

AREA GROUP GUIDELINES

1. An Area Group may be started with a minimum of three (3) people after notifying the Vice-President. MEOW By-laws and Standing Rules are the guidelines for the Area Groups. A State Director will be assigned to each group by the Vice-President to give guidance and to be a communication link between the Area Group and the MEOW Board. All members are to share the responsibilities as program presenters. The diverse membership gives the opportunity for greater variety and interesting programs.
2. There will be one leader called an "Area Rep." or two members may work together and be Co-Area Reps -- responsibilities to include:
 - Preside over Area Group meetings and coordinate activities
 - Request members to volunteer to help with the activities of the group
 - **Read MEOW By-laws and Standing Rules**
 - Liaison with the State Director assigned to the Area Group
 - Send to the State Director (in writing) any subjects the members wish to communicate or discuss with the Board. These must be received at least one month before the Board meeting, if you want the subjects to be included in the President's Agenda.
 - A copy of correspondence and newsletter, if one is published, sent to your Members. This information should also be sent to the State Director and MEOW Newsletter Editor
 - Prior to the Board meeting, provide the State Director any news, activities and programs of your group. The program schedule is needed for at least six (6) months ahead, but it would be nice to have one year complete (subject to change).
 - Term of office shall be determined by the group and reviewed yearly in August, with immediate notification of any leadership change to the State Director, MEOW Newsletter and Web Mistress.
 - Review duties of an Area Representative
3. Area Group Program Chairperson(s) – Members arranging programs provide the necessary information—supplies needed, instructor and any fees—to members (and visitors) before the Area Group meeting. All programs must be arranged for at least six (6) months following the date of each Board meeting, if not one year. This allows for the Area Group's schedule to be published in the MEOW Newsletter. **All Board meeting dates are listed in the Newsletter.**
4. A non-member may attend two (2) meetings (this does not include former MEOW members) prior to joining, but must then join MEOW and show your current membership card if requested. The annual year is September 1 to August 31. An application for membership is filled out and mailed with a fee (\$35.00) + \$10.00 if you want a printed newsletter to the MEOW Membership Chairperson. after April 1st the dues are \$20.00 with the full dues of \$35.00 due prior to August 31st of the same year.
5. **Area Groups do not receive any portion of MEOW annual dues.** There

will be no specified area dues and expenses such as fees for a meeting place or instructor fees paid by MEOW. The costs are to be divided equally among that group's members. All members must keep their dues current to attend meetings and any Seminar. Non-members may attend Seminar by registering as a non-member and pay any necessary fees required.

6. All members share the responsibility toward the success of their Area Group and MEOW with everyone participating, sharing ideas and talents, thus sharing in the learning.
7. All sewing machines are welcome. This is NOT a group for any one brand or model of machine. Meetings are hands-on programs with Member's bringing their own machines and encouraging members to learn their machines.
9. Area Groups are encouraged to participate in:
 - Seminar activities when we have one and working on Seminar committees.
 - Make a banner—portable and free standing
 - Make all-occasion cards once a year and send them to the Sunshine Chair for disbursement to MEOW members in their time of need or joy. Write your Area Group name on the back of the cards to avoid getting it back.
 - Send pictures of your Area Groups' activities or member's accomplishments to the Web Mistress and Historian.
10. According to MEOW By-laws and our IRS status, we are a non-profit organization, established "for education and benevolent purposes". We may be eligible to receive grants, fellowships and/or gifts, with the donor able to use it as a tax deduction. We meet the **education requirement** by way of the following: Seminar's, demos at fairs, expos, meeting, etc. To meet the "**benevolent purposes**," each Area Group chooses a community service project that will be of help to their own particular community. Some suggestions: teddy bears for firemen & police organizations, preemie receiving blankets, crib or youth quilts for the hospitals, items to bazaars for Special Olympics, totes for mastectomy patients through Reach to Recovery Program, head scarves for chemotherapy patients, sweatshirts to the Salvation Army for burned out victims or street people, items for the soldiers, pillowcases, faceless dolls and doll hospital gowns. Check with the organization first for their needs and quantity. Get the Employment Identification Number (EIN) from the organization and keep a record of the average cost of the item (not what it costs you to make) and average hours spent on a project, then multiply by the number of items. Count any hours that you help with in an another organization if they don't count the hours. A final report is due to the Vice President prior to September 15th of the current year so that the membership report can be completed and turned in by September 30th.
11. If the Area Group meeting is held in a store, the store name may not be used in the group name and no store owner may serve as the Area Rep.. This could cause us to lose our IRS non-profit status and it could lead to IRS problems for the shop. **Show courtesy and appreciation to the shop.** A shop may host,

but does not sponsor and may not use the name MEOW for shop functions.

12. Notify the Sunshine Chair of any members who should receive a Sunshine card and the need for it.
13. **All members are invited to attend MEOW Board Meetings**, but they do not have any voting privileges.
14. If the Area Group is disbanded a letter of intent, signed by all current members along with all records and monies, are to be sent to the Vice-President and she will notify the MEOW Board. Any monies will be deposited into the MEOW general fund from any disbanding group.

Groups that find that they need to disband for reasons of low attendance or loss of their Area Group Rep, etc.:

- a. All members of any group that has decided to disband for whatever reason, have the right to chose another group as their **home group**. They are full members at the time of the group failure and have all rights of membership and having a home group is one of their rights. They usually will begin attending a group that is close to their home area.
- b. The MEOW group that they chose cannot refuse to accept the member for any other reason.
- c. An Area Group does not have the right to close their meetings to current members. All groups must **always** be open to all members of MEOW.
- d. An Area Rep must make sure that all of the group members have renewed before they are allowed to continue to attend meetings. This needs to be done at the first meeting in September. Renewal notices are sent out at the end of July (fee is \$35.00) and are due prior to August 31st or the fee goes up to \$40.00.
- e. Any new member joining after April 1st will pay \$20.00 for membership and \$5.00 if they want to receive a printed newsletter -a full years dues (\$35.00 + \$10.00 if you want a printed newsletter) will be required as of August 31st of the current year.
- f. Area Groups are required to support MEOW by participating in the community service program each year with their final report due September 15th so the Vice President can present the final report to the Board prior to September 30th. This is for the purpose of maintaining our non-profit status through the Internal Revenue Service.
- g. If you are having trouble with a member who is disruptive or causing some other type of trouble; the Area Rep must contact the State Director, the members of the mediation committee and state their case in writing and as the last resort the Board of Directors will make a ruling.
- h. An Area Group does not have the authority to ask a current member to leave their group for any reason. If they are a visiting member and the room is full, the Area Group has the right to ask them to not sit at the tables unless they are planning to participate in the class project.
- i. Per the membership guidelines, a member has the privilege of attending any group any time. They are always told that all groups are open to them for the yearly fee, but it is **a common courtesy to notify the group leader of your intention to attend**. This way they can make sure to send out a copy of the supply list and directions should they be

needed.

- j. **NO AREA GROUP IS A CLOSED GROUP AT ANY TIME.**

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