

Inventory Notes | EPGSA Panel 73

October 14, 2023

Area 59 Inventory

Easy Does It Inc., Leesport, PA



- Susan M., Chairperson, opened the Inventory by thanking District 66 for hosting, followed by the Serenity Prayer. She then had a reading from the AA Group pamphlet, regarding the group inventory process.
- Past Delegates (Pat F., and Darren F.), specials servants, and the guest facilitator (John H., Delegate from Area 60) were recognized. Sue then turned the program over to Pete B., Delegate.
- Pete thanked everyone for attending, especially GSRs. He noted the timing for our inventory matched the midpoint of our Panel.
- He discussed the overview of how questions and comments would work, such as: 2 minutes per person, 20 minutes per question, and to follow our spiritual principles when at the mic.
- The guest facilitator then gave another general overview of his background, the inventory process, and explained the importance of focusing on the current question and remarking in the spirit of justice and love.

Inventory Question	Comments from Open Sharing (M = Male, F = Female)
1 Is the business conducted in Area 59 important to the groups and the future of Alcoholics Anonymous? How or how not?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• M D51 – Noted his district has sent a survey asking the same question to groups in relation to his District. Made an analogy of how people at the “top” of the triangle get heated as steam rises from the “bottom”. Noted the importance of our business but lamented that not enough people seem to care. We need to note who’s leaving AA.• F D30 – Disappointed in turnout, especially since her district is only an hour away. Obviously, the business we conduct is important, but the real question is how we make that connection – it’s difficult in today’s world. Lamented that many of this year’s agenda items are once again looking backwards, as our numbers fall. How do we change this?• M D38 – Commented the answer is yes and noted a recent email from our delegate asking specific feedback from groups. That example helps to connect groups to the Area and GSO.• M D27 – Remarked how general service is the “business side”, and it’s not always clear whether we are working on something that will make 12th step work more effective.• M D31 – Purpose of being here is to foster a culture of 3 Legacies in Area 59. Apathy is common, but we have the power to change that.• F D58 – Noted the poor attendance and lack of GSRs. DCMs can only do so much foster participation and service. Groups need to be willing to grasp the importance of what we do. Individual sponsorship could help.
2 Are we open-minded to new ideas as an Area? If not, what might be some sources of resistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• F D33 – Noted things in the Area had seemed closed-minded for a long time; however, Pete has brought some change and new ideas.• M D29 – Stated almost nobody here except for the normal group. Suggested holding inventory at EPGSA since everyone would be there. Felt the Area is resistant to change due to some failed motions last Panel.• F D58 – Thinks Area is open minded; our resistance is just the same as when we come into AA.• Archivist – Noted the reason we change slowly is because we think things through, consider consequences, and are prudent.• M D27 – Told story how at his first PCCS, the idea of a plain language BB came up, and Area was against at the time. Now we have a new plain language BB.• M D53 – Resistance does not mean closed-minded, only caution. Said conference rammed stuff through during Covid and we threw caution to the wind.• M D43 – Resistance partly due to inability of DCMs to communicate “first-hand” and maybe we need more direct GSR voting/participation. Area could communicate better about our processes and how voices can be heard.

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<p>3</p> <p>What do you think of our practice of rotating locations for Area quarterly meetings and other events?</p> <p>Is there equal opportunity for Districts to host and participate in all events?</p> <p>Are some Districts subject to significantly more travel than others?</p> <p>It has been proposed before that the Area should consider a central location to hold all functions.</p> <p>What are some pros and cons to this centralized model?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M D42 – Traveled 2 hours to get here. Feels all Districts should participate, is not sure if that’s currently the case. Against a central location due to lack of inclusion and potential cost. • M D66 – Explained history that Area considered this in the past, including Reading, and was in favor at first. That changed when he started traveling as a DCM, and rotation is important for participation and responsibility. • Archivist – Provided historical overview. In the past, Reading was used as a location for about 10 years, but Districts complained about not being included, and the Area voted to change it. You can’t make everybody happy all the time. We don’t have enough people here for appropriate level of feedback. • M D53 – Loves the journey to Area events, and needs to convey that to groups, and the joy of participation. • M D30 – Although central location would make things easier in some ways, we might lose the Area’s group conscience, since majority of people would come from surrounding region. Wonders if “bid” process used in other Areas would work here? • M D43 – His former Area accepted bids for events such as quarterly meetings and assemblies. When his District hosted, many people got exposure due to helping host the event. Wonders why Area doesn’t have quarterly meetings on Saturdays, since it seems on Sunday afternoon many seem like they just want to leave. • M D53 – Has sense that travel might cause more people to attend, since attendance at local events can be poor. Rotation is good. • M D64 – Doesn’t have a problem with travel but thinks that a central location would simplify logistics. • M D31 – Life changed since being in AA; noted that many people work Saturdays now. We need to have more events where GSRs have a direct voice. Central location would not benefit Area as a whole. • M D68 – Likes rotation and “road trips”. Related joy and fun had during trips/travel. • M D38 – Feels rotation is best for the Area. Questioned why we always have a quarterly on Founder’s Day weekend.
<p>4</p> <p>What suggestions would you offer to improve Area 59’s financial budgeting and reporting process?</p> <p>Are there any areas where we should increase, decrease, or eliminate budget line items?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F D24 – Noted current budget process and how they are considering rolling “Past Delegate” expense line item into Area events rather than a separate line item. Also appreciated how Structure was transparent about needing to go over, and asked future subcommittees to ask in advance if they need more money and present a motion. • M D42 – Learned a lot by being on Finance subcommittee. Doesn’t understand why Convention Committee expenses are separate and wants more transparency. • M D51 – Noted his subcommittee had trouble budgeting due to unknowns of travel. • M D58 – Suggested maybe Finance should “inventory” the budget. • M D27 – His subcommittee got less money than they asked for but realized it would be okay and the Area doesn’t spend money it doesn’t have. • F D30 – Used to not understand why it was important to submit expenses for money not needed, but now as a chair she understands a budget is needed so we can plan what’s needed to support our work. Submitting expenses this year will help the future.
<p>5</p> <p>How often do you read the WE Newsletter?</p> <p>Is it effective?</p> <p>How many editions are needed each year?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M D27 – The fewer issues the better, since his subcommittee publishes it. • M D?? – What is the “We” newsletter? • F D30 – Was on literature committee prior panel, explained how she communicates about it, and then explained what the newsletter is and how to get it. Loves it. • Delegate – Gave full instructions on how to access. • F D58 – Newsletter is effective; tries to disseminate at District meetings. • F D24 – Explained more about information in it, had suggestions to put more “current

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	<p>info” into it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Archivist – “We” is the 4th iteration of a newsletter. Since others died, “we” are doing something right this time!
<p>6</p> <p>Consider our Pre-Conference Sharing Session.</p> <p>Offer thoughts on improving our process for distributing Conference background materials, selecting items to discuss at PCSS, and informing the Delegate of Eastern PA’s collective conscience.</p> <p>What more can be done to ensure each group is informed and has the opportunity to participate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F D24 – Loved online access and Google Groups that allowed people to comment on every issue and get a fuller group conscience. • M D66 – Appreciated change in format this year which allowed more discussion. Suggested Area could do a better job at guidance to DCMs on the various ways groups can provide feedback. • M D53 – Suggested some kind of communication back to Districts on how he’s going to vote before the conference. • M D51 – Feels Delegate giving written docs before conference on how they will vote is very dangerous. Conference is a spiritual group conscience, and that is all the Delegate carries. We can’t tell people what to do. • Archivist – Explained history of how initially PCCS was solely to get feel of Area conscience and wasn’t sure how it morphed. Feels only having discussion of items doesn’t get the conscience of the Area. You need a vote. • M D53 – Noted overall process and how its difficult due to time constraints. Feels we need the information earlier, so maybe we need to spend an entire year debating agenda items. • F D30 – Said how SENY Delegate sent out a questionnaire that asked for direct feedback from groups, etc. Found the process fascinating. Feels our PCCS has an issue because people come in with uniformed opinion. • M D?? – We could do a better job at the District level of giving “how-to” of ways to access, and more explanation about what is new vs. progress reports. Thinks it would be a good idea for groups to give direct feedback to a central repository to be read by all members on a conference committee. • M D31 – We need to put more tools or a “handbook” into the hands of members to know how to give feedback. • M D29 – Timeline could not be compressed. Explained a way you could split up the information and distribute it to GSRs. Group members need to be always involved, not just when they are angry. DCMs could collaborate to split up the work. • M D27 – Is a visitation chair, so looking at it from that perspective. We need to get back to basics in how we explain the purpose of PCCS. Maybe we could have catchy infographics or something to really make it simple.
<p>7</p> <p>We typically hold two Area funded delegate Conference reports each year.</p> <p>Is this number sufficient? Additionally, Districts have the option to invite the delegate to give a brief report of the Conference at their monthly meeting.</p> <p>In either case, how effective are these reports?</p> <p>What could be changed or improved?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F Past Del – Noted how wonderful it is to share the information from Conference. It’s important to listen, ask questions, and make sure you have the information you need when you talk to your groups. Also relayed story from Conference about how new information can change your vote. Report backs are an opportunity to explain what happened and why. • M D51 – Wondered about cost of the Mini Assemblies, and could we afford to have 3, thus getting the info out to more people. • F D24 – (Answer) Yes, we have the money, typical budget is \$2,500. • Treasurer – Affirmed the amount, and noted if the Area has the need, we should definitely have a 3rd report-back and its worth the cost. • F D33 – Remarked last year both assemblies were far from her District. Rather than a 3rd assembly, maybe Districts could band together and have group workshops. Delegate did a tremendous amount of travel and that could help. • M D30 – Noted history that Area used to have 3, but then attendance declined. However, interest last year was high, so maybe we should increase the number. • Archivist – We used to have 4 with large attendance (Philly had 600-700). Now attendance is never that great, so we need to adapt to current situation/needs.

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<p>8</p> <p>Are all who participate in the Area 59 committee given all they need to be clear on position descriptions, workbooks, guidelines, various A.A. Literature, know where they can get guidance and ask for help?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F D24 – Had a great experience since her subcommittee advisor was Finance chair. Wonders if other subcommittees could have “training session” with outgoing chair. • M D27 – Suggested ad hoc subcommittees should be listed in the structure manual with a description of what they do. • F D58 – Felt she had enough background when asked to be subcommittee chair, knew who she could ask, and advisor was helpful. Not sure if that’s the case for everyone. Maybe the motivation of the person in the position is important. • M D51 – As committee chair, it’s up to you to ask questions and learn what you need to know. Past Delegates are always available and can be extremely helpful to all, not just committee chairs. You can reach out to past DCMs, or even other Areas. Use our structure manual as a resource! • F D22 – Knew nothing when she came in as GSR and didn’t have anyone to help. Was also afraid to ask for help, and stressed how much DCM would assist.
<p>9</p> <p>Are there any current standing committees or positions within the Area that are not effective or possibly not necessary? If so, what are they and why are they not effective? Alternatively, is there a need for a Subcommittee or position that does not currently existing in our structure.</p> <p>How well are Subcommittee Chairpersons and Special Servants prepared to effectively fulfill their responsibilities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F D24 – Alternate Treasurer (new position) could assist and have separation of duties for greater control and division of labor. • F D68 – Accessibilities could be more of a focus. Since it’s now combined with treatment, the “treatment” gets more attention than accessibility. Feels they should be separate, even though they are combined on GSB. • M D27 – Gave history how Delegate disbanded ad hoc Literature and combined into Digital Comms, “We” used to be only Lit function. Perhaps newsletter could be responsibility of standing subcommittee. Feels combination of Tech into Digital Comms made sense; literature, not so much. • Archivist – Why do we have an alternate delegate? It used to be a combined position of Alternate Delegate/Chairperson. • F D24 – (Answer) So a designated person to go to Conference and keep Area informed if the Delegate is unable to attend. • M D51 – Listed duties of Alternate Delegate from the structure manual and “line of succession”. Commented on subcommittee discussions around having more “alternate” positions, but idea was tabled it since was unsure of financial impact.
<p>10</p> <p>Area 59 Officers serve 2-year terms. Every 2 years the Assembly votes for officers to install for the next term.</p> <p>How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the current election process?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M D66 – How elections are handled is an ongoing topic; relayed story of how when 1st GSR he had no idea how to choose. Don’t know how, but it would be better to have GSRs who are more informed. • M D29 – Long, agonizing, slow. We should investigate electronic voting. • M D53 – Thinks going around to all DCMs with “accept/decline” is tedious. Thinks people could know more about what skills are needed for each position to better inform whether to stand. • F D66 – Electronic voting: could help with “widespread” complaints. • M D30 – Cost for e-voting: 700 units to rent would be \$7,500 or \$8,166 + \$100/hour. Purchase quote is \$25,600. • M GSR – There are opportunities for GSRs to know who is who, but feels people shouldn’t vote if they don’t know the person. • M D38 – Our voting process is the same as it was 28 years ago. Writing down names to vote for when you don’t know them is not ideal. Wonders if we could have candidates give 2 or 3 minutes to describe themselves. • F D26 – Not sure about e-voting and if people would need to have a phone. • Archivist – Suggested having DCMs tally votes vs. everyone casting ballots. Issue is sheer number of people voting. • F D24 – Investigated other Areas and asked the best way for GSRs to get to know people? Invite potential officers to your District. DCMs can get GSRs to go to events. People can go to the Area website and read reports to know what people do.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M D27 – The way we do things is because AA avoids politics, and we don’t compete. We need to be careful we don’t inject unwanted things. Finds value in our process. Noted even younger GSRs found the election to be exciting, not tedious. • F D68 – Been through 12 elections. Loves the process! • M D31 – Electing Delegate is the most important thing we do. GSRs aren’t the most informed. It would much be simpler if only DCMs voted. • F D56 – Several times thought about maybe we should expand who is eligible to vote. Maybe even extend to 1 Panel past...
<p>11</p> <p>Are the Area Officers approachable and responsive to emails and other communications?</p> <p>Are they effective or overbearing as Subcommittee advisors?</p> <p>Is the overall approach of the Officers authoritative or that of servant leadership?</p> <p>How well have the Officers fulfilled their responsibilities?</p> <p>What has been done well, and what could use improvement?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M D51 – Relies heavily on officers for guidance and experience to be more effective. • M D66 – Hates email. Called officers and found them very responsive for inventory planning. • M D68 – Appreciates level of effort to be engaged with Spanish community; makes me want to be connected. This stimulates my interest to serve in the Area. • Archivist – Maybe the officers should leave for good feedback. (A straw poll was taken, and the consensus was officers should stay.) • M D27 – Maybe officers could discuss what they do in the “We” newsletter. • M D53 – They are responsive. • F D24 – Officers are very responsive to budget requests and very approachable. • M D58 – We could maybe do a better job of letting people know what each officer brings to a position. • M D67 – “Don’t bite the hand that feeds you” 😊 These are non-paid positions as volunteers, constructive criticism only. • M D53 – Area has listened and did best to resolve issues. • M D22 – Doesn’t want us to change a thing with voting, since it will be her first time and she wants to see how things are now. Maybe we should have candidates speak briefly.
<p>12</p> <p>The delegate currently makes DCM assignments to Subcommittees, as well as appointing the Subcommittee Chairpersons, and Special Servants.</p> <p>How would you evaluate this process?</p> <p>Are there Districts who are called on less for leadership positions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M D51 – Structure has discussed issue of subcommittee chair assignments. Feels subcommittee can override appointed chair. • F D24 – Wonders if subcommittee chairs struggle with that plus being DCM. • Archivist – When he served on subcommittee, they elected own chair. Is it too much power to put in hands of Delegate? • M D38 – Experienced disappointment when he wasn’t assigned to preferred committee. Told Delegate this, and surprisingly it has worked out well. • M D29 – In a perfect world, you could get DCMs to elect their own chair and secretary and work well together. But that is rare – it’s hard to get 8 chairs. Sometimes it’s best to let things just happen and trust that you will wind up where you’re supposed to. • M D66 – Noted that Delegate did state if you felt really strongly about a mismatch for your subcommittee, you could work something else. Feels subcommittees could elect their own chair. • M ?? – Initially said no to being a chairperson (years ago), but then said yes after reflection. Didn’t have a lot of participation on subcommittee but it worked out. • M D31 – Told story about how he came to be a special servant. Thinks too much pressure is given on Delegate recommendations. • M D43 – Feels DCMs should rotate out into chair position. Would lessen load on DCMs and allow past DCMs to utilize their experience in another Panel.
<p>13</p> <p>Do you have any questions, comments or concerns of your own to add for consideration?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M ?? – Loves AA. • F D25 – Grateful. Curious how things worked out, but it’s great. Has given her a chance to work outside of her comfort zone. • F D33 – Structure manual does a great job in describing officer positions, subcommittees etc. Does not have enough information about how the Area does its

- business – was confused during a motion and its process at Area meeting.
- M | D53 – Knows how much work is involved in being Treasurer, and the position could most certainly make use of an alternate or two.
 - F | D30 – Also had experiences where she didn't understand where we were during debate on a motion. Maybe a parliamentarian could help?
 - M | D64 – Plugged an upcoming workshop.
 - F | D24 – Subcommittee discussed how they didn't see it documented even in service manual on how motions work. Maybe we could have a workshop on the topic?
 - M | D42 – Thinks even though our process may be cumbersome, it has value. Used to take things personally, but now realizes things just happen.
 - M | D51 – Structure manual is more of a guide and would be too much to add details of parliamentary rules. It does have info on how you introduce motions to Area. Question – are we making service attractive, what are we doing to retain people to serve?
 - M | D38 – District 38 is holding a workshop on keeping people engaged in service.
 - M | D27 – Noted Hugh H. created a quick guide to modified Robert Rule's that is on our website.
 - M | D29 – We're failing next "generation" by not taking people through traditions and explaining importance of service.
 - M | D22 – Find service overwhelming, and her generation tends to want to do things fast but doesn't want to put in the work.
 - M | D30 – Shameless plug for workshop on service sponsorship.
 - M | D31 – GSO is overwhelmed with number of agenda items and the volume of background materials. What can we do as an Area to stop talking about the same things repeatedly and move forward to help more alcoholics?
 - M | D68 – Amazed by transformative power of service. Important to realize what others can do that I cannot. Spanish speakers may require more work to stay involved.
 - M | D66 – Feels Area and District did do their best, but the learning curve for groups to make an informed decision is impossible. Perhaps having a Conference every other year could allow for a more deliberative process. We are trying to do too much.
 - Facilitator - Noted background material has only been available easily to the fellowship in the past decade. In prior years it had to be mailed. Volume of background has increased.
 - Archivist – Stated there are many repetitive agenda items so total number is less.
 - Facilitator – Some Area Delegates unfortunately like the power of determining when and how background material is made available.
 - M | D43 – How do we just have a more informal discussion, without it being a motion or action item? Is there a place for that discussion during a quarterly meeting?
 - Chairperson – Commented on how every service position has taken her out of comfort zone. She is extra hard on herself and talked about prep she does before chairing Area meetings, and how it can be very hard, especially if you leave a paper behind. It is such a learning experience – be patient.