



Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter

May 2020

Unity in a Virtual Age by Steve S.

AA is in a good spot right now. There are few organizations that can boast a history like ours. To some degree or another everyone who has gotten sober has had to deal with major changes in their daily lives. So yes, I'll say it again, AA is in a good spot right now. I've recently been witness to one of the most spectacular displays of unity and fellowship I have ever seen. We, who have spent the last 84 years meeting in person; in church basements, community centers and everywhere else that would have us, have flipped the switch overnight. In the face of adversity, we have confronted our fears and found another way to maintain our unity. A virtual way, and that unity is our ultimate strength.

I can't help but think of those stories from our founders in the back of the big book. Those women and men who managed to start this thing without benefit of the 12 Traditions, Big Book, or even the 12 Steps! Yet armed with the tools of Recovery, Unity, and Service they managed to forge our fellowship which has endured countless hardships, wars and national tragedies, and which sustains us still today. These founders had the gift of willingness and so I've learned that once I use that key of willingness, I can unlock doors to recovery that no pandemic could ever bolt. I know I've been given this opportunity today because I am (we are) uniquely gifted with the all the tools needed to reach out to our fellow alcoholics. So, I'm logging into that Zoom meeting with gratitude, I'm going to e-mail some friends in sobriety, and like always, I'm gonna call my sponsor, because I know this is the path to sobriety. Let's make this virtual space crowded.

This Spiritual Life is Not a Theory; We Have to Live It. by Meg S.

Upon recent reflection, I see spirituality like a garden which needs to be cultivated. While this may be true, we're currently facing a challenging time for many in the fellowship of A.A. It is a time of change and reflection for sure.

We, in A.A., are like gardeners of spirituality, and we tend to our gardens with what we weed and what we sow. We "uncover, discover, and discard" like one of our fellowship forefathers once said. We must continue to uncover the roots, like entangled resentments and fears which block our soil from its purpose.

We must till the soil of our soul, digging deep enough to purify the soil so that it can reach the sunlight of the spirit, free from anger, fear, despair and bewilderment. This allows us to let in the sun and elements of the spirit to germinate our seeds of spirituality, thus living with purpose.

We must continue, right now more than ever, to do this as our future depends on it. The way in which we live today affects our tomorrow. Dig in, get a big book and a sponsor to help dig, and enjoy the journey! ☀️

My Story

By Michigan Mike

There is no problem that cannot be made worse by adding alcohol to it. My life journey has always been one of exploration. I voluntarily started out on this journey less than three years ago in a quixotic quest to find the “best” beer or the “best” liquor. I had never drunk more than two drinks in a day before this time. I told myself this would be a fun journey that would end with me recommending this or that craft beer to my friends and family and they would “ooh” and “aaah” at my insight and say, “Well I’ll have to try that one!” That’s what I told myself at least.

I made lists of the beers I wanted to try. At first it was a fun journey which was mood and consciousness altering. Over time, the short journey of exploration ended predictably at the nearest liquor store. I increased the amount of drinking so I could explore more choices in shorter time. While my abuse of alcohol lasted less than two years, I managed many “field trips” for research during that time.

Finally, it was time to stop. The grand experiment was over. You know the story. I had crossed that invisible line. I was willing to stop, but not able to. The obsession had become a restraint that never permitted anything other than planning the next time I could drink.

From my early career as a Mental Health Counselor I knew what the next step had to be: AA. I attended up to 18 meetings a week, trying every type allowed.

But I slipped.

I got back up and went to meetings. My health and life needed to be brought back to manageability.

I started my 90 meetings in 90 days.

I still slipped.

I got back up and continued counting my 90 days.

I still slipped.

I got a temporary sponsor.

I still slipped.

One meeting that was out of my area and certainly out of my comfort zone was dark and a little creepy with its cinder block walls and dim lights. I did not know anyone. Two men sat at the other side of the table, talking about me as if I wasn’t there.

“Do you think he knows?” One would ask.

The other would respond, “If he doesn’t, he won’t get it.”

“Do you think he gets it?” Followed by, “I don’t know, but if he doesn’t, he will drink again.”

I stayed after waiting for any friendly face that might talk to me about what it was to “get.” A kitchen service worker explained the key to “getting it.” **You have to turn your will and your life over to a Higher Power. Without that, you will not be able to stay sober. Without that, there is no going forward.**

I started “turning it over” every day to the God of my understanding. I have not slipped since. I found a permanent sponsor that has been walking me through the steps. (He asked that I re-start my 90 meetings in 90 days, dating back to my sobriety date). I have started service work. I have started a new journey – on road to recovery.

Keep on Trudgin'

By: Phil S.



THE BROAD HIGHWAY

A Monthly Update from the GSRs of District 16

So, here we are, and we are still here by the grace of God.

I wish I could tell you of efforts to set up events and work together "in-person" to support the District's groups. I wish I could talk of those things. What I can say is many members involved in service to the fellowship are still making it very possible to carry the message. The groups also, to meet demand, are providing online meetings in great abundance.

This time shall pass, and a blissful age shall follow. And then some other great challenge will come upon us once again. It is only natural. What I have found, in my experience, is to find meaning and value in all ages of mankind. Will I find only resentment, frustration and sorrow in this age? Will I find meaning during this time either in myself, reality or anything else?

The great dance will continue. And in sobriety, I have a choice to join the dance or I may brood on the sidelines watching others dance. The choice exists for everyone who is sober... some will dance and some will sit. :)

Contributions needed for June-December Editions of this newsletter!

Share your experience, strength and hope OR design the cover!

Questions/Comments/Ideas: district16news@gmail.com

Happy Anniversary:

Two or More Miracles Group – Ferndale
United in Sobriety Group II – Royal Oak



Thank you to all
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We are self-supporting through our own contributions. The District, representing the overall conscience of 76 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

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Berkley, MI 48072

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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.