

When Teens Drink... The Hidden Dangers

KNOW

WEIGHT	# DRINKS	BLOOD ALCOHOL LEVEL
100	3	.113
140	4	.107
180	5	.104
200	6	.113
220	7	.115

YOUR LIMIT

Last of a Three-Part Series

By Joan M. Smith

Like icebergs whose potential dangers lie submerged, the hazards of alcohol are hidden beneath the surface of use, acceptability, and availability. The dangers, however, are real and not necessarily confined to alcoholism.

"Alcoholism," said Dr. Sheila Blume, director of the New York State Division of Alcoholism and Alcohol Abuse, "is a

disease with its own characteristics," and according to a division fact sheet, problem drinking among adolescents is more associated with episodic, heavy drinking than with alcoholism. Although teenage problem drinkers don't suffer the physical disabilities such as liver damage associated with alcoholism, they are prone to have automobile accidents, fights, memory blackouts, and alcohol problems. Add to these the social problems related to alcohol abuse, like running away from home, teenage pregnancies and juvenile delinquency along with death caused by suicide, driving while intoxicated, and drinking too much, too fast, alcohol's impact on life can be disastrous especially for an ill-informed young drinker.

What happens to an adolescent when he or she drinks? A lot, and it happens fast! The drinker quickly feels the effects of alcohol, a drug which can become habit forming, because it is not digested like other foods and liquids. It is absorbed directly into the blood stream from the stomach and small intestine and then carried quickly to the brain and other parts of the body and circulates until it is burned up by the liver. Since it first starts working on the part of the brain that controls inhibitions, it can make the drinker become more talkative or rowdy, but alcohol is not an "upper." It is a "downer" which depresses the central nervous system. If the drinker continues drinking while the first drinks are still at work, the body functions slow down and the drinker becomes drunk.

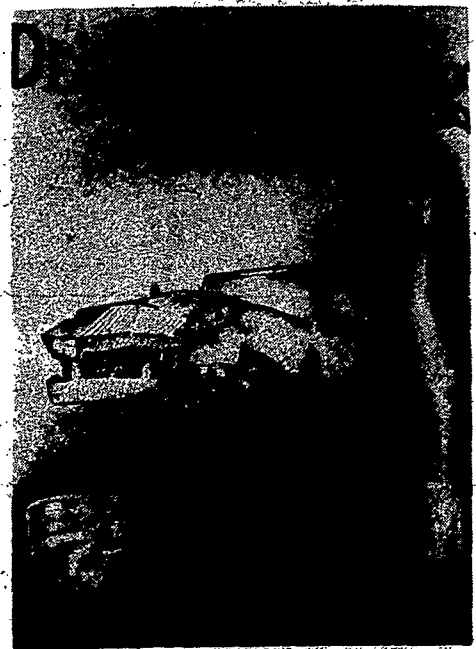
Getting "drunk" or "high" seems to be a

major reason for most teenage drinking, and beer is the preferred alcoholic beverage. Beer, though — contrary to belief — is as potent as hard liquor. According to a NYS report, there is the same amount of alcohol in a 12-ounce can of beer as in a five-ounce glass of wine or a mixed drink containing one and a half ounces.

But no matter what is imbibed, adolescent drinking is not a new phenomenon. In the 1880s and '90s, teenagers were being hospitalized because of drinking problems. It is the age at which drinking now begins that is new. In a 1981 national survey, it was found that 56 percent of high school seniors reported using alcohol prior to the 10th grade; 24 percent, ninth grade; 23 percent seventh and eighth grades; and 9 percent in the sixth grade.

The same survey reported that 41 percent of the young drinkers consumed five or more drinks at least once in the two weeks prior to the survey questionnaire; six percent reported daily use; 15-20 percent of high school dropouts were due to heavy drinking.

One statistic which remained unchanged since a 1977 survey was that 93 percent of high school students drink. This realization has prompted those concerned with the problem on state and local governmental and educational levels to effect a change in attitudes about drinking. New York State, by raising the drinking age to 19 and toughening the laws and penalties



regarding DWIs, is changing the once accepted attitude that it is alright to drink and drive. Educational programs are informing people about the health hazards of alcohol abuse.

This legislative and educational barrage is telling people that their decision to drink carries with it a heavy responsibility — the responsibility to be aware of the potential dangers of alcohol and the effects it could have on their lives as well as on the lives of others.

Pope

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The pope told the politicians that the Church does not intend to interfere in government matters but intends to speak strongly on matters "having to do with God and the conscience of his sons and daughters."

"The Church, rightly respecting the spheres that are not its own, marks out a moral course, which coincides with and does not change, diverge from, nor contradict the demands of the dignity of the human person and the rights and freedoms inherent in it," he said.

On Nov. 2, at a Mass in Madrid attended by an estimated 1.5 million people, the pope said that the Church would continue opposing the legalization of abortion, a position in contrast to the platform of the Socialists. Abortion is illegal in Spain and the new ruling party favors legalizing it under certain conditions such as danger to the life of the mother.

The first papal visit to Spain was marred by the Nov. 4 killing in Madrid of Maj.

Gen. Victor Lago Roman. The Basque independence movement, ETA, claimed responsibility for the assassination.

The pope revised a homily on Nov. 4 to ask prayers for "the latest victim and for all victims of terrorism in Spain" and to say that violence is not the way to solve human problems.

Two days later, he visited the Basque region and said that violence is never a constructive means.

"It offends God, those who suffer it and those who practice it," he said.

On the day of the papal stops in the Basque region near the French border, French police arrested two ETA members, according to EFE, the Spanish News Agency. Citing sources of "absolute confidence," EFE said they were arrested for allegedly plotting to assassinate the pope. EFE did not report the arrests for three days.

One of the most widely debated

questions during the pope's 10-day, 4,500-mile, 18-stop tour of Spain concerned his health.

Some thought he held up amazingly well under the grueling schedule, in light of his age and the attempt on his life in May

1981. Others thought he looked unusually tired, even at the beginning of the trip.

Regardless, as he bid adios to Spain, this much-traveled Holy Father already has thoughts fixed on his next journey, a return to his motherland.

Junior League Opens 47th Season

The Junior League of Rochester opened its 47th season of theatrical production, presenting "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs of the Black Forest" on Tuesday, Nov. 2, at Holy Trinity School, Webster.

The play was presented in-the-round, with several students selected to help with

the action of the production. More than 150 kindergarten through sixth grade students attended.

Holy Trinity was one of four suburban schools chosen to view this production. The Junior League of Rochester has toured with two troupes of actresses since October.

They visited 16 schools and entertained more than 6,000 children before concluding their season in a public performance on Nov. 11 at the Rochester Museum and Science Center.

The Junior League of Rochester has funded children's theatre since 1935.

Health Board

Continued from Page 1
Third party referrals from family, friends, parishioners, etc., will be investigated, again on a confidential basis. It is important, however, to note that the health board is here to help clergy deal with sources of stress in their lives and not go on witch hunts in search of problems.

General inquiries or correspondence may be directed to Deacon Anthony P. Marini, director of the health board, at St. Bernard's Institute, 1100 S. Goodman

St., Rochester, N.Y. 14620. The other board members may also be contacted. They are:

- Richard W. Bondi, PT, 324-3900 (ext. 203).
- Mollie Brown, RSM, Ph.D., 461-3077.
- Bernard J. Farnand, MD, 244-1900.
- Father David Gramkee, (607) 734-3901.
- Father Thomas D. Hoctor, 473-3230 (ext. 1344).
- Father Charles Latus, 328-3210.

Deacon Anthony Marini, 423-3136.
Richard D. Reilly, 423-4292.

Stanko Rodic, MD, 275-0410 or 461-4356.
Father James Schwartz, 271-1320 (ext. 22).

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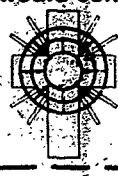
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