

Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter
DECEMBER 2022



The Person I Was Born to Be

Lexi A.



To borrow words from a great writer, who happens to be a friend of Bill's, "We begin to find and become ourselves when we notice how we are already found, already truly, entirely, wildly, messily, marvelously who we were born to be." Getting sober through the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous allowed me to find myself through a path of hope, forgiveness, and acceptance. The 12 steps, fellowship, meetings, finding a higher power, and work with my sponsor showed me that living a sober life in recovery was possible. Through working the steps, I was able let go of the illusion that my life could've been different, and the person I am today—imperfect, but sober and living in recovery with the hope of becoming a slightly better version of myself each day—was the person I was born to be.

It took a lot of drinking, surrendering, following suggestions, and work in recovery to be able to comfortably sit with myself. I didn't really start drinking until college, but I quickly noticed that I couldn't predict how a night of drinking would go. I figured everyone experienced something similar, especially in college. I wouldn't talk about it though, because I didn't want to look like I didn't know what I was doing. The inconsistent results when I drank gave me false hope that one day, I would figure out how to drink like everyone else. However, nothing changed for the better. Gradually, alcohol became the end goal to each day, and until that goal was achieved, I felt uncomfortable with myself and around others. Over time, my sober mind was increasingly won over by alcohol, and my drunken mind always wanted more. Alcohol became a catalyst in my life making decisions for me. I never had a truly clear, dry brain capable of reflection and purposeful action since my alcoholism was always giving its input. My alcoholism and ego kept help at bay because anytime someone tried to bring up my drinking, I just ignored them. I didn't understand why I drank the way I did, so I didn't want to talk about it. I didn't want to feel different or like an outsider.

For years I disregarded consequences of my drinking like a dwindling bank account, lost friends, trouble at work, and concerned family members, because those events were my new normal. I kept lowering my standards of what unmanageability I could live with. After a geographic move and setting limits for myself hadn't cured my drinking problem, getting a second DUI brought me to sobriety court and into A.A. My sobriety date is January 21, 2018, and for that, I am grateful.

On that day, I had an overwhelming sense of hope that lifted the obsession to drink long enough to make it to a meeting. During that meeting, I admitted that I didn't have a clue, and I needed help. I found a sponsor and with her help, leading me through the 12 steps, I somehow managed to put one foot in front of the other. The 12 steps, my sponsor, and fellow recovering alcoholics equipped me with the tools to stay sober, and when I felt like drinking, I used the tools I had. Fear of jail certainly helped, but I had to lose some freedom to gain some. I had to admit powerlessness to gain some power. I had to let go of preconceived notions and be willing to accept help from strangers. The feelings of love, joy, companionship, serenity, and acceptance that I tried to find with alcohol, today I've found through sobriety and living in recovery.

My sister once asked me, "What happens when you don't like being sober anymore?" I hadn't conscientiously thought about that before. The truth is I don't like being sober all the time. There are moments when my brain is not my friend, a drink sounds good, and I want an "easy way out" of how I'm feeling. A.A. has taught me how to recognize my alcoholic thinking and skewed perception when it pops up. I now know what to do with temporary thoughts and emotions. I know that those impulses are not about alcohol; they are about wanting to escape how I feel. Today, I know that the 12 steps of A.A., and recovery is the easier, softer way. I have the sober road map A.A. has provided to help me navigate through the ups and downs of life. I get to lean into how wild, messy, and marvelous life can be, even in recovery. I get to do that with the help of my sponsor, higher power, and worldwide A.A. fellowship.

New Meeting!
Happy, Joyous & Free
Christ Church Cranbrook
470 Church Road, Bloomfield Hills
Tuesdays & Saturdays – 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Open Talks – Last Saturday of the Month

●●MEETING UPDATE●●
Clawson Women's Way
MONDAY EVENINGS AT 7:00 P.M.
Guardian Angels Church
581 14 Mile Road, Clawson
(no longer on Wednesdays at Heritage Church of Christ)

If I Can Do It, Anyone Can

Dan K.



My name is Dan and I'm an alcoholic. I'm 30 years old and my sobriety date is March 23, 2020. I loved the effect that drugs and alcohol had on me. They allowed me to temporarily escape the world and "control" the way I felt. I was a blackout binge drinker and would go on a spree, then sober up for a few days and desperately try to manage my life, only to do it all over again. A vicious cycle. I didn't drink every day so I thought I couldn't possibly be an alcoholic. I started to drink and smoke pot at age 14 and it didn't take long before I was a daily weed smoker and weekend vodka binger. I put myself in the hospital with alcohol poisoning at age 15 and got my first MIP at 17. In college, I solved my blacking out problem when I discovered uppers. I spent some time in the drunk tank and picked up another MIP which resulted in some court-ordered sobriety. Throughout my using career, I had periods of time where I'd stay sober for a couple weeks or even a month at a time and good things would start to happen in my life. This further supported my idea that I wasn't an alcoholic - I could stop if I wanted to. I could never stay stopped for long on my own and would always find myself back in a place of feeling guilty and remorseful after another spree.

After college, while my friends were scaling back their drinking, mine continued to ramp up. At 26, after a string of bad drunks, I hit a bottom. I hadn't lost my job or gotten the DUI "yet", but I felt physically and emotionally bankrupt and was overwhelmed by suicidal thoughts. There was no room for God in my life and it was me against the world. I finally surrendered to the idea that I needed help, an idea that friends and family had for a long time. I went to my first meeting and sat down with a group of people who would become family, and directly next to my current sponsor. When it was my turn to share, I just started crying and said, "it's gotten really bad", and it had. However, I didn't drink every day so I'm not an alcoholic. I was going to get in here, sober up, figure this thing out, then go back to enjoying my drinking. I managed to provide a real-life example of what it says on pg. 33, "once an alcoholic always an alcoholic". I went back out and tore it up for another year and in March of 2020, as the world was shutting down, I came back convinced that I was an alcoholic. I was desperate and ready to go to any lengths for my sobriety because I knew my life depended on it. I used this gift of desperation and did everything I was told to do. I reconnected with my sponsor, and we started to work the steps. I did 90 in 90 (x4), picked up the phone, and asked God to help me stay sober each day. My pain slowly drifted away along with the obsession to drink and do drugs as I kept myself active in the fellowship. Before I knew it the promises started to materialize in my life. I reestablished my connection with God and realized He was with me this whole time.

Today it's about trying to live better in sobriety, strengthening my relationship with God, and being of service. I'm able to show up and be there for friends and family like I wanted to in the previous life but simply could not. I know peace. I have everything I need and then some and it's because of this program and for that I'm grateful. I occasionally still get road rage, resentful, fearful, and will procrastinate until I'm in absolute crisis mode (even with writing this story), but because of God and this program I have a chance. A chance to live a sober, useful, and happy life if I continue to put in the effort. The solution to my problem is here and all I have to do is keep showing up and doing the deal, one day at a time. If I can do it, anyone can.

SAVE THE DATE!!

MARCH ROUNDUP 2023

March 3rd, 4th & 5th

Motor City Hotel

2901 Grand River Ave, Detroit, MI 48201

SAVE THE DATE!!

Michigan Mock Conference

March 25th, 2023

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

400 South Main Street

Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

LOVE & PRAYERS TO ALL DURING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON!!

STEPS, TRADITIONS & CONCEPTS

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to other alcoholics, and to practice these principals in all our affairs.

Tradition 12: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Concept 12: The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AREA 33 ASSEMBLY — SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1TH

12:00 to 3:00 p.m. with GSR Orientation & Service Manual Study at 11:00 a.m.
Ferndale First Methodist Church, 22331 Woodward Ave. / Lunch will be provided!

69TH ANNUAL MICHIGAN STATE CONVENTION

Hosted by Area 33 on December 16th, 17th & 18th

Auburn Hills Marriott / 3600 Centerpoint Parkway / Pontiac / 48341

Registration Fee: \$30.00/Saturday Night Banquet: \$70.00/Hotel Rooms: \$99.00

REGISTER AND VOLUNTEER AT: AA-SEMI.ORG

W.A.R.M. Group New Year's Eve Party!

Saturday, December 31st / Doors Open at 5:00 / Food at 6:00 / Speaker at 7:00

First United Methodist, 315 E. 9 Mile Road, Hazel Park (one block east of John R.)

The Southfield Group's Holiday Party!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10TH / DOORS OPEN AT 6:00 P.M. / DINNER AT 7:00 P.M.

Speaker: Bob M. at 8:00 p.m. (bring a dish to pass if you wish!)

St. David's Episcopal Church/16200 W. 12 Mile Road/Southfield

District 21/22 Holiday Party!

Monday, December 12th from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. / Cuisine by Chef Mike S. at 7:00 p.m.

Sobriety Countdown at 7:15 p.m. / Open Talk: Area 33 Delegate Russ R. at 7:30 p.m.

New Life Presbyterian Church, 11300 19 Mile Road, Sterling Heights

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!

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"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