

JANUARY

OUTSIDE THE

2026

BOTTLE



**As we welcome 2026,
let's also welcome the newcomer!**

My First Addiction - Mary B.'s Story

Those People - Dan Z.'s Story

District 16 Newsletter

MARY B.

MY FIRST ADDICTION



My first addiction was food. My family constantly criticized me for my weight. I was about 10 years old the first time Mom called me fat. My self esteem was destroyed, so I ate even more to comfort myself.

I started binge drinking in High School. The legal age was 18 at the time, but I managed to get a fake ID at 16. On a typical weekend, my friends and I would get a couple of bottles of Boone's Farm apple wine and cruise Woodward. The "joke" was "one bottle for Mary and one for the rest to share", so from the beginning, I drank differently from my friends.

During my college years, I worked in a fast food restaurant and most nights after we closed, we would head to the bar. We drank pitcher after pitcher of beer. I would wake up in the morning feeling terrible, study for a bit, go to classes, go to work and then back to the bar. It was an exhausting way to live.

In my 20s, I started teaching, lost weight and got married to a wonderful man who just happened to be a beer salesman. He didn't like to drink much, so I slowed down. When my daughter was born, I became more responsible and slowed down even more.

Then disaster struck. My husband collapsed at work and was later diagnosed with brain cancer. I was shattered. Our daughter was only 4. I was so busy teaching, taking care of my husband and daughter and never thought about drinking. I started eating to numb the pain. It was my only coping skill. My husband died 364 days after his first symptom appeared. I was 34 years old.

Being a single mom, I really concentrated on my daughter and my career. I had to provide for her, get her to her many activities and take care of everything at home. I was exhausted. I felt I couldn't drink because I had to be so responsible all the time. Instead, I began binge eating and became morbidly obese.

After trying every diet in existence, I opted to have weight loss surgery in 2000. I lost 180 pounds, my daughter graduated and I felt it was my turn to have fun. Food had been my only way to cope with my feelings, but after surgery, I couldn't eat much. I began drinking again.

I started to party and pretty soon, I was drinking alcoholically. Once I had a drink, I couldn't stop. I hated myself. After a couple of really bad experiences, I knew I needed help and my daughter drove me to my first AA meeting. I went to meetings for about a year, but I never got a sponsor or worked the steps. I was a dry drunk for 4 years. I remarried and it was the biggest mistake of my life. My husband was emotionally and financially abusive. He introduced me to pain pills and pretty soon, I was drinking and taking opiates.

I was at the lowest point in my life. I wanted to end it and tried to die. I had lost everything. My family convinced me to leave him and I went to live with my mother and brother. After a few half-hearted tries, I came back to AA at the age of 61, and this time, I got a wonderful sponsor who helped me work the steps. I went to meetings every day. My sponsor encouraged me to do service work and pushed me to participate in fellowship activities. I found a Higher Power and stay in conscious contact to guide me in every way.

Being an active member of AA has changed my life. At 70, I am happier than I had ever been. The last 9 years have been the best of my life. I owe everything to AA!

DAN Z.

THOSE PEOPLE

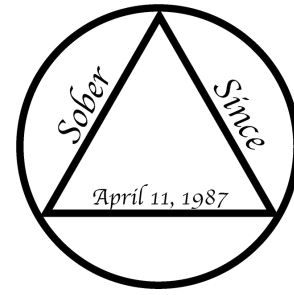
"I'm not like those people. Isn't that what I was brought up to think. I grew up in a nice, upper class suburb. I went to an a private Catholic grade school. I went to high school in a rural all white district. I went to college at an upper middle class university. And now...What was I doing around these those people?"

"These People"

At 24, after almost a decade of relentless drinking, I was at my first AA meeting at the Wayne State Student Center. My mind and body were shot. I was desperate. How were these people supposed to help? You know, these people from skid row. Aren't all alcoholics from skid row?

"These People" welcomed me into the room. I wasn't like them. All of them were at least 10 years older than me. But, they shared their stories for the next 2 hours and I quickly identified with them. These people held out hope. I tried to tell them how crazy I was. I asked them to tell me what the rules were. They shook their heads acknowledging my questions. They knew I wasn't able to grasp much in my state. All they would tell me was that I was going to be okay. And come to the same room tomorrow at 1:00pm and there would be another meeting.

For the first time in years I didn't question everything. I went to the same room at 1:00pm the next day. There was another meeting. It was a "Young People's" meeting and I was the same as these people. Except they knew way more about recovery than I did. Someone leaked some information to me about a "2nd Step" about sanity. These people knew just what I was looking for. And they suggested I go to a meeting every day.



The next meeting was off campus and I was the only white person there. These people were alcoholics like me. The next meeting was in a church basement and a group of people came in from a treatment center. They were drunks and dope fiends like me. At the next meeting, a lady from the first meeting suggested that I tell my department's vice chair that I was an alcoholic. She said the vice chair had been sober for 5 years and I should ask him to be my sponsor. But, he was one of those people with a different sexual orientation from me. But, I did what she asked. Turns out, he was an alcoholic just like me.

"My People"

And it turned out that the first group of people were actually a bunch of artists like me. They were my first home group. They nurtured me back to spiritual and mental health. Our meetings before the meetings, dinner after the meetings and group events taught me how to socialize without alcohol. Young People's AA taught me how to have fun. A lot of crazy, sober fun.

The professor, who became my sponsor, was exactly the person I needed in my life. Someone who loved me "unconditionally".

And I got better. I got better fast. And 9 months later a fellow student, a young Mexican woman who was nothing like me, who drank at the same bars as I did, called me and asked me if we could talk. Of course, I knew she wanted to talk to me about a mutual acquaintance of ours. But, it turns out she wanted to talk about herself. She told me she had noticed that I was a crazy drunk. Then, suddenly I was this different person. And what did I do to become this good guy. So, I told her my story and she identified. She agreed to go with me to the same first meeting that I had gone to and I introduced her to "My People". And she got sober, exactly like us.

DESIGN FOR LIVING

A 14-WEEK ONLINE STEP TAKING GROUP

Design for Living was created for the Sobriety First of Royal Oak Michigan's AA group as a biannual offering for anyone who desires a deeper experience of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. Today, Design for Living is offered online for participants around the world.

The only requirement is a desire to stop drinking.

STARTS
FEBRUARY 19, 2026

Next Session

February 19-May 21, 2026

Thursdays
6:30-8:00PM (ET)

Registration Open
January 8 - 29, 2026



Contact: Mary Beth K.
(248) 336-0795



Find more information:
<https://designforlivingroyaloak.webnode.page>

EDITOR: MAUREEN H.

AA OF GREATER DETROIT:

248-541-6565

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

BOB P--DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

CHRISTINA N-- ALTERNATIVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

PETER S-- TREASURER

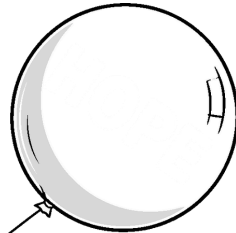
TANA M --SECRETARY

DISTRICT 16 IS LOOKING FOR AN EVENTS CHAIRPERSON

Fun Position, 2 events per year!
2 year commitment.

Contact:

district16news@gmail.com



DISTRICT 16 MEETS AT 7:00PM 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

W.A.R.M Presents
BACK TO BASICS



TAKE ALL 12 STEPS
IN 4 WEEKS!

FRIDAYS IN JANUARY,
STARTING FRIDAY,
JANUARY 2ND @ 6:30 PM

315 E NINE MILE RD, HAZEL PARK IN THE
CHURCH BASEMENT

THIS IS A CLOSED AA MEETING

Area 33 Assembly Meeting

Assembly Schedule

11am - Various Committee Meetings
11am - Service Manual Study
11:45am - New GSR Orientation
12:30am - LUNCH PROVIDED
1pm - Assembly Start Time

January 18, 2026

915 E Eleven Mile Rd, Madison Heights, MI 48071