

# Higher Ground



Now...for the rest of the story

## Elzie Segar

(A Higher Ground investigative report)

Elzie Crisler Segar was born near Chicago on December 8, 1894. He took to drinking at an early age but still managed to maintain a career in journalism. In his biography "E.C. Segar" by Ed Black, there is a story of Elzie travelling to New York in 1933 to meet with an editor. While waiting for his meeting he had drinks at the hotel with Bill Wilson (identified as the eventual co-founder of AA). It is not clear if they had known each other previously. There is also no mention of Elzie ever attending or being involved with AA. However, because of their shared affinity for and problems with alcohol it would not be surprising if some type of friendship existed or developed. Elzie Segar died on October 13, 1938 of liver disease at age 43.

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Elzie Segar made his living as a cartoonist. In 1929, he introduced a new character into his syndicated comic strip, *Thimble Theatre*. Originally intended as a minor player, he quickly became so popular with the public that in 1932 the comic strip took his name. That character was Popeye. Upon closer examination, it can be seen that Popeye exemplified many of the qualities cherished in the rooms today. His most famous saying: "I ams what I ams and dats all whats I ams." demonstrates his humility, self-awareness and honesty. Often when going out to sea and asked where he was headed, he would reply: "I can only goes where the four winds takes mes." showing his faith in a higher power, serenity and ...A regular plot line involved Popeye having to overcome immense hurdles in order to win the affections of Oliver Oyl, illustrating his willingness to "go to any lengths" and "not quit 10 minutes before the miracle happens". There is no doubt that Bill met with Ebby T. in 1934 and that Ebby introduced Bill to the Oxford Group. But is it also possible that Elize S. did a similar thing a year earlier when he introduced Bill to Popeye? If so, could the Bill have gotten his first view of the road to sobriety thanks to a crusty old sailorman?

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## On the death of Dr. Bob S. Hail and Farewell. . .

(Dr. Bob died on Nov 16, 1950 in Akron, Ohio)

### G.S.O. Taking Applications

GSO is updating its file of applications from A.A. members who are interested in being considered for possible future openings as G.S.O. staff members. The basic criteria include a minimum of six years continuous sobriety; a background in service at the group and possibly district and area levels; business or professional experience; and excellent communication skills. Another consideration is a willingness to relocate to New York, if necessary. G.S.O. staff people are A.A.s who carry out rotating assignments and correspond with A.A.s throughout the world on all aspects of recovery and service. If you are interested, please write to: Staff Coordinator, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163 or email [staffcoord@aa.org](mailto:staffcoord@aa.org)

### District Meeting Schedule

Nov. 10                      Dec. 8  
Virtual on Zoom @ 7:30  
ID: 895 8996 2911  
Password: 212057

It is such a little while ago he stood before us, sick unto death  
and strong unto faith. . .

Strong still unto the task begun. . .

Firm still, and he spoke in a strong, sure voice

Ten minutes. How many thousand times ten minutes

Had he served ten times ten thousands of us who were halt,  
and sick, and steeped in fear?

And in ten minutes there again were strengths anew, and old  
truths reaffirmed

In the strong, sure voice. . .in the tired, frail body.

How far from St. Thomas house of healing in Akron

To the surging conclave of Cleveland?

In miles as far as the Marshall isles are far;

As near as the first lengthening step of one drunk taking one  
clear stride forward,

And as far as fifteen years are far, and as near as one new ray  
of hope in one new breast.

The little man who had sworn Hippocrates great oath

Had helped to heal beyond it.

*This be the arch of his memorial: the towering span  
Of Fellowship, held high upon the heritage*

*By which we grow.*

*And this be the echo of his founding voice:*

*The weakest knock of whosoever seeks*

*The opening*

*Of any AA door. . .*

**Grapevine January 1951**

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## This Month in AA History

Nov 26, 1895 - William Griffith Wilson born in East Dorset, Vermont

Nov 11, 1934 - Bill W's final drunk begins on Veteran's Day and lasts about a month

Nov 28, 1934 - Ebby T carries his message to Bill

Nov 10, 1943 - The first Roman Catholic priest to join AA, Ralph Pfau, had his last drink and went on to publish "The Golden Books" under the pen name Father John Doe

Nov 16, 1950 - Dr Bob Smith dies in Akron, Ohio

Nov 1, 1963 - Reverend Sam Shoemaker dies

Nov. 1986 - The Big Book is published in paperback version

## Upcoming Events

### Virtual

Nov 13-15 – ESCYPAA 2020 (Empire State Young People) See: [ESCYPAA.org](http://ESCYPAA.org)

Nov. 16 - Area Inventory Day, zoom id: 821 2119 4548, pw: Inventory

Nov 26-28 Las Vegas Roundup, Las Vegas, NV See: [Lasvegasroundup.org](http://Lasvegasroundup.org) (must registrar)

## A Suggestion for Thanksgiving

Grapevine - Bill W–Nov. 1951

THE idea is in the air that AA might adopt Thanksgiving Week as a time for meetings and meditation on the Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous. The friend who hatched this notion tells you--on another page--why he thinks the idea good. I heartily agree with what he says and hope you will too.

Pre-AA, we alkiees could sometimes achieve that dubious state called "sobriety, period." How bleak and empty this alleged virtue is, only God or a dried-up drunk can fully testify. The reason? Of course, every AA knows it: nothing has taken the place of the victim's grog; he's still a man of conflict and disunity. Comes then the 12 Steps of Recovery, bringing to him a "personality change." The shattered prospect feels reassembled; he now says he seems all one piece. We understand exactly what he means, for he describes the state of being "at oneness"; he is talking about personal unity. We know he must work to maintain it and that he can't stay alive without it.

Will not the same principle hold true for AA as a whole? Isn't it also a fact that the alcoholic is in no greater peril than when he takes sobriety for granted? If vigilant practice of sound principle is a matter of life and death for him, why isn't that equally so for the AA group, and for our far-flung society itself?

Yet many of us still take the basic unity of Alcoholics Anonymous for granted. We seem to forget that the whole of modern society is on a dangerous and contagious "dry bender." We evidently assume we are so different from other men and women, that disintegration can't hit us. Our unity appears as a gift of Heaven; something to be perpetually enjoyed by us AAs quite without effort.

Criticism is not intended, because our present attitude is natural enough. It stems from the fact that no society in its infancy has ever enjoyed more providential protection against temptation and untoward happenings than has ours. Minor troubles we have had, but none serious enough to test our adult strength. It's not strange that we are a bit complacent and self-satisfied. Surely there need be no counsel of fear, nor lack of faith in the prediction that a far greater time of trial may yet be ours. When we think our situation through, simple prudence and foresight will tell us that.

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## Group Anniversaries

- Nov. 2, 1994 - Saranac Lake Tuesday Night Grp
- Nov. 7, 1990 - Plattsburgh - Beekmantown BB Study Group
- Nov.25, 1976 - Cadyville - Morrisonville-Cadyville Group
- Nov.28, 1984 - Bloomingdale KISS Group
- Dec.18, 1984 - Champlain - Northern Tier Group
- Dec.27, 1994 - Saranac Lake - Happy Hour Group

The 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous are a distillate of our experience of living and working together. They apply the spirit of the 12 Recovery Steps to our group life and security. They deal with our relations with the world outside and with each other, they state our attitudes toward power and prestige, toward property and money. They would save us from tempting alliances and major controversies, they would elevate principles far above personal ambitions. And, as a token of this last, they request that we maintain personal anonymity before the open public as a protection to AA and as proof of the fact that our society intends to practice true humility.

For the information of the general public and for the instruction of new AA members, the 12 Traditions have just been released in a much condensed "short form" which we hope will be as widely read and understood as the 12 Steps of Recovery. Should this happen, our current growing pains will be lessened, and we shall commence to lay up a great store of insurance for the years ahead.

What then could be more appropriate than to set aside Thanksgiving week for discussion of the practical and spiritual values to be discovered in our Tradition? We could thus reinforce our faith in the future by these prudent works; we could show that we deserve to go on receiving that priceless gift of "Oneness" which God in His wisdom has so freely given to us of Alcoholics Anonymous in the precious years of our infancy.

