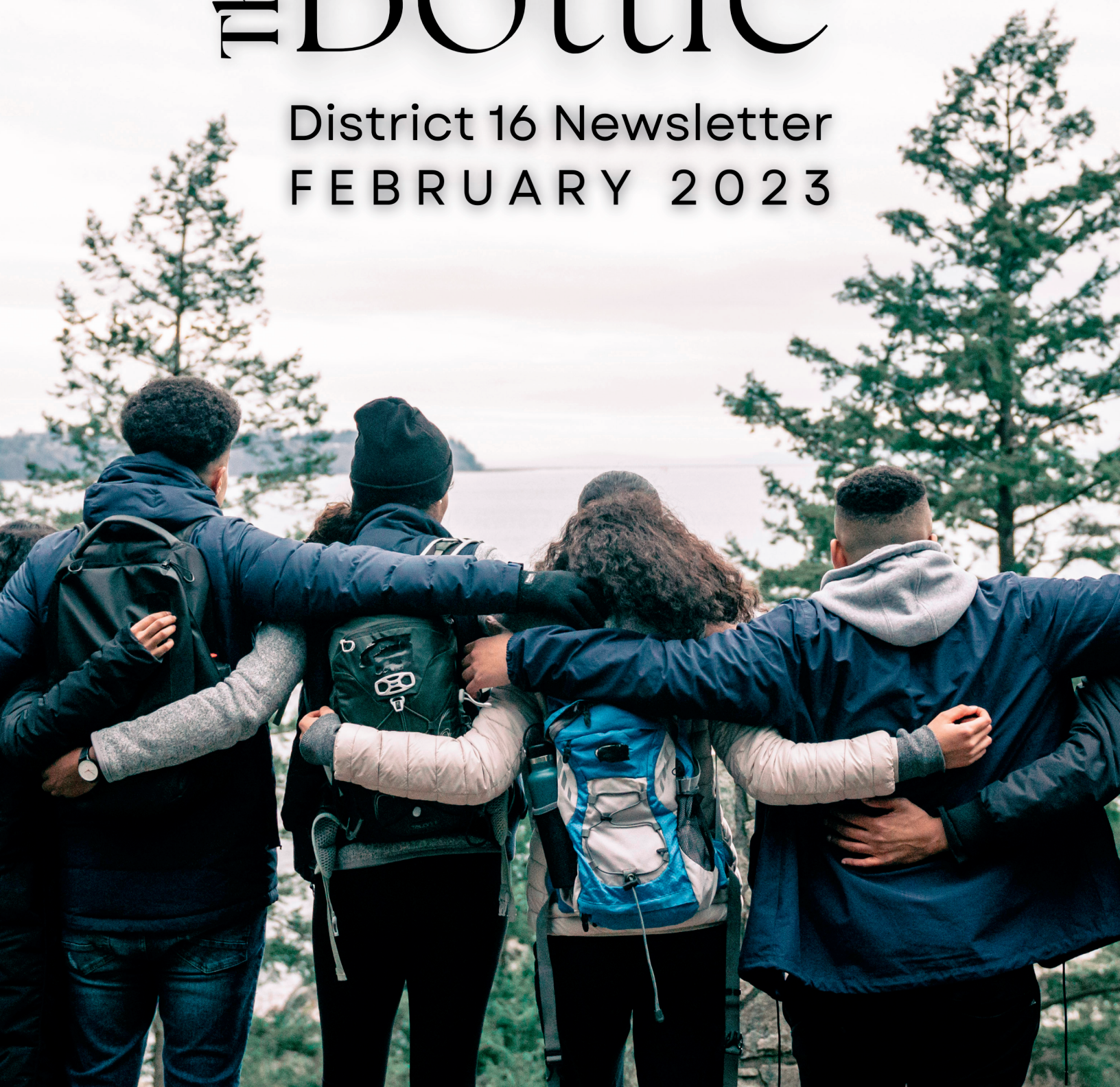


Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter
FEBRUARY 2023



Born Alcoholic

James B.



I am an alcoholic, and my name is James. I haven't found it necessary to take a drink or drug since February 23, 2009. I use the word necessary because at the end, I had no choice in the matter. I owe everything that I have today to God and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I was born the son of an alcoholic father and he was a son of an alcoholic father and so on... I would love to say that his behavior in his disease is the cause of my alcoholism but that simply isn't true. In fact, his behavior only made my repulsion of alcohol even worse. My disease was present when I came out of the womb; I was born alcoholic. I remember like it was yesterday when my mother first gave me whiskey and lemon for a cough; I couldn't have been more than seven or eight. I remember the feeling of that warm "miracle medicine." I would develop "coughs" repeatedly! I didn't start abusing alcohol "yet" but something inside was triggered. My "yets" were right around the corner...

My alcoholism really kicked in when I discovered that IT was the answer to ALL my problems. Alcohol was not my problem; it was my solution. Things were clearer and it helped me navigate my own private hell. I was the nerdy kid that didn't fit in on any level. I didn't dress in the latest style, and I was struggling with being "different." I remember standing in front of the mirror wanting to be anything/anyone other than myself. I just wanted to escape. I was struggling with the acceptance of my sexuality and being raised in a very conservative community was extremely painful. The only thing that would help with the feelings of self-hatred and being "less than" was alcohol and lots of it!

There is no single thing or person to blame for my disease. I can't pin it on anyone. Just like I wanted to blame someone or something for me being gay, it just is. I am grateful to my parents for never having me want for anything. Please don't misunderstand this for anything other than what it actually was. I had clothes on my back, food in my belly and was given a great education. My parents did the very best that they could. They loved me the best that they knew how. In fact, I love them more now in sobriety than ever. I see flawed individuals doing the best that they can.

To make a long story short, I modeled my entire existence and work trajectory around alcohol. I drank heavily in high school, college and postgraduate. There wasn't a night that I didn't black out. If I didn't black out, what was the point? I needed to escape the pain. But in the early days of blackout drinking, it worked for me. I was still able to function, at least as far as I saw. All my behaviors are crystal clear now. For example, the University I attended was consistently voted a top party school by many media outlets. I then moved to Chicago after graduation in search of a career or, to be candid, something to pay the bills. I moved in with some high school friends, and it was Nirvana as I saw it, work during the day and party at night. See a pattern?

While living in Chicago, my boss offered me an opportunity to take an open position in the Detroit office. I accepted the job wanting to go back to "home". I took a brief trip back to find a place to live only to find my father in the hospital with a terminal diagnosis of liver disease. I was able to spend a year with him before he died. As he lay dying in his hospital bed, my drinking habits didn't change, they actually got worse. One might ask as to why I wouldn't stop drinking while witnessing my father dying of cirrhosis of the liver. Only another alcoholic would understand.

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

●●NEW MEETING●●
Principles Before Personalities
A.A. 12 & 12 LITERATURE STUDY
TUESDAY EVENINGS AT 6:00 P.M.
Berkley First
A United Methodist Church
2820 12 Mile Road, Berkley



James B. continued...

Through all of this, my drinking only got worse. I was living in the "If this happens, then I will be happy and stop drinking." The desired goal would often come, the raise or the nice house, but my drinking would only intensify. It never cured my deep feelings of inadequacy and self-loathing. I would get what I thought I wanted but, in every instance, I was still there; "Wherever I go, there I am." I am reminded of the saying, "If I can't be happy with what I have, what makes me think more will make me feel better?"

On February 23, 2009, I raised my hands up to the sky and said, "God, I can't do this anymore!" I can take ZERO credit for this because my will would have kept me out there for a long time probably resulting in death. I remember the tears wouldn't stop flowing. It was a rush of emotions that I had never felt before. What is this? Feeling? I don't like this. However, something told me that I needed to stay, and I know it was God, my father, and all of those who have gone before me. The messages were always there but I just started to hear them, little by little. Even today I am reminded of how blessed I am to be here.

Today I am a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am an employee, a boss, a husband, a son, a brother, and a productive member of society. I don't just attend meetings or read a little from time to time, I work it. I work the steps, sponsor guys, I go to and chair meetings and do service work; maybe not as much as I should so I'll work on that. I make phone calls and go to fellowship dinners and have dinner parties for our friends. I put all of this into the universe because I need to continue to do it. Without it, I am doomed to a life of misery.

I am grateful today to God and my fellowship brothers and sisters for a life of purpose and joy. I need to be reminded that I am never cured. Without giving it away, I can't keep it. Thank you for allowing me to tell a brief synopsis of my story. I didn't get sober to be miserable, God's will for me is to be happy and I truly am!

March Roundup 2023 Meeting Schedule



Sunday's at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom
Meeting ID: 742 8494 9684 / Password: MRU

FEBRUARY 19TH
MARCH 12TH

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

Michigan Mock Conference

March 25th, 2023

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
400 South Main Street
Mount Pleasant, MI 48858



PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETS:
Saturday Mornings at 9:00 a.m. on Zoom
Meeting ID: 517 414 7662

February 18th
March 11th

DESIGN FOR LIVING – A 14-Week Online Step Taking Group

NEXT SESSION BEGINS FEBRUARY 23RD & ENDS MAY 25TH – THURSDAYS FROM 6:30 TO 8:00 PM

Sign Up Now! Registration Open Until February 3rd

TAKE THE STEPS...TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE!

Contact Mary Beth K: 248-336-0795 / Find more information: <https://designforlivingroyaloak.webnode.page>

STEPS, TRADITIONS & CONCEPTS

Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Tradition Two: For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Concept Two: The General Service Conference of A.A. has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in its world affairs.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AREA 33 ASSEMBLY – SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH

12:00 to 3:00 p.m. with GSR Orientation & Service Manual Study at 11:00 a.m.
VFW Hall, 24222 W. Nine Mile in Southfield / Lunch will be provided at 11:30!

MARCH ROUNDUP 2023 – March 3rd, 4th & 5th

Motor City Hotel / 2901 Grand River Avenue / Detroit / 48201 / 313-237-7711

Registration Fee: \$25.00 / \$30.00 after 2/15

Saturday Night Banquet: \$75.00 & Hotel Rooms: \$153.00 after 2/15

REGISTER & VOLUNTEER AT: AA-SEMI.ORG/MRU2023

Back To Basics – A.A. Beginner's Meeting

SPONSORED BY: THE SOUTHFIELD GROUP

Tuesdays 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. – February 7th, 14th, 21st & 28th

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

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!

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Wayne County:
313-831-5550

"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