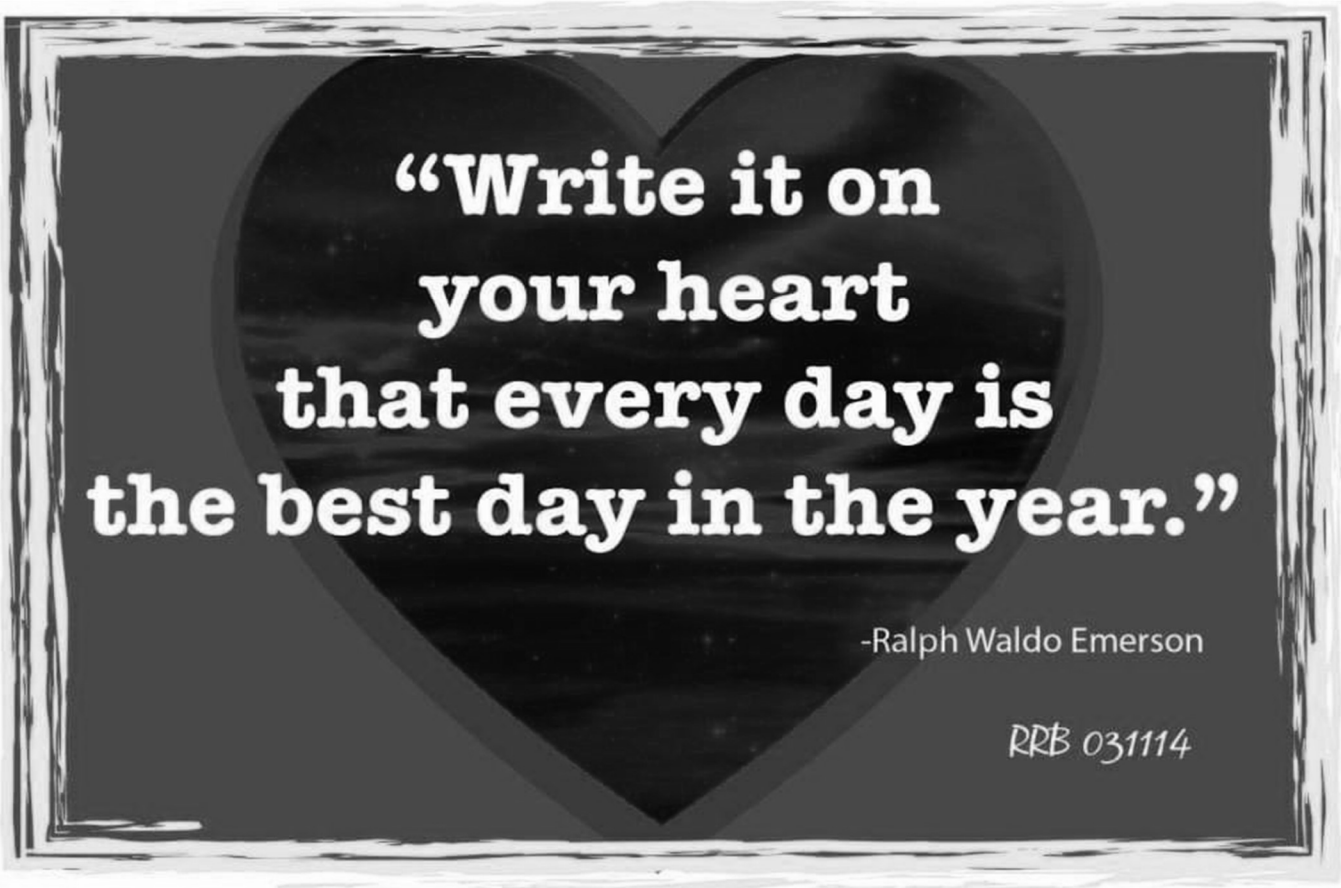
The background of the top section features a light gray textured surface. Five dark gray heart shapes are suspended by thin black vertical lines. The hearts are positioned at various heights and horizontal locations, with some partially overlapping the text.

Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter

February, 2021

The bottom section features a dark gray rectangular area with a white, hand-drawn style border. In the center is a large, dark gray heart shape. The quote is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the heart.

**“Write it on
your heart
that every day is
the best day in the year.”**

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

RRB 031114

A.A. service! What is there to say about it?

Well, frankly, a lot....

In the beginning, when my A.A. journey began—and it is my journey... neither completely right or wrong, merely just “is”—I had one motivation: to be rid of all aspects of my life. So, I naturally looked for problems and found only one—drinking. Of course, later many more problems within myself would either be found or pointed out.

I was 4 months sober, minding my own business, participating in post-meeting conversation outside the group’s meeting room. A fella, who helped me beyond belief in these last 5 years—my sobriety date is 06/28/2015—came up to me looking with a suspicious gleam in his eye. “I have a job for you. You’re gonna be our GSR for this meeting,” he said to me.

“OK,” I responded. “Sounds great... what’s a GSR?” He went onto to explain the basic duties of representing a group in A.A.’s service structure. Without further thought, I did as I was told.

After heading to monthly District 16 meetings for a little bit (a District 16 meeting gathers together all those who represent their groups across 70+ groups), I found myself not only participating, not only sober, not only moving spiritually forward, but generally restless and discontent... a suffering bridging the road to spiritual growth.

Now, for all those who attend group conscience meetings to lend personal experience in group business decisions, you will know how I thought for the first year or 2... “what a disaster? If only they would listen to my great ideas, everything would be solved.”

I went through those attitudes and thoughts for 2 years at group consciences, district meetings, area meetings and anything else A.A. related. It actually took me a year and half to understand and behave like a GSR should keeping in mind the group I represented rather than my own personal agenda. Let me tell you, that is a great way to do stupid things and make a lot of apologies.

That said, I did have enthusiasm. And I was willing. Those two characteristics kept me going through various positions in A.A. that came after that first GSR position. I have served as a coffee maker, a building opener, a group meeting chair, newsletter chair, a member of Area 33’s finance committee and a District Treasurer. Most recently, the GSRs of District 16 saw fit to ask me to be the District Committee Member. Barring unforeseen circumstances, I shall serve in that position during 2021 and 2022.

Apart from that service, there is one-time service that I do when asked. I’ve been honored to provide leads and open talks. I was even asked to host a group anniversary as A.A. couples participated in a form of The Newlywed Game. I experienced these opportunities because I said “yes.” Every time I take a position or donate my time to be of service, I at first regret it only thinking of what I want to do. Then I go about the business, do the service and feel great about it.

There is very little or flat-out nothing more valuable upon this earth than to give ourselves for others. To participate and be with my fellows, and I with them, are the very essence of living, finding myself and transforming into what God meant me to be. Every time I am asked to do service, purpose flows into my life as waking the next day brings meaning. These are things, nay... ideas that I never thought, nor followed through with, while the drink buried my time, my health (both physical and mental) and my soul. May God bless our fellowship with many opportunities to be of service... not only for ourselves but for those around us.

The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

My introduction to Alcoholics Anonymous was by way of a treatment center that I voluntarily agreed to attend as I was in a fair way of losing my job, as well as some domestic difficulties aggravated by excessive drinking. I was married with three young children, at the time.

I was really a mess when I arrived, and though I knew of AA, it never entered my mind that this program was something I needed. The only image I had of AA was the ending of the movie "Days of Wine and Roses" where Jack Lemmon is speaking before an AA group. It seemed incredibly dreary.

I thought my "real" problem was anxiety neurosis with many panic attacks(for which I received many types of tranquilizers).

When my mind started to clear, it became obvious that the direction of the treatment was to encourage our attendance and involvement in Alcoholics Anonymous. We were provided with AA literature which I very haphazardly scanned. Also, meetings were held and led by AA members.

The upshot of all this was I was determined to stop drinking, but I did not believe or accept I was powerless in the way described by AA. I accepted only that I was powerless if I picked up the first drink; but not powerless if there was no alcohol in my system. The "strange mental blank spot" that the "big book" mentions was lost on me.

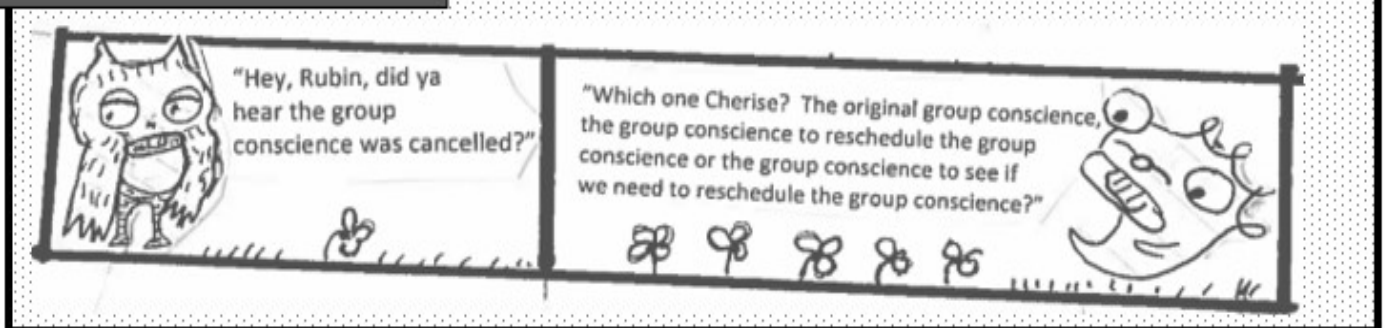
Earlier, I mentioned my brief scanning of the AA literature. Something that has proved to be more important than I can say did stick in my mind, Tradition Three(the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking).

As you might guess, my problems with Step 1 of our program(the understanding of what it means to be powerless) led to 5+ years of relapsing and loss of all that was most important to me. But, because of our third tradition, I would always return to the love and acceptance in the rooms of AA because - I had a desire to stop drinking, the only requirement for AA membership. Eventually, the grace of God, as I understand Him provided the knowledge of how deeply powerless I was, whether there was alcohol in my system, or not.

In the January, 2021 issue of the GRAPEVINE, there is a section called "discussion topic" where some possible suggestions are offered; and one happened to be: "what is your favorite tradition"? Mine is Tradition Three.

Keep on Trudgin'

By: Phil S.



Announcements & Anniversaries

If your group is hosting an event, or if you or someone you know is celebrating an anniversary, please contact the newsletter and we will announce it on this page.

EVENTS

Area 33 Meeting February 21, 2021
12:00 Noon on Zoom

District 16 Meeting February 25, 2021
7:00 PM on Zoom

March Round Up
March 5th -7th
Registration \$7.00
Preregistration suggested
This is a virtual event

Michigan Mock Conference
March 27, 2021
Mt. Pleasant, MI
Preregistration Available
Virtual options available

Happy Anniversary to these groups:

Keep it Simple Southfield Group
Royal Oak Unity Group
Thank God it's Monday Group (Royal Oak)
Clawson AM Group
Southfield Group
Madison Heights Group
Royal Oak Noontimers

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.

All AA members are invited to submit material to the newsletter.

Please send correspondence or contributions to clevebro@yahoo.com

Remember this is your newsletter help us make it better- all suggestions or comments are gladly welcome



Thank you to all
newsletter contributors!

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