

JULY

OUTSIDE THE

2024

# BOTTLE

Meeting Makers Make It- Stefanie B.'s Story  
The Problem is Joe-- Joe S.'s Story

## District 16 Newsletter



**STEFANIE B.**

# Meeting Makers Make It



Hi! My name is Stefanie and I am an alcoholic. I grew up in a large family. I was the oldest of eight kids. My mom was young and had a lot of children to take care of. From a really young age, I can remember that my mom suffered from depression. My mom handled life the best she could, and that meant that she used alcohol. She began drinking when I was a teenager. So alcohol was always a part of my life.

Growing up, I was uncomfortable. Like many of us, I never felt good enough and I never fit in. When I started drinking at 13, alcohol took that feeling away. With alcohol, I was enough. I didn't worry about fitting in. At first, my drinking was sporadic. I drank when I had the opportunity. However, when I left home at 18, I started partying. I hadn't crossed that line yet, though. I had control. I could put the drink down still.

I worked hard and went to nursing school. Once I got out of nursing school, my drinking increased and I crossed the line. My drinking got out of control. That's when I can remember having black outs. I was working afternoons and drank after work. I'd be able to sleep in and do it all over again. At this point, I started doing drugs since I had access as a nurse. The state caught up with me and took my nursing license away. They took me to jail and revoked my license. The defiance drove my behavior, so I switched from pharmaceuticals to street drugs. I was losing the very thing I worked the hardest for— my nursing license. That's the thing with alcohol. It chips away at the very things we love by giving this false sense of magic. Everything feels great when you're high or drunk and you don't make the best decisions.

I married a drug addict and got pregnant. I stopped using when the physical problems from IV drug use started popping up. When I gave up the drugs, my alcoholism really took off. I switched one devil for another. I was blacking out when I drank. My husband reported me to the therapist I was seeing because I was lying to her, telling her I was sober. The therapist threatened to have my kids taken away unless I went to AA 3 times a week. So I reluctantly went.

For a long time, I didn't drink and I went to meetings. Going to meetings allowed me to hear different people and different ideas. That proverbial bell would go off in my head and I would be able to identify and hear exactly what I needed to hear. I was so committed to AA- whatever anyone asked me to do, I would do. I eventually found a sponsor and I worked the steps to the best of my ability. I did that first 4th step and created a list of stuff I did wrong and that people did wrong to me. I didn't know how to work the steps deeply yet, but like many newcomers, I just kept doing the next right thing- which is a mantra that has served me well.

Then, I got a new sponsor that steered me towards the steps and helped me use the steps to deal with the guilt and shame of my past. I still have that sponsor and she often reminds me that I need to let go of things I've dealt with. Something that has been dealt with doesn't have to be dredged up. God has forgiven you and it's time for you to forgive yourself. That's been a powerful part of my recovery.

In the last ten months I've experienced loss and grief. My brother passed away ten months ago from lung disease. My husband died four months ago. The point is that through all of this, it was the steps and the tribe of people in AA that kept me sane, balanced, and sober. It was AA, and a new homegroup, Sobriety First that saved my butt. I could sneak off at 7 am to a meeting, get my dose of AA and my connection to other people, and then go back to being the caregiver I needed to be. Without that spiritual connection, I wouldn't have stayed sober.

Today, my life is beyond anything in my wildest dream. My license was restored, and my reputation in my field is stellar. I am trusted. Today, I am honest. I'm a worker among workers. I have a relationship with my family members built on the steps and recovery. Today, my life is full and complete. I owe it all to God and AA.

JOE S.

# The Problem was Joe!

Hi, my name is Joe S. and I am an alcoholic. I wasn't that bad of an alcoholic as long as I could justify away the 3 felony DUI's, 6 arrests, work release for 90 days to and from Oakland County Jail, the house arrests, tethers (5 or 6 depending if you count the one I cut off as two) and sadly the list goes on. I clearly did not have a drinking problem. As you can read, I can destroy my life with drinking just fine. What this alcoholic had was a "Joe" problem.

I did not feel like I fit in and to be honest, I didn't. A gay kid in Royal Oak in the 90's had little support compared to today. There were no safe spaces and getting called f#g in high school in front of the teacher with no one stopping the bully was a daily normal event back then. I had no friends and trusted no one. I had to hide from everything and pretend to be normal.

I learned I could drink and say things I wanted to and blame it on the alcohol. That was my answer to everything. What I was not ready for was the responses to what I said because at this point, blackouts were common, and I agreed to a lot of things or, so I was told. Basically, it is hard to say no when you are passed out. I kept lowering my standards and failing to achieve them and that was the only thing consistent in my life.

I did not know how to live on life's terms because I was always looking for that thrill. Drink to celebrate or commiserate the day! That's how basic my thought process was by the end of my drinking. This all changed when I received my last DUI and then 3 weeks later, I found my brother dead. My father could have lost both his sons in a month and still that did not matter to me. No one mattered to me--not even me! If I had not passed out in that motel room, I might have gone through with suicide. Two weeks after my brother's death on August 13, 2014, I got sober.

I realized I was going to die if I kept drinking like my mom and brother. I finally wanted to live. It took what it took (ITWIT) for me to want to live, and I asked God to put the work in front of me so that I can live a sober life. I was looking at a year in jail or up to five in prison for my 5th DUI when I asked Him for the gift of sobriety AND the work-- no matter how hard it was to be placed in front of me.



Even back then I knew the fox hole bargaining was over. I couldn't be disrespectful and call them prayers anymore. I never had to play the God game: Are you out there? Do you care about me? The fact that I did not pick up incurable diseases, that I could survive my worst motel drunk and I was alive was enough for me to start to believe in a Higher Power.

At this point I had to take action to get, stay, and remain in quality sobriety. I had to honestly want to get sober. I had to be open-minded on ways to stay sober (shocker, but service work is amazing for sobriety) and be willing to go to any length to keep what I have. It's easy to not want to count a day, minute or even a second as a win for sobriety, and alcohol likes us to forget how much of a saboteur it is.

Working a program and giving away what I can is what has led me to being happy today. Seeing more countries than states, earning five degrees from an associate's to a master's degree, mean nothing if I am not happy or alive. I had to get involved in my recovery because...An object in motion stays in motion and for that I am responsible.

**37th Annual**

# Tri-County Conference

*Walk Day By Day in the Path of Spiritual Progress*

**September 13-15, 2024**

**Auburn Hills Marriott Pontiac**  
**3600 Centerpointe Parkway**  
**Pontiac, MI 48341**




**Special Hotel Room Rate**  
**Available through 08/30/2024\***  
**\$132 per night + tax**  
**Reserve: <https://shorturl.at/oqIW8>**  
\*LIMITED AVAILABILITY: while supplies last

**Main Speakers:**

- Jimmy A. (NJ)
- Ant (NV)
- Jay A. (ONT)
- Paul McQ. (NJ)
- Ken T. (PA) *Al-Anon*

**Register online: [tricityconference.org](http://tricityconference.org)**

**Save The Date**

We would like to invite you to the

**AREA 33 INVENTORY**

**Sunday, October 6th**  
**12pm - 4pm**

915 E Eleven Mile Rd, Madison Heights, MI 48071

Join us for an important session where we will conduct a comprehensive Area Inventory. This is a crucial opportunity for members of Area 33 to assess how well we adhere to the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts. Together, we'll evaluate our practices and identify areas for improvement to better serve our community.

Your participation is vital in helping us ensure that our Area is functioning effectively and in line with AA principles. Let's work together to strengthen our fellowship and support each other in our common purpose!

This is an in person event, but there will be a survey for members to fill out in the preceding months. This will allow for individuals who can't attend to participate and let their voice be heard.

Stay tuned for more information at our Area 33 Assemblies and website.

For questions, please email:  
[area33chairperson@aa-semi.org](mailto:area33chairperson@aa-semi.org)

[www.aa-semi.org](http://www.aa-semi.org)



**Michigan Statewide  
Corrections Committee  
Workshop**

**When: October 12, 2024**  
**Where: Re/Max Building Brighton, MI**  
**What time: 9:30 am-3 pm.**

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**MARCH ROUNDUP 2025  
Committee Meeting Schedule**

**Sundays, at 10:00 am,  
Madison Heights High School  
Preceding Area 33 Assemblies**

**APRIL 21, 2024**  
**MAY 19, 2024**  
**JUNE 23, 2024**  
**JULY 21, 2024**  
**AUGUST 18, 2024**  
**SEPTEMBER 15, 2024**

(MEETINGS MAY MOVE TO VIRTUAL DUE TO WEATHER  
CONDITONS OR SCHEDULING CONFLICTS)

Join us to learn more about the March Roundup service  
opportunities, or email for more information.

[Area33mruchair@aa-semi.org](mailto:Area33mruchair@aa-semi.org)

## AREA 33 ASSEMBLY

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

New GSR Orientation @ 11:00 &  
Assembly @ 12:00

July 21 Come hear presentations from Films/  
Grapevine/ Literature

## 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 contribute to District 16,  
please mail a check or money order:  
Payable to: District 16 of Area 33 A.A.,  
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248-332-3521

AA of Detroit Wayne County:  
313-831-5550

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](mailto:district16news@gmail.com)



# Design for Living

**Next Session Dates: August 22 - November 21, 2024**  
**14 THURSDAYS from 6:30pm (ET) - 8:00pm (ET) on ZOOM**

Register on July 11 - August 1, 2024

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

