

P.I./C.P.C.

I Las Cruces, New Mexico— Informing Their Community About A.A.

It comes as no surprise to most members that when alcoholics arrive at A.A.'s doorstep, they don't often arrive willingly or voluntarily. Many are ordered to go—by a spouse, a parent, an employer, a counselor, or perhaps a doctor. When Marty C., of Las Cruces, New Mexico, arrived at A.A. about ten years ago, he was ordered by a judge. Wryly, Marty tells how he decided to do A.A. his way, until he realized, in nine months time, his way didn't work. He was finally able to stay sober when he began listening to the shared experience of sober drunks in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous. And, like countless A.A.s before him, Marty turned around and used his experience to help other alcoholics.

Marty now does Public Information (P.I.) service for District 4 in Area 46 (New Mexico). "Like all of A.A., the primary purpose of members involved with P.I. service is to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers." (A.A. Guidelines: Public Information) District 4, however, is taking a fresh approach on informing the people in their community about A.A.—they are offering details and specifics about Alcoholics Anonymous in a "public information class." Aware that A.A. does not teach classes, is nonprofit and does not engage in alcohol education, District 4 opted to use wording familiar to non-A.A.s (and thus attract their desired audience), but is careful to inform attendees what A.A. does and does not do. Attendees are told that there are five one-hour presentations. One is held each week on a different topic, and each topic is "led by a different member of A.A. to help you understand what A.A. is about. On the sixth week we will hold a speaker meeting. On the seventh week we will hold an actual A.A. meeting, hosted by one of the Las Cruces A.A. groups." The P.I. trusted servants are also careful to explain that they are not paid nor are they associated with any counseling or legal program: "The individuals that come each week are members of A.A. in Las Cruces and come voluntarily." Topics that A.A. members share about include: What A.A. Does and Does Not Do;

The Doctor's Opinion; The Solution; the Twelve Steps; and the Twelve Traditions.

When the endeavor was initially started in January 1995, A.A.s in Las Cruces found that judges were ordering people with alcohol problems to attend area A.A. meetings. A.A.s began to see more and more people show up at their meetings "confused, angry, not knowing what to expect, and sometimes causing disruptions in meetings. It wasn't working very well."

So Las Cruces A.A.s set out to find a solution to the problem, while making sure they continued to carry A.A.'s message of recovery to the still-suffering drunk. Marty relates, "We in A.A. went to the judges and suggested setting up a series of presentations... for people to attend to help them better understand what A.A. is all about and what to expect from a meeting." Today, the A.A.s in Las Cruces find that many who are not A.A. members will attend these presentations, although they may not attend an A.A. meeting. It is available to professionals, civic-minded citizens, concerned family, and those court-ordered to attend.

In the Twelve Concepts for World Service, Bill W. wrote that "To reach more alcoholics, understanding of A.A. and public good will towards A.A. must go on growing everywhere." (p. 51) With A.A.s like these doing P.I. work in their communities, our Fellowship can look forward to continued growth and life so that the message of A.A. may reach all who suffer from alcoholism.