

## 25 YEARS AND STILL COUNTING: THE BIRTH OF A NOTION

**T**he date was Tuesday, April 27, 1971. The place was the conference room of the Alcoholism Council of Greater Los Angeles. The records show that 45 people were invited and only 18 could attend.

They had been invited by the National Council on Alcoholism (now known as the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (NCADD) as a result of a comment made by one of those present: "I did not get into this field very far before I crashed into loneliness. I felt very much alone in almost all the work I did..."

The work he referred to was what would become known as an occupational alcoholism program. These pioneers, who helped people in the workplace with alcoholism, recognized the critical need to communicate with one another and share their experiences. They hoped to learn from one another and thus be an even greater help to the work organizations and the human beings who were their clients.

What developed at that first meeting would later be described as "The Birth of a Notion." Many people charged with administering occupational alcoholism programs had been thinking of establishing an organization that would relieve the chill of loneliness they felt. It proved to be a fairly simple task to establish this organization and to facilitate the sharing and learning that many people desired.

The group identified several objectives for this organization:

- To meet periodically and develop communication methods that would facilitate sharing experiences and methodologies and improving programs
- To develop improved training programs and materials

- To develop improved standards and techniques for providing consulting services to labor and management
- To develop methods of keeping records and collecting uniform data and statistics
- To develop uniform and improved methods of evaluating business and industrial programs
- To develop job descriptions and job qualifications for labor-management administrators and consultants

The people in the room voted unanimously in favor of creating such an organization. They elected a president, vice-president, a secretary-treasurer, and an executive committee. Many of the names are now legendary in the EAP field. Frank Huddleston was the first president; Ross Von Weigand was the first Vice President; Jim Ray was the first Secretary-Treasurer. Other members of the Executive Committee included Willard O. Foster, Jr.; A.J. "Sully" Sullivan; Ross Von Wiegand; Don Sandin; Joe Zuska; Jess MacBeth; Morris Lookout; and Art Stump.

Before the end of the day, the Executive Committee had begun drafting a set of bylaws and a code of ethics, and had come up with a suggested name for the organization—the Association of Labor-Management Administrators and Consultants on Alcoholism, or ALMACA, as it was immediately christened. The organization's name remained ALMACA until 1989 when a majority of members voted to change the name to the Employee Assistance Professionals Association, or EAPA as it is known today.

Since that April day in 1971, ALMACA/EAPA members have developed the most humane and most consistently successful models for identifying troubled employees and helping them regain normal, productive lives. These same models saved a considerable amount of money for the employers who had the foresight and business acumen to adopt employee assistance programs.

On the following pages are some of the landmarks of the past 25 years.

**Note:** We hope you enjoy seeing the familiar faces on the next few pages. Space allowed us to print only a few of the thousands of EAPA members whose pictures were in our files. Many thanks to those who made photos available for this occasion.

