

■ G.S.O.'s Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the criteria for listing A.A. conferences, conventions and similar events in *Box 4-5-9* and the A.A. Grapevine?

A. We generally try to list all A.A. events of two or more days in length, provided we are informed in time. There would not be enough room to list one-day events.

Q. Okay, then what is an A.A. event?

A. As far as we are concerned, any event which is run by A.A.s, about A.A., and for A.A.s is an A.A. event. Some are under the auspices of regions, areas or districts; others of central offices or intergroups or even groups; and still others of a committee of A.A. members. Al-Anons are included in some events. Many of the events are service-connected, others are purely for A.A.

Q. We are putting on an A.A. roundup, and some A.A. members are saying that since we are charging a registration fee for attendance at an A.A. function, we are not acting in accordance with A.A. Traditions.

A. There is a big difference between “no dues or fees for A.A. membership” and a registration fee for an A.A. roundup. The word “fee” is a strange one in a self-supporting Fellowship, but someone has to pay the bills! There are many, many A.A. roundups, conventions, and conferences (see the Bulletin Board Section of *Box 4-5-9* or the Calendar of Events in the Grapevine) and in most cases, registration fees are charged to cover the expenses of the event. Often a special event, such as a banquet, is put on for the purpose of raising additional funds to support a central office or the work of an institutions committee.

Depending on the situation, and in the judgment of the planning committee, sometimes special arrangements are made for A.A.s who would like to attend but cannot afford to. There are also events, such as a banquet, which only ticket holders attend, but after the meal the room is opened up to everyone, with or without a ticket, to hear the speaker. But again, this decision is made by the planning committee as they are the ones responsible for covering costs.

Q. Are raffles within A.A. Traditions?

A. Past General Service Conferences have been asked this question. The Conference has not come forth with a recommendation in regard to raffles. A show of hands usually indicates that about half the delegates think they are all right and about half the delegates think they should be discouraged. So the best we can do when asked is to reply that it is up to the group conscience.

Q. We are planning to hold a roundup in our city, and wonder if it's okay to ask the groups for seed money?

A. This can be answered only by the group conscience of the groups concerned. However, if the group agrees to take a collection at its meeting to support the roundup, a

separate basket for this specific purpose is often passed for those who wish to give, rather than taking money from the group funds.

Q. Is it okay to hold a dance (no meeting) as a fund raiser for an A.A. function?

A. If tickets for the dance are sold within the Fellowship, it's up to the group conscience; if they're sold outside, it's a clear violation of the Seventh Tradition. Dances themselves are a popular feature of A.A. conventions and get-togethers.

■ P.I./C.P.C. Committees Share Experience

Cooperation with professionals has been essential to A.A. since its beginning. Without the help of Dr. Silkworth, Sister Ignatia, and the Reverend Sam Shoemaker, the development of Alcoholics Anonymous would have doubtless been more difficult. Bill W., in his 1958 Grapevine article, “Let's Be Friendly With Our Friends,” writes with gratitude to professionals in the fields of (among others) alcohol treatment, health care, education, religion, law, and social work. Bill stressed the importance of friendly cooperation with these professionals and encouraged A.A.s to “work alongside all these projects of promise to hasten the recovery of those millions who have not yet found their way out. These varied labors do not need our special endorsement; they need only a helping hand. . . .”

Today, in keeping with this spirit, members of C.P.C. committees in the U.S. and Canada make special efforts to ensure that local professionals and agencies working with alcoholics know about A.A. and how to refer problem drinkers to Alcoholics Anonymous.

In Connecticut (Area 11), the C.P.C. committee is not only friendly with our friends; it also endeavors to be helpful, accurate, and informed. A page circulated among area groups asks, “Is your home group an ‘open’ A.A. meeting?” Connecticut A.A.s are reminded that “open” meetings are open to anyone interested in Alcoholics Anonymous’ program of recovery from alcoholism. Nonalcoholics are welcome to attend open meetings as observers, while only those with drinking problems may attend “closed” meetings: “Nursing students, social workers, and many other professions are often encouraged to attend open A.A. meetings so that they may experience Alcoholics Anonymous firsthand and may in turn recommend it to others who may have a drinking problem. With that in mind, it's important for us to ask ourselves whether or not our home groups that host open meetings are welcoming to both alcoholics and nonalcoholics.” The C.P.C. committee shares a few suggestions on how to ensure that meetings are nonalcoholic friendly, such as: “Greet everyone with a warm welcome, and don't make