

Alcohol's message came through slowly

by JOHN POPE
Citizen Staff Reporter

It took 58 trips to the drunk tank for Gene to become aware of what alcohol was doing to him.

Although this is not his name, the circumstances surrounding the 17-year-old Native Indian's alcoholism are all too real.

His first drink was a beer taken out of curiosity at the age of 11.

It didn't become a problem until about two-and-one-half years ago, when he began drinking heavily after his father died at the age of 34 from the alcohol-related disease cirrhosis of the liver.

Both his parents drank a lot and his mother died recently at the age of 37 from heart failure.

Today he is taking it one day at a time in a half-way house for alcoholics where he was ordered to stay after conviction for being a chronic alcoholic.

This criminal code charge and forced commitment for treatment is a possibility for anyone who has to be continuously picked up for safety reasons.

Usually, it is now applied to someone picked up more than 20 times.

But the personal degradation suffered by an alcoholic and the policing problem is not even half the story — particularly in Prince George which has one of the highest per capita consumptions of alcohol in North America.

Statistics released by the Alcohol and Drug Commission this week, as part of their promotion of alcohol awareness week (Oct. 22-26, present a dim picture throughout British Columbia in 1978.

They show that:

- British Columbia has the highest per capita consumption rate of alcohol in Canada.
- Approximately 12 per cent (237,500) of the adult population in B.C. are considered hazardous drinkers, which mean they risk or are experiencing physiological damage due to heavy drinking.
- Although B.C. has less than 11 per cent of the Canadian population, it has almost 15 per cent of the estimated 773,000 alcoholics in Canada.
- Impaired drivers constitute 17 per cent of the court case load in Vancouver and 35 per cent in outlying areas.

Because many accidents caused by alcohol-drinkers are not reported until the person is sober, it is difficult to know how many may be attributed to alcohol.

But police here know alcohol was involved in the traffic accident deaths of at least 16 of

the 21 people killed on highways in the Prince George area this year.

And it is estimated that 38 to 50 per cent of all fatally injured drivers are legally impaired.

Local alcohol drug commission counsellor Glenda Roberts says drinking for many people becomes a "reflex action rather than an intelligent choice."

"It (drinking) becomes a problem when it is compulsive and excessive," says Roberts, who adds that many people drink without realizing what it will do to them.

"An alcoholic's definition of an alcoholic never includes himself."

Those who abuse alcohol don't realize the danger signs until a point is reached where it is difficult to return.

Anyone wishing help with a drinking problem may contact the outpatient counselling service at 562-6691.

SHE WANTS A BOYFRIEND

Unhappy girl considers suicide

YOUTH CLINIC

Dear Dr. Levine: I am a 13-year-old girl. I have been told by many people, including my school teachers, that I am 13 going on 17. But I am treated like a 10-year-old. I am very smart and popular. Many of my girlfriends say they would trade places with me anytime. I wouldn't wish it of anyone.

I have thought of suicide many times, and still do. I have tried twice (only my best friend knows) and I came very close.

My parents don't allow me to go out much with boys. It's not like I am going to have sex with them. All I want is to have a boyfriend to talk to and have fun with.

I am very shy and have trouble being open with my parents and boys. What do I do?

I have many friends but don't live by them. I can't stand one more boring night in this house. I try to occupy my time with my future — I am going to be a lawyer. I can't see such a future and I don't know if I want one.

Answer: One of the big problems about being a teenager is that while you want to be neither, you are alternately treated as an adult or a child.

In your letter you acknowledge that the age range 13 to 17 pretty well covers the discrepancy between your chronological age and the way you look and perhaps act. That's a pretty big jump! I would expect that some people have expectations of you to act "like an adult" and you suggest that your parents and others treat you like a child of 10. They may be giving you the message, "Hold on a bit, don't grow up too fast."

You have an added burden in that you are by your own

admission "smart" and you look older than your age. People give you simultaneous double messages. For some things you are a child, for others you are an adult. You're told to assume responsibilities and at the same time you are told that you are too young.

I can say confidently that all this will fall into place soon. Try speaking about your feelings to your parents — they may surprise you with their understanding. And listen to their concerns about their 13-year-old daughter.

I can't stop at this point without responding to your talk of

suicide. If you find that nothing is improving, that talking doesn't help, and that you still are contemplating suicide, then you must get some professional help. You can speak to your school guidance counselor or family doctor, or any other responsible person you trust who can see that you get the right kind of help. Otherwise, got to a local adolescent clinic, drop-in centre or youth agency in your town.

Remember, your friends would like to trade places with you — they must see an awful lot of good there.

Dear Dr. Powell: I'm 16. A

friend told me that if I don't wear a bra I won't grow much. I haven't worn one for the past year and I haven't grown much. I have also heard that breast size is heredity. Is this true? I'm smaller than my mom was. Is it true some women develop in their 20s?

Answer: A bra does not make you grow, nor does it stop the development of your breasts. It provides support and that is its only function. Breasts grow because your body produces a hormone called estrogen. Breasts continue to develop and change throughout your life.

I am not sure that you can predict the size of your breasts by heredity alone. But the size and shape of your breasts will be influenced by your body weight and build.

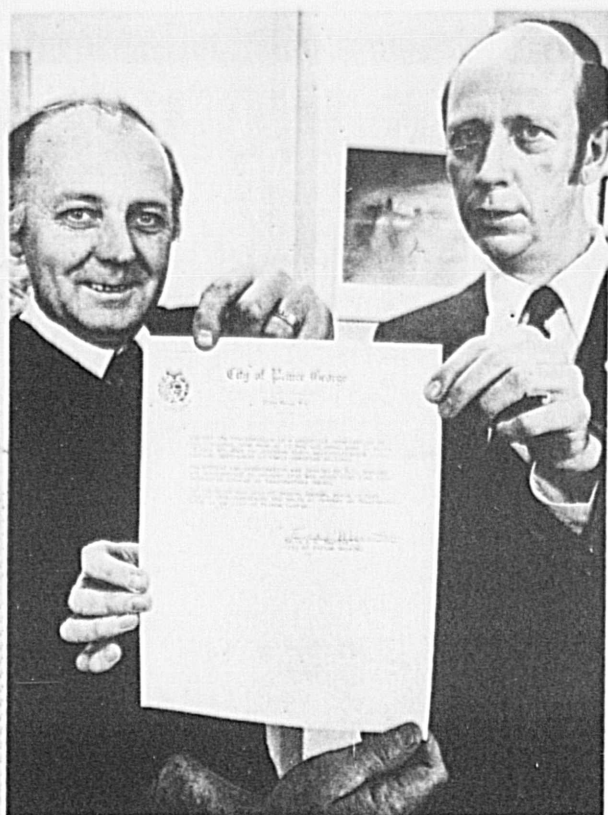


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Their month

Toastmasters in Prince George meet 12 months a year but October has been declared their month by Mayor Elmer Mercier, left. Members of the international organization meet to increase their self-confidence and improve their speaking ability. Bob Larmer, area governor of the local Toastmasters receives the proclamation.

Ann
Landers



Dear Ann Landers: My husband and I are completely mystified and we would like your opinion. His sister passed away two years ago. The grief-stricken widower (I'll call him "Rex") wouldn't allow us to invite another woman along for "company" until six months ago. Now he has started to show some interest in a charming lady who is an executive with a big company.

"Louise" is a delightful and gracious person who can speak intelligently on any subject. She is wonderful company and seems to like "Rex" a great deal. But the woman gets blind drunk on one drink. Is this possible?

When "Louise" arrived at our home for dinner last evening she was as sober and delightful as can be. After one martini she became garrulous and repetitive. When dinner was announced she walked straight into the broom closet. No one can figure out how a person can get so loaded on a single martini. Please explain. —Eighth Wonder.

Dear Eighth: People who have a low tolerance for alcohol can get cockeyed on one drink. But from your description, it sounds as if "Louise" may have had a head start before she arrived at your place — like maybe she nips at home a little.

Dear Ann Landers: Here's my answer to the man who was tortured because he found some old love letters when his wife died. They were from her high school sweetheart and implied that maybe she had slept with him. The husband assumed his wife was a virgin when they married. He said he'd never recover from the "shock" and "disappointment."

I read a poem years ago and now I wish I had saved it. The gist of the poem was this:

"I am who I am and what I

am today because of all the people and experiences I have met along the way. You must take me as I am. If you are hung up on "being first" it means you have an ego weakness and that is your problem."

I very nearly became engaged to a man — until he asked if I was a virgin. I was 24 at the time and had been working since high school. He had been in a monastery but was out three years when we met. I stopped seeing him because his question told more about him than my response would have told about me. I've never regretted it. No reply is necessary, Ann. Just print my letter. It's — Food For Thought.

Dear Food: It is, indeed, and highly nourishing, too. I shall follow your instructions. Thanks for writing.

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DATE: October 31, 1979

TIME: 9 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

SITES: Workshop 1

CNC Room 1-306

(Dr. F. Walton — Winning the

Cooperation of Adolescents)

WORKSHOP 2 CNC Room 202

(Kathy Walton — Winning the Cooperation

of Children)

REGISTRATION FEE: \$10.00

These workshops will be of particular interest to parents and all others who work with children and adolescents.

TO REGISTER: CONTACT STUDENT SERVICES
AT CNC — 562-2131

SCHOOL DISTRICT 57

(PRINCE GEORGE)

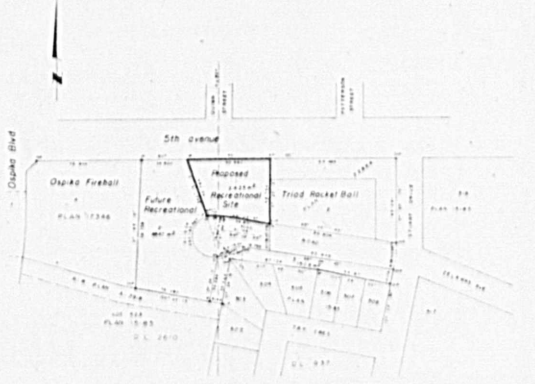
1894 Ninth Ave.,

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USES PERMITTED:
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SITE:

A total of 0.24 hectares (0.6 acres) for lease

Access is permitted only from Zeikwas Avenue

TERMS OF LEASE:

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In Brief: (1) The minimum improvement value

shall be \$75,000

(2) The annual lease rate shall be

\$7,500 for the first three

years. Terms to be re-established every three years.

(3) There shall be a 10 metre

(33 foot) fully landscaped

setback from 5th Avenue

(4) Servicing may not be complete

until June 1, 1980.

Auction to be held November 15, 1979 in the City Hall

Council Chambers at 10:00 o'clock (a.m.).

Karl Zandberg

Tax Collector

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