

OCTOBER

OUTSIDE THE

2026

BOTTLE



Hope Became Real - Tracy N.'s story

Addiction is Doing Push-Ups in the Parking Lot - Elizabeth V.'s story

District 16 Newsletter

TRACY N.

HOPE BECAME REAL



I was an average boy in an average, suburban home with two older sisters. The first time I experienced alcohol was when cleaning up after my parents weekly card game I wanted to be like the adults who seemed so happy. I sampled the leftover beers and cocktails. I got so sick and couldn't understand why people would drink this stuff.

Years later, now in high school, some of my friends and I would drink whatever we could get our hands on even if meant stealing from a store. Some of us smoked weed, while the older kids used harder drugs. Fortunately, I would later say, "Thank God I'm allergic to needles". Having had a tonsillectomy that didn't heal properly I had to have a series of iron shots to replace the blood I lost. They were Very painful.

Trade school, a good career start, a house and a child on the way. At some point it seemed to me, that my success entitled me to drink when and as I chose for I had become a professional alcoholic. Another goal achieved.

As a result saying it was like a badge of honor. I'm not just a regular alcoholic "I'm a professional" stated only partly as a joke.

For me, everything seemed fine, other people, ones closest and most dear were just beginning to worry. Injuries started to occur slowly, some at work, some not. It never occurred to me that partying had anything to do with it. Just bad luck. These things happen to everybody from time to time.

Eventually the injuries weren't so easy to recover from and the health problems started. Weight gain, diabetes, and an ever increasing list of conditions and still it never entered my mind that alcohol played a role in most all of my problems. My wife and both of my sisters and son tried to tell me I was drinking too much and too often. Then the accident happened. The van had gone off the road, a tree stopped me from hitting a building - a funeral home. I was arrested for my first DUI.

After the trial, jail and spending a lot of money we started picking up the pieces. We were all glad I was home. Surely now I'll have learned my lesson, thought everyone but me, just bad luck said I.

A little more than eight years passed for the second DUI. One day a non-alcoholic beer was a good idea, that it couldn't hurt anything but it just didn't taste quite right and was expensive. Within a month, very quickly it was as if I never stopped at all.

I don't know why but I asked the lady officer to pray for me and said I needed help and didn't know how to get it. I've always done everything myself.

Not long after that I found my first AA meeting. A few days later I opened the van door and got out and stayed. There was a large group in a courtyard. Some of them I actually knew. I didn't know it but it wasn't just my first day at an AA meeting. It was the first day of a new life, a new way of thinking. I was about to trade Hopelessness - not enough Hope - for being HopeFull. A member told me "Hope can be found Here". "We have enough to share take some with you". It was later I found Hope and it was plentiful. When I traded in the thoughts of Me for the thoughts of We, Hope became real.

ELIZABETH V.

OUR ADDICTION IS DOING PUSHUPS IN THE PARKING LOT



Growing up in a family of alcoholics, I vowed I would be different, that I would not succumb to the disease I saw destroying family members and causing all kinds of chaos and resentments, physical and mental unwellness.

With this in mind, I did not drink from age 20-33. For thirteen years I told everyone I was a teetotaler! I would not even sip champagne at a wedding.

But alcoholism is exceedingly patient. It is, as they say, doing pushups in the parking lot!

And so, at age 33, I got divorced for the first time and moved into an apartment with my six year old daughter. I have a hard time understanding why I decided soon after that I should celebrate my divorce by having a nightly beer (which led eventually to wine and many years down the road to harder liquor). By the time I turned forty, I was well on my way to becoming dependent on alcohol and my personality was changing from one marked by selflessness and patience to one that was increasingly resentful, cynical and self-pitying. I had married again, but over time, especially after my daughter left home for college, I pushed my husband away to drink alone. I was, for the most part, a closet drinker, one who would have half a drink when out with friends and family, then drink a bottle alone later in my basement. This disease, for me, was one primarily of isolationism and profound loneliness which led, of course, eventually to another divorce, increasing anxiety and depression.

I married a third time, but this time I married someone I viewed as more unwell and a bigger addict than I was and concentrated all my time and energy on getting him well, into multiple rehabs, while my own addiction (and depression) festered and deepened to the point I sometimes no longer wanted to live.

Finally, on the morning of September 4th, 2024, suffering another physical hangover, but suffering much more from a grave emotional unwellness and spiritual sickness, I decided that instead of attending an AI Anon meeting that evening, as I had planned, I needed to go to AA. I needed to say I AM AN ALCOHOLIC and to get help for my disease before it killed me. I needed to let go of trying to fix my now third ex-husband, and instead, focus on letting go and letting God.

I have now been sober two years and I can honestly say AA has saved my life, but also vastly changed my life. A year into my sobriety I met my current sponsor and working with her and my Higher Power and this fellowship, I am becoming a much happier, more serene, kinder person. I no longer live in chaos or isolation or self-pity. I have a very quiet, peaceful life, but also a life filled with new friends, and with a desire to share AA and our message with others still suffering, so that they have the same opportunity to save themselves that was provided me by this wonderful, caring, loving program.

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

DAVE S.-- ALTERNATIVE DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER

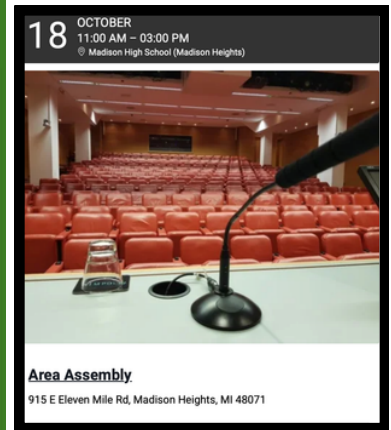
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THE FOLLOWING GROUPS ARE NOT PICKING UP THEIR COPIES OF OUTSIDE THE BOTTLE: IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO PICK UP THESE NEWSLETTERS FOR YOUR GROUP, PLEASE CONTACT: DISTRICT16NEWS@GMAIL.COM

Berkley Saturday Afternoon	2820 12 Mile Road	1:00pm Saturday
Love & Service	4000 Normandy Road	9:00am Saturday
Principles Before Personalities		
Market Meeting	316 East 11 Mile Road	6:00pm Tuesday
Acceptance	38651 Woodward Ave	Multiple
Keep It Simple Southfield	17029 West 13 Mile Road	7:00am and 8:30 am Saturday
Troy's Mens Big Book Study	4230 Livernois Road	6:30pm Tuesday
New Unity	1314 Northwood Blvd	5:45pm Monday and Friday
Chance For Recovery	529 Grove Ave	4:00pm Thursday and 6:00pm Monday
Serenity Women's - B'ham	1669 Maple Road	10:00am Thursday
Sunday Women's Step Meeting	529 Grove Ave	12:00pm Sunday
Sunday Morning Literature Study	2903 South Wayne Road	10:00am Sunday
Saturday Big Book Study	529 Grove Ave	8:00pm Saturday



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