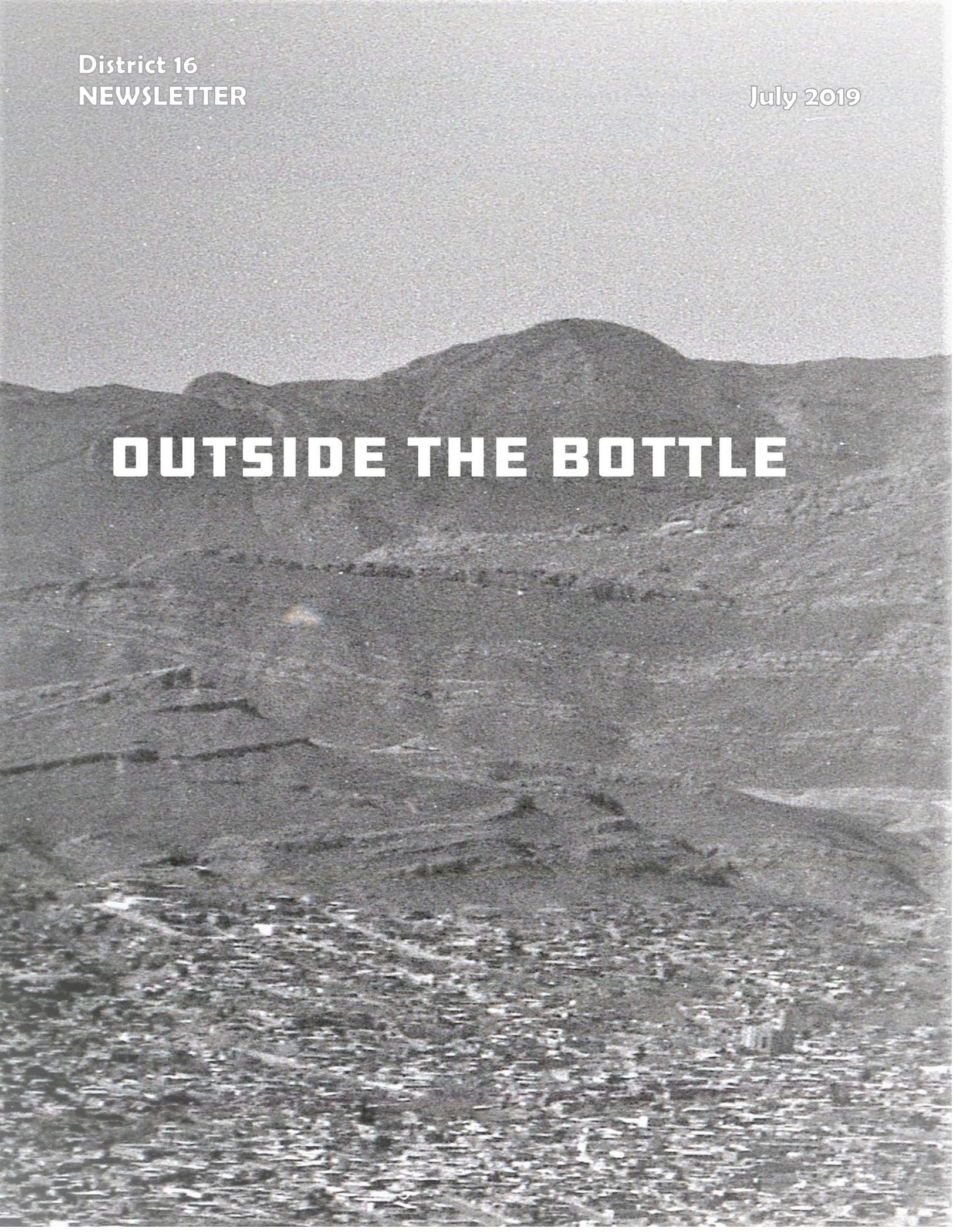


District 16
NEWSLETTER

July 2019

OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE

An aerial photograph of a city and its surrounding landscape. The city is visible in the lower portion of the frame, with a grid of streets and buildings. The surrounding area consists of rolling hills and mountains under a clear sky. The overall tone is somewhat desaturated, giving it a historical or documentary feel.

A New Freedom

by PG

Looking down at my feet, walking as fast as I could, I didn't want to look up. I couldn't look up. So much shame and regret. So much failure. It was January 2012. I was 6 months sober and finally completed my undergraduate degree after seven and a half years in and out of college. (To this day, I get letters for the class of 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2012.) I was back in Baltimore to complete some paperwork so that I could get my diploma (I grew up in Metro Detroit, then went to college in Baltimore, MD). Three years earlier in May 2009, I stumbled across the stage as my parents and grandmother cheered. Since I was 3 credits short of a degree, I was allowed to walk at graduation, but got a blank paper instead of a diploma. I had some leftover coursework in one class from the spring semester, but had until September to complete it and get my degree. I had a brilliant plan to take a break for two weeks, finish up in the summer, and go on to graduate school in the fall. Two weeks turned into two years of hell until I finally got sober back in Michigan.

After getting sober, I was able to complete my final 3 credits at a school in Michigan, and transfer the credits to earn my degree. So I went back to Baltimore 6 months sober to complete some paperwork, get my diploma, and get some of my stuff out of storage. I made some of the easy amends and got some closure. But there were a few I didn't make. How could I?! I left them off my 4th step! There were parts of my past I didn't want to deal with. I wanted to pretend they never happened.

A year later, after addressing these resentments, fears, and harms in an inventory, I made another trip to Baltimore solely to make some amends. I went there with blind faith, hoping people would give me a few minutes to clean up my side of the street. I was able to thank the people who carried me through the last months of my drinking, who loved me when I was unlovable. I forgave the people I didn't want to forgive and cleaned up my side of the street. God gave me the opportunity to have 6 conversations that changed the course of my life.

That freedom I felt walking through the brick archway, down the smooth marble steps into a new state of being. It is a feeling I still have difficulty explaining. A mix of joy, relief, and possibility. I carried my head high to a new view of the world. At that moment, I was free from my past, free from my pain. This boy was on fire all right! That was on Friday, January 4, 2013. I began graduate school the following Monday, and went on to earn a master's degree on my 1000th day of sobriety!

Side note. I still make mistakes. In grad school, I forgot to "apply for graduation" so my name didn't actually get printed in the graduation program. My parents were not as amused as I was. Oops.

I have dealt with other addictions, and other life circumstances along the way. I've made mistakes, done inventories, and made more amends over the last several years. But nothing has left me as absent from the world around me as drinking did.

I've had some incredible moments and freeing experiences since I've come into sobriety. Tearing up uncontrollably during the sobriety countdown at my first MCYPAA, getting over my fear of women, having my boss call me a great employee and a friend, asking my Mom where I can improve and actually listening without a defense, shotgunning a 16oz Surge in 2.3 seconds. Nothing has come close to dealing with the demons that led me to the bottle. Nothing has come close to the living amends I am making to my friends and family; being present, available, and part of their lives.

I'm so grateful I have a method to clean up my past and make things right. I'm even more grateful for the opportunities in this new life, this new freedom.

Alcoholics Anonymous of Greater Detroit

A little history, what we do and how we do it.

By Bob S.

Many know us as the Central Office in Ferndale. We got our start in Sarah Klein's kitchen in Detroit in 1941. She was a friend to AA, but not a member herself. Over the next several years, we moved to a handful of Detroit office buildings. Then, in 1972, we found our current home on Hilton Road in Ferndale.

What we do now is the same as what we've been doing since 1941: We help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. Every day, people call our AA hotline looking for their first meeting. Maybe that's how you found yours. We also organize 12-step work by maintaining a list of people willing to give rides and/or talk with a fellow alcoholic.

Not a day goes by without desperate people calling for help. Everyone in the office answers these calls and we are reminded of what it used to be like. There are boxes of tissues near every phone because they get used. Imagine you've just given a man, woman or teenager hope. They're on their way to an AA meeting; Their life may change forever. And you helped them.

Loved ones of the alcoholic call us, too. They don't know what to do. We listen and offer suggestions. Today, a hotline volunteer spent 30 minutes on the phone with the sister of an alcoholic. She no longer feels hopeless and she is seeking further help for herself from Al-Anon.

We also get a lot of visitors throughout the week. Some stop in for coffee and fellowship. Others are here for Big Books, anniversary tokens, coffee mugs and much more from the Literature Room. Our "Where to Find AA" directory lists over 1500 meetings and is included with thousands of beginner packs given to AA newcomers each year in southeast Michigan. Recently, we started accepting credit cards and added new items that make great speaker/anniversary gifts. Come see for yourself!

For more than 70 years, AA of Greater Detroit has been a non-profit business. Our survival is reliant on AA group and individual contributions. To those who support us, we thank you! You are helping us continue the work that needs to be done.

If you have any questions regarding this office, you are welcome to visit or give us a call. Bonnie, John or Bob will be happy to talk with you.

We are located at 380 Hilton Rd., Ferndale MI 48220. Phone: (248) 541-6565 On the web: aaferndale.org

Keep on Trudgin'

By: Phil S.



Wow! I'm still new to recovery but
It's SO GREAT!!
I feel like there ain't
nuthin' life can throw at me
that I can't handle!

Don't worry, kid.
It won't last.



Events & Announcements

Next District 16 Meetings: Fourth Thursday - July 25, August 22, Sept. 26
Next Area 33 Meetings: Third Sunday – July 21, August 18, Sept. 15

Happy Anniversary to these groups:

W.A.R.M. Group – Hazel Park
SOBER group – Royal Oak
Easy Does It – Ferndale
Young People Can Too – Royal Oak

WARM 4th of July Picnic: July 4 at 3 pm start, food at 4 pm, speaker at 6pm
315 9 Mile Road, Hazel Park

Southfield Group Annual Summer Family Picnic: July 14 from Noon-6 pm
Starr Jaycee Park on 13 Mile Road East of Crooks in Royal Oak

MYCPAA Annual Advisory Campout
July 26-28 at Paddlebrave Camp and Canoe (10610 Steckert Bridge Road, Roscommon)
Questions? Contact emily@mcypaa.org

MYCPAA 4th Annual Sober Rave save the date: August 17, 2019

Camp Unity at Addison Oaks County Parks August 9-11
Pre-reg at daypaa.org (co-hosted by every YPAA in Michigan)

We are self-supporting through our own contributions. The District, representing the overall conscience of 77 groups, is greatly appreciative for any funds of any amount. May we all be united together in spreading the message across this geographic area. If groups would like to donate funds to District 16, please mail a check or money order:

Payable to: **District 16 of Area 33 AA**
PO Box 725362
Berkley, MI 48072

Outside the Bottle is the newsletter of District 16. The newsletter contains announcements, meeting changes, events, news and information around the district, short articles on sobriety and recovery, and even some humor.

Any AA member is invited to submit material to the newsletter. Please send questions/comments/contributions to district16news@gmail.com



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