

TRADITION SIX: An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.



The Question of Clubs **What's the connection between clubs and AA? When is it affiliation?**

HAD "the gift of desperation" when I got to my first AA meeting at a club not far from my home. I was ready

to do whatever it took to be free from drinking. So after hearing the pitch for joining the club at the beginning of an AA meeting,

I filled out the application and turned it in. That's when the oldtimer I gave it to told me I had to have 90 days of sobriety before

I could join. My heart sank. There was no way I would be able to stay sober for 90 days. I felt like crying.

The oldtimer assured me there was nothing to cry about, however. Alcoholics Anonymous was free, and if I wanted to be a member, I was. That's all there was to it. I didn't need to fill out an application form, pay any money, or even promise sobriety.

I like to go wherever other alcoholics gather together to help one another. Most of the meetings I go to are not in a club setting, but some are. Recently, an AA member actually said she was "grateful to the club for her sobriety." Of course, I can understand how easy it is to be confused about this. But a line from "A.A. Guidelines: The Relationship Between A.A. Groups and Clubs" published by AA World Services [found at aa.org], helps me to grasp the difference between AA and a club: "Even though the group meets in a club that may be composed exclusively of AA members, and many members of the group

may be club members, too, the relationship of the AA group itself to the club should be the same as it would be to a church, hospital, school, or other facility in which it might rent space for its meetings."

My home group meets in a church. The people at the church office are supportive and kind. We are happy to pay them rent, but we wouldn't dream of letting them tell us what to say in a meeting. When our group first started, we discussed what to name it at the business meeting. One of the names included the name of the church where we meet. Someone pointed out that we wouldn't want to do that because it implies affiliation. We meet at the church. In no other way are we affiliated with it.

Sometimes I get a helpful perspective on a Tradition by going through the Grapevine's Traditions Checklist. The questions were originally published in Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions. While they were originally intended for individual use, many AA groups have

since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Here is what the checklist says about Tradition Six: "Are all the officers and members of our local clubhouse familiar with the guidelines on clubs, which is available free from GSO?"

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From Grapevine,
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TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

The checklist first appeared in Grapevine more than 25 years ago and remains a great way to learn more about the principles of our Twelve Traditions. Great for AA meetings and sponsees. To download one, visit: www.aagrapevine.org/gvr-resources