

AUGUST

OUTSIDE THE

2026

BOTTLE



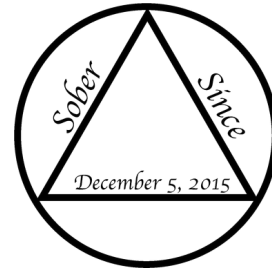
Full of Excuses - Christy P.'s story

August: 8th Month, 8th Tradition

District 16 Newsletter

CHRISTY P.

FULL OF EXCUSES



I went to my first AA meeting five years before I got sober. I honestly don't know how I knew about AA; I'd never known anybody who'd gone. But somehow, when I got fired from a job I loved because I was drinking during my shifts, I was ashamed enough to go to a meeting. And that's when I found out that you people don't drink at ALL. That sounded like an absolutely terrible idea, so I didn't go back. I kept drinking for five more years until I finally came back through the doors and stayed.

I wish I could say that everything got better from that moment. But that's not my story. I came to AA because I knew something was wrong. But I did NOT know that I was an alcoholic. And I am stubborn. So I spent eight months introducing myself as "My name is Christy." Usually, I would burst into tears after that, but I would NOT finish the sentence.

I couldn't admit I was an alcoholic. I told myself that most nights I could stop at three drinks and conveniently left out what happened on the nights I couldn't. I told myself that my life wasn't unmanageable: I got degrees while drinking, got my dream job, bought a car, and even got married! How could that be unmanageable? But I left out that I was drinking every day, was hungover and puking in toilets at work, my marriage was in shambles, and I was on the verge of suicide.

I heard someone say at a meeting once, "normal drinkers don't have to try to control their drinking." That blew my mind! I thought everyone had to force themselves to stop...or at least try to. Normal drinkers don't think about when they can drink next; I thought about drinking all the time. Alcohol completely controlled my mind.

Once I admitted I was an alcoholic, I completed step one (only took me eight months!). Then I stopped step-work for three years because of the pesky word "god" in steps two and three. I had a traumatic religious upbringing and was convinced that "god as I understood him" was a TRAP to make me believe in the god of my childhood, who terrified me. So I stayed sober but didn't work the steps. I stayed angry and resentful and just MISERABLE. Around four years into my sobriety, somebody told me firmly at a meeting "you HAVE to work the steps! Skip a meeting so you can go to your sponsor's house if you need to. The steps are more important than a meeting." I'd never heard that, and I'm so glad she said it! I've never seen her again, but she changed my life.

It's taken me a long time to find a G-O-D that works for me. At first, it was the Group-Of-Drunks – the people at the meetings whose wisdom and love helped keep me sober. I tried the Great-Out-Doors...that worked for a while. Today, I don't know what my higher power is. I just know that it's got my back and it wants good things for me. That's enough for me.

When they read How it Works at the beginning of the meeting, it's not a coincidence that it includes the steps. That IS how the program works. Working the steps brought me the freedom of recovery. I'm grateful for my story today, so I can tell sponsees "you're welcome to do it my way, but I don't recommend it." If you want to stay reallllly miserable, don't drink and don't work the steps. If you want the freedom and peace of mind that the program promises, stop making excuses like I did, and dive in! You won't regret it!

AUGUST - 8TH MONTH, 8TH TRADITION

“Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.”

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS will never have a professional class. We have gained some understanding of the ancient words “Freely ye have received, freely give.” We have discovered that at the point of professionalism, money and spirituality do not mix. Almost no recovery from alcoholism has ever been brought about by the world’s best professionals, whether medical or religious. We do not denounce professionalism in other fields, but we accept the sober fact that it does not work for us. Every time we have tried to professionalize our Twelfth Step, the result has been exactly the same: Our single purpose has been defeated.

Alcoholics simply will not listen to a paid twelfth-stepper. Almost from the beginning, we have been positive that face-to-face work with the alcoholic who suffers could be based only on the desire to help and be helped. When an A.A. talks for money, whether at a meeting or to a single newcomer, it can have a very bad effect on him, too. The money motive compromises him and everything he says and does for his prospect. This has always been so obvious that only a very few A.A.’s have ever worked the Twelfth Step for a fee.

Despite this certainty, it is nevertheless true that few subjects have been the cause of more contention within our Fellowship than professionalism. Caretakers who swept floors, cooks who fried hamburgers, secretaries in offices, authors writing books—all these we have seen hotly assailed because they were, as their critics angrily remarked, “making money out of A.A.”

Ignoring the fact that these labors were not Twelfth Step jobs at all, the critics attacked as A.A. professionals these workers of ours who were often doing thankless tasks that no one else could or would do. Even greater furors were provoked when A.A. members began to run rest homes and farms for alcoholics, when some hired out to corporations as personnel men in charge of the alcoholic problem in industry, when some became nurses on alcoholic wards, when others entered the field of alcohol education. In all these instances, and more, it was claimed that A.A. knowledge and experience were being sold for money, hence these people, too, were professionals. At last, however, a plain line of cleavage could be seen between professionalism and nonprofessionalism. When we had agreed that the Twelfth Step couldn’t be sold for money, we had been wise. But when we had declared that our Fellowship couldn’t hire service workers nor could any A.A. member carry our knowledge into other fields, we were taking the counsel of fear, fear which today has been largely dispelled in the light of experience.

Take the case of the club janitor and cook. If a club is going to function, it has to be habitable and hospitable. We tried volunteers, who were quickly disenchanted with sweeping floors and brewing coffee seven days a week. They just didn’t show up. Even more important, an empty club couldn’t answer its telephone, but it was an open invitation to a drunk on a binge who possessed a spare key. So somebody had to look after the place full time. If we hired an alcoholic, he’d receive only what we’d have to pay a nonalcoholic for the same job. The job was not to do Twelfth Step work; it was to make Twelfth Step work possible. It was a service proposition, pure and simple.

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.



Autumn Session 2026

August 20–November 19, 2026

**Thursdays
6:30–8:00PM (ET)**

**Limited Registration
Open July 9 – July 30**

Scan or visit
our website
to register



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



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

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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

DAVE S.-- ALTERNATIVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

PETER S-- TREASURER

TANA M --SECRETARY

NEW - BECOME A GRATEFUL GIVER!

Your contributions help us continue doing the important work we do:

- Meeting listings, updates and website maintenance.
 - FREE Big Books to newcomers!
- Answer the phone! We are the live resource for anyone looking for AA information, including their first meeting.
- Provide services and support to all AA groups in SE Michigan.

Please check out our new page:

<https://www.aaferndale.org/grateful-givers> 🍷



2026 TRI-COUNTY CONFERENCE – REGISTRATION!

Registration is OPEN and it's only \$25!

More information, including discounted hotel rooms and how to get involved, can be found at <https://tricityconference.org>

A.A. SYMPATHY

Kenny W., Royal Oak & Berkley area meetings

Steve N., Mt. Clemens area meetings

They passed away last month and will be sadly missed.

MONTHLY INTERGROUP MEETING

The next group representatives meeting is Monday, July 13, at 7:00 pm, and will be held at United Methodist Church of Madison Heights, 246 E Eleven Mile Rd. All groups are encouraged to have a member attend.

16 AUGUST
11:00 AM – 03:00 PM
© Madison High School (Madison Heights)



Area Assembly

915 E Eleven Mile Rd, Madison Heights, MI 48071

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