

Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter

July 2022

**Recovery is
not one and
done.**

**It is a
lifelong
journey
that takes
place one
step at a
time, one
day at a
time.**



Little By Slow

Kathleen P.

Hi! My name is Kathleen and I'm an alcoholic. Where to begin? I guess I'll start by saying I didn't know there was a way out of the hell that I had been living in. My first drink was in 8th grade at a friend's house, little did I know that was going to turn into 21-year relationship with something that almost killed me. I am the youngest of 4 who grew up in a middleclass family. Things were simple, I had a good childhood! I went to MSU and after a friend decided to go into Hospitality Business, I followed suit. There began my journey to finding the role alcohol was going to play in my life. Moved to Chicago like many others and started my career in the restaurant business. Worked my way up to managing at the highly acclaimed Peninsula Hotel. "Work hard, play hard" was the name of the game. It just made sense to me. Drinking while working became a "thing." I never thought twice about it.

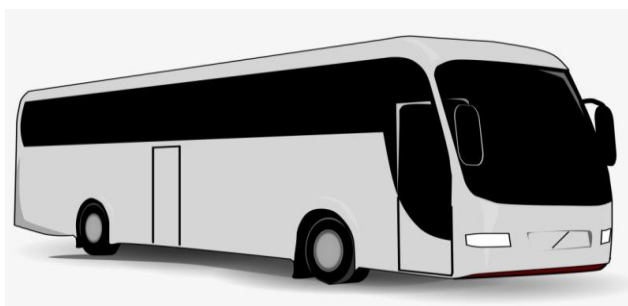
Moved back to Michigan when my sister started having babies to be closer to my family. Here I landed a job managing at another well-known restaurant. On paper I looked pretty good. While other people my age (25) were getting married and starting their families, I was busy living the life of partying and belying up to the local bars. In fact, so much so that I ended up marrying one of those bartenders who poured me a good drink. Things didn't take that long until we found ourselves in the throes of alcoholism. We lived like vampires. Up until 4 or 5 a.m., "sleep" until 2 p.m. and repeat. Eventually I left that managing position (because they were on to me), became a waitress and then stopped working all together. I drank myself right out of my career. I don't think I breathed a sober breath in the two years prior to getting sober.

I became an around-the-clock drinker. Polishing off a half-gallon in about 2-3 days. Thoughts of suicide raced through my head. My family tried an intervention, but it failed. My health was declining rapidly and thought I had no way out. I was just going to die this way.

A series of events took place and this "random" urgent care doctor suggested rehab. I spent 5 days at Maplegrove where I was safely detoxed. The only thing I remembered was to go to a meeting the day I got out and I did! I haven't had a drink since October 27, 2014. My very first meeting I was greeted by John S. outside of Good Shepard, where he walked me down this long corridor, sat me down at the first step table and handed me a Big Book. There I found my tribe. I made a lot of meetings (and still do) because time was not my friend, and I sure hadn't found any happiness YET!

Things got worse for me before they got better. Very basic things I couldn't do when I first got sober - read, talk, eat, look someone in the eyes. The list goes on. I've grown up in the program, learning from all of you. Absolutely nothing made sense. Little by slow things started to change. I had to keep things very, very simple. For me I think the hardest part has been letting people in and asking for help. My favorite three words were "everything is fine!" Truly believing and understanding that I'm not alone and that there is nothing that I can't get through sober became vital.

The reality that God was doing for me, what I couldn't do for myself rang true. Through a set of prayers that were given to me I was able to find a God of my own understanding. There are no coincidences in my world. God's timing is never wrong and this journey in sobriety has manifested itself into a life I could have never dreamed of. Learning and discovering how to become the best version of myself hasn't been easy. Nobody said it would be. I keep my sobriety first place and realize today that without it I have nothing! God is good all the time and the best is yet to come!



SAVE THE DATE!!

Saturday, September 17th

BUS TOUR of Detroit's A.A. History

\$30.00 per seat

Registration Opens on August 1st at 9:00 a.m.

Non-A.A. members are welcome!

Limited Seats – Reserve Early!

My Story

Mark H.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
		O	N	E			
9	10		11	12	13	14	15
		D	A	Y			
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
		A	T	A			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
		T	I	M	E		

What I used to be like

I was mostly a private drinker, but it was constant at the end, and my behavior increasingly was shameful. My addiction was vodka and ice in warm weather and vodka and warm water in cold weather. I was an intellectualizer, who thought that by myself I could and would think my way to sobriety. My life had become unmanageable, defined in the Big Book as a fatal progression.

What happened

In October 1997, eight months after I attended my first AA meeting, where, after drinking, I would make coffee, I had my last drink. Why that was the day I don't know. Fortunately, I didn't need to de-tox. My family had an intervention for me 6 weeks later. I was a dry drunk.

I then went for 5 months to an inpatient treatment center, attended 162 meetings in 157 days, started taking Anabuse and anti-anxiety medications for over 2 years, and seeing a psychologist for about 3 years. I had a nervous breakdown while in treatment. For weeks I could not pass for normal, impressing on me the 2nd Step's message that only a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. I came to rely on doing mechanically what trusted people told me to do. When I was sober for 6 months, I did my 5th step, a requirement to complete the inpatient program. During my 4th step, as during my 8th, the acronym FEAR was an obstacle. **F**uture **E**vents **A**ppeared **R**eal is what it means to me. In the 6th Step, with help, I tried to learn my defects of character that are most likely to cause me to drink.

What I am like now

I have not lost my desire to drink, but it's not strong. The 10th step, as Mike P. of my home group for 23 years says, is the "walking around" step. I strive to promptly admit when I am wrong. Privacy verging on secrecy and a lack of self-awareness are dangerous defects of character. I work on them and on my anxiety, for which the cure used to be alcohol.

I try to share my experience, strength and hope by my conduct, and, if by words, not by unsolicited advice, but with sentences beginning with "I," not "you," or even "we." This helps me to be conscious, an 11th Step goal, and more self-aware. My 12th step service has included home group leader and treasurer. No one has asked me to be a sponsor.

This a deadly serious program. My treatment center no longer exists, because the recovering addict who founded it relapsed, and later died young. Of my 3 initial apartment-mates there, before I left, one was jailed; one was de-toxing in a hospital; one committed suicide: jails, institutions, and death.

Theodore Roethke ended his poem *The Waking* with these words: *This shaking keeps me steady. I should know. / What falls away is always. And is near. / I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow. / I learn by going where I have to go.*



Summer Fun!!



Madison Heights Group of A. A. ZIPLINE ADVENTURES

Saturday, July 16th

6:00 p. m.

\$52.00 per person

The West Bloomfield Adventure Park

<https://www.treerunnerwestbloomfield.com>

Contact the Madison Heights Group for more info!

1633mhgaa@gmail.com

STEPS, TRADITIONS & CONCEPTS

Step Seven: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Tradition Seven: Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Concept Seven: The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Design For Living - A Step Taking Group

14 Weeks - Online Zoom Sessions

Thursdays August 18th through November 17th from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m.

Registration: July 7th to July 28th at www.designforlivingroyaloak.webnode.com

AA of Greater Detroit - 50 years in Ferndale celebration!

Saturday, August 13th at Noon at Harding Park Pavilion

Maple Dale Street, Ferndale

Tri-County Conference - September 9th, 10th & 11th

Pre-register now for just \$20

Please visit www.tricountyconference.org for details and service opportunities!

SAVE THE DATE!!

2022 Michigan State Convention - hosted by Area 33

Auburn Hills Marriott Pontiac

December 16th - 18th, 2022

District 16 meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 4th Thursday of every month at:

1st United Methodist Church of Madison Heights

246 E. 11 Mile Road, Madison Heights, MI 48071

We are self-supporting through our own contributions. The District, representing the overall conscience of 77 groups, is greatly appreciative for any and all donations. 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 & information around the district, and stories about sobriety and recovery.

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



Thank you to all newsletter contributors and to the many people that distribute the newsletter throughout our district. We are truly grateful for your service!

Editor: Tracey T.
Cover: Tracey T.
Distribution Chair: Kelly L.

AA of Greater Detroit:
248-541-6565

AA of Oakland County:
248-332-3521

AA of Detroit
Wayne County:
313-831-5500

"Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny."
-Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 164