



HIGHER GROUND

August 2015

Tradition Eight

"Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage non-alcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. "12th Step" work is never to be paid for."

Throughout the world A.A.s are "12th stepping" with thousands of new prospects a month. Between one and two thousand of these stick on our first presentation; past experience shows that most of the remainder will come back to us later on. Almost entirely unorganized, and completely non-professional, this mighty spiritual current is now flowing from alcoholics who are well to those who are sick. One alcoholic talking to another; that's all.

Could this vast and vital face-to-face effort ever be professionalized or even organized? Most emphatically, it could not. The few efforts to professionalize straight "12th Step" work have always failed quickly. Today, no A.A. will tolerate the idea of paid "A.A. Therapists" or "organizers". Nor does any A.A. like to be told just how he must handle that new prospect of his. No, this great life-giving stream can never be dammed up by paid do-gooders or professionals. Alcoholics Anonymous is never going to cut its own life lines. To a man, we are sure of that.

But what about those who serve us full time in other capacities--are cooks, caretakers and paid Intergroup secretaries "A.A. professionals"?

Because our thinking about these people is still unclear, we often feel and act as though they were such. The impression of professionalism subtly attaches to them, so we frequently hear they are "making money out of A.A.", or that they are "professionalizing" A.A. Seemingly, if they do take our A.A. dollars they don't quite belong with us A.A.s any more. We sometimes go further; we underpay them on the theory they ought to be glad to "cook" for A.A. cheap.

Now isn't this carrying our fears of professionalism rather far? If these fears ever got too strong, none but a saint or an incompetent could work for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our supply of saints being quite small, we would certainly wind up with less competent workers than we need.

We are beginning to see that our few paid workers are performing only those service tasks that our volunteers cannot consistently handle. Primarily these folks are not doing 12th Step work. They are just making more and better 12th Step work possible. Secretaries at their desks are valuable points of contact, information and public relations. That is what they are paid for, and nothing else. They help carry the good news of A.A. to the outside world and bring our prospects

face to face with us. That's not "A.A. therapy"; it's just a lot of very necessary but often thankless work.

So, where needed, let's revise our attitude toward those who labor at our special services. Let us treat them as A.A. associates, and not as hired help; let's recompense them fairly and, above all, let's absolve them from the label of professionalism.

Let us also distinguish clearly between "organizing the A.A. movement" and setting up, in a reasonably business-like manner, its few essential services of contact and propagation. Once we do that, all will be well. The million or so brother alcoholics who are still sick will then continue to get the break we 60,000 A.A.s have already had.

Let's give our "service desks" the hand they so well deserve.

Bill W., July 1948

This Month in AA History

August - Sales of the Big Book reach 3,000,000

August 8, 1879 – Dr. Bob was born in St. Johnsbury, VT.

August 1934 - Rowland Hazard and Cebra persuades the court to release Ebby Thatcher in their custody.

August 11, 1938 - Akron and New York City members start writing stories for the Big Book.

August 16, 1939 – Dr. Bob and Sister Ignatia admit the first alcoholic into St Thomas Hospital in Akron.

August 26, 1941 - Bill writes to Dr Bob informing him that Works Publishing has been incorporated.

August 28, 1954 - 24 Hours a Day is published



Early photo of Dr. Bob

Group Anniversaries

Aug. 10, 1993 Willsboro Group

Aug. 15, 1989 Wilmington Pioneer Group

Aug. 25, 1994 Tupper Lake Ten O'Clock People
Sept. 1, 1973 Plattsburgh Fri. Night Step Group
Sept. 6, 1953 Plattsburgh Trinity Group
Sept. 14, 1972 Ausable Forks Thursday Night
Sept. 17, 1965 Lake Placid Paradox Group

Old Timers

Ed S. will be celebrating 42 years in Ausable Forks on Thursday, August 27.

Upcoming District Meeting Schedule

Aug. 11	Saranac Lake Adk. Medical Center, Rt. 86
Sept. 8	Plattsburgh Club 12, 1 Durkee St.
Oct. 13	Elizabethtown United Church of Christ, Fellowship Hall Court St.

All meetings begin at 7:30

Upcoming Events

Local

Aug. 21-23 - ESCYPAA II, Rochester, NY See: www.escypaaii.org

Sept 12 - Area 48 Election Assembly, Troy, NY. See: www.aahmbny.org

On The Road

Sept. 11-13 25th Annual "Bridging the Gap" Workshop, Park City, UT. See: www.BTGWW.org.

For What It's Worth

According to the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration](http://www.nhtsa.gov) (NHTSA) 32,885 people died in traffic crashes in 2010 in the United States, including an estimated 10,228 people who died in drunk driving crashes, accounting for 31% of all traffic deaths last year.

Since NHTSA began recording alcohol-related statistics in 1982, drunk driving fatalities have decreased 52% from 21,113 in 1982.



Roxy at Lake Champlain