

Madeine P, former Pacific Regional Trustee opened the meeting thanking the group for their service and read from the service manual about the third legacy of service and the importance of the inventory. Encouraged everyone to demonstrate courage.

Please keep your shares to 2 minutes and do not share twice so that we can get through 6 questions.

Linda T., Area 18 notetaker

1. What is the purpose of our Area?

- a. To assist the districts. And the purpose of the district is to assist the groups in order to carry the message more effectively to the alcoholic who still suffers.
- b. To elect a delegate to represent the general conscience of Area 15 at the General Service Conference.
- c. We provide a forum for our groups and districts to share what is working, what isn't and to share ideas.
- d. Hopeful for more enthusiasm that we take care of business in a more efficient way. Could we do more virtually. This is a hope and a dream. This may be more cost effective and time efficient. This will allow more access to service. This is a large area geographically.

2. If we in General Service are the Group's link to AA., what can we do to improve that link?

- a. Overall making Area 15 more attractive to GSR's. I feel we ask a lot of the GSR's in our area and district. Monthly meetings and travel to quarterly meetings. We need to evaluate how we are communicating and how much we ask our GSR's absorb. We don't have a set format. Some say Roberts rules, some say conference protocol. We are in many ways failing our GSR's by not providing them tools.
- b. We as people who have been in service for a while need to be more accessible. We need to be open, transparent and willing to foster the relationships with GSRs.
- c. When I became a GSR it really opened my eyes. It jumpstarted my sobriety and helped me tremendously. We are here to help keep the doors open.
- d. I try to share everything I get with my home group and other groups. I just shared about tonight with a lot of people. Many are not aware. Even if they don't show up they always ask afterward. Try to keep the lines of communication open with the groups.
- e. When we visit a group, no matter what our service position, especially the DCM, share about general service. Even if they don't have a GSR. This creates enthusiasm and informs about service opportunities.
- f. We are just one link. Rely less on our GSRs. Give more work to the Area committee. The GSR's should elect the delegate and carry their group's conscience. All else should go to the Area committee.
- g. As a GSR, I had no idea what I was doing. I knew how to do things as soon as I was rotating out. I often have people look to me to answer what is going on as a DCM. I see so many people wanting to not do this. I formed a group with service sponsees and others who want to tap in more. We meet weekly to help educate and provide more

understanding. I have seen GSR's not vote because they don't understand what is going on. Idea for a workshop every 8 weeks an info session with a presentation.

- h. There is a GSR sharing session and DCM sharing session at each quarterly.
- i. DCM's are so important. In the past few years we have taken so much responsibility away from the DCM. We are hurting for participation. We need to encourage that and look at the responsibilities that they have and what we have taken away.
- j. I had a sponsor a service sponsor and a DCM who was involved. Back then it was a big job. They had so much to do. Traditions studies and giving the knowledge to the GSR's is important. Unsure if the DCM is giving the knowledge needed to the GSR. I visit groups that have GSR's and not have. We need more instruction for the GSRs.

Reminder that there will be a solution meeting at the end. As we do this, write these things down so that you have what you are thinking about now?

Suggestion from the facilitator: visit to other areas. See what they are doing there and how they may do things differently.

3. What could the area add revise, or drop from the Area Assemblies that would make them more inclusive and informative?

- a. We should rescind the motion from 2008 giving the vote for GSRs to reduce the work for DCM's to constantly be "selling" general service. Move the meetings to Saturday.
- b. We would benefit from adding Area sharing sessions to contribute as outlined in our service manual. Similar to what's on your mind, but more structured and goal oriented. Notes are taken and followed up on. For example, what issues or problems are your groups encountering?
- c. We need to find a better way of communicating the district and committee reports. People leave at noon. People are "talked at". Restructure the quarterly. It's too long and the distance is too much. The agenda for July will be a very long day and then have to drive 4-5 hours home.
- d. I have been in two other areas, both did business in one day. Two days is "brutal" it's a hard weekend. Is it necessary? It wasn't in the other two districts. Most people would still need to come Friday, but the folks who were local could go home.
- e. So many good suggestions! To add, we alcoholics are all the same when it comes to addressing things about our groups. What I missed during the pandemic there was no real interaction between individuals. We were not sharing with each other. A real sharing session would be so helpful. We never talked about online meetings. As a DCM I had 33 groups. How are we best serving our groups? Are we too big?
- f. The DCM and Sharing sessions happen concurrently. I believe they should happen one after another. So that the DCM can hear what is happening in the GSR meeting. Also, start identifying people to step in when you rotate out and train them. Why do we have a Saturday night speaker? We could be doing so much more with that time.
- g. My experience with the area meeting. I'm learning a lot, but I'd like to see planned breaks. Lunch. Set a time to end and stick to it.

4. How can the area attract more GSR's to attend the Area Assemblies?

- a. It costs about \$1500 a year to have a fully active GSR. Hotels, travel and meals. Cost is an enormous barrier for a group. For us it is \$145 a month. There is a large economic barrier for GSR's to participate.
- b. The time commitment and distance to participate in assemblies.
- c. If a GSR asks a question without the institutional knowledge, it is problematic that others roll eyes and be divisive. We should encourage their participation at the mic.
- d. Ad Hoc committee is working on virtual options, can we also explore how to expedite voting. It's easy online. We lose people during the discussion of the voting process and during the voting process.
- e. The area should compensate the GSR's who's meetings cannot pay for them to travel. At the area we have enough to fund those GSR's in order to get them involved. A lot of groups cannot afford to send the GSR, let alone the individual.
- f. Point of information, when we met virtually our attendance went down. We have signed contracts with hotels through April of 2024.
- g. It is difficult to get a hotel. Most sell out very quickly. Our area is very large.
- h. This is eye opening. I have been able to attend the online assemblies the last quarterly. The workshops are phenomenal. It's mind stimulating. But not everyone can get to them. The elephant in the room, we need hybrid. We will get more involvement. Change the time of the concepts workshop. Hold the DCM and GSR meetings back-to-back. Longer workshops. I am from a virtual group. We are a local group. Our district has been very accommodating to virtual meetings.
- i. I was the hotel liaison. The hotel being filled up can be discouraging. Everyone on the wait list was served. Put this information on the flyer.
- j. I've been an online GSR for about a year now. The last virtual assembly we had was 12 hours. It gave me the ability as an alternate GSR to "be" there. If it was in person my group would not have been able to pay for it and I would not have been able to pay for it.

Point of information, Oregon used an online voting system for people in person and online. (Madeleine)

5. Do we emphasize the importance of Service Sponsorship? How can we do better?

- a. I am an alternate GSR. When I started, I remember being on the zoom quarterlies, I did hear from multiple people to get a service sponsor. I heard it right away.
- b. I am the alternate delegate. I do not emphasize service sponsorship except in 1x1 situations. Perhaps we can include it in our format. Also, in our Friday orientation. Perhaps we could have a "buddy". Match up the new GSR with someone more seasoned.
- c. We need to make sure people know they are in the group and get a service sponsor asap. Motions at are confusing as they have nothing to do with the group. They are business motions. Not much to take back to the group.
- d. My first sponsor is very active in General Service. And now she is my service sponsor. I didn't have to search. But if I hadn't had one I wouldn't have know what one was. We have a workshop before our district meeting where we study the service manual.
- e. We have several opportunities when we could discuss service sponsorship and third legacy sponsorship. We don't have a format for that. For our concept/traditions workshops etc., we don't have a format. Perhaps some suggestions on how you might benefit from this we could include service sponsorship. We have an outreach committee

that is fairly new. This committee could be one of those who could provide this to the area.

6. Does the Area effectively prepare their trusted servants for their positions? If not, what can we do better?

- a. I think we could do better. I think we could underscore the importance of alternate positions. We don't think about that enough. Perhaps District Charis and GSR's could remind each other of. Bill did this. We need a plan. And keep our position descriptions updated. In another area, after the business meeting, another meeting was held and the rotating servants needed to prepare and provide all of the information for the incoming trusted servant. A passon. And to continue to be available to answer questions.
- b. I've had support every step of the way willing to help me to learn the job. It was my responsibility to ask and not to pretend I knew how to do the job. Pamphlets, service manual, every piece of literature can provide us with the information about the job description. I always consulted with the previous servant.
- c. I think it is important to remove barriers to get people to stand for office. We can do a better job of promoting what is concept 9. You may not have the "qualifications" but you should know the leadership qualities. Flexibility, tolerance, responsibility and vision. Don't talk people out of standing. If you believe you are qualified an available, then you are qualified and available. I think we need to take down all those barriers.
- d. The comment on Concept 9 is excellent. Instead of making decision based on the "mechanics". We need to need a lot more motions than should be required. By placing something in a motion, allow the servant to have autonomy. We need to get beyond micromanaging.
- e. I think that everyone should be able to stand for a position if they meet the qualifications of being a DCM and 5 years of sobriety. For those of us who rotate, you are responsible to share your experience and then step back. And not micromanage.
- f. I have not served in an area position so I can't speak from experience. But overall, based on conversations with my GSR's, there seems to be an air of "us and them" and an unwillingness for change. This is extremely unattractive. Those of us who have been here for a few years, we could do a better job of encouraging the next generation, not shutting them down. The leadership could have an impact.
- g. Area 15 tries to do very well is utilization of our area website. There is so much information there. We need to use this and share it. All of our meetings with the exception of the Sunday business meeting are open. We want people to attend on Saturday. I would hope that the members of our district and fellowship embrace that and get the word out.
- h. We have 53 participants. 12 are GSRs, 8 past delegates. Let's look at not making this so intimidating. The voice we are getting here is not the people we are trying to get to answer the question. We need to look at that.
- i. Who are these people who don't have their cameras on? We only have a very few people here at this very important event.
- j. The elephant in the room is that we are interested in streamlining the business of area 15, the people we know are not here today, but it is our job to give the information to the GSRs. How do we emphasize the need to make a change? This is the way we have always done it is no longer a good excuse.

- k. We have had great trusted servants. There is too much micromanagement. We can delegate to our officers. When I was new, I did feel like there were two groups, the ones who knew each other and then the newbies wandering around and not feeling a part of. We can all do a better job of reaching out to the newcomer to make them feel more welcome.

My experience has been that the weight of much of the Pass-ons falls on the area chair. And it really is the collective who should be responsible. (Madeleine)

Oregon Area does their inventory every other year at the last assembly of the panel. This time the area committees did their own inventory. This was done in the hopes of getting wider sharing. (Madeleine)

Second Session: July 30th, 2022

Meeting opened with the Serenity Prayer

Madeleine P, Former Trustee, Facilitator

Linda T., Notetaker

7. Do our Area Service Committees provide enough support to Districts and home groups?

- a) I am excited to see the support here. I have emailed area committee and have not received an answer. I am looking forward to seeing that.
- b) Some of our area committee chair people try to get to the districts and not the homegroups. They get involved only in their home districts. So if we don't have anyone from our district serving at the area level they do not get involved.
- c) Kudos to our area chairperson who sits in our district meeting. Last month we went hybrid and she attended and provided lots of support and answers. I was a member of Area 06 and the practice there where area officers attended district meetings. It was how I got connected to the Area as area 06 is so large GSRs often could not attend the area assemblies or area meeting.
- d) One thing I loved this last year was that we met regularly over the last year to review the workbook. But this was a specific project. I would appreciate the area meeting more often.
- e) I appreciate the outreach committee hosting a bootcamp and that they provided fliers and heads up notice so that we could plan to be there.
- f) I want to second the last speaker. I am very excited to do a bootcamp in the Keys.
- g) We are back in person and only the people who are able to attend area meetings can attend committee meetings. I think it would be great for committees to meet in between virtually so more folks could attend.
- h) As an area, especially at the assemblies we should be encouraging all of the GSRs to pick a committee to serve beyond just being a GSR. This would facilitate rotation. We need to do a better job of encouraging participation. Part of this is a sponsor issue. I wasn't given a choice about service!
- i) Listening to the comments I keep thinking communication communication communication. I think if we have a weakness it is how we are carrying back what happens in these wonderful committees. We are dependent on who is present to carry the message back or to read the minutes. One thing we do in our district is to identify 4 or 5 key takeaways and suggest that the GSRs and DCMs take those items back to their meetings. We have to let people know over and over again. Better communication strategy is needed.
- j) I can't distinguish the difference between the area committee and the district. Either there is an overlap or there needs distinction. I've been a GSR for a year.

8. Does the Area use our Seventh Tradition funds effectively to carry out our primary purpose? How can we do better?

- a) I am in the have too much camp. We contribute over 20,000 to the General Service Committee. If the groups are applying the pie chart appropriately and also sending to GSR, we should be using the money at the Area level. I think we should be spending the money at PICPC. We need more PSA's and digital work. We can advertise the APP. I think this would be the best way to spend the excess funds or tell the groups to stop sending so much money.
- b) I agree with the previous speaker. If we increase the budget for the committees it would go a long way to getting the districts more involved at the area level. The districts could do more workshops and get more cooperation from outlying districts. Increase the budget and make more funds available to districts.
- c) One thing I noticed in the last few years due to being virtual was how much money we spend on transportation and why are we spending so much money to reimburse hotels and transportation when we can do virtual so much more cost effectively.
- d) My home group does not give to the area. I am the first GSR there. Their logic is that they were given a distribution a number of years ago where they give 10% GSR and everything else to groups within the district. Their answer is that the area sends everything to GSO so we are going to keep the money locally.
- e) I am a GSR in a virtual meeting. My group does not donate because they feel that the money is spent for people's vacations to attend area in fancy hotels. And the process is archaic. Paper checks and not the ability to donate
- f) A while ago I spoke at an area meeting and was given a check to take back to GSO. At the time GSO had a surplus of a couple of 100 thousand dollars. I felt like I was robbing Area 15 when I took that check. When I asked why I was told this is the way we have always done that. We should be prudent with our money and spend it in the area first.
- g) One thing is how much we ask of our GSRs. We expect them to attend the assemblies every few months. The attitude is that there is too much money in Area 15 and the GSRs have to pay their own way. I keep hearing "we have to encourage GSRs" but we don't have enough room for any more to physically meet. Maybe we should spend the money differently or not meet so much in person.
- h) I notice a big drop in sponsors not cracking the whip over their sponsees. I was told I had to do service. If I hear anything consistently it is how great the website is. I go to a zoom group and there are a number of ways to give money, checks, venmo or paypal.
- i) If I ask for what I need, there is always a path. My committee was given a sizeable amount of money and then went to lockdown so the money was not spent. Now we are starting to come back with outreach. How do we do this in a responsible way so it reflects our area's values system.

9. How effective is the Area GSR Sharing session at Area Assemblies at providing GSRs the information they need to carry out their GSR responsibilities in their home group, District and the Area?

- a) I have the same question brought up earlier about the difference from district and area committees. We are getting information at the sharing session, but I am not sure the information follows a set plan. Opportunity to standardize the information and communication as it is a lot to absorb. I appreciate them but I'd like to improve the information we are getting. I cannot attend both the GSR and finance committee meeting.
- b) I have only attended the last quarterly assembly. I didn't feel it was effective at all. The panel shared their experience which was interesting. But then the people who asked questions asked the same questions about how to get their group involved. I think it's important, but those two hours were not effective and I didn't learn anything new. I do have some suggestions for the solutions meeting.

- c) I was not a fan of the format where they bring in a GSR or former who shares their service recovery story. GSR's need education and training! We need more information and less story!
- d) I have been to several of these meetings and it has been an interesting experience. It feels like I'm being "sold" to the next level. I didn't get information on how to be boots on the ground support for my group.
- e) I agree with what everyone has said. The education of a GSR starts at the District and it's the District's responsibility to train the GSRs. We need to offer training for GSR's. Our district had a service committee meeting and it was well attended. The meeting stopped at rotation.
- f) I found the assembly very informative and when the GSRs shared I appreciated the experience. I got the resolution I needed. I got a lot of feedback from GSRs in the room. We need to talk things out in these sessions instead of just sharing problems. I also attended the Finance committee and went back to the GSRs. Sometimes the GSR panels do all of the talking.
- g) I've been of the opinion that the GSR panel should be folks from the local district running the meeting and past delegates, officers should be in the audience as a resource. We asked for responses from the audience rather than from those running the meeting. Unfortunately GSRs are often too afraid to ask the question. Service sponsorship is helpful too.
- h) I would like the GSR workshop be planned by the GSRs and the hosting district can oversee it. Being talked to is less effective than allowing those who need the education plan the meetings and content. I'd like to say yes the district trains them but we need more support.
- i) We met together to figure out what the GSRs needed to know. One thing we need is a GSR orientation. They need more information, structure and tools. We have an obligation to do that. Service sponsor too is important.
- j) There is a lot of information in our literature. Our district does an orientation.
- k) Our sessions need to be more structured and less loopy goosy.

10. How effective is Area communication with the Groups, Districts, and the rest of the service structure as a whole? What can we do better?

- a) I don't hear directly from the area; I hear from the area through my district. There is no facebook group. I wish I had direct communication from our area. Email too.
- b) Communication Communication. We have an upside communication and communicate through the district but I think we need to have more direct communication. I love the previous comments. We have three assemblies and meetings but we do not do any surveys on how people feel we are doing. I'd really like to see the Area surveying the members if they are getting what they need.
- c) I feel like I experience a different Area 15 than everyone else. I have emails. I have reached out and never had anyone not respond. It has been a very good experience. I had to do it.
- d) I feel the website is a tremendous source of information. I am responsible to search out the information. I think the communication is very accessible. I have no complaints.
- e) Point of information, we have three opportunities for communication. The district registrars put in information. Our districts elect committee members for every committee. The dcms can provide information to the registrar. We have some challenges. We are missing registrars and DCMs and unfortunately not all of the DCMs are working with the district registrars. We can tidy up these things. If the are data base doesn't have accurate information we wont be able to communicate effectively.
- f) I use email blasts. Every now and then there are some communications that come in the same day of when they are supposed to occur. It would be helpful to send them out early and in advance.
- g) Our chair uses email blasts to disseminate information. If you are not getting the information, contact the chairperson. We cant be spoon fed.
- h) How can we do better with email? Where do we get the information?

- i) Kudos to the website. The information posted is usually correct. Especially kudos to Tom. You want to find out what is going on, go to the website.
- j) I like the idea of keeping current with online information, like Facebook. Sometimes I get the email and it's already happened. Newsletter online? A lot of GSRs don't go to the quarterlies.
- k) GSO did a communications audit a few years ago and the things we are talking about now were discussed then. The upside down triangle was created in a different time. The Florida state convention has great information. The website is great, and a private Facebook group. Our website needs an opt in feature. Allow folks to put their email in.
- l) The website is amazing. The online forms look great. It looks very comprehensive. Lisa has been very helpful. Everyone I've ever contacted has been responsive and helpful.

11. Does the Area provide a safe, functional, and accessible meeting place for our Area events? If not, what can we do better?

- a) I think it is selfish of us to not do online whenever we can. It is costly to pay for travel. There are apps, Slack, etc to improve communication. There are a lot of tools we could use to communicate far more effectively.
- b) Some of the concern expressed about accessibility, Tampa is not accessible with parking and wheelchairs. Financial concerns for travel. I like what was just said, meet in person and online. Not force hybrid. We don't need to exclude people we have been doing this online for two years.
- c) The accessibility of the past assembly, there were workshops on the third floor not accessible from the main elevators. People didn't know where they were. It was a very long walk. A hotel may say that a hotel is ADA compliant, but we can do better than that. That should be part of the selection of the facility. The travel time to get across the state and the need to get an extra hotel night that is a barrier. People who work 9-5 can't always get there? Maybe shorten Saturday.
- d) D 14 and D19 opted in to Area 15. The area approved and signed contracts through April of 2024 for hotels.
- e) I don't think the Area assemblies are accessible to our target audience. If we had the access we wanted we would not be able to accommodate everyone. We need to move away from saying this is the way we have always done this. I know we have contracts, but GSRs don't want to travel and pay. I am curious how many area officers and committee chairs are retired. I'd like to see us meeting in person and online.
- f) The first assembly we had in person I didn't go because masks were not required. We still have COVID. I reached out after the meeting and asked everyone what happened, people did not stay until the business meeting. The whole point of the assembly is the business meeting and no one stays. I had to wait for the minutes in order to inform my group. Why is always a high priced hotel and why a fancy expensive town? And why are we doing contracts two years out.
- g) In April we would have benefitted from AV equipment. The meeting would have been more effective if we could have seen the screen. The accessibility of the meeting rooms in July was very difficult.
- h) I am handicapped and the hotels are difficult for access.
- i) When we voted we tried to talk about different options, but I felt pressured to move on the contracts. I think now we are trapped. Unless the hybrid committee can come up with a plan to do something different after the contracts expire.
- j) Conferences are not bound by previous conference decisions. The groups are in charge. Area 15 is part of the service structure. The groups can vote to break the contracts. That's the way AA works. Obviously we have lots of money. Not advising we can pay penalties to break contracts, but we can have the conversation.

- k) We can plan things. We don't have to vote on things immediately. It cannot hurt to plan. Let's develop a plan. I'd go with one assembly a year. Four mini assemblies for localities. We have a lot of structure we do not need at the area level.

12. Are there any current structures or positions within the Area that are not effective or possibly not necessary? If so, what are they and why are they not effective?

- a) GSRs. Is the GSR without full right of participation needed at the assemblies? We do business at the end of the weekend. And they cannot stay. We don't give them rights for motions, but do to vote.
- b) "The Dais"? I don't see the purpose of it. Everyone else should be a part of the body, sitting with everyone else. It sets an "us and them" attitude. Let's get rid of it and be unified.
- c) We were adrift the last few years. When we did events there was resistance. It was poorly attended.
- d) We are very married to the book of current practice and we have no flexibility in how we do things. The current practice is focused on the process and not results and I think that slows us down in getting results.
- e) No panel is bound by other panels. The current practices seem to be a method of maintaining status quo no matter what. With positions we seem to be more worried about having positions than having GSRs show up. For me the most important thing is the group. We need to get together at the district level and figure out what we really need to get the message of AA to the people who really need it.
- f) The discussion has been wonderful. I wish we could have a forum at our assemblies to have this discussion. Maybe blend the GSRs and DCM sessions. We only have 60 people here tonight and at our assemblies we have 100's. This is wonderful. I applaud the area and everyone who has shared their concerns.
- g) Structures that might help? Ability to take area assemblies hybrid would be a structure that would open accessibility. For health issues, island participants, for groups who can't afford, for younger people. If the area's goal is to have more people participate than that is the way to go.
- h) DITTO. Things have changed. We need to move in that direction. I get the email from the district chair and I get it once a month and it is all inclusive.
- i) It seems to me that we need to take a hard look at the assemblies and look at restructuring them. GSR training and business meeting. Get it done in one day. When we had the assemblies on zoom we seemed to get less attendance than in person. I am not sure our experience indicates that we get more when we are on zoom. We get more done in person than online. We are trying to do too much at the assemblies.
- j) If we can be more effective, why not? How do we gauge the numbers for those who cannot come in person? How do we see who is coming online and who in person. If we access even one alcoholic online that we cannot meet in person then we are doing better.
- k) Yes, we had less online than in person.
- l) I am not opposed to implementing different ways to having the quarterlies. The meetings online went on for 10-12 hours. We need to figure this out and do it sensibly.

We need to talk about solution. Think of those going forward. Thank you for showing up. Solutions session will be August 13th at the same time.

Solutions Session
Area 15 Inventory
August 13, 2022

Lisa D opened the meeting with the Serenity Prayer.

We have answered all the inventory questions and now we will discuss the solutions.

Madeleine P. Facilitator

Linda T. Notetaker

The Why? We do these things. On page 77 the Big Book says our primary purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and our fellows.

How are we doing with our 3rd legacy of service. Please think about what you might want to change. We can do an inventory, but it is nothing without the action steps.

What are some of the things that came out of these last two sessions that we might want to change.

1. What is the purpose of our Area?

- a) Hopeful for more enthusiasm that we take care of business in a more efficient way. Could we do more virtually. This is a hope and a dream. This may be more cost effective and time efficient. This will allow more access to service. This is a large area geographically.
- b) I heard a lot of frustration from a lot of members. Before we can look for solutions, we need to agree upon the purpose of our area. The primary purpose of our area is to elect a delegate. We also need to support the districts. Some have suggested that we support the groups too. We need to provide training and tools. We need to appoint an ad hoc committee to examine the purpose of our area. Based on that we can look at what changes we need to make.
- c) Embrace 21st Century Technology- to save money, to save individual travel time and to allow At all responsible levels, to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge. If a motion(s) were presented to the Area 15 body to embrace online technology to conduct business twice a year, rather than four times in-person, the time and money wasted to physically travel, sometimes up to 5 hours one way, would reduce the hardship on extremely distant members of the Body. Also, by incorporating on-line technology would increase the ratio of Groups represented; to the numerous voting Area Officers and Committee Chairs thus complying with Concept 4. Furthermore, if Area 15 were to create interim Area Committee meeting between the four Area Assemblies, where DCMs and District Chairs could meet with Area Voting Members, in a centrally located place for a single daytime (8 hours), where motions and questions that will be before the Assemble participants can be discussed first, leading to a more informed Groups' conscious, the Assemble would be more effective in coming to resolutions to important matters which would involve the GSR's communications with their groups. We are responsible as Steward's of the Contributions from Groups in a prudent and effective way. Area committee's COULD meet separately on-line between Assemblies and reduce or eliminate the time taken now during the present Saturday Day long Committee Meetings, thus the Area would become Prudent and effective and responsible in communicating at all levels, to and from the District Committees and Groups' concerns.

MP: Please refer to the guidelines of the are as to how to accomplish these proposals.

2. If we in General Service are the Group's link to AA., what can we do to improve that link?

- a) I think part of the area's responsibility is to generate enthusiasm with the GSRs to participate at the area. We need to look at communication. The area needs to start its own blog where the leaders can send out information. This would improve visibility to the groups and GSRs. We are lacking visibility and therefore enthusiasm.
- b) We need a blog or something to get information to the groups.
- c) We have seminars and workshops. What I have been hearing is all of the reasons why I should not go to area assemblies. I want to keep my commitment and attend in person. Can we streamline it? I guess we can. I feel I am hearing the negative aspects of the assemblies constantly. I think we can reinforce the reasons why GSRs can go. Can the area partially fund GSR's to attend as it seems the area has a lot of extra funds. I feel it is important to attend in person and carry back information to my group. Thank you.
- d) With regard to how we create the link between area/district/group. I think there needs to be exploration as to how we improve the area website for email blasts, fliers, reports, etc. The other suggestion is to consider an area dispatch where we could have a

newsletter. This would be a new position. Brief blurbs about what happened and what was discussed. Bullet point information.

- e) I think it would be important to try to get back to the basic descriptions for each of us. Allow the GSRs to be GSRs, allow the DCMs to be DCM's and Area officers to be area officers. I think we need to trust our trusted services. I'd like to see everything a lot simpler. Maybe the GSR's stay at the district level and the DCM's go to the Area meetings. The way it is set up is not to transact business it is set up to give everyone a voice. This is good but it interferes with the business hand.
- f) I really do not think that GSRs are the reasons why the business meetings are so long or that the meetings are three days. I'd like to see us to rescind the motion of 2008. The GSRs would participate every April and every other October. I do not think this requires an ad hoc committee. This structure is not accessible for GSRs to participate.
- g) Ditto to the previous comment. I think it would be good for us to meet digitally for the area committee meetings. Districts should have the autonomy to decide if they want to break themselves into smaller districts. District 8 has 400 groups. We have two intergroups, but we have been told the area must approve this. Thanks.

MP: I am hearing a proposal for a guideline amendment based on the previous two comments.

3. What could the area add revise, or drop from the Area Assemblies that would make them more inclusive and informative?

- a) I would like to suggest that the current practice that the current practice be rescinded. That host districts be given autonomy to structure the meetings and agendas to effect business. We'd like to find another way to do roll call electronically. After noon the roll call is probably inaccurate. Whatever we need to do to adjust the schedule to accommodate new ideas/business.
- b) Ditto what was just said. We need a lot more flexibility in the agenda. If you look at the GSO conference, there is a group that works on the agenda ahead of time. Would be great to ask questions of what has been presented. We need to revisit the idea we cannot discuss motions before the business meeting. Why can't we meet ahead of the committee meetings. I love the idea of streamlining the roll call.
- c) I think we need to think about eliminating the whole Sunday. I have a suggestion that we have a few committee meetings Saturday morning and have the business meeting at noon on Saturday. On Sunday we could have traditions and other committee meetings so we can finish by noon.
- d) The comment of "flexible" has been mentioned. First regarding the area officers. There is a lack of concept three. I think there needs to be more autonomy and trust allowing the officers to act. They are handcuffed. I think we need to have an ad hoc committee to examine why we take concept three away from the officers. The current practice is to shut down the officers. Questions to officers, I think there is unchecked authority. I do not understand why GSRs, and DCMs cannot ask questions. If we elect the right people, we should give them freedom and not be handcuffed by the manual.

4. How can the area attract more GSR's to attend the Area Assemblies?

- a) Thank you for doing this. The one thing I wanted to bring up is not about attracting, we don't have room for them because there is no room for the GSRs.
- b) For my district, I have the majority of GSRs cannot afford to go to the assemblies. The district has taken that on and could use assistance. Maybe if we gave the GSRs a preview

of the quarterly and how they could get involved. I feel like they walk around not knowing what to do. I feel like we need to make some changes there.

- c) In the past we have done a play. Of course, that goes along with the autonomy of the district. Something new.
 - d) Quick fix for the first timers. We could have a color code that this is my first time so they could be orientated and taken around.
 - e) Our past delegates could be the guides who take the first timers around to the quarterly. This could address a funding issue with the former delegates.
 - f) Most of our districts fund our DCMs and some of the DCMS have not been able to get to their groups or perform their positions. If we gave some funding to the GSRs that might give them incentive. A lot of groups do not have the money to fund a GSR.
 - g) I know one of my GSRs who said their group would never do a GSR because of the three day weekends. Can we look at doing business on Saturday? Lots of good ideas. Are we open to changing our minds.
 - h) I'm a GSR. I told a GSR I went to the quarterly and she said "Oh I've never done that" It was a good opportunity for me to offer to help to drive, etc. Maybe one GSR helping another.
 - i) I feel very strongly that Area 15 needs to have a structured orientation for GSRs. Our district supports GSRs. We pair a new GSR with a more experienced GSR. We would talk about quarterlies and let everyone know what they are. We have a room and ride coordinator. I know people who find a way. I know people who bring their own food.
 - j) GSR. My experience has been very beneficial. It has taught me a lot and has been key to my sobriety. What I think might benefit us is trying to develop interest in service in our district. Would it be possible at the quarterly to have some pointers on how to say things to attract to service and explain the quarterly. Making sure there is a smooth transition, best practices.
 - k) I was thinking about the way we did things in a different state. We had a GSR workshop on Friday nights. On Saturday we had the business meeting. Anything not covered on Saturday could roll to Sunday. Our leaders are but trusted servants and we need to trust them. One of my first meetings was a motion for a new computer and how it was going to cost and people were talking at the mic about how they could get it cheaper!
 - l) I am in the service manual learning that the committees can handle the administrative work and I think this would allow more time for the GSR. It is so clear how we can bring the area to a healthy state. If you haven't read it, please do.
5. **Do we emphasize the importance of Service Sponsorship? How can we do better?**
6. **Does the Area effectively prepare their trusted servants for their positions? If not, what can we do better?**
- MP: Service sponsorship and how that rolls into making sure that people know how to bring of service and solutions.

- a) I service sponsor people and I tell them we need to review the traditions and the concepts. People say "Oh I don't need to know that" Ask people what are they looking for in advance. I am sick and tired of not seeing last names. We should not be anonymous in closed meetings. When you go to elections people don't know us by our last names. We should be less anonymous. We need to get to know each other better. Same thing with having your camera off. We don't know who you are.

- b) I would like to see at the GSR workshops, many people volunteering to be service sponsors and explaining what service sponsorship is. It would be great if people who had been around a lot would volunteer
- c) I think its important that we stop separating service and seeing it as an adjunct to recovery. It is not optional. Sharing at meetings about sponsorship and not having it optional. Service is how we recovery. We are losing site of that. It is important that we put service back in the fold.
- d) I struggle this because I see service sponsorship becoming almost cult like. I think a workshop on what a service sponsor is is important. I was taught I don't give answers to people I show them where they are. The number one success is when a sponsee is willing to vote against me. I get nervous at ideas that divide us rather than unite. I think a GSR is better focused on steps and traditions.
- e) Is my sobriety so attractive that other people would want it? From service sponsorship is to be enthusiastic. Is the service manual up to date. We are coming up on elections, we need to generate some enthusiasm. We cannot wait until Saturday to describe what the area chair does. Why can't we post service resumes?
- f) When I first got into General Service, I didn't know anything about General Service or service sponsorship. My sponsor has been instrumental in mentoring me. In district meetings we could ask those who are interested in being sponsors we can provide names and numbers.
- g) When I was first a GSR, my service sponsor helped me so much. She didn't tell me who to vote for, my group told me how to vote. I also did the service manual with her.
- h) If we are not adequately prepared as new GSRs by the area or the district it takes too long to get comfortable. During the rotation there should be workshops so GSRs can hit the ground running. Try to recruit GSRs on a district basis if the GSR is having a hard time finding a replacement.
- i) Being a new GSR I like the idea of a list/pool of service sponsors. Why don't service sponsors approach GSRs?
- j) We have delegates. Sometimes they look like referees in the back. They are there to share their experience. We need to suggest that the delegates sponsor the new GSRs. Sometimes we talk about other things than sponsorship.

7. Do our Area Service Committees provide enough support to Districts and home groups?

- a) Some committees are meeting online.
- b) The Area chair for a committee would bring information on their committee to the districts.
- c) In other areas, officers visit districts. In our area, our district committees have connection with the area committees. What I worry about is us representing groups vs meetings. Keep that in mind that there will be meetings with service numbers but can we really call them groups.
- d) My only concern with the new zoom platform at area, have we opened it to all committees to meet online? Great we can have more informed conversations in advance.

8. Does the Area use our Seventh Tradition funds effectively to carry out our primary purpose? How can we do better?

- a) Are we using our excess contributions effectively to help the groups?
- b) Provide literature for any group who is not at their prudent reserves so that they can purchase literature.
- c) I think we need to revisit our current practice that sets the current policy that excess funds at the end of the year go to GSO. We need to publish this at the end of the year. Let committees know.
- d) We currently have a technology ad hoc committee. Hopefully someone is putting forth a motion to capitalize on this work. Also, we have an ad hoc committee on hybrid. Perhaps earmark some of these excess funds for funding this. Increase some of the area committee budgets so that they can do work throughout the area for districts who are not well funded.
- e) The banquet is another place where we separate each other. GSRs cannot afford the banquet. Can the area fund at least one ticket per district? Be more inclusive.
- f) I'd like to see more transparency as far as how the area uses group contributions. Maybe add something to the website. I hear a lot in AA that the area has too much money, it isn't being utilized. It is so obvious to me where the problems are, and it is bananas to me that we are not making things easier and better for the GSRs they are the future of service. We really need to make some changes.
- g) I come from a tech background. Do we have a way to measure the effectiveness of the expenditures we make? Can we have data points as to what is working?
- h) I love the previous comment. If we did paid PSAs on YouTube, we could have them playing to smart phones and the goal would be for someone to download the meeting guide app. We could track the meeting app downloads as successful.
- i) The district has a guide that when we go over a certain amount of money, we send excess to the area and use the money for our own GSRs and groups. Maybe we don't fund the DCMs we fund the GSR.

9. How effective is the Area GSR Sharing session at Area Assemblies at providing GSRs the information they need to carry out their GSR responsibilities in their home group, District and the Area?

- a) I attended the DCM sharing session. I think the format is the same. I think it would be better to have less sharing of experiences. It would be better to have more time to share and have q and a and common discussion. Maybe two shares and more time for sharing and discussion.
- b) I had a new GSR attend the last quarterly and felt the sharing was completely useless. She suggested breakout groups and that they could problem solve and have interaction with others. The current format of being talked at is not effective.
- c) Service sponsors should attend and sit down with the new GSRs. I was expecting GSR 101. It was more of a complaining session on how groups were not supporting them. That wasn't my experience. I'd like more "this is the job; this is who to ask for help". This would be helpful.

- d) This is the number 1 question we got on our outreach work. We developed a nice schedule of topics, good information, had it on the outreach website. It is not there any longer. This needs to be presented in a session. There is great information, great ideas. To do "more" is in most of our hearts. I think the GSR session is "lost in space" sometimes. Firm information, good direction.
- e) As a GSR, I'd like to hear more from the other GSRs, not the panel members. Shared experience. I am there for my group as a representative.
- f) More of the solution, less of the pollution. Maybe workshop tables. District tables in the GSR sessions? People for service sponsorship. I want to be with people who are like minded. Can we do this with our literature.
- g) Maybe we could change the time of the DCM meeting so it is not the same as the GSR so that the DCM can sit with their GSRs?

10. How effective is Area communication with the Groups, Districts, and the rest of the service structure as a whole? What can we do better?

- a) Communication is key. I suggest an ad hoc committee be established immediately to determine the most effective ways to communicate.
- b) I'd like to look at what the AA National Tech committee is doing to facilitate communication. The southeastern servants FB group is also an option. It's a secret group. A large amount of servants do not know it exists. I'd like to suggest an Area 15 private secret FB group be established to facilitate communication in live time.

11. Does the Area provide a safe, functional, and accessible meeting place for our Area events? If not, what can we do better?

- a) I always thought we had a great place to meet. There were some rooms that were confusing to get to. After attending the accessibilities committee, I was educated. There are a lot of things that are not accessible. Hearing, noise levels, etc.
- b) I am in a wheelchair. It's hard for me to get there and the last hotel had access issues. Can we have a hybrid in addition to in person to help those with access issues?
- c) The last time we talked, the idea of having the accessibilities walk through the hotels and access as liaisons to people who have access issues.
- d) Safe, for the most part. Functional, not so much. Four times a year, three days, Business meeting on Sunday. Tampa airport is not accessible.
- e) There are no aisles for those using wheelchairs or walkers. Someone on accessibilities to assist people to get to tables.
- f) COVID. We are a zoom group because most of our people are caregivers for people who have immune issues. I cannot afford to sit in a room with those who are unmasked. This is not safe for me.
- g) Can we have an accessibilities liaison work with the hotel and the planning committee.

12. Are there any current structures or positions within the Area that are not effective or possibly not necessary? If so, what are they and why are they not effective?

- a) Parliamentary? Points of information, things out of order, etc. Area 14 had a parliamentary assisted with that. I think that is something we might want to look into.
- b) When you put the area officers on a dais above everyone, you are inverting our triangle. I'd like to see them do their job joined in the community, going to the mic like everyone else. We have lost the sense that the individuals and the groups are on the top of the triangle. The visual isn't reflective of that.
- c) I would like to see current practice of being bound by other panels. We need to move toward fewer or more local assemblies. We need to add zoom assemblies.
- d) The past delegates table? Not helpful. Ditto to the previous comment.
- e) I like the dais. They are not in charge. The delegate's table isn't needed. They should sit with their district. Our dais is one of the best and Lisa keeps it organized.
- f) As a former GSR sitting in an Area 15 business meeting I didn't understand which procedure we are following. It is not clear. We need to make the experience more accessible. Roberts Rules and the motions sheet? Can we all get on the same page so our new GSRs understand. We don't know who should write it? Move past that and do it.

Respectfully Submitted
In Love and Service,
Linda T.