

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AMATEUR WINEMAKERS

*News and
Views
Occasional*

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"Why do you suppose the Committee would like to increase the membership of the Association?"

"That's obvious, To make more profit, of course."

Popular misconception

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Dear Member(s),

I

For the major part of this third issue of News and Views I would like to present to you some of your Committee's views on the matter of membership and voting rights, and the other thorny problems associated with these. I am not trying to eliminate any of the discussion which will undoubtedly take place at the A.G.M., but rather to present a viewpoint for your calm, placid and thoughtful contemplation. So, if you have the opportunity, I suggest you settle down with a glass of wine and a clear placid and thoughtful mind, and contemplate to your heart's content.

The Committee has spent a great deal of time recently discussing membership. Two disturbing facts emerged. (i) The Association loses financially from the member who joins one year (because he can go to the National Show that year) and doesn't join the next year (because that year he can't get to the Show). Many members do join on this on/off basis, and human nature being what it is, we cannot fully blame them for taking advantage of the few shillings that membership saves them. But surely the Association offers more than just a cheap entry to the Show?

(ii) Some members, and even more disturbing, a few Circles, have left the Association under a cloud because they do not agree with the Constitution and particularly with the rulings regarding voting rights. If this is so it is a most unhappy situation, and their objections should be fully aired, though presumably not to the extent of changing all the Constitution to bring one Circle back into the fold again.

Now we do need more members. In spite of my quotation on the front page they are not required in order to make more profit. Making a profit is NOT one of the objects of the Association, though obviously we cannot exist for long if we make a loss. We need more members simply to make the Association representative of the very large number of amateur wine makers in the Country. Again, this isn't in the objects of the Association, but we do call ourselves a National Association, and can anybody call itself National unless it does represent the nation in its particular field? We feel that for the Association to become truly "National" we require many more members, all with the right to wear the badge - so that in time this badge does become known throughout the country.

Wishful thinking? Yes, maybe, if it costs a guinea, or 105 new pence, to join for a few shillingworth of material benefit. Of course I would like to persuade you that these Newsletters alone are a good poundsworth of material benefit, but I'm not really that persuasive.

Now, after considering many possible alternatives, the Committee have agreed to submit a Resolution to the A.G.M. We think that this resolution would do three things:

- (a) It would enhance the status of the Association throughout the Country by increasing the actual personal membership very considerably.
 - (b) It would pacify those militant spirits who get all hot under the collar about voting rights.
 - (c) It should lead to a more unified spirit among winemakers in relationship to THEIR National Association.
- Do you not agree?

Well, those are the views - how about news? Next year's Show is already well into the planning stage. You may be surprised that any arrangements have to be made this far in advance, but speakers have to be contacted, programmes printed, schedules revised, and some alterations made in our regular practices wherever we have made any mistakes previously. We do learn from our mistakes, I hope. Actually, we have been considering a complete break from the planned series of lectures given year in, year out. But if there is to be a change, it will not be next year at Southport. In case you haven't jotted the date down, jot it down now. April 11th, 12th and 13th, 1969.

One item that has led to some criticism in the past has been the actual Award Cards given to prizewinners at the National Show. New cards have been printed for next year, and although not greatly differing from the present style, are indeed much more attractive.

The A.G.M. You are coming of course. In that futile remark I know I touch some members on a soft spot. They have a long way to travel, in order to sit in a rather dreary room for an hour or two, in order to participate in the A.G.M. It is very much to their credit that many members do think it worth while. We would like to try to help any member who has to stay in London overnight with accommodation - as was suggested at last year's A.G.M. Mrs. M. Biddlecombe of 15 Sanderstead Hill, South Croydon, Surrey, is prepared to help to find such accommodation for the long distance travellers. First things first. She must have offers of accommodation from London area members first, who could put up one or two fellow members for the one night necessary for them to attend the A.G.M. So to those who can help ~ please will you contact her straight away? Telephone (01) 657 6938. Then when she has the offers she can help those from further afield who write to her asking for help. Here is an offer of voluntary service which we do indeed appreciate. Please let us help her to make it work.

And finally, how about YOUR views? I hear them verbally from time to time, including the one on the front page (which I have heard very frequently), but up until yesterday I hadn't received anything in writing that I can include here. Perhaps this means that the Newsletter as it is satisfies you completely can hardly believe this because it certainly doesn't satisfy me yet! I still hope to see this venture of the Association increase in value, even including a few articles by members for members, whenever there is something of real value to *say*. I did however have a view arrive yesterday - just in time for press. It concerned our image in the Country in a different way, but still a most important way. Our image at public functions. What we do and say at our own circle meetings is our own affair, but when we are at any public function, and are really showing the image of amateur wine makers to the unknowing public, we should really be a little careful of what we say and do. Mr. Elvin Plant wrote the comment - I must say I agree wholeheartedly with him, although I personally have found very few occasions where more care could have been exercised. Let us make sure our public appearances are beyond reproach, even when the wine is running freely.

Hoping to see you all at the A.G.M

PHILIP DELMON