

Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter
NOVEMBER 2023



Finding Beauty in the Struggle

Kari H.



Hi! My name is Kari H., I am an alcoholic, and my sobriety date is 11/13/2020. I never thought that I would be so grateful to be an alcoholic. Without this program, I would have encountered many of the “yets” I did not have to because of this fellowship. I also would not have found God the way that I did if it were not for finally having faith in something greater than myself.

When I came into A.A., I had no idea what I was getting myself into other than I knew I was miserable with my life, and it was time for a solution. I had been in denial. Drinking was fun, I was fun, until it wasn't fun anymore. I didn't believe that any of my struggles had anything to do with the fact that I had zero coping skills, did not live in reality, and did not want to reveal the pain and suffering I had been going through for years because to me that would not fix anything. I just needed to shove it down and push through. I was so wrong and today I can admit when I am wrong without blaming others.

When I attended my first meeting, it was via Zoom because we were in the middle of a pandemic. I was very intrigued, not knowing anything about how the program works. As soon as “The Promises” were read and immediately after “How it Works” was read, I thought, THAT'S ALL I HAVE TO DO??!! There are directions and I just needed to follow them! SIGN ME UP! I picked my sponsor via zoom which was interesting. I was very fortunate because she was amazing and taught me all about the steps. One of the most important things she helped me with though was to learn about myself and to face things about myself. Having to learn what you believed was confidence was a HUGE EGO, one of your biggest character defects, was a humbling experience. Oh, did I mention that I completely lacked humility and was oblivious to it? That was a super fun learning lesson! I learned a lot about my character defects that I used to control a lot of situations because I always felt that if I could control everything I wouldn't feel so out of control. This program taught me that the more I stay in my lane and have faith, the more peace I will have in my life.

I was told to get so far into A.A. that I could not get out which led to an A.A. addiction, which I am sure many of us can relate to. My sponsor finally said if you raise your hand to do one more thing, I am telling you no in front of everyone. So, I didn't, in front of her anyway! But not listening would lead to exactly what she said it would (I don't always listen, not alcoholic behavior at all) and I became completely unbalanced. I also had to question why I was doing so much, what was I running from again because that was the theme of my life. Do more, work more, give more - then everyone will see what a great person I am. Sound familiar? Another lesson and awakening to more growth possibilities as a contributing member of A.A. Just keep helping others get what they need, and it comes back to you.

The longer I am into my sobriety journey, the more I am humble enough to “know that I don't know”. I continue to learn that what other people think of me is none of my business. I have learned that “No” is a complete sentence. With this program I have learned to fully surrender. My will is a tough one and a work in progress, but I wholeheartedly believe that if I continue to work a rigorously honest program and serve others then I will be sober one day at a time for the rest of my life.

GSR Workshop!

Hosted By: Districts 16 & 18

Saturday, November 11th / 10 AM - 2 PM

COFFEE + LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED!



**Location: United Methodist Church
246 E. 11 Mile Rd, Madison Heights
Link the group with A.A. as a whole!**

Dr. Bob's House!!

**Bus Trip Hosted By: Sobriety First
Sunday, November 5th / 8 AM – 8 PM
Church of Christ**

115 S. Campbell., Royal Oak

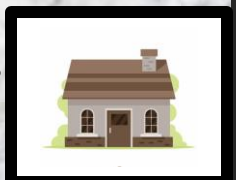
Cost: \$50 Per Person

Register & Pay by October 20th

Contacts for more info:

Willy: 248-808-0250 -or- Anita: 248-496-8942

QR Code on the flyer at: aa-semi.org



The Way Home

Tom L.



My drinking life began when I was 12 years old, although alcohol has been a part of my life and lineage for generations and embedded in my DNA in the womb. Even if I had known about the insidious disease—concealed in the family vault—that had inflicted many ancestral uncles, cousins, great-this’s, and grand-that’s, it would have been the last thing on my mind as I felt the warmth and confidence that came flooding in as I choked down the nasty tasting beer. Over the next three decades, alcohol went from being the magical lubricant that could transform an insecure, introverted kid into a confident, outwardly successful man of the world to the poison that would gradually take over my life and set to destroy it.

Throughout high school, college, grad school and my early career, I managed to “control” my drinking and avoid serious obvious consequences. I married my college sweetheart, became a dad to four great daughters and got a job that was the envy of many. During my 30s, my behavior deteriorated from problematic to insane, inflicting suffering on my loved ones and putting them and me at risk. Passing out on the couch at 7pm was a picnic compared to being found in a nonresponsive blackout behind the wheel of a parked car with my daughter in her car seat, which in turn was dwarfed by the chaos to come. Family and friends intervened and pleaded with me to get help, which I reluctantly accepted, but only on my terms, which included continuing to drink. I began to check out A.A., but only to steal a few of the decent ideas I heard from “those people” in the rooms. Of course, my uniquely superior intelligence would create an easier, softer way to manage my drinking. That plan led to a DUI in 2010, which finally led me to admit that I was powerless over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable. I went to EOP at Maplegrove, started to show up at A.A. instead of lurking, got a sponsor, began working the steps, discovered an amazing fellowship of supportive people (who were MY people not “those people”, go figure!), and enjoyed over two years of sobriety before I tried to take back control. The better my life became, the less I showed up at meetings, called other alcoholics or did service work. I picked up just one drink and within three months was doing everything in my power to ensure that my body was never alcohol-free. The insane, reckless behavior returned and amped up, leading to another intervention on December 10, 2012. This time it was off to Hazelden, where I found the strength to give up, accept, surrender, and act.

One key was realizing the real ratio in the Serenity Prayer for me. Early in sobriety, I was a “1/99” guy. I thought the only thing I had to accept was that I could not drink (the 1%). I certainly was strong enough and smart enough—especially without booze—to control and change everything else, including the people and circumstances in my life (the 99%). By really doing the steps, really deciding to turn my life over to the care of a Higher Power, writing a thorough inventory that I shared completely during a fifth step, making genuine amends to the many people I hurt and, most important, committing to a daily practice of reflection, prayer and meditation, I came to believe that my ratio is actually 99/1: I cannot control nearly anything outside me, but I can control almost everything in my reaction to it. Not only that, I also know that I need a lot of help to control that 1%. When I made sobriety the foundation of my life and A.A. the foundation of my sobriety, that help was easy to ask for, easier to find and better than I could hope for. Better because it isn’t just “help,” it is the portal to the spiritual realm, a place grounded in love. The love that the Great Spirit bestows on us constantly and that you fellow travelers give me regularly. Love that I couldn’t see until you showed it to me, first by accepting me as I am and then by showing me that I am loved in an all-encompassing way by an Indwelling Presence that is beyond anything I can imagine.

During the pandemic, I began to repeat some of the behavior that preceded my relapse in 2012. I stopped going to meetings, fell out of touch with friends in the program, and started making a lot more conscious contact with Netflix and ice cream than with my Higher Power. Unsurprisingly, I became increasingly restless, irritable, and discontent. Fortunately, by the grace of God, I got off the couch before I took a drink and made it back to the rooms of A.A. To the fellowship. To service. To the miracle that is available to me every day I choose to accept it and do the things required to maintain all the love of the Universe and its Creator. That is my true home.

I love being sober. My life today is precious. I don’t take it for granted and am grateful for every day I receive, which would not be possible without Alcoholics Anonymous and all of you. Thank you!



75th Annual Gratitude Meeting

Wednesday, November 22nd at 7:30 p.m. – Doors Open at 6:30 p.m.

Location: Royal Oak Farmer’s Market, 316 E. Eleven Mile Road

Contributions: Checks to AA Greater Detroit

Mail To: AA of Greater Detroit, 380 Hilton Road, Ferndale, MI 48220



CONVENTIONS & CONFERENCES

2024 March Roundup Planning Committee Meeting - Saturday, November 4th at 10:00 a.m.
Meeting at the Motor City Hotel & Convention Center / area33mruchair@aa-semi.org

East Central Regional Forum - November 17th - 19th, 2023

Hosted by the A.A. General Service Board and open to all A.A. members!

Location: The Doubletree by Hilton, 6200 Quarry Lane, Independence, Ohio / (866) 568-0896

Registration is FREE!! Last day to book is November 3rd. / regionalforums@aa.org for more info!



NOVEMBER EVENTS



AREA 33 ASSEMBLY – NOVEMBER 12TH

Madison High School, 915 E. Eleven Mile Rd., Madison Heights, 48071

New GSR Orientation @ 10:00 & Assembly @ 12:00 – Lunch Provided!

Join us to experience A.A. General Service beyond the Group!

THANKSGIVING DAY ALKATHON - Thursday, November 23rd

Time: 12:00 to 5:00 / Location: Heritage Church, 529 Grove Ave., Clawson

Turkey Dinner, Lions Football, Continuous A. A. Meeting!!

Volunteers Needed! Contact Laurie F. at: dudleyf626@gmail.com

BACK TO BASICS - Introduction to the 12 Steps

MEETING DATES: NOVEMBER 7TH, 14TH, 21ST & 28TH

Tuesdays 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. / Sponsored by The Southfield Group

Location: St. David's Episcopal Church, 16200 W. 12 Mile Rd., Southfield, MI 48076

2024 Michigan Statewide Mock Conference Planning Committee

Saturday, November 11th at 9:00 a.m. Via Zoom

Zoom ID: 517 414 7662 / No Password Required

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 A.A., 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 A.A. 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!

Cover Art: Melissa A.

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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