Panel 74 Area 07 Inventory Notes - Summary Version

Hello CNIA!

Our Area held an inventory at our Mini PRAASA assembly on October 13, 2024. During this inventory, members participated in small group breakouts, with each table discussing every question. A non-participating notetaker at each table captured the feedback, and a [full version](#) is available for those who'd like to review it. This version is intended to be a summary one-pager for each question. Feel free to use whichever format works best for you. These documents will be shared with all area officers, appointed chairs, and DCMs to distribute to GSRs.

I'd like to note that the words shared here do not necessarily capture the full feeling of the area, as they are largely individual comments and perspectives from group discussions. These notes reflect some of the ideas raised, but not all. And lastly, the suggestions and ideas you'll see listed come directly from the members who participated. They're intended to get us thinking, not to be a final list of actions we must take.

From here, ***it's in your hands***—if there's something you'd like to change, discuss, or bring to the area, please feel free to take that next step.

Emily L, Area Alternate Chair alt-chair@cnia.org

For more information on the area inventory visit www.cnia.org/area-inventory-2024

(1) CNIA as a Whole: What is the role of CNIA? What is the Area doing well? Where can the Area improve?

<u>What is the role of CNIA?</u>

- **Supporting GSRs and Districts**: CNIA's role is to help and support General Service Representatives (GSRs), District Committee Members (DCMs), and districts. It provides resources and guidance for carrying AA's message.
- **Connecting Local Groups to AA's Structure**: CNIA acts as a bridge between groups and the General Service Office (GSO), bringing information and updates from the larger AA community to members and carrying feedback back to GSO.
- **Communicating and Educating**: CNIA is responsible for sharing information, hosting assemblies and meetings, and educating members about AA's service structure. Some feel more work is needed to clearly define this role for all members.

<u>What is the Area doing well?</u>

- **Effective Communication and Accessibility**: CNIA.org is viewed as informative. The delegate's communication and responsiveness have been noted as excellent.
- **Well-Run Assemblies and Meetings**: CNIA's assemblies and Area Committee Meetings (ACMs) are well-organized, inclusive, and encourage open discussion. Many appreciate the smooth planning and supportive environment.
- **Inclusive Efforts**: Members appreciate CNIA's efforts to increase participation for Spanish-speaking members, which has shown positive results, even if more can still be done.
- **Approachability of Officers**: Members feel officers are approachable, responsive, and willing to offer support, which reflects growth in CNIA's culture.
- **Love for AA and Building Fellowship**: Members feel CNIA is effective in keeping the AA spirit alive, fostering a sense of connection and commitment.

<u>Where can the Area improve?</u>

- **Increasing Officer Presence**: Some feel that officers could be more present and proactive in local district without waiting for invitations.
- **More Proactive Communication**: Provide info further in advance (especially the delegate's report), distribute the minutes faster, and send updates directly to GSRs.
- **Better Support for Groups**: Workshops, education on general service, and outreach to less engaged groups were suggested to reduce apathy.
- **Reducing Emphasis on Finances**: A member feels that finance discussions overshadow AA's primary purpose.
- **Addressing Accessibility and Inclusivity**: Improve participation for Spanish-speaking districts, enhance mileage support, and increase hybrid meeting options.
- **Promoting Unity and Tolerance**: CNIA could help foster tolerance and reducing unhelpful gossip or division outside of meetings. It was suggested to attend service manual meetings together.
- **Enhanced Education and Outreach**: Better educating members on AA's structure, strengthening connections with Intergroups, and making the website more accessible.
- **Make Assemblies More Engaging**: Suggestions include using a timer at Pre-Conference, fully explaining what conferences are like/how they work, and having Mini PRAASA only be 2 days.

(2) Trusted Servants: How can we make sure we prioritize principles over personalities when electing trusted servants? Do we pick leaders who think carefully about their important job, instead of just picking the most popular ones?

What's Working Well

- **Process Structure**: Many members expressed satisfaction with the democratic and spiritual nature of the election process, especially through Third Legacy and resumes. A few members liked the practice of reading resumes and not taking nominations, which avoids popularity contests.
- **Visibility**: Some like the practice of having candidates stand and having their resumes read by the facilitator to put a face to the name.

Where can the Area improve?

- **Knowledge Gaps**: Some expressed concern about the lack of awareness about the roles they're voting for. There is a need for more information about each position and its responsibilities.
- **Uncertainty in the Process**: A few members noted a sense of inconsistency or lack of thoughtfulness in the selection process. Some expressed the idea that just because someone has held one position doesn't necessarily mean they're the right person for the next step.
- **Overlooking Less Visible Leaders**: Some quieter or less visible members, who may be highly capable, get overlooked in favor of more vocal individuals.
- **Election Assembly Participation**: Some felt the process could be improved by encouraging more discussion and engagement at the assembly level.

Suggestions and Ideas

- **Better Information Sharing**: Some members recommended providing more detailed descriptions of the responsibilities of each role with the districts ahead of time, and potentially reading position descriptions during elections. One member asked if we should know who's being made available ahead of the election.
- **Encouraging Reflection**: More attention to the person's qualifications, communication style, and ability to handle the responsibilities of the role could improve the selection process.
- **Educating the Newcomer**: Several members suggested educating newcomers to the process so they can observe how the election and decision-making are handled during their term.

(3) Area and District Communication: How well do the Area and districts talk to each other? How can the Area help Districts, Groups, and GSRs use the Traditions to share the message and help the still suffering alcoholic?

<u>What's Working Well</u>

- **Responsiveness and Availability**: Many expressed that the Area and its officers are available and responsive when contacted.
- **Delegate Communication**: The Area Delegate was highlighted as being especially effective in communication and in keeping GSRs informed.
- **Regular Updates**: Several members noted that they receive timely updates from the Area, including emails and minutes from the Area Committee Meetings.

<u>Where can the Area improve?</u>

- **Information Overload**: Some members feel that too much information is shared, making it difficult for DCMs and GSRs to know what is most important to communicate back to their districts.
- **Improved Website Navigation**: A common concern was that the Area website can be difficult to navigate. Some members expressed frustration with finding relevant information (e.g. when are GSR schools?) and suggested improving the interface, especially for districts that don't have direct links or pages on the site.
- **Timeliness of Minutes**: There were requests for minutes from ACMs and other meetings to be distributed more promptly.
- **Outreach to Inactive Districts**: A few members noted that some districts don't attend ACMs and there's a need to find ways to encourage participation.

<u>Suggestions and Ideas</u>

- **Resource Accessibility**: Creating a resource guide that outlines where to find key information, such as the Accents and Box 459, could help new GSRs.
- **Presentation of Information**: Some members prefer PowerPoint or simple handouts.
- **Workshops and Roundtables**: Several members suggested more workshops and roundtables (but not at 9pm!) for experience sharing and networking.
- **Strengthen the DCM Role**: Some members felt that the communication gap often lies at the DCM level—a struggle to determine what is important to take back to their districts. Bullet-points could be developed to help DCMs.
- **Timely Event Listings**: Events like workshops and Unity Days should be promoted well in advance on the Area website.
- **Seating Arrangements at Assemblies**: By organizing seating arrangements by geographical proximity, neighboring districts can connect.
- **Improved Assembly and ACM Structure**: Suggestions include extending report times to 3-5 minutes for all with 30 minutes for the Delegate, scheduling important votes on Saturday at the assemblies, and offering group lunches at assemblies.

(4) Area Technology: How are we doing at using technology and tools – do our tools enhance or restrict participation and access to information? Where should we adjust, or how can we better use our current tools (including website, online platforms, and newsletter)?

Members feel the Area's use of technology is generally enhancing participation and access to information, with improvements in hybrid meetings, assisted listening devices, and website functionality. However, there are challenges in navigating tools effectively (difficulty with search function on cnia.org), especially for those less tech-savvy. While hybrid meetings have improved attendance and accessibility, they require careful management to preserve the in-person connection that's integral to AA's spirit. Overall, technology is advancing, but some tools could still be more user-friendly to ensure equal access and participation for all members.

<div align="center">Suggestions and Ideas</div>

- **Venmo/PayPal for 7th Tradition**: Area to develop a presentation for groups on setting up Venmo or PayPal with QR codes to streamline 7th Tradition donations.
- **Separate Newsletter and Agenda**: Make the newsletter and agenda distinct to improve clarity and ease of use.
- **Training Videos for GSRs**: Create videos for new GSRs that include role overviews and Q&A sessions to enhance onboarding and understanding.
- **Hybrid Assembly Improvements**: Use larger screens, make the anonymity statement more prevalent, and use closed captioning during hybrid assemblies.
- **Create an Area Podcast**: Consider launching an Area podcast to enhance communication and outreach.
- **Simplify Event Calendar**: Make the event calendar easier to find and navigate on the website.
- **Consider Paper Carefully**: Keep copies printed at assemblies as an option. Is it time to eliminate the printed version of the Accents?
- **Website Inventory**: Getting feedback from the Area on what needs improvement with cnia.org.

(5) Area Finances: Is the Area's spending aligned with the Area's primary purpose? If so, how? If not, what should be adjusted?

Overall, the area's spending is generally aligned with its primary purpose of carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. The funds are mostly used for essential activities such as supporting events like PRAASA and sponsoring members' participation in service opportunities. Many feel the area is prudent with its finances, with transparency from the finance committee and a growing understanding of the budget. However, there are concerns around high costs for certain events, especially travel, and how they align with the Area's purpose.

<div align="center">What should be adjusted?</div>

- **Reevaluate Attendance at PRAASA and other Conferences**: Limit the number of officers and appointed chairs attending PRAASA or other conferences by defining more specific criteria for who needs to go, possibly rotating participants. Consider a lottery system. If an officer isn't attending, consider sponsoring a GSR to attend. Consider if alternates (e.g Alternate Chair or Delegate) need to attend if the main position is attending. Do appointed chairs need to go to PRAASA or the Regional Forum?
- **Increase Financial Transparency**: Share regular financial reports (e.g., quarterly treasurer reports, monthly spending plan) and updates on the area's financial status, including savings.
- **Report on Outcomes from Conferences**: Suggest those who attend major conferences or events to report back on what they learned, providing accountability and helping to justify the expenditures. Consider creative methods such as posters or blogs, as well.
- **Offer Education**: Organize financial education opportunities, such as a treasurer's workshop, to help members better understand budgeting and the rationale behind spending decisions.

(6) Accessibilities: In what ways are we serving AA members--and/or prospective AA members--who have barriers to accessing AA in our Area? Where can we improve?

Members feel the area is actively working to ensure accessibility for, particularly through technology and direct support. Key efforts include:

- Translation services
- Assisted listening devices
- Hybrid ACMs
- Personal assistance such as helping people set up Zoom or find transportation
- Inclusive mindset and focus on inclusion

<u>Suggestions and Ideas</u>

- **Formalizing Accessibility Efforts**: There is a suggestion to formalize the accessibility efforts by creating a standing committee on accessibility. Others feel this should be handled at the individual, district, or group level.
- **Transportation Assistance**: Providing transportation for members who have difficulty getting to meetings (e.g., offering a "Bob's Taxi" model to help with rides to meetings, especially in rural areas).
- **Expanded Accessibility for Disabled Members**: Consideration for closed captioning at hybrid events. We could let those with physical disabilities go first for dinner.
- **Better Awareness and Communication**: This could include clearly communicating options for members needing help to attend meetings, whether it be transportation or technical assistance for online meetings.
- **Increased Education and Sensitivity**: Offering workshops or training to raise awareness and sensitivity about accessibility could be helpful.
- **Parenting Support**: More could be done to make meetings more welcoming to parents with young children, perhaps by providing childcare options or creating family-friendly meeting environments.
- **ACM Length:** Sometimes ACMs can be too long and make it hard to attend the whole thing.