

# Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter  
MAY 2023





# It Takes What It Takes

Sam S.



I had my first drink at the age of 14. My first drink was my first drunk was my first blackout. I wasted no time! And in no time, I was wasted. I was an alcoholic from the start. But it took me another 16 years to finally (one day at a time) stop drinking.

I grew up in a chaotic, unpredictable household. My father was absent, my mother worked or was preoccupied with her next fling and her next drink. I was raised by my grandparents and a loving aunt and uncle. But as a child, we crave the love and admiration of our parents. And when those parents are not around, it creates confusion and sadness for a child. I sought out that attention in many other ways: alcohol, men, sports. Any time that I could shine and be the absolute best at something, I did. The best soccer player in the county, the best singer in my school, a first-generation college graduate. Whatever the challenge was, I accepted it, *as long as I could be the absolute best*. If I wasn't at the top of the game, I would quit playing. I did not know how to simply exist. And ever since I was a little girl, deep down inside, I did not **want** to exist. I tried to fill the hole in my soul with alcohol.

In less than 10 years of drinking, I torched my life to the ground. I threw away my career, my reputation, the respect of my family and friends. My brother took me in at his rental house, where all I had were a few belongings and a mattress on the floor. I attended my first meeting in July 2013, and in the basement of that church, I found hope for the first time. I knew deep down inside that there was a way out of the trench I dug for myself. I pieced together a year here, six months there, and rode the in-and-out merry-go-round for six and a half years. Each time I went back out, my time spent out was less and less. Finally, in 2019, I went back out with the intention of never coming back. In less than three weeks I was planning my suicide. My last drunk entailed stumbling down 13 Mile Road, in a blizzard, to get more booze.

During this relapse, I missed a therapy appointment and ghosted my therapist. She called several times; I sent her call to voicemail. She left me a voicemail and said if I did not call her back in the next 30 minutes, she would call the police to conduct a welfare check. I did not have my suicide plan "ready" yet (she called my bluff) and I knew I had to call her. I was done. I went back to therapy the next week, called my sponsor, and came back to A.A.

My new sobriety date is January 9, 2020. My life has been transformed thanks to the fellowship and the program. I put one foot in front of the other. A pandemic hit when I was three months sober – I learned how to use Zoom. I maintained a close relationship with my sponsor, whom I have been working with for almost 10 years (God bless that woman and her unwavering support). I became more involved in A.A and got a home group. I do the work so I can have the rewards and keep the incredible gifts I have received by the grace of God. I have a safe place to live, a car that actually starts (and is pretty sweet!), my health, relationships with my family, a significant other who loves and cherishes me, and a job that I love. I am entrenched in A.A and am forever grateful for it.

Someone in the fellowship asked me what would be different this time. The answer? Everything.

## ♦♦Meeting Time Change♦♦ Nine Mile & Lahser Group



**Starting May 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Sundays & Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.**

**Emmanuel Lutheran Church**

**23425 Lahser Road, Southfield 48033**

## Writing Workshop!

**Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

**Hosted By: District 16 and the  
Area 33 Grapevine Committee**

**1st United Methodist Church  
246 E. 11 Mile Road  
Madison Heights 48071**

**Donuts, Coffee, Water & Cake!!**



# Where Would I Be?

Bob S.



I've asked myself, "Why am I an alcoholic?", "Why is my sister not an alcoholic?" and "Why didn't I get sober when I was younger?" But the most important question is "Where would I be without A.A.?"

Several years before I picked up my first drink, Mom and Dad joined Alcoholics Anonymous. I saw firsthand that A.A. was where people went to get help with their drinking problem. Of course, like any *real* alcoholic, by the time I could admit my own drinking problem, there was no way I was going to A.A. Well, at least not until the consequences of my drinking beat me into submission and then, finally, complete surrender.

My last drink was October 29, 2001, about 25 years after my first one. I had quit drinking a few times, including one period that lasted over 5 years. Each attempt to quit came after a terrible incident (like a car accident or job loss) and I was determined not to drink. But I wasn't going to ask anyone for help and the moment I told myself "a drink is a good idea", there was **no defense**. No program of recovery. No fellowship to turn to.

The first time I reached out for help was mid-August 1998. I called my dad and told him that I found myself drinking no matter what. Even after a terrible car accident, which involved a new court case, I drank the very next day. Dad lived out of state, so he had me meet up with two guys at a meeting. I knew these same guys when I was teenager, back when I was just starting out my drinking career and these two were ending theirs. Now, they were offering to help me end mine. One of them, Mike K., said "If you're serious about this, you need a Big Book, a sponsor and a home group." Mike bought me a Big Book at that first meeting. He also agreed to be my sponsor and helped me find a home group within the first few days.

I was sober for about 18 months, but I lacked willingness. Predictably, I eventually picked up a drink. Being a progressive illness means I began this new period of drinking right where I left off. Powerless and out of control, this was the worst time in my life. Fortunately, the law separated me from alcohol long enough to experience my gift of desperation. It was my lowest point ever, but it was also necessary.

This time, I was ready to be "in" A.A. instead of just "around" it. I found a group of guys that are my *herd*. I got so far in I can't get out. Seriously working a program of recovery; sponsoring other men; volunteering when service opportunities came up. These are all things I learned from others. People who seemed reasonably happy and have been sober for a while. Watching what they do and doing the same thing. For example, sharing my phone number with newcomers and buying a Big Book for someone. I still sit at First Step tables regularly, along with mentoring and sponsoring others. It's an important part of my recovery.

If there is one thing I appreciate most, it's how I think today compared to all those years ago. I'm able to reason and consider carefully before acting. For me, being a mature adult didn't come by abstaining from alcohol and aging. It came from years of discipline and effort, even when I wanted to be lazy.

The answer to "Where would I be without AA?" is "not where I am now" and where I am now is amazing. I am one of the happiest guys I know. I am a reliable & devoted husband, a father & trusted advisor to our 4 children, and to *their* children I'm a fun & loving grandpa.

Thank God for A.A. and all of you.

## March Roundup 2024 Planning Committee



**Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am**

**Zoom: Meeting ID: 848 6288 6959**

**Password: 33**

**Contact: [area33mruchair@aa-semi.org](mailto:area33mruchair@aa-semi.org)**

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!**

## Movie Night Returns!!

**Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>**

**Doors open at 6 p.m.**

**Movie at 7 p.m.**

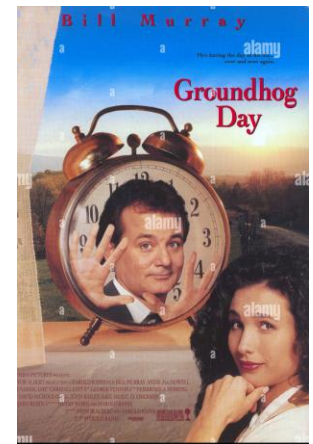
**Refreshments  
will be provided!**

**Hosted by:**

**The Madison Heights Group**

**1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church \*Basement\***

**246 E. 11 Mile Road, Madison Heights**





## 36<sup>th</sup> Tri-County Conference - September 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>

### 2023 Sunday Full Conference Meeting Schedule

Eastside Alano Club, 11487 E. 9 Mile Road, Warren, MI / 12:00 p.m.

May 21<sup>st</sup> / June 25<sup>th</sup> (Zoom @ 10:00 a.m.) / July 30<sup>th</sup> / August 6<sup>th</sup> / August 27<sup>th</sup>

Wrap-Up Meeting will be October 8<sup>th</sup>

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!! VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!**

## CHECK OUT THE UPCOMING EVENTS!!

### AREA 33 ASSEMBLY – SUNDAY, MAY 21<sup>ST</sup>

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!

## Founders' Day Summer Bus Trip 2023

**Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> - Leaves 8:00 a.m. & Returns 12:00 a.m.**

**Depart from Detroit to Akron University – Only \$60.00!**

Contact: Fred P. at 313-402-5383 or Dennis C. at 313-903-5103 for more info!

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

SPONSORED BY THE SOUTHFIELD GROUP

Tuesdays 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. – May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>

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

## 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MICHIGAN STATE CONVENTION

**Save the Date: August 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

Pre-register at: [aa-michigan-2023.square.site](https://aa-michigan-2023.square.site)

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

1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church of Madison Heights - 246 E. 11 Mile Road, Madison Heights, MI 48071

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](mailto: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