

Growing Your Chapter Q&A Questions October 21, 2023

1) **How did you resolve the clique-ishness in your chapter? How do you break up cliques?**

Dianne: She asked me to call her about this, so I will tell her privately. We have a clique that was awful and they pretty much imploded on themselves.

Angelia: We are blessed to be small, so clique is an awkward word. We have friends for decades who look forward to spending time together. I literally ask people to change where they are sitting at the meeting. I would love to have a mentoring program where the old guard embrace the new. Dreaming.

2) **What locations for Stitch in Public do you find have the most impact/community interaction? What locations did you use for stitch in public?**

Dianne: We try to focus on local businesses instead of large corporations. There are several mom & pop coffee houses that welcome us. We check with them beforehand. We usually let our members know we might not all be able to sit together if it's busy. We usually have a plastic tabletop sign that says "Come and say HI!" with the EGA logo on it to let people know it's okay to stop and ask questions. We try and do the same location multiple times because someone might see us once and not approach...but if they see us again, they'll usually come talk to us.

We usually stick to locally owned businesses like coffee shops or food halls. We ask for permission in advance and always tell them we're coming to eat and drink as well as stitch...we're not looking to sit and stitch for free without spending money in their establishment. :)

3) **Do the crafter shows/fairs charge for you to exhibit? We tried that once and they wanted \$500!**

Dianne: We don't do anything that wants to charge us a fee, so I would skip that outrageous \$500 charge. Libraries are usually a great place to display stitched work and will often welcome you to stitch in public or teach a small class as well.

4) **Which activity/activities garner the most new members?**

Dianne: Stitch in public days are great, but I think the local cross stitch retreats give us even more members. The organizers give us 15 minutes to speak to the room of 150 stitchers and we share what EGA membership has to offer. I often have some of our members walk around the room displaying finished pieces we've done in workshops so they can see what we're about.

5) In the 40 member days, how did you get members motivated to do outreach activities to start ramping up?

Dianne: Honestly, me and another member who was also new just started going rogue. We started to organize things on our own...like more stitch in public days. When the pandemic hit, I asked our president if we could do a weekly Zoom stitch in since the world was pretty much shut down. It became so popular that our members begged us never to end it. It's one of our main social activities and is very popular. People actually have time to chat and visit in Zoom instead of having to stop and be quiet because a meeting is going on.

6) Have you reached out to the Boy Scouts?

Dianne: We have not reached out to the Boy Scouts because we couldn't find anything like the Textile Arts badge on their side.

7) Will Dianne share the Girl Scout badge program? Can we have access to the program for the scouts? Would you please share the Girl Scout program that your member created? Are the Girl Scout materials available to all chapters?

Dianne: We're in the process of rewriting the program after having determined that a lot of what's included in the text is too much. As soon as it's rewritten, we can share.

8) Our members were concerned about the FB Group being public — how can I calm their fears? How do you comfort members who are reluctant to change the FB group to "Open"----they're so fearful security-wise.

Dianne: I would ask what specifically they're afraid of so you can address that concern. There are settings in public groups that enable you to control a lot. For example, you can set rules that if someone has a new Facebook profile, they can't join your group...or they must be approved by an admin. You can turn off posting for everyone (although that stops engagement...and I would not advise that). You can turn on "post approval" for Facebook profiles that are not a year old yet. There is a lot you can do for that. We do have one member who is highly protective of themselves due to an ex-spouse and a domestic violence situation. We know not to include their photo in anything we post online. That comes with knowing your members and having those strong relationships that Angelia was sharing about. That member just removes themselves from any area where we're taking photos, and we also know to look out for them. If there are specific fears that I haven't addressed, please feel free to reach out to me and I'll be happy to help.

9) How do you comfort members who are reluctant to change the FB group to "Open"----they're so fearful security-wise.

Dianne: I would ask what specifically "security wise" they think is going to happen if they're a member of a public group? There are ways to help prevent "hackers" and people with bad intentions from joining your public group. We have those set up in the EGA SAL group on Facebook. For example, we don't allow anyone to join

or post in our public group if they've been on Facebook less than a year. Hackers and internet thieves commonly create brand new profiles in order to start defrauding people. When these profiles try to join our group, our group admins get a warning message and we can investigate their profile and determine if they're someone new who legitimately just joined Facebook or if they're some creeper with suggestive pictures in their profile who has nothing to do with any other needlework groups.

10) Have you tracked the number of new members gained at the various outreach events to determine which are the most effective?

Dianne: Without a doubt it's our local stitching retreat where we've gotten 17 new members in one day the first year and 15 new members the following year.

11) What was that hashtag again?

Dianne: #egastitchers

12) What age group and level of stitcher are being attracted to these groups?

Dianne: We have members of all ages, but mostly stitchers in their 30s to 50s have joined us from public events. We've also started getting junior members.

13) What do you mean by a "chapter not in good standing"?

Wendy: I don't know what this means.

14) Do you find that you find new members through selling stash on the internet?

Angelia: We do not. It is a pure gift of financial love from one of our members.

15) What are the chapter dues (local and regional) for the large and the small chapters?

Some of our members seem to act like the prices are too high.

Sue: Please see the attached list for GLR.

16) Diane, with so many new members, how do you balance the skill levels of your programs? How do you offer beginner and intro programs while still keeping your advanced stitchers engaged?

Dianne: We recently had a workshop that was taught by the owner of one of our needlework shops and we specifically targeted a project that would be great for beginners but still hold the interest of more seasoned members. The result was a counted canvas needlepoint project that our die-hard cross stitchers felt comfortable exploring and our highly experienced stitchers enjoyed as well because of the range of stitches and pretty fibers. It was great fun.

17) How do you effectively teach programs via zoom? Just have someone in front of the computer camera? Are they also responsible for monitoring who has questions in the room and on zoom. Do you have a Polyphone/conference phone so that in the room people can talk to/be heard by those in Zoomland?

Jana: A document camera is essential for teaching anything via Zoom—especially something as visual and tactile as embroidery. Holding something up to the webcam is not effective at all—no detail, for one thing. Document cameras used to be quite expensive, but you can now get a very good one for about \$100. Most of the teachers use one from iPevo. As for questions, the Zoom host is the person who should be monitoring them, so the teacher isn't constantly being distracted from teaching. My chapter also bought an omnidirectional microphone (about \$100) that we use for anything we do for hybrid meetings and classes. It has also been helpful to have computer speakers hooked up to the computer to make it easier to hear those in Zoom. Rand and I combined forces and created a document that is available in the EGA Documents Download here (login first): <https://egausa.org/app/uploads/2022/06/EGA-Zoom-Hybrid-Meetings.pdf>. It has some specifics that we have used successfully, although it could probably use a little updating... Feel free to contact me if you have questions.

18) Please comment about needlework exhibits (e.g. at local libraries).

Angelia: Day Lilies advertises any exhibit around and any show around. I make sure that people know their work can be exhibited. We have not (yet) proposed an exhibit of our own.

19) How are you finding facilities, especially for stitch-in-public and outreach classes? Outdoor stitching is not a reliable option for Oregon, and even our libraries are charging (and discouraging people for sitting as a group in an area for extended time).

Dianne: We have the whole membership suggest locations, then we call and find out whether they're okay with 10 or 15 of us coming to stitch. We do always tell them that we're coming to enjoy their food and drinks as well. We do not bring in outside food and we make sure we tip the wait staff well if there are wait staff. We want to be able to come back again. :-)

Angelia: Day Lilies is blessed with an amazing library system. A person by name is allowed to schedule any room 12 times. We have 2 names, one for Chapter meetings, another for our Chatty Stitchy. We could use a community in a local grocery store as well. As for outdoor meetings, Ohio is not a great locale for that either! We found a non-reservable pavilion and camped.

20) Angelia, as a plural member of your chapter I can say that you and your group have the utmost respect for one another. Your group is a kind and welcoming group. You set a good example for all EGA chapters.

Angelia: Thank you. No one is "just". Everyone contributes through teaching and hugs.

21) Could you explain what a ‘make it take it’ is?

Sue: A Make-it/Take-it is a very small project that someone can sit down and learn a new “thing” (in our case, embroidery stitches) and walk away with the piece (sometimes completely finished). While they don’t finish the piece we teach on, they have the experience, instructions, and all the materials to finish it in a short amount of time.

22) Sue, do you find that paying for the add in the event brochure (Quit and Sew Expo) is worth the price?

Sue: Is the expense of advertising worth it? Hard to determine, but it puts our contact information into the hands of many, and they can come back to it. Exposure on the web is also a good thing. Compared to what advertising costs (like magazines, etc.), it is inexpensive to advertise as exhibitors, and also provides some good-will that they continue to give us free booth space (which would otherwise cost \$2,300+). Our ad and the website button both show we are a serious and professional organization.

23) Sue -- Where did you get the EGA banners?

Sue: I ordered mine from Kinkos/Fed Ex (approx. \$110-\$135). They charge by the square foot, and the ones I ordered were 8’ x 2’ (16 sq ft), with grommets along the top. Use the artwork from National – you may have to ask Rand for a file that is appropriate for printers (EPS file). I used the horizontal version for the banners.

24) I'm trying to set up a non-Facebook website for a small chapter with limited funds, as well as a standard email contact address. Tried with Google workspace, but having trouble getting through the non-profit validation process. Any thoughts on how to get that media presence moving?

Jana: I would not use Google Workspace. Of the chapters I have heard from, none has gotten through the non-profit validation process, and you really do not need it. Just start with a nice, plain Gmail account (try to use something like bunnystitchersega.org—replace bunnystitchers with the name of your chapter, though...) and it will unlock all kinds of possibilities. We are working on a template for creating a website for chapters using Google Sites and will have directions for creating one from scratch using Google Sites, too. The price is right—free except for the cost of the domain name (\$12 the first year, \$20 after that). I’ve also worked with several chapters and a couple of regions to get this going. I’d be happy to talk to you about it, so just email me.

25) Sue, did your chapter purchase the folding display that sits on the table. If so where did you purchase it?

Sue: I purchased the panels. They are the same as the ones National uses for the education displays at national seminar. I bought them from Armstrong Products, Inc. out of Guthrie, Oklahoma. They are “The Stackable,” and are about 38 x 36.

They have Velcro straps at the bottom legs to connect them together and using a large cotter pin at the top to connect them, hinging in a zig/zag for stability on top of a table. <http://armstrongproducts.com>

26) Do you have a separate mailing list you use for people signed up at the fair vs the information you're sending to chapter members?

Sue: Folks who sign up for info at an event are kept on a list for that event. We don't add them to our membership lists unless they become a member, in which case we get that information from national or the chapter that we have a new member.

27) Sue, do you actively recruit and sign up members at the various events, such as Sew and Quilt Expo?

Sue: We have not taken memberships at the events, as we want folks to join a chapter. Beginning in January 2024, we will take them at the shows, as all memberships will go through the National office electronically.

28) Thoughts on value of "make-it-take-it" vs "take-it-make-it"?

Sue: This is place where folks pick up all kinds of freebies, and we want to engage with these folks, not just hand out kits. We don't have a "kit" made up; we pull the stuff together when they sit down and learn the stitches. We've not just sold the parts.

29) Sue, would you please share your make-it/take-it books/kit supply lists? Thank you!

Sue: Supply list: 6" fabric square, 4" hoop, #8 embroidery needle, floss from stash. We also have a booklet and a design sheet.

30) At the beginning of this meeting, percentages were presented for reasons that people did not return. What are the actual numbers that made up the percentages?

Wendy: 135 former members did not renew because there were issues in their chapters. There were 585 people who are current members who responded that there were issues in their chapters.

31) Can GLR share their Make It/Take It info & designs?

Sue: My booklet is not in a state to just share widely. If groups are doing something on this order, I will work with them to customize it for their event, and we add a "used with permission" line along with the copyright notice.

32) What type of programs interest your new members? Embroidery, cross stitch, other?

Dianne: A lot of our new members are cross stitchers, so we ask on our membership form what you're most interested in learning and then we help them find ways to explore those areas.

Angelia: Day Lilies does not dictate the program. The Programs person provides a blank calendar and the inspire offer to share. Whatever the teacher is teaching is what we are learning. It's been amazing to see all of the techniques that have been offered. It has been more amazing to see the variety of finishes that come from the programs. We honor our teachers by bringing the finishes to share :-)

Sue: New members are all over the place, but usually cross stitch and surface embroidery. I've found many younger folks have been winging it with YouTube videos, and surface gives much more creative freedom, rather than following a chart.

33) Where do you recruit volunteers on a region level?

Sue: I reach out to all of our members in the state, or an area about 2 hours from the site. They get free admission to the show, so that is also an enticement. I usually have to ask twice 😊

34) Our chapter has an active Facebook page. Can this be linked to Instagram?

Jana: Yes, it can. Instagram has some directions on how to do this (<https://help.instagram.com/176235449218188>).

35) Will there be a new brochure when the process for joining changes 1 Jan?

Wendy: Yes. We are having the brochures reprinted now.

36) I have had people ask to join that can't afford the membership? What do you do?

Wendy: We don't have any program that would help with this.

37) Do you have to have any special permission from national to advertise using the logo, etc.?

Wendy: EGA would like the National logo displayed wherever our members are meeting in public. Uses should be run past hqega@egausa.org or marketing@egausa.org.

38) If you don't charge dues, how do you raise funds? Thank you.

Angelia: We don't spend \$ so we don't need \$. Our new dues policy is more about buying in than buying something. We are just small enough to be able to use free resources from our community, e.g. we meet at a library.

39) If you don't charge dues, how do you raise funds? Thank you. AND I'm confused. Does Angelia's chapter not pay national dues?

Angelia: We pay national and GLR dues. Absolutely. It's our chapter dues that are new.

40) Angelia, what do you announce for National & Regional at your chapter meetings?

Angelia: That would be a long answer. Each time the national magazine comes out, I look for things that I think would be useful. One example is that National put out a 2023 goal sheet (what to finish, what you need to buy, what skill do you want to acquire. Most recently, I talked about how national is making resources for chapters, e.g. the form to fill out when the board changes. GLR writes a newsy email so I make sure people know when and where volunteers can make an impact, e.g. Make-N-Take at the quilt shows. I also make visible stuff other chapters near us are already doing and offer concrete details about how to join in.