

DECEMBER

OUTSIDE THE

2024

BOTTLE



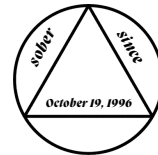
The View At 1,151 Feet- Tom M.'s Story

Can you Teach Old Dogs New Tricks?- Peggy Y.'s Story

District 16 Newsletter

TOM M.

THE VIEW AT 1,151 FEET



Two flutes of bubbling champagne were placed delicately in front of us. My wife's look of surprise was followed by a kind smile that told me she knew I didn't order it. "When I made the reservation, I told them it was our wedding anniversary, and that's it," I said in fawned defense. She would sip one-half of her glass throughout dinner in respect to the kind gesture of restaurant management. She doesn't really care for alcohol. I placed my glass next to her dinner plate. It would remain full.

We were reenacting our honeymoon in Toronto. Forty years ago, we had dinner at 360, the rotating restaurant atop the CN Tower. We had returned on the same date and time, exactly four decades later. She reached over the table to cover my left hand with her right, and looking romantically into my eyes said, "well, Mr. Wonderful, you've done it again." Thanks to a team that has kept me happy, joyous and free the past twenty-seven years, I've found the ability to try to live up to her special term of endearment. However, when she occasionally calls me that, I still wince a little inside. My alcohol-infused periods during our first thirteen years of marriage continues to have some haunting effect. Thankfully, those times have gradually become just a part of the story I relate to anyone who asks what I've experienced, alone with my disease.

The serving of dinner interrupted the free flow of conversation. We ate while my mind returned to early years together. There were happy times, especially with the addition of two sons, but even then, my alcoholism continued its gradual ascent. By year thirteen of our union, she had enough. A good friend, immersed in Alano, gave her the bad news after hearing successive stories of a husband who regularly came home drunk and continued in sneaky ways to drink about the house into nights and through weekends. Said her friend, "it only gets worse; it never gets better." As the restaurant revolved above a city that, like me, had been reinvented, I thought to myself, "thank God I found my way to AA."

I looked down at the Royal York Hotel where we stayed during our honeymoon. Twice, I made an excuse to sneak off to the bar for a few quick drinks. We were now lodged there again, the place looking like new, thanks to a major renovation. I flashed back to my condition just before coming to AA - scared and desperate. A fifth of vodka wasn't working and to proceed in drinking more in a single day was to continue down a path where several men in my family soon arrived at early death. The bluish glow of the new sign on the hotel below made me realize I had undergone my own renovation, thanks to repeat journeys with a sponsor through the twelve steps.

Into the second rotation of the restaurant, I recounted the night of my very first AA meeting during which the simple truth, spoken by five men and two women, lodged in my brain: "We cannot stay sober alone." I took their direction and attended meetings every day for months, eventually settling into a practice of four to five meetings a week that has continued for over twenty-seven years. Today, the twelve steps, wonderful sponsorship, and service opportunities rotate, almost supernaturally in my life, by my staying very close to an AA team, no matter where I go.

After dinner we headed to the elevator for the rapid descent to ground level. As the doors opened, I asked, "do you think we will come back here for our 50th?" She hugged my arm to say, "time will tell." My close association with AA makes our return in ten years a good possibility, but in making the dinner reservation again, I think I will start with, "Hello, my name is __ , and I'm an alcoholic."

PEGGY Y

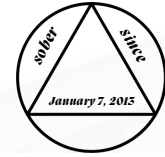
CAN YOU TEACH OLD DOGS NEW TRICKS?

I'm an alcoholic and my name is Peggy. My last drink was on January 7, 2013. My drinking life was a long one spanning the better part of 4 decades. Miraculously, I somehow managed to stay alive to be able to share some of my story.

My sponsor teases me because I claim to have always been a rule follower. I never stole, unless you consider accepting a paycheck for working while drunk or hungover, stealing. I never lied, well mostly only when my lips were moving. I had a perfect driving record and that was the simple case of not getting caught the many times I drove drunk. I did actually get caught once – 38 years ago! Spent the night in jail, hired my bar buddy attorney to go to court for me and couldn't drive on Sundays for 90 days. Cost me \$1500 and all I learned from that was how to sleep at friends' houses and drink at home. Ultimately, drinking home alone was what I did, all... the... time.

Growing up, my family life was loving and reasonably functional. My parents drank but not to excess. I lost my oldest sister to cancer when I was 18 (she was 24) at the time when the drinking age was also 18. I jumped on the band wagon and the "fun" began. Like most alcoholics, I truly thought I drank like everyone else and for a time, that was probably true. Although I didn't drink regularly in the early years, typically if I did, I got drunk. As the decades rolled on, I started having more and more consequences. Since I always worked on commission, potential for greater income and success was never appreciated. I lowered my standards in many respects to be able to keep up with my drinking and bad behavior. I had a couple of grand-mal seizures, one of which was so strong it broke my back, but they never determined that alcohol (or lack thereof) was the cause, so I drank some more.

At the beginning of my last year of drinking, my infamous femur story took place. I fell down drunk on a cruise ship seriously breaking my femur. I was air-lifted off the deck of the ship at night into the belly of a Coast Guard helicopter that flew me to a hospital in Key West. There I spent a week, had botched surgery and recovered for 30 days in a physical rehab so I was able to travel home. I remained non-weight bearing on that leg for 6 months and still have



lifelong residuals. And yet, I drank some more. At the end of that year the pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization of my soul was complete. While sitting and drinking the last weekend of the year, I picked up the phone and made arrangements to go to rehab. I just knew they had a magic wand that would fix me. I certainly didn't expect to be greeted with an AA Big Book.

After a short time at Brighton, I felt like I'd found my people. All ages, backgrounds, races, sexes: didn't matter. We were all there for the same reason. To be delivered from this soul and body crushing disease of addiction. I did exactly as I was told and continued to do so when I rejoined the world. I had never had a direction like it before as an adult. Go to a meeting, talk to a sponsor and other alcoholics, pray (that took a little while), read the literature, act as if....JUST DON'T DRINK NO MATTER WHAT. Slowly I realized that my cravings for alcohol were lessening until eventually they were mostly gone. I had a crop of new friends and tons of people willing to gather me up and talk me off the ledge as I stood out in the hall dissolved in tears after a meeting. We all wanted each other to succeed. I belonged here.

Now almost 12 years later, 2 months shy of my 70th birthday and happily retired, my life is mostly calm and enjoyable. When life does get messy, I have an entire world of alcoholics, the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and my Higher Power to help me work through whatever needs to be worked through without having to pick up a drink. So to answer the age old question, YES, you can teach an old dog new tricks.

**BACK TO BASICS
INTRODUCTION TO
THE 12 STEPS**

An Open Workshop
Take all 12 steps in four weeks!

WHEN

Beginning first Tuesday of every month, four consecutive Tuesdays, 6:30pm-8:00pm
January – May, September - November

WHERE

St. David's Episcopal Church
16200 West 12 Mile Rd, Southfield, MI 48076
Center behind building!

SPONSORED BY THE SOUTHFIELD GROUP

"I didn't want to attend but my sponsor pushed me to...and this is JUST what I needed to improve my program and get me fired up again. I am so glad I came and stayed!"
-Anonymous, 45 years sober

Questions? Contact Kathy P. at (313) 433-3469

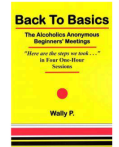
Work the 12 Steps as they were taught in the 1940's when the recovery rate was 50-75%!

RECOMMENDED FOR

- Newcomers and Old-timers
- Sponsors and Sponsees

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Anyone who has completed Back to Basics is invited to practice their 12th Step as a sharing partner – *especially women!*



TAKE THE STEPS...TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

DESIGN FOR LIVING

A 14-WEEK ONLINE STEP TAKING GROUP

Design for Living generates the possibility of divine transformation for peace, joy, love, freedom, and accountability in recovery.

Created in 2012 for the Sobriety First Group of Royal Oak, Michigan, this biannual offering is for anyone who desires a deeper experience of the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Today, Design for Living is offered online for participants who have days to multiple years of sobriety, and join from all over the world.

The only requirement is a desire to stop drinking.



Next Session
 February 20-May 22, 2025
Thursdays
 6:30-8:00PM (ET)

Sign Up Now!
Registration Open
 January 9 - January 30

Scan or visit our website to register



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



March Round Up

March 7-9
10-11:30 am
Register at:

<https://aa-semi.org/mru2025/>



March Round Up Planning Committee Meetings

December 8
10-11:30 am

Michigan High School Tech Room

For more information:
Area33MRUchair@aa-semi.org

AREA 33 ASSEMBLY
December 8

Madison High School, 915 E. Eleven Mile Rd.,
 Madison Heights
 New GSR Orientation @ 11:00 &
 Budget Discussion and Vote @ 12:00
 Come join us!



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.,
 PO Box: 725362, Berkley, MI 48072

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AA of Oakland County:
 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



"The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us."

Alcoholics Anonymous, page 17

