

**Meeting Minutes | EPGSA Panel 73**  
**66<sup>th</sup> Annual EPGSA Convention & Assembly**  
**November 11, 2023**



Wyndham Lancaster Resort and Convention Center  
 2300 Lincoln Hwy E  
 Lancaster, PA 17602

**Meeting Opening:**

Susan M., Chairperson Panel 73, opened the assembly at 8:45 AM with the Serentiy Prayer. She then read a section from the “A Vision for You” on page 161 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Acknowledged Guests, Housekeeping, Remarks:**

Susan noted various “housekeeping” items, noted, and thanked the Spanish interpreter Sandra P., and encouraged everyone to visit the Archives display which has a wealth of information from the Area Archivist. Finally, she thanks DCMs and GSRs for attending and fulfilling their service responsibilities.

**Introduction of Guest Observer:**

Susan explained the history of the guest observer: Each year, Eastern Pennsylvania General Service Assembly invites a Guest Observer to our convention. The guest observer is defined as: "A person, not in the Fellowship, and with limited access to members of the Fellowship, who has intimate, on-going contact with alcoholics in the workplace, and whose job activities would be enriched by attending our convention/assembly." EPGSA welcomes Dr. Monika Van Sant to our 66th Annual Convention and Assembly. She is a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine and Medical Director of Addiction Services at Be Well Center/Goldman Methadone Clinic, a consultant of Addiction Medicine at Nazareth Hospital in Philadelphia. Susan welcomed Monica and noted appreciation for her taking the time to get to know us better.

**Roll Call:**

Area Secretary, Dan B. then explained who was considered a voting member, the roll call procedure, and then conducted the roll call. There were a total of 369 voting member, with details noted below:

District	DCM	GSRs/Reps	Total
21	1	4	5
22	1	10	11
23	1	17	18
24	1	8	9
25	1	9	10
26	1	8	9
27	1	6	7
28	0	0	
29	1	7	8
30	1	16	17
31	1	6	7

District	DCM	GSRs/Reps	Total
45	1	15	16
46	0	1	1
47	1	10	11
48	1	15	16
49	1	3	4
50	1	0	1
51	1	17	18
52	0	0	
53	1	5	6
54	1	4	5
55	1	4	5

32	1	10	11
33	1	7	8
34	0	0	
35	1	3	4
36	1	10	11
37	1	9	10
38	1	8	9
39	0	4	4
40	1	6	7
41	1	3	4
42	1	0	1
43	1	0	1
44	1	5	6
Subtotal	21	156	177

56	1	11	12
57	1	5	6
58	1	5	6
59	0	2	2
60	1	3	4
61	0	6	6
62	1	1	2
63	1	8	9
64	1	10	11
65	1	6	7
66	1	13	14
67	1	8	9
68	1	2	3
Subtotal	20	154	174

Total DCMs	41
GSRs/Group Reps	310
Area Officers	6
Past Delegates	12

Total
351

TOTAL VOTING	369
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Past Delegates	Panel	Present	Area Officers	Position	Present
Marcia G.	41	1	Pete B.	Delegate	1
Clay R.	47	1	Curt C.	Alt. Delegate	1
Gary C.	49	1	Susan M.	Chairperson	1
Marty S.	51	1	Dan B.	Secretary	1
J. Gary L.	55	1	Tara C.	Treasurer	1
Shelia D.	57	1	Claire B.	Officer At Large	1
Lowell L.	59	1			
Hugh H.	61	1			
Steve O.	63	1			
Patricia F.	65	1			
Paul M.	67	1			
Caroline N.	71	1			

### Officer Annual Reports:

Area Officers presented their annual reports to the assembly; reports are posted on the Area website, [area59aa.org](http://area59aa.org).

- Officer at Large, Claire B.
- Treasurer, Tara C.
- Secretary, Dan B.

- Chairperson, Susan M.
- Alternate Delegate, Curt C.
- Delegate, Pete B.

### **Subcommittee Annual Reports:**

Subcommittee chairpersons or their alternates presented their annual reports to the assembly; reports are posted on the Area website, [area59aa.org](http://area59aa.org).

- Archives, Jen F.
- Cooperation with the Professional Community, Alex B.
- Corrections, Joe K.
- Finance, Lauren B.
- Grapevine/LaViña, Jessica T.
- Public Information, Deb S.
- Structure, Alex N.
- Treatment/Accessibility, Devon C.
- Ad Hoc Digital Communications, Ted C.

### **Assembly Sharing**

Susan then invited assembly members to share their opinions on three pre-selected topics. Each topic will be noted below, followed by the various comments expressed at the mic.

#### *1. Communication through the Service Structure: What works? What needs to be improved?*

- D61, M: Is there a way to directly get information directly from the Area or GSO vs. getting it from the District?
- D44, M: How can we improve the monthly GSR meetings for better attendance?
- D24, F: Google Groups has great for sharing on agenda items and hopes it continues.
- D53, M: Feels timeline for getting proper group conscience for agenda items is too short.
- D36, M: Communication has greatly improved over the years. There are great challenges in compiling and distribution info related to agenda items and other things; it has definitely improved.
- D58, F: Communication has been very good; felt Google Groups for agenda items was critical and gave a great opportunity for more voices. Changes to PCCS was also an improvement.
- D51, F: Communication has been excellent; it does work when we are involved and responsible.
- D40, F: Grateful for communication at all levels – it has been phenomenal. Events like this are key. What are we doing to encourage people to get involved?
- D63, F: Delegate did a great job of explaining what happened at Conference and made it come alive, particularly the Plain Language Big Book. Important to support DCM to attend all events.
- D66, M: Responsibility to ask questions – you will get a response. GSR orientation workshop worked well.
- D??, M: Communication has opened door to trust. We have been getting the information.
- D49, M: Information is there if you seek it. You need to make a commitment to wade through the agenda item background. Would like to have a summary or condensed version of agenda items to get people started.
- D51, M: More groups need to be connected and make commitment to send GSRs to events like this. Perhaps we need fewer meetings and more involved groups.
- D32, F: Had concern about not getting agenda items in time to take it back to the groups. The timeline of getting in mid-February made it too much for just the GSR to be responsible for getting the information back to the groups.
- D??, M: Would like to have more lead time for agenda items.

- D27, M: Excellent communication from Area to GSRs. Challenge is getting the group involved or providing feedback.
- D61, M: Does not know how to get information to the group; is not computer literate; feels groups need to be sent information directly.
- D46, F: Feels people are being left out due to the location. Strongly suggests having more events in hybrid format to increase access.
- D45, M: Thinks having video messages could improve communication.
- D??, F: Feels transparency is excellent, and DCM or members can get the information.

2. *The 73rd General Service Conference Committee on Finance considered a request to discuss proposed agenda items related to changes to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The committee suggested that the Trustees' Literature Committee seek input from the Fellowship (including but not limited to Area delegate feedback) regarding any possible future changes to literature written by A.A.'s founders.*

*There are 5 sub-questions noted below; feedback has response to each question in order. Most feedback was presented by a GSR or other member speaking on behalf of a group.*

- If changes to Bill's writing should have a longer review process, how long?*
  - Should future changes have footnotes with changes or remain unchanged?*
  - Should there be a threshold for review, and at what level?*
  - Should the changes made to 12x12 be retained?*
  - Do we need a new policy for the future?*
- D28, F: 2 years would be enough; footnotes; District should be threshold; changes should remain; no new policy.
  - D29, M: Not enough time given, no changes, revert, no policy since we must never change.
  - D65, M: Do not change anything, ever.
  - D27, M: Agreed with all changes. It's needed for future alcoholics and must be updated to attract more. It is your responsibility to go to business meetings and be informed.
  - D51, F: Lots of different opinions. Consensus was we need to listen to the people who aren't here, and we need to adapt. Best not to put a time limit.
  - D38, M: 4/4 felt 1 year enough; ¾ unchanged, 1 undecided; 4/4 group as threshold; ¾ reverted, 1 more time; ¼ no new policy, 1 need for new forum.
  - D??, M: Pragmatism important; 2-year timeframe for changes; District threshold; did not know what changes were; for openness and clarity we need a new process.
  - D37, M: No new changes ever, minority said footnotes.
  - D65, F: We must never change anything. The problem is people getting sober need acceptance or they don't deserve to get sober.
  - D25, F: Concerned about pronouns; changes should be in footnotes; majority said 12x12 changes retained; need more info about policy – doesn't know current process.
  - D66, M: 2 years for review; footnotes/longer review; group level; keep changes; new policy needed.
  - D31, M: No changes ever. Quoted 1995 advisory action.
  - D47, M: 2 or more years; no changes ever, but if changed, original in footnotes, district level, revert changes, need new written policy.
  - D38, M: 2 years, changes in footnotes, proportional by group level, keep changes.
  - D51, F: 2 years, no changes, but if so in footnotes, group level, revert, never change anything ever.
  - D27, M: There is a need for changes, lots of people do have issues with changes so it's needed.
  - D58, M: More info is better; no changes to 1<sup>st</sup> 164 pages; group level; yes, with footnotes; new policy needed.
  - D23, M: 2 years minimum, feels changes were done under the cloak of darkness; revert all changes.

- D??, F: More time needed; unchanged writings; confused since structure already includes; revert changes; need policy that these changes.
- D26, M: Are new people being considered when we discuss these types of things? We do not include younger people. Bill's language was for his generation. The younger generation needs new language.
- D56, F: More time; no changes; group level review; revert changes, need policy.
- D30, F: More time for review; no changes; Area final threshold; revert changes; new policy.
- D44, M: Keep AA as it is because it works.
- D41, M: Angry people is likely because of fear. Need to look at some of the outdated language. Important to keep our vision intact though.
- D61: No changes, but if there are, use footnotes.
- D??, F: Writings can only be changed if 2/3 of all groups in the world. Bill's writing should remain pure forever.
- D63, M: Homegroup has lot of newcomers since near to recovery houses. People who are offended by pronouns have their disease talking.
- D36, M: Quoted Bill W stating that AA needs to change.

### 3. *Participation of Online Groups in the General Service Structure*

*There are 4 sub-questions noted below; feedback has response to each question in order.*

- What are the current challenges?*
  - How are online groups currently participating?*
  - Has Area 59 outgrown a purely geographic structure?*
  - Should the Area create a virtual District, or should there be a U.S./Canada virtual Area?*
- D24, F: Online groups are here to stay; should be up to group to participate where they want.
  - D??, M: Does not have geographic home and would love to be part of Area.
  - D??, M: Virtual-only works. Suggest online groups just local District.
  - D41, M: Feels like service is a different level and needs its own type of meeting.
  - D66, M: Needs a virtual District with its own Delegate, because it's difficult to *really* participate in a local area, and properly reflect their concerns and communicate.
  - D51, M: Felt preamble change was political and "top-down" directed and violated our principles and creates division by changing Bill's writings.
  - (Erie), F: Online Area would increase accessibility and participation.

### **Convention Challenge Winner**

Susan then invited Caroline N., Past Delegate, to announce the Convention Challenge winner. Caroline then congratulated District 29 who won the challenge and would receive a lovely gift basket.

### **Closing**

The Chairperson Susan closed the assembly with the Responsibility Declaration at approximately 11:20 AM.