

April/May 2007

her down and gently told her: "When you've been sober a year or so, perhaps we can consider dating, but not now. The only thing that matters is your sobriety, and to keep it you need to immerse yourself in A.A.—to the exclusion of anything else that gives you the feeling of a high but that, like all roller-coaster rides, goes down as well as up."

Comments Mike H., of Ventura, California: "What people sometimes forget is that women as well as men engage in 13th-stepping—I remember one good-looking guy who was new to A.A. and had the girls bearing down on him like so many freight trains. Furthermore, 13th-stepping can be detrimental to the stepper as well as the steppec. When I came into A.A., my group was full of newcomers who were very attractive but also very sick. I was lucky to have an assist from a fellow in the group who'd been sober awhile. 'We stay away from the newcomer women,' he counseled, 'not for them but for our own sobriety.'"

The Way It Was Can Happen Now

"As a fairly new A.A. who sobered up in December 1998," says Steve M. of the Glendale Group in Queens, New York. "I'm beginning to catch on to how it used to work. At a meeting I attended last week, the speaker arrived accompanied by five or six of her group members. I said to myself, 'Wow! That's cool.' It really showed unity, fellowship and the WE program."

In a letter printed in the autumn 2000 *QIAA Newsletter* of the Queens Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous, Steve further related, "It suddenly occurred to me to bring the incident up with my group members. Many remembered that when they first came around A.A., that's what they did—they supported all outgoing group commitments, and their fellow members, by just being there. I'd like to see this happen a lot more often. Most of the sobriety I witness is on the way to the meeting or on the way home from it. So let's encourage 'road trips' . . . and good sobriety."

G.S.O.'s Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the criteria for listing A.A. conferences, conventions and similar events in *Bar 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 about which 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. . . . Al-Anons are included in some events. Many events are service-connected, others are purely sharing and fun.

Q. We are putting on an A.A. roundup,

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 *Bar 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 money?

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