

1. What is the basic purpose of CNCA (Area 06)?

Website does not specifically say our purpose. It has the definition of AA, and quotes the GSR preamble. Purpose is to bring information to groups. North Solano intergroup used to put our purpose in every publication. Let's put something similarly succinct on Area web site. Purpose is to provide a place for group reps to present to delegates. Service Manual states that any meeting is an assembly, the mainspring of our conference structure. Democratic process. / Purpose is to carry the message. Create and encourage members to become active and participate, and therefore become leaders so we can carry the message more effectively. / Members of Area serve as a sponsor, encouraging others to serve. Function of assembly is to provide inputs to the delegate. / Unity—solving problems and addressing issues in a loving manner. / Link to AA as a whole. / I'm new. This is like AA college. Networking with people. / Practice principles before personalities. No one runs the show. We all want each other here. / Act as a conduit to communicate to New York from the GSRs and from GSRs to New York. / We are an undisciplined lot. Left to my own devices I will come up with all sorts of things. CNCA is here to develop and provide leadership—otherwise I would just make stuff up. / Connections that strengthen the entire organization. How connected I felt with other people in AA, seeing the way those connections keep me sober. Groups connect together. Districts form the Area. Areas form General Service. / Sub-committees. We have PI/CPC (Public Information and Cooperation with the Professional Community), BTG (Bridging the Gap) – focused on how to help the still suffering alcoholic and how to help the member who is trying to help the new person. / Purpose becomes whatever is in our heart when we walk in the door. We can't separate all three legacies. / Primary reason for creation of Conference was to give AA to the groups, to establish that the decision makers are the groups. We still have the purpose to get the group input to the Conference. This is a difficult, time-consuming, cumbersome task. We have 2,000 groups in CNCA and 60,000+ members. / We face the dilemma of how to help the alcoholic—how do we implement this? Where are we missing the boat? If we want to reach group conscience as a whole, we have discussion. / Original point of the Area was to elect a delegate. Is our purpose to get inputs, or to get the best delegate? It's somewhere in the middle. / For the alcoholic, AA is life itself. General Service is where we celebrate AA. We celebrate through the services we provide, so we can help the alcoholic who still suffers. So we can help the new person identify with the problem and with the solution. So we can further our service capacity. / How many times have we tried to address things in meetings without having a stated goal. How do you know if you have arrived if you haven't defined where you are going? This is spiritual and we are part of a conduit. AA is a variety of a lot of different conduits. I am a conduit for my higher power. As a conduit here, we take the message both ways. / To support committees, Districts and groups and members to carry the message. / Area is responsible for the health of the conference structure. / To be a change agent. We can propose change. Ultimately we keep the entire organization fresh by keeping information flowing. / Website describes CNCA pretty well. It describes boundaries, square miles, how many members, sub-Districts and Districts, and our liaisons. Why reinvent the wheel? It's a good explanation. It's public facing. A lot of the comments today are internally focused. / I'm grateful to be in this forum. We are spiritual. We harness passion in the Area, and provide structure and platforms for the future of AA. / We exist so that AA can operate at scale. The Big Book was to scale—how do we help alcoholics by the hundreds? We needed a structure. We have the ability to touch AAs we will never meet. I won't attend their meetings but their input is critical.

From the Moderator: Suggestion to come up with unified mission, and vision. Discuss where the Area should go and what is its purpose. Publish it to guide your thinking. Could consider creating a Strategic Plan. / Is there a handbook? Response: There is a motions history book. There is a lot of information in that book. The information feeds into this question.

2. How effectively are we using technology to inform and connect with members, groups and GSRs in our Area?

E-mail volume is overwhelming. As DCM, I filter. / Website is improved. Need a section for Districts. E.g., Manual from one District can be used by all. Maintain motions on web site. Information is available but difficult to access. *Comments/Commentarios* are available electronically. / Provide portable lights for those

Panel 67 California Northern Coastal Area (CNCA) Inventory

with motion disabilities. / Nice progress with web committee. We both need, and get crippled by, Traditions and Concepts. I'm excited for NAATW and the Area ad hoc committee on technology. We are lacking in our online presence. I am hopeful for the future. / Need to improve registration. / Some AAs are just getting a flip phone. The only way I know to reach them is face-to-face. / Watch for complexities so that technology doesn't become a barrier. Building out technology will continue to be difficult. Need directories online. Can General Service in NY make their infrastructure available to Areas? Who will develop PURL as a pass-it-on? / Can we simplify? / Town is divided between young and old. Youth is online. / San Francisco District does a nice job. E-mail distributed once a month. We can easily search for a document because it comes from one consistent source. Participation is important. Need to be there in person and share heart-to-heart. Technology is a privilege; not everyone has it. / Learned from the NAATW. Idea for ad hoc committee on technology to develop open-source templates for Districts to establish websites. Someone on our District website committee has developed a lot of code. What about rotation and uniformity? / San Francisco intergroup is technically savvy. We were discussing notifications on Facebook and there were people in the room without Facebook. Risk of leaving some behind. / My meeting does not have a lot of fast adapters. We don't give money over the internet. Diversity, doing it for everybody. Information could be passed at Area level and GS level better than at group level. / Inform, connect, diversity. Need to have hard copy directory available. Need white card to hand to someone in jail who doesn't have a phone. I think it can work together. There are young people, old people, incarcerated, English as a second language—we are everybody. Balance. / What problem can we solve today without losing sight of all members. Need portal for DCMC to access documents. They could also receive printed copies. We can have Square and pass the basket. Technology is not a panacea; it is just another tool in the tool box. / Has the ad hoc committee done a survey? Maybe we can support inter-District volunteers—have one District help another? / We have a great web committee and technology subcommittee. We purchased screen and projector, and use Square for donations. We provide radios for translation—including for PRAASA. We are doing well and can always do better. / This leads into Question 6. We are a long Area. Do we have D15 and D01 (from north and south)—do we have technology to include these Districts and better connect them when they are unable to travel? / Awesome with translations. Can be more concise on web site. Could have sanitized version of what is going on in the committees, or password protected Area of web site. / Great willingness to move forward and making service more available. We have an Area database that is over 20 years old. Need to take classes to use it. We are in a program that changes when things aren't working. We need ways to better communicate with GSO. Glad for ad hoc technology committee / Need consistent focus on optimal method. We can do both—e.g., registration. Take old ways of doing things and look with new eyes. / Difficult for me to use technology, it's an obstacle to communicate with people. Need workshop where we could learn how to use Google. I received three e-mails and could not open them. It is important to express this and give our personal conscience. / Agenda Topics—keep it simple. Shoemaker stick to thy last. We could chase new technology or concentrate on the website we have and keep it as one entry-way. Chasing people on Google and Facebook is promotion. It's exclusive.

From the Moderator: Board struggles with this too. Great that the Area has an ad hoc committee on technology. I hope their reporting is visible throughout the Area. Get committee far into the face of the fellowship. Get their minutes to the District, for instance.

3. Are we open-minded to all voices and ideas brought to our Area?

Controversy at the Area discussion on closing with the Lord's Prayer. We talked and now close with the Responsibility Declaration. / Area motions book covers 25 years. I learn by listening. Thanks to our trusted servants. / Bill Wilsonism of "Benign Anarchy." Third legacy to elect leaders. Honoring concepts and traditions, ideas and opinions. Outlandish ideas come forward. Process that guides us gives us divine guidance. World's most open format. / Are all AAs represented? Young people carry the message—are they here today? Are sponsors carrying the message? How to take a group conscience? What is the impact 25 years from now? / Everybody gets to go the mic. We hear the minority. We are encouraged to take information back and forth to groups. / In context, we have been traditionally more open than larger society. Not everybody here is representative of the population. Are we open to making technology first

Panel 67 California Northern Coastal Area (CNCA) Inventory

class, are we open to saying we need to be in front of issues? Are we open to all? / You're here, you're important, your experience matters. / We are open to ideas. Who are the people who aren't able to be here? They have different ideas. I live below the poverty line. We are strong people with a lot to offer, but we don't have the financial ability to participate. I am lucky that as GSR my group has paid. Exclusive. / I love what I am hearing today—please speak your truth, especially if you don't feel heard / Sometimes we don't accept people who don't have an open mind. We don't agree with people who don't want to change. There is always a solution. Important to keep learning. Those who don't want to learn may be set aside. / Yes and there is room for improvement / Two parts: Is the Area open, and is the process open? If someone shares something I don't agree with, it is easy for me to say they are wrong. I am a young woman and feel nervous. Sponsors. I am given respect and opportunities. Need to help people feel welcome at meetings, so they feel welcome in General Service. Area does a good job. / Folks in General Service are passionate. What about the voices and ideas that are not brought here? I am responsible. Does everyone listen to Spanish speakers when they go to the mic—do they put the ear buds in their ears? / Earlier this year, one woman went to the mic and was laughed at. People tried to make amends, but this should never happen. The structure is here for considering other opinions, but we ourselves are part of the problem. I expressed an unpopular opinion. When you have an idea, you can hear every snicker and see every rolled eye. / What about new ideas when we are not expecting them—how do we express it? How do our behaviors affect people's ability to speak their truth? / Area 06 has always had an open mind to listen to minorities. Budget was approved for us to send someone to Hispanic Women's Workshop. Delegate and Chair also attending. Some English speaking Areas give suggestions and walk with us. / Fear of change makes us rigid. There is always something new. If we are always guided by God in our consciousness, he will guide us in the right direction. / Good to ask ourselves who is not here. People without cars. How to get more people in the room? Officers and people with service positions are embarrassed to share. They have helpful information. They don't want to influence. / If I were Spanish speaking I would feel very disrespected since so many earbuds are available.

From the Moderator: Regarding “eye rolling.” That can be done with sounds too. On the receiving end we can get nervous and shut down. Sometimes we roll our eyes or make a sound, and don't realize we are doing it. Open minded to hearing all voices. “Good leadership will discard its own cherished plans”—it's difficult to hear if an idea is better if there is an eye-roll attitude. When someone comes to the mic are we shutting them down based on past history. Often our higher power sends messages through people we don't want to listen to.

4. Are we doing a good job of supporting our subcommittees, standing committees and sharing sessions?

15 people come on a monthly basis to talk about making AA more accessible. Groups take meetings to people who are home bound. Support for funding sign language is available for people who need it. There aren't a lot of us, but there are 15-20 who are getting together early in Petaluma to help people we will never meet. Come find us. / Area does a good job. We recently passed motion to provide interpretation to all standing committees. Need to do a better job with written communications and standing committees. / Am I doing a good job—do I bring people to ACM? I attended in 2001 as GSR and someone remembered me from attending an Assembly in 1996. It's my job to get others to go. / CNCA website list of subcommittees could be made links so that members of the committee could stay current. Can make improvements to website and increase the benefits of technology. Fortunate to have someone from Tech committee attend Archives committee. Last panel Archives wanted a desk and there was an uproar. Archives needs more than average to protect artifacts. / First day of ad hoc committee for Technology, the interpreter was ready to go. We have felt completely supported by the Area. / Puzzled about closed DCMC sharing session. Why doesn't the attending officer participate? / Someone at PRAASA said—“Who is not here and why?” Idea to have committees do mock presentation for those that cannot attend. / Committee work is meat and potatoes of the program. / District has 11 sub-Districts and 11 DCMs. They are not all here. Opportunity for more participation. We can't all be on all committees. / Support of the Area has been wonderful to get a desk, vacuum cleaner, attending National Archives Committee. Who is not here? There

Panel 67 California Northern Coastal Area (CNCA) Inventory

are no Archives boards in Spanish. This is no fault of the Spanish speaking members. Members connect with history - let's include Spanish speaking. / Literature and Grapevine Sharing Session has participation from a lot of Districts on how they do workshops. Thanks everyone who has been sending stories and photos to the Grapevine. We are not focusing on how much money the Grapevine and La Vina are losing. / I get to facilitate the DCM sharing session on 4th Saturday every month. Open sharing session—GSRs, coffee makers, you are welcome to come. Every month we ask for suggestions of topics. We can be productive and affect change on the ground. / Some meetings have only a few people participate—Literature, La Vina, and anniversaries for the Grapevine. These are tools we use to carry the message places where we can't physically go.

From the Moderator: Question 4 is important and co-mingles with diversity. Are officers selected with care? Do we clearly communicate the ways these committees work and they are populated? Do group members understand this? Are they aware of what these committees do? Suggestion to have workshops or skits.

5. How do spiritual principles play a role in our financial decisions?

Long ago, we gave \$2000 to New York without much discussion. This year we gave \$10,000, and we talked about it for 3-4 months. We heard fear. Watch for accumulation of excess funds. / We were at a multi-meeting group, discussing cleaning carpets. We made a motion and sent money to GSO, but what about the carpet? Need to think about how we want to spend the money before we have it. Rather than thinking about it after the fact with an attitude of "we have money, how shall we spend it?" We have a guiding principle to be prudent with our funds. / Some promises came true for me before the 9th step. Removal of fear of money and economic insecurity was long in coming. I know God will take care of me. If you say that things are below prudent reserve, can you dig deeper? People will find the funds. I have fear that people are trying to sell this as a \$3-dollar meeting and we will accumulate too much. I like us living on the edge and trusting in God. I'm reluctant to over-collect. / The word spirituality is important. Money and spirituality always go together, in all Areas of my life. It's important to ask—should we be doing this? Are we the best people to do this? The spiritual question is how is this helping the alcoholic. If I can't answer it, then I should look at the budget again. I think we are doing great. It's always prudent to think in those terms. / There is a spiritual aspect for me. I've noticed that at assemblies I hear more about "What more can I do? Who is not here?" than "Let's talk about money." There is an umbrella over the whole thing, that money and spirituality can mix. Money is not the first thing on our minds. I am new to hearing about the feasibility study, and how we generate more 7th tradition funds. I am seeing the result from when the conversation got started, and seeing that things will spread. / I've felt confusion between AA needing funds to continue its job, versus raising funds. It's an exercise in ego. I recently had an experience where money was part and parcel of the job that I needed to do. I was told that it was not about the money. People were donating. It was promotional for them. My sense is that it was not about the money. People were giving out of gratitude and generosity. The dishonest will find workarounds to the \$3k limit. / My Home Group is rent free. Where there is a will there is a way. ACYPAA could use money right now. We lost our main hotel. It's important to keep finances and spirituality intertwined. / For my first assembly, it felt weird to spend my group's money on travel. My service sponsor said it is God's money. It's to be used for participation. The sentiment that I always had enough for alcohol, that can lead to shame. Money should never be an obstacle to being of service. Even though it is not expressed out loud, there is a subtle thing. Even the phrase "you need to eat anyway" has implications. / When I was Treasurer, I got to see the spiritual aspect plus the financial aspect, and the 7th tradition. We give to the District, CNCA, and GSO. We keep the doors open for the alcoholic. When I put my contribution into the basket, I know where it goes and that is a spiritual feeling. My home group is the women's group. I am glad I contribute to keeping the doors open there. / When I drank I spent as much as I could and I made no money then. God is in this room. If God is here, let him decide where it needs to go. / At the end of 2016 we had excess funds at the District that were not earmarked. We distributed to CNCA. This year we were under budget. We were going to ask groups for money. Someone reminded me that we will always have—we will always have enough to meet our needs. Then I could relax and feel better. GSO can always use that extra money to bring down the price of books, that is a good use for it. That is a better use for it instead of groups hoarding. / Sore subject. Problem lies at

group level. At a Traditions meeting, when we get to Tradition 7, half of the room disappears with their eyes. Two of us try to share that we need AA here for our grandchildren. We are not addressing this topic in a spiritual manner. This is an issue in a lot of meetings. The group is at the top of the pyramid. As long as we express the spirituality, that is where my heart lies in getting us going at the group level. / How can a small group be self-supporting? For \$7 a year we keep GSO going, imagine if it was \$8 a year / We need to form a vision, and spend money to pursue that vision. Use the group conscience to spend the money. When we have multiple baskets, it is not the group conscience any more. It is my conscience. / Parsimoniousness-stinginess.... I have experience at Central Office level. There is fear, and we need to use spiritual principles. Is there fear underlying a suggestion or proposal? Freedom from fear is just a factor. Education is important. It costs GSO \$7 to support individuals. Information is a neutral platform to talk about money, and translates directly into service. / Concerning any given service "Is this service really needed? If it is, then maintain it we must..." I always try to remember this when we discuss finances. Prudence as a principle. Both ends of the spectrum blend into that magical Area that is not too much fear, and not too much entrepreneurial. Prudence. As we make decisions I try to get to this middle safety Area. / We operate on one simple idea—you pass a basket. I have ideas about money that have so much to do with my identity. It is very difficult to separate spirituality from money. / I am learning a lot. Where one can eat, five can eat. If we all give a little bit there will be so much more for everyone to take part in / Consider scholarships. / This is an Area inventory, not a GS Board inventory. When we have a lawsuit to obtain property, this is the enemy of the best.

From the Moderator: Give an alcoholic money, watch him act funny.

6. What barriers are preventing people from participating at our Area meetings and assemblies?

It's great that people take meetings to those who are house-bound. Maybe we should have a District or group that takes meetings to people who are house-bound. I've never seen Spanish to English interpretation. Next time I will make use of the interpretation equipment, which I didn't even know existed. / One of the barriers is language. How many of you actually put on the headphones to find out what the Spanish speaking conscience is? / Distance. An hour and a half is difficult to process. Technology. Making an effort so people can telecommute. This might give more motivation for people to participate / Awareness. Groups in my District know there is something about "those people who go off to those meetings." I get postings from a local intergroup about General Service. It has become a big deal. Intergroup reps are taking back news from Area business. / The things you spend your time doing are the things that you value. Barrier—we expect people to show up out of obligation, versus showing the value. Some groups have a culture of growing up in General Service. What about groups that don't have that culture? We are expected to drive four hours when we don't know the value, and then to say "thank you for letting me be of service." There are a lot of people who don't think General Service is amazing. Biggest barrier is helping people find value and making a personal connection with it. We have our stories and experiences—we need to make AA and General Service attractive. / AA doesn't have any barriers or borders. That is what you have taught me. There is a lack of knowledge, sponsorship, education. I rarely went to assemblies because I never read the Service Manual. Our GSR comes to serve and they want to belong to different committees. You have taught me there are no barriers or borders / I didn't know what service or voting was. Sponsorship. Biggest barrier in linguistic community is the language. Grateful that our Area helps us with interpretation—the language barrier is gone. I can communicate with you. I understand you and you understand me. GSR is very privileged and can participate in AA as a whole. What helped me was asking questions, getting a sponsor. I put aside all my fear. That goes away little by little as you enter service. The Area oriented me and gave me the tools and broke down barriers to participate. / Video conferencing option. Accessibilities sharing session should keep taking a look at needs. / Access committee in Sonoma is incredible. Seeing their words in the Agenda Topics last year was a proud moment. They have done a lot of work to reframe what we are talking about. Distance and time are barriers. Video Conferencing—we can record. / Acronyms are a barrier. One barrier is sharing experience, strength, and hope. Going to any lengths. Telling a story motivates me. / Coming here requires stability and balance. We are asked to think two years ahead. Will I be pregnant, divorced, still employed? Will I be

Panel 67 California Northern Coastal Area (CNCA) Inventory

depleted? Will it suck? We have to have already done good step work. Also—how do I practice these principles in all my affairs? My husband has to agree that I am out of town once a month. I am against video conferencing—lip reading would be distorted / Need a culture of taking responsibility. Sponsors bring sponsees. We take for granted that AA has been around for the last 80 years. It has to be a cultural change and the way we talk about General Service. Service manual recommends when you are a General Service rep that you only have one commitment. It is a big commitment. Time is the new currency, not money. A lot of meetings are not self-supporting because they don't have enough trusted servants. / One of the biggest barriers I have seen and heard in US, Canada, and other countries is lack of love for service. Lack of love for being informed—what does your service mean. In my home group—they tell me they should have good information. / A prior commitment is not a sunny day at the beach. People's willingness, time, commitment, and desire. When I was GSR I went to an Assembly in Crescent City. Everyone was excited to go and I wasn't. They didn't go and I did. I had a spiritual experience. I experienced fresh salmon from the ocean. It comes down to love of service. Attraction and example set by other members. / I had no idea how to do General Service. I took on the task of learning what love for service is. Take information to my group. Getting an informed conscience. What AA is and how it works. / Group deserves to be informed. I am far away. I love service and do it with gratitude. / I am from a rural District. The biggest barrier I can identify is recovery. The triangle in my District is a flagpole—Service is at the bottom, Unity is at the top (the little ball) and Recovery the long pole. At service functions, recovery is highlighted. / I had two carloads of people that were going to come today. Little by little, people dropped off. Different barriers. / Many people have an issue of money versus time. I have no money but I have lots of time. Please use us. We are here and ready to serve.

From the Moderator: Consistent theme about time. Coming together is great for our sobriety. We experience fellowship. Time is precious. Often we create meetings about meetings. In my Area, when we cut the meeting frequency in half, the attendance tripled.

Summary

From the Moderator: These questions really come together. There are more questions in the group pamphlet. The idea of a strategic plan, with a mission and vision, might be a useful exercise. Consider plotting a path forward to get deeper into these issues. I love skits, and you have people talented at putting skits together. Humor helps educate, and helps generate enthusiasm. Could have skits about eye rolls, that can be very useful.

Dr. Bob was a balancing force to our co-founder Bill W. Here's an excerpt from his last message:

“There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service.' We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.”

Moderator: Bob W., Past Trustee-at-Large/U.S.
Recording Secretary: Lela M., CNIA Past Delegate