

Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter
JULY 2023



The Opposite of What I Expected

Denise E.



It took me a long time to find Alcoholics Anonymous. But I'm so glad I did. Now I feel like I have been given a second chance at life.

I didn't see it at the time, of course, but now it is easy to see how my alcoholism progressed over the years. In college I learned that a few drinks helped ease the anxiety of having to meet new people and trying to "fit in". In my career and marriage and raising a family, I learned that drinking after a long, hard day was a way to relieve the stress. Alcohol was always the quick and easy way to "numb" and make the bad feelings go away. What I realize now is that, because of the alcohol, I never learned how to really be present and live with my feelings. I would just drink to push them away.

Over the years, the drinking became more often, started earlier in the day, and lasted longer in the evenings. Dinners with friends became less frequent and shorter: I couldn't wait to get home so I could drink wine like I really wanted to. Time with my daughter was cut short: I'd push her to go see her friends or "go to bed" early so I could have more wine. My marriage dissolved and, later, even dating ended early so I could be alone with my wine. Over the years, wine became my best friend/co-commiserator and my world became smaller and smaller. I was lonely, but I turned to wine to numb my loneliness. I was in a vicious cycle and didn't even realize it.

During the pandemic, my drinking escalated. I tried several times to quit on my own, but failed day after day after day. When I was finally forced to admit that alcohol had taken over and I had lost control, my brother suggested that I join him in an A.A. Zoom call. I reluctantly agreed, expecting to see a group of misfits in trench coats that I'd have nothing in common with. Thank God that what I found was the opposite of what I expected!

I looked and was surprised to see happy, successful people of a variety of ages and all walks of life. I listened and heard many of the thoughts and feelings I had experienced myself: the insecurity, the loneliness, and the frustration of turning to alcohol as a solution every day, only to wake up facing the same miserable feelings the next morning. But what really surprised me was hearing how these people felt now. I expected them to be bemoaning their loss of alcohol, to be constantly wishing that they could drink again. There were a few new people like me who were still struggling with cravings. But the people who were living the program were different. They were happy and authentic and grateful that A.A. had taught them a new way to live. I felt hope when I realized that I might be able to learn to live a new way, too, and so I kept coming back.

In the nearly three years since I started coming to A.A., I have learned many new things that have reopened my life, things such as: It is freeing to accept imperfections in myself and others. It is courageous (not weak) to ask for help. The solution to loneliness is a willingness to be vulnerable in order to connect with others. It is a life-enhancing joy to help others. I learned all this through the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. It may have taken many years for me to finally reach out for A.A., but I am grateful I found it and the path for a second chance at life! I expected a program that would make me resentful for having to give up my wine, but thankfully I found the opposite: a new, hopeful, and rewarding way of life that helped me learn to "sit with" my emotions instead of using alcohol to numb them away.

W.A.R.M. 4th of July Bash! Music, Fellowship and Fun



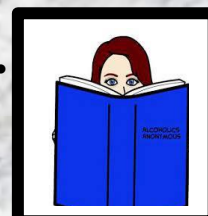
Tuesday, July 4th
Starts at 3:00/Food at 4:00
Speaker at 6:00 / Sian D.
Bring a dish if you wish!

315 E. Nine Mile, Hazel Park
Between the church & little white house

BIG BOOK STUDY!!

Last Tuesday of the Month @ 6:30 pm
Hosted By: Nothing But The Book
Genesis Church

309 N. Main St., Royal Oak
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Zoom Accessible
Meeting ID: 457 505 2737
Passcode: 450844
Pizza, Drinks & Sweets Provided!



How I Met A.A.

Mike R.



On my 16th birthday my father approached me to explain that he would be missing my birthday party that year because he was ready to admit he was an alcoholic and had hit his rock bottom. He needed to go to some rehabilitation center I had never heard of to get sober and healthy (a place I would also become personally familiar with). At the time I had little knowledge of what an 'alcoholic' even was, I mean I knew that my brother and I often found my dad passed out around the house, but we thought that was a normal thing dads did. I didn't know that this was alcoholic behavior.... yet.

Over the next 11 years I would continue my journey through high-school and into college with the small thought way in the back of my mind, "remember to be careful with how much you drink.... your dad's an alcoholic" usually in my mother's voice. This concern simply helped to delay the inevitable. The voice of concern became weaker and weaker as the demands and responsibilities of life surmounted. It was replaced by a new voice that started to say "I am an adult and can make adult decisions. If I want to drink, I'm going to drink. I'll be damned if my experience will be my father's experience."

At some point I crossed a line. It was that magical invisible line that we all eventually come to recognize. For me it was physical addiction to alcohol. I was 27 years old; and I couldn't go two hours without a drink before my hands started shaking. How the hell did I let this happen? How could I have been so stupid? Why didn't someone stop me? I was constantly blaming myself and others for the conditions of my life, which at that time were utterly terrifying looking back.

It was 2014 and around this time I was in such bad shape physically from drinking that my doctors called me with concerns after my yearly physical. I needed to come back for further bloodwork so they could rule out diabetes. I wasn't willing to be honest with my doctor about my alcohol consumption yet, but I knew that I didn't have diabetes. I had a real problem with alcohol; I wasn't ready to use the term alcoholic yet. I knew I needed to change my behavior, but I wasn't ready to ask for help.

This led to the dangerous decision of trying to quit drinking ON MY OWN. I figured that was all I needed. Just to quit drinking. Upon taking this course of action I was immediately plagued with the most terrifying withdrawals one could imagine; seizures, hallucinations, and every other horrifying story you have heard about delirium tremens. At some point in my experience in the ICU going through delirium I surrendered my fight. My fight against the idea that I was an alcoholic. My fight to prove to the world that I could do this alone. I could not. I was utterly defeated.

Then I found A.A. It was during my own stint in rehab that I was faced with the reality that I was a true alcoholic. I was ready to admit that I was powerless, and my life was utterly unmanageable. Here I learned about the fellowship of A.A., doing 90 meetings in 90 days, and helping others. It was at Alcoholics Anonymous that I learned about living in the solution. I am eternally grateful for everything that Alcoholics Anonymous has done for my family. I could never give back what has been given by this program. By the grace of my higher power and the fellowship of A.A., my sober date continues to be 4/14/14. Thank you, A.A.!



Southfield Group's Summer Picnic

Sunday, July 16th from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Starr Jaycee Park – 1321 W. 13 Mile, Royal Oak

BURGERS, HOT DOGS, & GAMES

More Information: thesouthfieldgroup@gmail.com

Sponsorship Spectacular

Presented by District 20 / July 22nd at 6:30 pm

Dinner at 7:00 & Speakers at 7:30

First Presbyterian Church of Troy

4328 Livernois Rd., Troy 48098

Please bring a dessert to pass!

CONVENTIONS & CONFERENCES

March Roundup 2024 Planning Committee - July 15th at 9:00 a.m. - Volunteers Needed!!

Zoom Meeting ID: 848 6288 6959 / Passcode: 33

Contact: area33mruchair@aa-semi.org for more information

36th Tri-County Conference: September 8th - 10th, 2023

Committee Meetings: August 6th & August 27th @ 12 pm / info@tricountyconference.org

Location: Eastside Alano Club, 11487 E. 9 Mile Road, Warren 48089

AREA 33 ASSEMBLY – SUNDAY, JULY 16TH

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!

Vintage Movie Night! – Serenity at Peace

Friday, July 14th - Doors Open 8:00 pm & Movie Starts at 8:30 pm

Featuring “Chalk Talk on Alcohol Revised (1979)” – refreshments provided!

Peace Lutheran Church – 17029 W. 13 Mile Road, Southfield 48076

DESIGN FOR LIVING - ONLINE STEP TAKING GROUP

NEXT SESSION – AUGUST 17TH TO NOVEMBER 16TH, 2023

Thursdays 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. / Contact Mary Beth K. at 248-336-0795

Sign Up Now! Registration Open July 6th through July 21st

Register at: <https://designforlivingroyaloak.webnode.page>

70TH ANNUAL MICHIGAN STATE CONVENTION

A.A.'s Three Legacies: Our Common Solution / August 11th - 13th, 2023

Comfort Inn and Suites Conference Center

2424 S. Mission Street, Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858 / (989)772-4000

Register online at: aa-michigan-2023.square.site

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

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 Art: Melissa A.

AA of Greater Detroit:
248-541-6565

AA of Oakland County:
248-332-3521

AA of Detroit
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