Gamblers Anonymous A Mutual Aid Group

By MARTIN TOOMBS

"At first it wasn't stealing, it was borrowing." But when he was unable to make up the deficit, he was arrested for embezzlement and lost his job. Why had he taken the money? To support his habit, gambling.

From the top of his profession to a street sweeper, because of a compulsive urge to gamble. Not gambling anymore, he is telling his story to the local Gamblers Anonymous (GA) chapter, which made it possible for him to stop. Each member tells his story, reminding himself and the others what it was like when they gambled. Other members have had similar problems:

"My wife threatened to throw my clothes into the street. I didn't believe her." And so he continued gambling; the next day "I was picking them up as she was throwing them out the window."

"I wanted to send my daughter to college, so I went to the track and bet the progressive system, doubling my bet at each loss as the chances for a winner got better. But I didn't win."

"I spent two or three minutes explaining to my son why I had been arrested."

"People I had once been happy to see, now I hid if I saw them coming."

"He had 17 personal loans. By continually borrowing more money to make payments, he had managed to keep a good credit rating."

The world of the compulsive gambler is not a pretty one. Their compulsion to make the big score drove them further and further into debt. Gambling soon became an obsession, as they hoped for a big win to pay the debts.

The GA members could have been meeting for some other purpose; they looked like men you might see anywhere. Their wives were meeting at the same time upstairs. "Why they put up with us, I'll never know," one member commented.

Compulsive gambling, while a serious financial problem, has much deeper roots. The GA booklet describes the dream world of the compulsive gambler as a "common characteristic of the compulsive gambler. He spends a lot of time creating images of the great and wonderful things he is going to do just as soon as he makes the big score."

New members are given special attention, so that they and their spouse both become aware of the scope of the problem and their financial responsibilities. This session, called a pressure group, is designed to confront the gambler with the seriousness of his problem and offer a sound plan for a future without gambling. GA is against bankruptcy; they feel it is necessary for a person to pay his bills. Quick relief would make it easier for him to go back to gambling.

GA functions much the same as Alcoholics Anonymous. Seeing others battling the same problem, hearing what they do to help themselves, helps to give the strength they need to overcome the compulsion, a need that never ends.

Gamblers who have sought psychiatric care have generally been disappointed. While psychiatrists may be able to tell them why they gamble, they are unable to help them stop.

It is estimated that there are 30,000 compulsive gamblers in the Rochester area. GA is seeking them, offering the help that will make it possible for them to stop gambling.

The local chapter sponsors two meetings each week. On Mondays, they meet at 8:15 p.m. in the Van Neil room at Northside Hospital. On Fridays, the meeting is at Our Mother of Sorrows, 5000 Mt. Read Blvd., at 8:30 p.m. More information is available at 544-8580.

St. Mary's Hospital Wins Accreditation

St. Mary's Hospital has been awarded accreditation by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH), according to Sister DeChantal, administrator.

The accreditation, granted for the normal two-year period, is based on a detailed on-site survey. It certifies that St. Mary's meets or exceeds quality standards set by JCAH for the operation of an acute care general hospital. St. Mary's is one of 5,300 general hospitals in the United States that have earned this distinction. There are approximately 7400 hospitals in the U.S. The voluntary surveys measure performance against standards higher than governmental licensing standards.

St. Mary's, Rochester's first hospital, admitted its first patient in 1857.

HOLLYS ELECTED

Terry and Sheila Holly of St. John of Rochester Parish in Perinton have been elected Unit Coordinators of Worldwide Marriage Encounter's Unit 3.

They are responsible for fostering the growth and development of the Marriage Encounter Movement in an area comprising Western Massachusetts, the dioceses of Albany, Ogdensburg, Syracuse, Rochester and Buffalo as well as Toronto and Sudbury, Ont., Canada.

Charismatic Gatherings

The following Prayer Groups are predominately Roman Catholic in attendance. This directory has been compiled and will be maintained by the Communication Committee of Catholic Charismatics in Rochester. Additions or deletions should be mailed to Mrs. Donald Mikel, 3000 St. Paul Blvd., Rochester, New York, 14617.

SUNDAY

St. John the Evangelist (Spencerport)
60 Martha St.
Spencerport
Frank Ferris 352-4218, 8 p.m.

St. Mary's Church
95 North Main St.
Canandaigua
Sr. Marie Albert, 394-2325

St. Mary's
Marian Center
Fulton & Franklin Sts.
Elmira
Salvatore Furiani, (607) 732-1248

MONDAY

St. Rose's Church (women)
1985 Lake Ave.
Lima
Jean LaBore, 582-1319
following 9 a.m. Mass

St. Stephen's Charismatic Community
DeSale's High School
Cor. Pulteney & High Sts.
Geneva
Mrs. Sam Venuti, 789-8557, 8:15 p.m.

"One In Love"
109 Laurel Lane
Horseheads
Bob and Donna Lamm
(607) 739-0234, 7:30 p.m.

TUESDAY

St. Augustine Rectory
410 Chili Ave.
Rochester
John & Betty Bunce, 235-0235, 8:30 p.m.

St. Michael's Prayer Group
3681 Lake Ave.
Rochester
William & Mary Buechel, 663-7645, 8 p.m.

St. Mary's Charismatic Prayer Group
32 East Morris St.
Bath
Mary Biblin, (697) 776-6726, 7:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Maranatha Prayer Group
7369 E. Main St.
Lima
Bill & Bobbie Buechel, 624-4529, 8 p.m.

Chadash Prayer Community
830 Clarkson-Hamlin Townline Rd.
Hamlin
Helen & Warren Lynch, 964-2498, 7:30 p.m.

Holy Cross School
4488 Lake Ave.
Rochester
Frank Irchgessner, 865-2650, 8 p.m.

St. Michael's Prayer Group (women)
3681 Lake Ave.
Rochester
Mary Buechel, 663-7645, 10:30 a.m.

Bethlehem Prayer Community
479 Covewood Blvd.
Webster
Dick & Mary Mahany, 671-1845, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel
132 Illinois St.
Rochester
Judy Costello, 654-9597, 9:30 a.m.

Donald & Mary Lou Mikel
3000 St. Paul St.
Rochester
266-3749, 8 p.m.

St. Pius X Prayer Community
3000 Chili Ave.
Rochester
Bob Dunning, 247-3740, 8 p.m.

THURSDAY

St. Anne's Prayer Group
1600 Mt. Hope Ave.
Rochester
Margaret Whitney, 461-1656, 8 p.m.

Precious Blood Prayer Group
Our Lady of Mercy Parish School
600 Denise Rd.
Greece
Larry and Helen Kavanaugh,
663-9327, 8 p.m.

Santo Espiritu
St. Francis (old school)
314 Bay St.
Rochester
Jose Malave, 342-7759, 7 p.m.
Isreal Santana, 482-1252, 7 p.m.

Upper Room Prayer Group
St. John's School
W. DeZerg St.
Clyde
Joseph DiSanto, 923-7865, 7:15 p.m.

St. Charles Prayer Group
St. Charles Borromeo Church Nursery
3003 Dewey Ave.
Rochester
John Taffner, 663-4851, 8 p.m.

Women at the Well (women)
151 Dalia Lane
Rochester
Mary Termine, 544-5211, 12:45 p.m.

St. Paul's Prayer Group
St. Paul's Church
783 Hard Road
Webster, N.Y.
John Paille, 671-6090, 8 p.m.

FRIDAY

Armand & Kathy Tanquay
311 Tobey Rd.
Pittsford
381-1949, 8 p.m.

Sacred Heart of Jesus Prayer Group
St. Lawrence School
1000 N. Greece Rd.
Greece
Klaus Schulz, 392-9646, 8 p.m.

SATURDAY

Mr. & Mrs. Fred Burgess
W. Union St. Extension
Newark
331-3841, 9 p.m.

St. Monica's Church
34 Monica St.
Rochester
John & Rita Donnelly, 328-1332, 4 to 5 p.m.

John & Rita Donnelly
9 Ellicott St.
Rochester
328-1332, 8 p.m.

AS I SEE IT

Pat Costa

Will the bionic man marry the bionic woman? Will Sonny and Cher reunite more than their careers? Will Laverne of "Laverne and Shirley" snag Fonzie of "Happy Days"? Can "The Dumplings" (James Coco and Geraldine Brooks) expect diet-mania America to accept their "happy is being fat" philosophy?

These are but a few of the questions that are being posed by television's second season, hopefully to be resolved before the reruns set in.

Sound dismal? You're right, perhaps even more than if the shows were debuting in September since we tend to be more housebound at this time of the year.

Some other new entries, not yet seen by this viewer, offer even less encouragement. There's impressionist Rich Little with a weekly hour on NBC Mondays at 8 p.m. and Wayne Rogers who left "Mash" has his own new adventure series set in the thirties. "City of Angels" converts him from his Trapper John character to a Sam Spade-Philip Marlowe type private eye. Just what we needed, a full hour of impressions and another gumshoe.

The first episode of "Laverne and Shirley," about two working girls in Milwaukee in the fifties and featuring Penny Marshall and Cindy Williams, depended in part for its humor on the former's ability to snort not unlike a horse in lieu of a laugh. The plot featuring a part for Henry Winkler (Fonzie) had the trio attending a party given by the owners of the brewery which employs the girls. A little social commentary dealing with the relationship of the lower middle class versus the very rich intertwined with some credible bits of comic business lifted this one, now and then, above the fodder level.

"The Dumplings," which stars the aforementioned chubbies Coco and Brooks, has a certain charm mostly because of the talents of the two stars.

As owner-operators of a small eatery in a large office building, the pair cater to employes ranging from cheap skate executives to cloddish characters who may end up Indian wrestling to see who pays the check.

In the first show the pair refuse to take a night catering special job because it interfered with an anniversary of their first meeting.

Celebrating at home the twosome were believable and most engaging. Not until the writers began parading in the neurotic visitors (cast regulars) did the show get tiresome.

RALPH AVERY SHOW

A special exhibition honoring the late Ralph Avery will be on view at the Memorial Art Gallery through Feb. 22. It opened Jan. 31, a week after the Rochester artist's death. The show is made up of about 20 of Avery's watercolors, mostly scenes of Rochester.

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