

GNOSBAA Central Office

From: Andrea [REDACTED] <andies963@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, December 16, 2024 5:37 PM
To: GNOSBAA Central Office
Subject: Fwd: Pink Can
Attachments: Box459 Oct-Nov 1991 page 4 on pink cans.pdf; Box459 Oct-Nov 2006 pink cans.pdf; MG-15_Finance.pdf; F-3_1023.pdf; P-16 The A.A. Group.pdf; The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous (long form) - SM F-187.pdf; Newsletter H&I No Ca - Pink Cans.pdf

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From: CPC <cpc@aa.org>
Date: Mon, Dec 16, 2024, 1:02 PM
Subject: Pink Can
To: andies963@gmail.com <andies963@gmail.com>

Dear Andrea,

Warm greetings from the General Service Office (GSO) of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) My name is Michael, I am an alcoholic who found sobriety in the Fellowship of A.A., and as the Southeast Region Correspondent, it is my pleasure to respond to inquiries from members in Louisiana. I am glad we have this opportunity to connect, and it was a pleasure speaking with you earlier today.

As you know, the General Service Office publishes A.A. literature and serves as a repository of collected A.A. group experience. GSO gives no opinions on local matters nor acts as a "final authority" on any group matter. We see our role at GSO as limited to researching A.A. literature, correspondence files, and at times, our archives, to offer

the shared experience of groups in the U.S. and Canada, where the General Service Conference is the closest thing to A.A.'s group conscience.

Each A.A. group is autonomous and has the freedom and the responsibility to interpret the Traditions and set their policies and practices according to their informed *group* conscience. It will be up to the group members to address the matter you raise. We can share some related experience on "pink cans".

Andrea, A.A. experience suggests that a "pink can" is part of A.A. if it is by A.A.s, for A.A.s, and is about A.A. From what you stated in our phone call, it sounds like your group's "pink can" fits this definition. As you also know, the Fourth Tradition of group autonomy allows groups to determine how best to format their meetings, including how to conduct their Seventh Tradition collection. This also applies to how a committee chooses to oversee any funds that are collected. I have attached the ["A.A. Guidelines on Finance"](#), and the pamphlet ["Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix"](#) which provide more on this topic.

The pamphlet ["The A.A. Group"](#), which I have attached, contains more on an "Informed Group Conscience" and can be a helpful guide covering four main areas: what an A.A. group is; how a group functions; group relations with others in the community; and how the group fits into the structure of A.A. as a whole. From page 28:

What Is an Informed A.A. Group Conscience?

The group conscience is the collective conscience of the group membership and thus represents substantial unanimity on an issue before definitive action is taken. This is achieved by the group members through the sharing of full information, individual points of view, and the practice of A.A. principles. To be fully informed requires a willingness to listen to minority opinions with an open mind.

On sensitive issues, the group works slowly — discouraging formal motions until a clear sense of its collective view emerges. Placing principles before personalities, the membership is wary of dominant opinions. Its voice is heard when a well-informed group arrives at a decision. The result rests on more than a “yes” or “no” count — precisely because it is the spiritual expression of the group conscience. The term “informed group conscience” implies that pertinent information has been studied and all views have been heard before the group votes.”

Our experience also shows that it is very often helpful if the group conducts a group inventory to see how well the group is adhering to its Primary Purpose to carry the A.A. message, to air concerns and to seek solutions to any problems with an eye to solidify unity in the group. On page 29 you'll find suggestions for a group inventory. As well, here's one particular passage I find helpful, from page 31:

“Almost every group problem can be solved through the process of an informed group conscience, A.A. principles, and our Twelve Traditions. Some groups find that their GSR or DCM can be helpful. For all involved, a good sense of humor, cooling-off periods, patience, courtesy, willingness to listen and to wait — plus a sense of fairness and trust in a “Power greater than ourselves” — have been found far more effective than legalistic arguments or personal accusations.”

The Traditions and all of A.A. literature are suggested guidelines for members and groups to follow and guide them in their relationship with each other and the world around them. I have attached the [“Twelve Traditions”](#) (long form) which may be useful in the group's discussions.

Andrea, I hope you won't mind if I share some personal A.A. experience. I live in New York, City, where many groups pass a “pink can.” Like yours, these groups had to determine how they wished to conduct their Seventh Tradition. Some groups chose to pass the “pink can” alongside the Seventh Tradition basket, others chose to have a designated person carry it around and that person is available after the meetings as well, and others pass the basket and kept the “pink can” on the literature table. Other groups choose not to have a “pink can” and only pass the Seventh Tradition basket. In New York City, the money from the “pink cans” is ultimately collected by the Corrections, Facilities and Treatment Committee (CFTC) and 100% of the proceeds are

for purchasing literature for these facilities. This practice was developed by the group conscience of the New York Intergroup and the groups that participate.

In summary, it really is up to the group conscience to determine this matter. I have attached copies of two [Box 4-5-9](#) articles that discuss the “pink cans” and a piece from the Northern California H & I Committee on the history of their “pink can”.

Finally, I am attaching [SMF-131 Traditions Checklist from the AA Grapevine](#). These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many A.A. groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion or a group inventory. You might reach out to other groups near you, your group’s district, or area delegate for wider, local shared experience. Your Louisiana Area 27 delegate [REDACTED] can be reached at delegate@aa-louisiana.org.

I hope that this limited information has been helpful. All of us here at the office send our warmest A.A. wishes. Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

In fellowship,
Michael

Michael [REDACTED] (*Last name not for publication on public media platforms*)

(Pronouns I use: he, him, his)

Cooperation with the Professional Community/Southeast Region Correspondent

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