

Our Greatest Drug Problem - - Alcohol

Washington, D.C. — (RNS) — A new government report has labeled alcoholism as the nation's greatest drug problem, afflicting some 9.6 million Americans and draining the economy of \$15 billion a year.

Dr. Morris Crafetz, director of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism which prepared the report, said, "Alcoholism is America's largest untreated (but) treatable disease."

He said the alcohol-abuse problem dwarfs that of heroin or any other drug, but "American society and most of the health professions consciously push alcohol problems under the rug. Alcoholism is mistakenly looked upon as a character deficiency instead of as a treatable illness."

The public has been preoccupied with the Skid Row

alcoholics, who make up no more than 3 to 5 per cent of the total problem, Dr. Crafetz said.

"I do not for a moment want to suggest that these people be forgotten," he said, "but I do want to suggest that we start focusing our diagnostic and treatment programs on the larger part of the alcoholic population — that part that comes closest to home, the part that touches every socio-economic and cultural level in the United States."

An analysis of drinkers based on religious groups stated that Jews and Episcopalians had higher proportions of drinkers than any other group, but they had relatively low proportions of heavy drinkers.

Based on country of origin, the Irish were on top of the list both in terms of percent-

age of drinkers and heavy drinkers. Latin Americans and those from the Caribbean were second to the Irish in terms of heavy drinkers but were the lowest in percentage of drinkers.

The report said alcohol was the cause — directly and indirectly — of almost half of all arrests in the U.S. and of 28,000 deaths annually on the highway.

Alcohol abusers were said to shorten their life span by about 10 to 12 years. Their time lost from work cost industry about \$10 billion annually, and their health, welfare and property damage costs total \$5 billion more.

In conjunction with the release of the 121-page report, the national alcohol institute announced a \$200,000 alcohol education advertising cam-

aign. Its theme will be "to encourage more responsible controlled drinking patterns in healthier social contexts."

The report indicated that of the 95 million drinkers in the U.S. about 5 per cent have serious drinking problems.

About 12 per cent of American adults are listed as heavy drinkers, 41 per cent as light drinkers. And 32 per cent do not drink at all.

Latin Mass Rescheduled

A Latin High Mass sponsored by the Eastman School's Newman Club has been rescheduled for 4 p.m. Sunday, March 5, at the Cenacle chapel, East Avenue at Oxford.

Father Paul McCabe will be assisted by deacons from St. Bernard's, and the Eastman School's Gregorian Chant Choir will sing, under the direction of Dr. Erich Schwandt.

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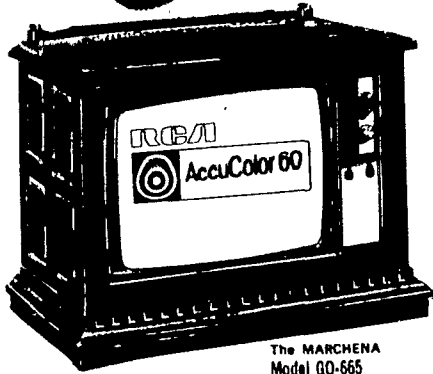
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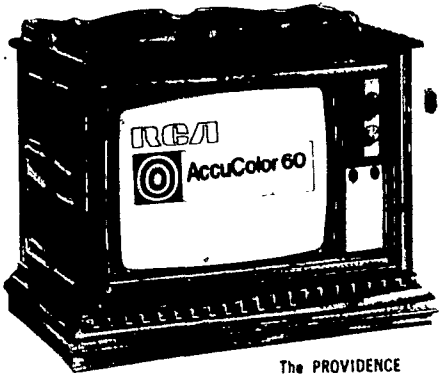
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