

HIGHER GROUND

April 2015



On the 4th Tradition

"With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation. On such issues our common welfare is paramount."

This Tradition, Number 4, is a specific application of general principles already outlined in Traditions 1 and 2. Tradition 1 states, *"Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward."* Tradition 2 states, *"For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."*

With these concepts in mind, let us look more closely at Tradition 4. The first sentence of Tradition 4 guarantees each A.A. group local autonomy. With respect to its own affairs, the group may make any decisions, adopt any attitudes that it likes. No over-all or intergroup authority should challenge this primary privilege. We feel this ought to be so, even though the group might sometimes act with complete indifference to our tradition. For example, an A.A. group could, if it wished, hire a paid preacher and support him out of the proceeds of a group night club. Though such an absurd procedure would be miles outside our tradition, the group's "right to be wrong" would be held inviolate. We are sure that each group can be granted, and safely granted, these most extreme privileges. We know that our familiar process of trial and error would summarily eliminate both the preacher and the night club. Those severe growing pains which invariably follow any radical departure from A.A. tradition can be absolutely relied upon to bring an erring group back into line. An A.A. group need not be coerced by any human government over and above its own members. Their own experience, plus A.A. opinion in surrounding groups, plus God's prompting in their group conscience would be sufficient. Much travail has already taught us this. Hence we may confidently say to each group, "You should be responsible to no other authority than your own conscience."

Yet please note one important qualification. It will be seen that such extreme liberty of thought and action applies only *to the group's own affairs*. Rightly enough, this Tradition goes on to say, "*But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, these groups ought to be consulted.*" Obviously, if any individual, group or regional committee could take an action which might seriously affect the welfare of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, or seriously disturb surrounding groups, that would not be liberty at all. It would be sheer license; it would be anarchy, not democracy.

Therefore, we A.A.s have universally adopted the principle of consultation. This means that if a single A.A. group wishes to take any action which might affect surrounding groups, it consults them. Or, if there be one, it confers with the intergroup committee for the area. Likewise, if a group or regional committee wishes to take any action that might affect A.A. as a whole, it consults the trustees of The Alcoholic Foundation, who are, in effect, our over-all General Service Committee. For instance, no group or intergroup could feel free to initiate, without consultation, any publicity that might affect A.A. as a whole. Nor could it assume to represent the whole of Alcoholics Anonymous by printing and distributing anything purporting to be A.A. standard literature. This same principle would naturally apply to all similar situations. Though there is no formal compulsion to do so, all undertakings of this general character are customarily checked with our A.A. General Headquarters.

This idea is clearly summarized in the last sentence of Tradition 4, which observes, "*On such issues our common welfare is paramount.*"

Bill W. March 1948

Upcoming Events

Local

May 3 – Pioneers Day Bill Wilson House, West Dorset, VT – Remember the founders of Al-Anon with a pot luck lunch and Al-Anon speaker meeting. Contact: 802-558-7319

May 16 - HMB Rea 48 Assembly, Scotia, NY. See: www.aahmbny.org

On The Road

May 2-4 – Orlando, Fl. – The Woodstock of AA – Celebrating the day Bill W. and Dr. Bob first met. See: www.leestapesandcads.com

June 12-14 – Akron, OH – Pioneer's Weekend, Celebrate the founding of AA. See: www.akronaa.org

Group Anniversaries

April	4,	2004	Plattsburgh Awakenings
April	14,	1975	Redford Group
April	23,	2005	Champlain Acceptance
May	5,	1986	Mooers Sunday Night
May	22,	1989	Saranac Lake – One Day at a Time

This Month in AA History

April 1, 1939 – The Big Book is published.

April 26, 1939 - The bank forecloses on Bill's hou and he moves in with Hank P.

April 22, 1940 - Bill W. and Hank P. transfer their Works Publishing stock to the Alcoholic Foundation.

April 3, 1941 – Father Ed Dowling dies.

April 26, 1951 – The first General Service Conference is held.

April 1, 1966 – Sister Ignasia dies at age 77.

April 30, 1989 – “My Name is Bill W.” is broadcast on ABC.

Upcoming District Meeting Schedule

April	14	Saranac Lake Adirondack Med. Ctr., Rt. 86
May	12	Plattsburgh Club 12, 1 Durkee St.
June	9	Elizabethtown United Church of Christ, Court St.

All meetings start at 7:30

Old Timers

Carol W. will be celebrating 38 years in Lake Placid on April 24.

For What it's Worth

Driving a vehicle while texting is six times more dangerous than driving while intoxicated according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The federal agency reports that sending or receiving a text takes a driver's eyes from the road for an average of 4.6 seconds, the equivalent -- when traveling at 55 mph -- of driving the length of an entire football field while blindfolded.

