that GSRs have a well-informed understanding before voting for Officers at our biennial Election Assembly? Should Area 59 create a nominating committee in order to inform GSRs regarding the potential candidates for upcoming officer elections? How can we do this better?

Troy - Maybe 3-6 months before EPGSA get some background info to put on the website, maybe send the info to DCMs to give to GSRs and maybe groups so they can be better informed.

Tony - I was looking through background material and I saw Caroline made a motion about a nominating committee when she was a DCM. I think that's a great idea.

Jill E. - I think it would be great to get more information ahead of time. If you are not a subcommittee chair, you don't have a shot to become an officer. Is there a way throughout the panel we can give other people other opportunities to be heard and be part of the process?

Melissa A. - asking for clarification – what would nominating committee look like? I am concerned about campaigning. CAROLINE: during Panel 65 I was a DCM and submitted a motion asking if we wanted to form a nominating committee. In the sharing that happened that day I heard all the voices pro and con, because we do have examples of nominating committees. In the back of my mind I wanted to model it after the SEPIA nominating committee, which is a chance for submitting applications in advance and having a process to “vet” the candidates. There was a concern about politicking and campaigning.

What if a person is so inspired to step up in the moment and did not meet a deadline to submit their interest in stepping up? That's why it's so important for you to encourage your GSRs and others to come and meet us, meet your fellow DCMs.

Steve N - I don't know about a nominating committee, but other than attending my first in-person area meeting in Quakertown my first experience was with the November 2020 elections. At that time I didn't know anything about anybody and it was a lot of information to digest. It seemed people were being nominated and declined – I was completely green and this was my first online election.

John - I didn't know anyone and got a one or two minute snippet of who was available to vote for if any shift in participation it would take time. But what if 70 GSRs showed up today? I didn't even know I was allowed to speak today. I didn't receive any communication about this. Should have a more organized way of letting GSRs know who they are voting for. Also mentioned about broadening the pool about who is eligible to stand. This might make for a broader pool of knowledge and participation.

Claire B. - every month I remind people next year is voting year so please go to as many workshops as you can. I have invited every officer to visit our meeting and will try and get the subcommittee chairs to visit as well.

Jack C. - I want to rise and give my experience as why I feel an election nominating committee is probably not in the best interest of the Area. I had a chairperson a couple years ago and as much as I wanted him to serve as an officer, he was deathly ill, but he showed up at a service workshop and that motivated me to stand for a position that I would not have stood for. We shouldn't "groom" people – remember, Circles of Love and Service.

Question 12: Have we defined the scope of authority and service responsibility of our Area Committee DCMs, Subcommittee Chairs, and Area Officers, by specific job descriptions or guidelines? What resources are available for the incoming DCM or incoming Officer next Panel, and what can I do now to better prepare for my eventual rotation and leave my service position in a better place than I found it?

Ted C. - I can say its good experience, perhaps for the next step DCM. I think people who are familiar with subcommittees function well. More involvement with people who aren't DCMs on subcommittees would be good.

Jim L. - referred to last line in this question. "I think this is the key for why we are here today." If we don't implement these ideas, we are going to keep coming back to the same issues. The responsibility falls of each one of us. And be around when we rotate out. I rely on my past DCM and too often we say we're out and we walk away. We all need to be responsible for our own piece of the pie. If someone isn't willing to do that, then it's not going to work.

Vicki L. - Structure manual has a paragraph for every position as well as DCM responsibility but it does not set out guidelines - that is where we have to go and ask others. We should have more guidelines about exactly what our jobs are.

Steve N - service sponsor. It seems to me that things used to be done differently 20 years ago, people had service sponsors, did different positions, and stayed. That doesn't seem to be the case today in different districts.

Elena B. - really concerned about this for now. My family is relocating, and I have to step down early. I don't have anyone who is willing to step up as DCM unless you come here and look and see and hear the reports. On Zoom was hard, they didn't get anything that was going on. Maybe if anyone has tips, please reach out to me.

Caroline N. - we are heading in the right direction. We introduced a subcommittee chair orientation in December and a subcommittee chair session the following month. The videos are available on the microsite and I am hopeful that we can do more of that. We also will continue as we have the last couple years to have both the preconference sharing session with subcommittees in the morning and full committee in the afternoon but we have also have the Google forum over the past years for anyone to share their ideas prior to the GSC. Please avail yourself of them, talk about them, so we have opportunities to make more improvements.

The Inventory was completed at 3:00 p.m. The Chairperson reminded Subcommittee chairpersons to submit their inventory reports to the secretary as soon as possible. The meeting was closed with the Responsibility Declaration.

Respectfully submitted by,

Alicia S, Officer-at-Large
On behalf of Area Secretary Susan